

Staying Centred - Moving with Ease and Gracefulness

By James Bone

Have you ever watched a skilled sportsman, athlete, gymnast or dancer move, so that even something difficult, appears unbelievably effortless and easy?

What is their secret?

Is it something only gifted people can aspire towards?

The truth is not all of us can be brilliant athletes etc, but we can all learn to move more from our CENTRE and therefore move with more gracefulness and ease.

Not only will you look better when you move, but the benefits can be amazing, possibly including:

- Less body and joint stress
- Less risk of injury
- Less muscle tension and body stiffness
- Less musculoskeletal pain
- Less fatigue and tiredness
- Improved performance if you do play sport, dance or do any other moving activity
- Move with more power and efficiency

The secrets are SIMPLE, but take PRACTICE (and you need to REMEMBER to practice!) :

- Bring **awareness** to your movement
- Focus on moving with **less tension and more ease**
- Become more aware of your **centre** – in the Eastern Tradition your centre can be found about fingers below your navel and inwards toward your pelvis centre. **Allow your movement to flow out from your centre.**

Try this simple practice:

Reach out for a pen or something on your desk or table. How conscious were you of moving? How did you move? Where did you move in your body from? Did you feel any tension anywhere?

Now bring your awareness to your CENTRE, then reach out again for that pen or something, moving from your centre and being aware of the actions, trying to move with less tension and more ease. Practice a few times and see if you can begin to feel the difference in how it feels to move in this more conscious effortless way. *REMEMBER being aware, means being present, not necessarily trying to control everything. Trying to control can lead to more tension and less ease.*

Also to HELP move with gracefulness and ease, you need to maintain (or improve) your Flexibility and Strength. Yoga, Tai Chi, Martial Arts, and Dance can all be great ways to practise moving more gracefully, but to make the most difference you need to apply your practice to your daily life.

You need to remember to take those skills you learn and use every day. One simple way is something we all do many times a day - sitting down and standing up. Do you tend to sit down with a flop, or stand up mindlessly, awkwardly or using your hands to assist? There is a better, more graceful way, which will also help strengthen your legs and improve your postural muscle strength.

Try this “Sitting to Standing” practice:

Sit in a chair, slightly towards the front of the chair, with feet apart, back towards the chair, but still flat to the floor. Bring awareness to your centre, draw your lower belly in slightly, lift tall through the spine and keep your chin slightly nodded inward. Then bend forward from your hips and use the power of your thighs and the flow of movement to stand up fully straight with ease and grace. Now to sit back down, lead with your tail (tail back and tummy in) and lower yourself slowly to the chair without going flop. Practise this until it becomes more natural