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the Emergence Explorer

Questions for the Week of December 4, 2006



"Ergonomic Consciousness"



- Is there a common sitting position in which people are more vulnerable to injury?
 - How seriously does peoples' age affect their degree of discomfort?
 - Can people emerge from life long poor sitting habits?

Do you know?

This Week's Questions

[These questions were posed by Steven P.]

[Question 1] Is there a common sitting position in which people are more vulnerable to injury? For instance, when people are seated, are they usually less conscious in the upper body, or in the lower body?
[Answer] Is there a common sitting position in which injuries more easily occur? Probably. In general, I'd guess, less support, less resistance to injury. However, body position alone cannot injure a person. Only events wherein people experience the sequence [1] hyperawareness, [2] being startled, and [3] going into shock, can injure people.

Thus, while experts do tell us certain sitting positions are bad for us, in all likelihood, these "poor sitting

positions" more often indicate people have already been injured than that this position may render these folks more vulnerable to injury. For example, if you are less conscious in your upper body as opposed to your lower body, then in all likelihood, you already have an upper body injury which will be aggravated if you sit in the wrong position.

Did sitting in this position once anatomically predispose you to this injury? No. You simply were startled into shock at one time while sitting in this position.

What I'm saying is, are you more likely to be injured if you do not plant your feet firmly on the floor? Perhaps. Sitting with legs crossed versus uncrossed? This too. However, children can sit in these positions for hours and suffer no ill effects. And simply attributing the pain we feel in these positions to being older in no way defines the source of the problem. Only that we are more likely to aggravate these conditions.

In the end, what would be more helpful here would be to know that there are sitting positions, and seats, which are less likely, and more likely, to aggravate *already existing injuries*. Identifying these positions, and remembering to avoid the painful ones, will definitely help you to reduce your symptoms. As will the assistance of a professional who can help you to identify these positions while also teaching you good corrective postures. And recommending ergonomically sound chairs and so on.

Know, however, that even after learning how to sit properly, and even with the most ergonomic of chairs, you will still need to remember to do all this. Why? Because injury blocks our proprioceptive awareness, making us proprioceptively forget. As well as blocking our psychological and spiritual awareness of being in these positions. Thus, if you have a lower back injury, you will likely often forget you have it. Physically. Emotionally. Mentally. And spiritually.

This means even if you know better, you may frequently forget and sit in a position which will aggravate this injury, such as sitting cross legged. At least, until lower back pain reminds you, you have this injury. At which point, it's too late to avoid aggravating this injury. This pain indicates you have already aggravated the injury.

As for healing these kinds of injuries, while you can, in theory, heal at least some of the ergonomic effects of aging, no one escapes these kinds of problems. Moreover, the more pain you feel, the less you'll be able to consciously manage these injuries.

This is why being taught good postures at a young age, and remembering to practice what you've been taught, can significantly contribute to a better quality of life as you get older. Including that you'll likely be less vulnerable to being injured in the first place.

Finally, know that once injured, your chances for further sitting injuries increase. Again, injury impairs conscious management skills. Thus, the more injured you get, the more likely you will be to get additional injuries.

My point. Learning, and practicing, proper sitting postures at an early age can pay big dividends over time.

[Question 2] How seriously does peoples' age affect their degree of discomfort?

[Answer] I would think the key to answering this question lies in knowing how various states of human

consciousness affect the degree to which we sense pain. Including that getting older affects our awareness of pain in both directions, both making us more vulnerable to having pain but less likely to feel it.

Of course, in the real world, there is no such thing as an absolute scale with which to measure pain. Which means, even when people share the exact same condition, their sense of how painful it is will vary widely. This is true, not only between people, but also within the same person. Now to see why I've how this plays out, consider this.

In the previous question, I spoke about how we all suffer the effects of aging, including that we all incur physical losses. Moreover, avoiding these losses is simply impossible.

At the same time, we Americans seem to have an obsession with trying to avoid these physical losses for as long as we possible can. As if we can somehow delay these losses indefinitely.

Applying this to how seriously age affects our discomfort, we Americans, in general, respond poorly to pain, mostly because our obsession with avoiding it makes us equate feeling pain with having done something wrong. In other words, if we feel pain, we see it as our fault. And a perfect example of this kind of thinking is the previous question, which could have been voiced as, "are there sitting positions in which we cause ourselves pain?"

In reality, none of this is true. Why? Because no one can avoid growing older. Including that we cannot indefinitely delay the painful effects of growing older.

Unfortunately, by failing to accept these events as normal, while we may indeed delay some physical pain, we set ourselves up to feel more psychological pain. Shame. Guilt. Obsession. And so on.

How then does this play out as to how seriously age affects our degree of discomfort? As you can see, it's complicated to say the least. On the one hand, it's a given that age creates more physical reasons for feeling discomfort. At the same time, being obsessed with trying to avoid feeling pain means we feel ashamed whenever we do feel it. This shame then inhibits our natural ability to vent the psycho spiritual aspects of our pain, thereby propelling us into Layer Two excuses and psychological denial.

In the end, this inability to naturally vent our pain means we increasingly become less conscious we have it. This then renders us less able to manage the pain of these injuries, including remembering to do things like sit correctly.

Finally, there is yet another factor. In many people, getting older brings with it a spiritual maturity which can, at times, lead us to the truth about growing older; that it is not our fault. In effect, we reinterpret pain as being normal. In other people though, with age comes an increase in spiritual pessimism, as in, " same crap, different day." Here, peoples' attitudes can increase their perception of pain.

My point? We don't even have a real way to measure peoples' pain, let alone a literal way to measure discomfort. And while paying attention to what people have to say about pain is important, taking what they say literally would be a mistake. Why? Because perception probably plays a bigger part in peoples' sense of their discomfort than any other factor.

So how seriously does peoples' age affect their degree of discomfort? I'd say, aging can increase peoples

sense of pain in both directions. And while they will have more of it, they may get better at gracefully enduring it. Or not, depending on the person's perceptions.

[Question 3] Where, in the Layers, do we feel discomfort? Is stretching before sitting a good idea?

[Answer] Second question first; **Is stretching before sitting a good idea?** Absolutely. Add to this that you'll gain more from your stretching if you do it slowly and consciously. And even more if you pay close attention to where you feel the urge to hurry.

As for the first question; **In what Layers do we feel discomfort?**, let's start with the Layer in which people most notice discomfort, Layer 5. After all, "discomfort" is first and foremost a symptom. Moreover, if you explore this symptom further, you'll notice that each time you feel this symptom, your mind goes blank. These moments of blankness occur in Layer 6; the layer of BLocks.

Here, then, is why we call Layers 5 and 6, the "medical layers." Cumulatively, they encompass the symptoms we feel and the symptoms we do not feel.

As for the rest of the layers, know, if you endure discomfort for any length of time, you'll feel some Layer 7 neediness. Along with that you'll likely begin to make a few Layer 2 excuses as to why you are feeling this discomfort.

Should this then pain continue unabated, you would eventually begin to do some Layer 3 clock watching, in essence, trying to determine how long you may have to feel this punishment. And if it then continued to get worse, eventually, you would reach a point at which you would probably feel some pretty strong urges to have a Layer 4 outburst. Especially in those moments wherein your pain exceeded your ability to excuse and or wait out.

Enter the pain killers. And if you took them, at this point, you'd experience a bit of the old Layer 1 detachment. Or more than a bit, depending on your personal style of pain management. And while, indeed, it can be true at times; no pain, no gain, at this point, you'd probably not be feeling too philosophically sympathetic. After all, there is a point at which we all deserve a break. Isn't there?

Now say you suddenly feel a burst of intense pain. In these moments, you'd be feeling an instant of Layer 8.

And if you were to finally reach the point wherein you needed to visit a health specialist, then perhaps, during the visit, you'd connect to the care giver and feel some Layer 9.

Finally, in cases wherein we experience extreme physical pain, in rare instances, we experience this pain in Layer 10. As a spiritual experience. And while these experiences are rare, they are entirely possible. Especially if the pain gets so bad you turn to prayer or to meditation.

My point? Like all other experiences in life, in theory, we can feel pain in all ten Layers. Or in only one, as in cases wherein we are zoned out on pain killers. Thus, once again, we see an example of how the Layers are a map, not a crystal ball.

[Question 4] Can Direct Emergence resolve proprioceptive malalignments? In other words, can people emerge from life long bad sitting habits? If so, what would be an example of both a bad habit and a

possible emergence goal?

[Answer] Yes, we definitely can emerge from life long sitting habits. And Direct Emergence is probably one of the best ways to resolve these proprioceptive malalignments. Especially since most proprioceptive malalignments are easy to define. Given, of course, you know how to do Emergence allergy testing to pinpoint the exact body position wherein the injury occurred.

Now applying this to bad sitting habits, being with that the word, "habits," is simply a nice way to say, "unconscious behaviors." These behaviors generally fall into two groups. Group one. Momentum learning. Group two. Blocked consciousness.

With momentum learning, we need consciously see the momentum in order to rise above it. And with blocked consciousness, we need to see the inability to see the momentum in order to rise above it. And in both cases, the person would need to have an emergence in order to permanently alter the momentum.

Finally, an example? Sitting cross legged. And a possible goal? Consciously witnessing the individual muscles involved in sitting cross legged versus uncrossed legged. And how we increasingly feel muscular discomfort while sitting in crossed legged positions.

Note that consciously witnessing anything requires we see the sign of an emergence; feeling delight at knowing this consciously. No delight. No conscious witnessing. Even if you mentally can teach proper sitting.

[Question 5] Does blankness while moving your shoulders indicate a BLock? How much does breath play a part in healthy sitting? Does proper light play a part in the body's alignment?

[Answer] Three separate questions. Three separate answers.

Does blankness while moving shoulders indicate a BLock? Yes. It definitely indicates the presence of at least one, if not more than one Block. Moreover, should you want to more accurately identify how many, simply work towards defining the arc on which this blankness occurs. Then move very slowly through this arc, noting each and every place you go blank.

More than one blankness. More than one Block.

How much does breath play a part in healthy sitting? I would think, a lot, really. However, breath is more an indicator of whether we are or are not conscious that that it can actually prevent injury.

Can remembering to breathe properly help us to remember to sit correctly? Yes. Absolutely. However, since breathing is more an unconscious body function than a consciously chosen act, "remembering to breathe" is more an act of force than an act of consciousness. Definitely worth doing. But only to the point wherein we expend less energy than we lose.

Does proper light play a part in the body's alignment? Wow! What a question. I'm not sure even where to begin here. Perhaps the best place would be to say, I'm very curious right now as to how much light plays a part in how consciously we sit.

My guess? Any light which raises our consciousness would help us to consciously manage our bodies. Including how we sit. Conversely, the lack of proper light would definitely inhibit our consciousness to

some degree, thereby impairing our ability to consciously manage how we sit.

Finally, add to this that each of us has different levels of "best light." Thus, while proper light will indeed add to our ability to remain conscious, there is no single measure for proper light. Thus, like anything else, our individual ability to remain conscious will largely depend on how well we know ourselves. Here again, we see our friend Socrates' maxim about the unexamined life is not worth living.

The point? Examine your life, regularly and frequently. And remember to do this with love and compassion.



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