

Moving Well Part 2

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This article is a follow up to the Yoga plus Therapies March 2011 article on Moving Well.

The following are some simple tips to help you move well in specific actions. Please note that these are GENERAL principles only. We all have specific body shapes, sizes and mental characteristics, so every principle may not necessarily apply to you. Also this is only a small sample of possible tips – there are many others which may apply for your specific needs.

It is usually best to get guidance from a physiotherapist, sports doctor, exercise or sports specialist/coach, to determine what is best for your specific needs. CARE - Make any changes slowly and don't over do it. Your muscles and body will need to adapt to any new changes.

Research and common sense suggest that warm up before activity is helpful. Warm up means to go through the activity you are doing in a slow way to prepare the body for the movement. It doesn't mean stretching. In fact stretching maybe detrimental for some activities, which require speed or power like running.

Stretching is best performed at the end of activity, or even better at a separate time such as a yoga class or self yoga practice session, Yoga after exercise has been shown to help reduce post exercise soreness.

Make use of your senses to get a better feel of your movement

Listen to the sound you make – is it noisy and erratic, or quiet and smooth?

Video your action – watch the way you move. Play it back in slow motion to help determine what you do. I some times do this with my clients.

Feel your movement – does it feel hard, requiring a lot of effort, or is it easy and exhilarating?

Good movement should be fun, make you feel good and reduce strain on your body.

Swimming

The main goal is to reduce drag in the water and find an easy rhythm. Check if you make a lot of splash, or you tend to drag your legs.

Keep the body long with good core control to avoid drag.

Try using any easy no drag kick.

Make your stroke rhythmical, easy and even, avoiding over reaching.

Find a balance between stroke length and rate to find your rhythm.

Some people may find it helpful to use the body roll to aid swimming to reduce strain on the shoulders. This means that the shoulders, torso and hips roll upward with the arm, which is reaching forward in the stroke. It may help the roll by drawing back with the shoulder blade. To get the hang of this you can try kicking with flippers in the side position.

Walking

Listen to your walk – is it noisy at the heel strike? You may be over striding with your heel.

Instead of trying to stride forward, change your emphasis, and instead try pushing off with your big toe ball of foot. So you are pushing, rather than striding out. Your step may become shorter, but it also becomes quicker, so you move with less effort.

Dancing

There are many styles of dance, each with its unique characteristics.

Finding the style, which suits you, and correct practice, is what can help.

Dancing requires good co-ordination, so start slowly, and build up speed over time.

Understanding momentum is a key to good dancing. This means to have good understanding and feeling for your movement of your body, and centre of gravity through space.

“Become the dance, not the dancer” is another key – meaning let go of your ego.

Running

The goal of good running is to propel yourself forward with minimal wasting of energy or jarring of your body. Like walking, listening to the sound of your stride can help. Is the sound as your foot hits the ground noisy or hard? This could mean you are over striding, which means your foot is landing in front of your centre of gravity, which effectively means it is acting as a brake to slow you down. Look at expert runners such as the Kenyan distance runners, and see how they appear to glide forward with minimal energy.

Make your stride quicker and land mid foot with weight over your foot, not behind.

Have some one video you and see if you move up and down as you run. This action wastes a lot of energy and can stress your joints. Joggers often do this incorrect action.

Instead, try to run smoothly and level ie glide more.

Keep your torso and pelvis stable and in control – avoiding moving too much side to side, forward or back or twisting. Running tall may help.

Allow your arms to swing relaxed and easily.

Run quietly, run relaxed, and your body and joints will love you.

Golfing

The swing action is a fundamental action in golf, which can make or break your game and your body.

Golf is as much about the mind as the body. Stay relaxed, stay centred, and focus on the action, then the outcome will follow.

Swing easily and don't try too hard – watch how the experts do it.

Keep your base stable, and sink into your legs.

Move with the whole body – this is how you create power – think of a whip.

Move from your hips, then your waist, torso, shoulders, and wrists, moving with rhythm.

Watch your wrists don't over do it

Cycling

Cycling is all about rhythm – pushing and pulling – using muscles at the front called quads, and at the back of thighs called hamstrings. It is important to remember the action is a cycle, not the push pull of a piston ie it is not up and down.

Find your correct rhythm or cycle rate – 90 is often quoted in the literature as best, but see what is best for your self.

Your set up on the bike is also very important – get a bike expert if needed to check your set up is correct.

As you go faster, you need to become more aware of wind resistance that your body position may create.

Watch for tension in your hands, arms, shoulders or jaw.

Be aware of using your body position in turns to maintain balance.

Remember speed is not everything, so keep it fun.

All the best with moving well!!!