

Number 1: The Wrap — A Loan of Uprightness

Hello. Today we will work with the Wrap; a strip of cloth, 7 meters long. It is a multi-purpose tool we use throughout our program in *Movement Intelligence*. *The Wrap helps us unify all our body parts, and enables us to secure a streamlined, vertical posture with which we can coordinate movements that are loaded with much more power than we normally use in daily life.*

I call the Wrap a “Loan of Uprightness” because, with the help of the Wrap, even people who are not so well-organized can improve their posture enough to safely withstand the impact of dynamic bone-building activities, such as running and jumping.

So let's get started. We first hold the Wrap with one hand — the two ends of the strip of cloth held together with one hand. Then, standing in a long step position, we start waving the Wrap, so that it extends to its full length.

Now, go to the other — folded — side, and open it between your hands. We place this part behind our pelvis: lower down — at the bottom of the pelvis. It is important to open the portions of the strip attached along our sides, so that we secure the connection of the legs to our pelvis. *Our intention is to protect our hip joints; this is like what is written in the Bible: to “gird your loins.” [Like a Girdle, or Corset.] When we protect our hip joints from randomly shaking, our posture is much steadier, and safer.* Now, cross the two strips at the bottom of your belly, and make another twist. Hold it with your hands from beneath, closer to the knot. To further increase the tightness, you can: uncross it a little; pull, with power, to both sides — right and left; and then cross it again. Like this, we are now snugly held within the Wrap.

Keeping one hand on the knot, take one strip, and toss it over your shoulder: catch it behind your back on the side, and begin to pull down. Pull it down with a

slight twist — rotated inward. Feel how this elevates your back, lifts your chest, *and* shows your body how to be upright — all without any conscious effort. Rather than directing your *back* to hoist itself up, it is your *hand* that does all the work. Now switch hands: toss the other end of the Wrap behind your back, catch it, and pull it straight down — as far as you can — giving your body the feeling of how easy it is to be upright.

You can also catch both ends, and pull them down at the *same* time. *It is important to not sway your pelvis forward, because then you risk compressing the arch of your lower back. You don't want to straighten your torso at the expense of exaggerating your natural lumbar curve.*

Pull both strips down; hold them taut, and start stepping in place. Now, with each step, you are teaching your body to maintain its uprightness while engaged in activity. It's not enough to position yourself into a new posture; you also need to convince your entire body that it can function comfortably in this different configuration.

Now, cross the strips behind you; hold them both together, and begin to twist them around each other — making one long rope that reaches all the way down to your tailbone. From there, separate the strips, wrap them around your sides, and then to your stomach; cross them again; and twist and tighten, once more. Now take the strips backward, stretch them just below your buttocks, and, from there, finally take the ends to your sides . . . Hold them there, together with the previous bands across your hips . . . and insert your fingertips under the strips, stretched around your hips — so that your entire body is now corseted in a single closed loop.

And, girdled like this in the Wrap, we start jumping: begin by just bending your knees; tune into the feel, and the rhythm, of the movement. In order to not get short of breath, we jump once, making a sound with an *active* exhale — “Ha!” And

then we jump three more times, with a *passive* inhale, giving ourselves the time needed for fresh oxygen to fill up our lungs. Start jumping: “Ha! 2, 3, 4,” “Ha! 2, 3, 4.”

Good! Now, very slowly — just with your hands, one at a time — begin to unravel your Wrap . . . *without* changing the position of your body. Simply allow your Wrap to slide down to the floor, and just stand there for a moment.

Sense your way of standing. How are you standing, compared with your usual way? Do you find that the weight of your head, all by itself, now projects more over your tailbone, and your heels? — *This is actually a very reliable indicator of optimal posture!* — Carefully step out from your Wrap lying on the floor, and begin walking around. Feel how your body carries itself; feel how you present yourself to the world with this new carriage — this new body image; this new way of walking.

By returning to the Wrap’s loan of uprightness it is always possible to remind yourself of your optimal posture, and how you can readily — safely, easily, and comfortably — streamline your body, and strengthen your bones. Thank you.

Number 2: Proportional Flexibility Eases the Neck

Hello. Today we'll do a short process to release the neck from stiffness. *Who is not interested in freeing their neck? Many people suffer from neck pain, and they think that they need to make their necks more flexible . . . But, instead, we may consider re-distributing the division of labor between the neck and the rest of the body, because the level of tension in the neck depends upon the support that the spine provides. It is just like family therapy: rather than asking the suffering member to change, we instead go to the strong — yet indifferent — partners, and invite them to cooperate.*

- Here with us today is Eddie . . . Hello Eddie.
- Shalom, Ruthy.
- How are you? How do you feel?
- Everything is excellent . . . except my neck. After a long trip this morning, — hitting a few traffic jams — I finally arrived here, but with a stiff neck.
- First let's see how you turn your head. Turn your head, to any side, slowly; and repeat this several times — gently, don't go to the maximum. Especially notice how you experience the limit of your turning. Where does it start to get stiff? And now, slowly, turn your head to the other side. Feel if it is any different there . . .
- Very much
- Where is the borderline? Where does it begin getting difficult? In what range can you turn your neck easily? What is the quality of your turning? Now, choose one side that you would like to improve . . . Which side would you choose?
- The left, please.
- This is obvious.
- Clearly, yes
- Okay, then . . . Extend your arms forward, and cross your left arm above your right — *the arm on the side that you want to improve will be on top.* Turn your palms to face each other, and interlace your fingers. Now, start

to twist both arms, around their length. Turn both of them to the right — *toward the arm that is under* — several times. As you turn your arms, you may feel how your back wants to participate in the movement; invite it to participate *more*. While tilting your back sideways, every time the shoulder of the top arm rises a little, allow your head to come closer to it. Every time that your left shoulder lifts, see if you can attach your head to the left arm. *If this is difficult, you can insert a folded-up towel, as a way to connect them.* Repeat this several times, okay? Now, stay in this position — with your head attached to your arm — and begin to outline a circle with your two arms . . . Do this without separating your cheek from your shoulder. Allow your entire back to participate in creating this circle. Also, let the circle take your head along with it, up and down. Gradually slow down . . . and, now, make the circle go in the other direction, a few times.

Stop; slowly undo your fingers, release your arms, and sit. Feel how you're sitting now. And, slowly, turn your head to the left . . . How does it turn now?

- Wow!
 - Where is the stiffness?
 - What did I do?
 - It is not a miracle, it can be explained. What happened — when you raised your shoulder and attached it to your face — is that you neutralized your neck. It could not bend anymore, so we then allowed it to rest. We took it out of action, out of participating in the movement. And then, making your circle activated your *entire* back, instead — the previously stiff and lazy partners begin to pitch in . . . *And our organism is so intelligent that, when it discovers a new option — not through words, but through sensation — it immediately adds it to its movement repertoire . . .* And now your head turns much more easily, because your back is helping it out. Wonderful!
- Thank you.
- I have more problems: What about the knee? What about the bad leg?
 - Next time!

Number 3: Sitting Up, Spontaneously

Hello — Shalom to you! Today our process involves upright sitting. *We live nowadays in a sedentary culture of chairs: sitting at work, sitting near the computer, sitting when eating, and sitting when entertaining. How could we transform the chair into a tool for better health, so that, instead making us lazy and irresponsible, it would encourage us to sit up fully?* Today we'll do a short process that not only straightens your back, but also creates in your body the need to be straight *on its own* — we call this “spontaneous uprightness.”

- Shalom, Dalit
- Shalom
- How are you today?
- Good.
- Let's see how you sit, in your usual way . . . without leaning. How does it feel to give up leaning against the back of your chair?
- Its okay right now, but I couldn't do this for too long.
- Let's see what we can do so that not only will your back straighten up, but also that your back will — all by itself — *choose* to be like that . . . so that the improvement will come spontaneously. (*Which is when it has real value for us!*)

Please cross one knee over the other, and put the leg crossed above alongside the leg standing on the floor, so that *both* lower legs are now aligned vertically. At the same time, tighten your knees, one toward the other — as if each knee wants to pull the other in its own direction . . . But the other one resists, and so we create a stalemate: an isometric pulling — full of power, but lacking in movement. Repeat this several times, and feel how each time you tighten, you help define your spine.

- I feel the power from the knees actually jumps up to my head.
- Yes, the tightening engages your entire spine, and it lifts your head higher.

Okay, let go of everything, undo your legs, sit, and feel how it is to sit now, without leaning back.

- It's different.
- Different?
- Yes.
- Good! Now, the next stage: Put your fists behind you, and push them down into the seat of your chair. Feel how this lifts your upper back. Your back now straightens up not in its usual way — with effort — but by using your hands, as intermediary agents. Let your shoulder blades approach each other from behind — pressing on the spine — to remind those vertebrae beneath them to be flexible, and to restore your back's power to properly lift you up.
- Okay, let go now, sit, and see what your body has learned. Can you now sit for a little longer?
- Yes it seems so.
- That's it!
- Yes, by itself, my body chooses to sit this way, all by itself.
- Now let's put all the movements together: Cross one knee over the other; push your fists into the chair seat; tighten your knees against each other — the top leg aligning vertically with the bottom lower leg. Now, push the *floor* with the foot standing on the ground: push the *chair* with your fists: tighten your knees and legs against each other . . . and in this position, make some small movement: pushing with your hands and feet, *bounce* on your chair seat — small vibrations. Remember to keep your legs tight to each other throughout . . .

Okay. Slowly let go; separate everything. Uncross your legs, and feel how your body wants to sit now.

- Wow!
- Yes, where is your head now? Where is the top of your head? Where does the projection of the top of your head fall in relation to your tailbone? This is one way we can define proper uprightnes, proper posture. See

how long you can remain sitting like this. This marks your reconciliation with gravity. Sitting doesn't need to be an assignment, something that necessitates an investment of effort . . . This simple process can be done every day, any time you wish, any time that you sit and feel that your body needs some refreshment, some reminder. Thank you.

Number 4: Restoring Springy Knees

Hi, Shalom! The process we will work with today regards the knees. *Knees are indispensable. If our knees are painful and stiff, we not only lose springiness when walking, but we also lose the chance to perform power-loaded movements that strengthen our bones.* We have here with us today Irit, who has a knee problem. Let's see how your knees are. Come, please stand up; stand in a step position, with one leg behind. Bend both your knees slightly, several times, and especially notice how the leg *behind* accepts the bending. Reverse the position of your legs, bend your knees again — both of them — and feel if in this arrangement it is any different for you. Which knee has more difficulty bending when it is behind? Which one would you like to improve?

- My left knee.
- Then come here, please. Stand near the chair, put your hands on the seat, and step in place — from one foot to the other — slowly. With each step allow both your knees to bend, a little; and allow your head to be heavy . . . And start noticing which reaches the floor first — the ball of your foot? or the heel? — each time one of your feet lands on the ground.
- The balls of the feet.
- The balls of the feet, right. Please stand up, and take a few steps back and forth here, and feel — while standing upright — which reaches the floor first: the ball of the foot? or the heel?
- The heel.
- The heel, yes that's it. Now, come sit down. *All four-footed — “quadruped” — animals walk on the balls of their feet, which are structured with many small bones to absorb shocks from the varied surfaces found in nature. Two-footed — “biped” — humans first put their heels down to the floor, and step on them, compensating in order to not risk losing our delicate balance. But in adopting this way of standing on two feet, we also lost flexibility in our ankles — which, in animals, bend at the same rate as their knees. Our ankle stiffness is especially noticeable when we walk while*

wearing shoes; and yet, by nature's design, healthy knees depend upon the flexibility of our ankles.

Let's see how we can help our knees out by improving our ankles. Here is our "Wrap" — a strip of cloth; please wind it under your left knee, from the front. Now cross it behind you; bring it on top of your thigh, from the front; cross it again, and twist the ends together to make a short rope.

Now, with one hand — whichever feels comfortable to you — hold your rope, and use it to slowly pick up your knee . . . in such a way that the bones of your foot remain on the floor. Your hand does all the work. We lift just the heel, and train your ankle in the pattern of quadruped animals — where the *ball* of the foot touches the floor *before* the heel. All this time your hand does the work of your knee. We are not interested in activating the knee — because doing so might trigger counter-productive programming that created the problem in the first place — so we move the knee passively, using only our hand.

Now get up, still holding your rope. Come stand behind your chair — resting one hand on the chair — and do the same thing while standing. Let your hand train your ankle to extend and flex, opening and closing its angle. Feel how the weight of your leg is suspended by the rope. Go to the point where the toes are just about to detach, and the whole weight of your leg hangs from your hand. Come to that last point, just before detaching. Your left foot never fully leaves the floor, it just gets dragged along.

Now, walk around while using this pattern. Let your hand do the work of your left knee, and see if you can *equalize* the rhythm of moving your two knees — the active one, with the passive one. You are training your left knee to operate in a primal evolutionary pattern.

Stop. Come to sitting. Take off the Wrap, and come to standing. How do you feel?

- Wonderful.
- Now we will actually confirm the result. Stand in a step position, as before, with your left leg behind — the one with the knee we wanted to improve.
The leg behind is the one that is mostly engaged in the task of bending.
Now bend both knees, and feel: How is your left knee bending now?
- Much better.
- Much better. It got softer on its own. Very good, Irit — Thank you!
- Thank you!
- *In this way, using a simple strip of cloth, we can quickly restore the natural springiness of our knees. We recover a primal vitality that improves our knees, our posture, and our springiness when walking; we also generate a feeling of well-being, which we call “Biological Optimism.”*

Number 5: Straightening up through “Reversed Running”

Hello, Shalom! Today I want to give you a few ideas of what to do when you have been sitting for hours at a table, and feel you need to do *something* for your body — some small and simple thing that doesn’t take much preparation, or much time. Here is Amir; come, let’s see. Put your hands on the table, and start running in place — simply run. Let your head tilt with the movement; and with each step, let both your knees bend, in a springy way. Leaning on the table allows you to run without worrying about keeping your balance; if you want, you can even transition to more powerful “stomping.” Let your running impact your body in a way that speaks to your bones.

Good! Now let go. Get up, and feel how your body is ready to stand. Notice your stability: How are your feet anchored to the ground? Now we’ll try out some variations. Put only one forearm on the table — the other hand stays as is, in your lap — and, like this, run. You now invite your body to adjust to a different organization of your back. This is *Movement Intelligence!* Keep running, and change over your hands; feel how other parts of your back are now activated . . . and, let go.

Stand up, and find your balance. Next time we will synchronize the pace of our breathing with our running, in a special way: one strong active exhale — with the sound “Ha!” — followed by three passive inhales, which allow us to take in more oxygen.

You can take this even farther, by standing with your back to the table. Put your fists on the table: you stand *near* the table — but you don’t touch it — and, just like this, start running. Feel how your running now pulls your shoulder blades back behind you, and talks to the vertebrae between them. Instead of its usual roundness, your upper back organizes itself to arch backward. Again, let’s add some breathing that helps support your movement: “HA! 2, 3, 4” . . . “HA! 2, 3, 4.”

Okay, let go of everything, stand, and now feel your way of your standing. Notice that your head spontaneously positions itself precisely over your heels, and over your backbone; like this, it feels you can stand forever! *I recommend you run like this from time to time. It only takes a brief minute or two, but it gives you an improvement that makes a lasting contribution to the quality of your life; it elevates both your posture, and your spirits.* Thank you.

Number 6: Bouncing on the Heels — Pulsations that Build Bone

Hello. The movements we do are suitable for any time of day — even in the evening, when you come home and wish to wash away your tension. Our innate Movement Intelligence knows how to naturally coordinate our bodies, but we all have personal habits that interfere with our optimal organization. In order to alter these habits, we don't use force to overcome them, or try hard to fit ourselves into some ideal mold. Instead, we explore a variety of alternative movement patterns. When we allow ourselves to experience these unused options, our bodies are no longer stuck with one habitual way of doing things. They can then choose for themselves among a range of possibilities, and discover what works best in each situation, in order to act more appropriately, and successfully.

People ask how movement helps health. If we think about health from the standpoint of blood circulation . . . In healthy people blood carries vital nutrients in a way that allows it to penetrate the tiny capillaries at our extremities, reaching and nourishing all the tissues of our body . . . as well as, on the return flow, cleansing these tissues of the residue of the metabolic process, which prevents the build-up of waste products that can often lead to sickness.

To help stimulate our circulation, let's begin in standing. Raise your heels a little bit, and then “bump” them into the floor. Now raise your heels a little bit more, and “stomp” them into the floor. *We need this kind of dynamic impact, this intensified impulse, which reaches into our very core, our individual cells. It shakes things up, encouraging a vigorous blood flow — especially helpful in directing our blood upward, against gravity, from our legs and from our arms; this is really our heart's biggest challenge! When repeated, these bouncy pulses help our heart pump blood and circulate it throughout our entire body, streaming it upward in earth's gravitational field.*

We can do our bouncing in pairs: “Pum-Pum” “Pum-Pum” “Pum-Pum” — in the rhythm of our heartbeat. It’s also valuable to make a sound, so that our breath coordinates with the movement — “Pum-Pum” “Pum-Pum” “Pum-Pum”
Good! Now stop . . . and feel how this bouncing has re-organized your skeleton, and re-shaped your posture.

When we perform vigorous movement, it’s very important to align our bones. If our posture is collapsed while doing some intense movement, a forward neck will only tend to increase its collapse. Every action we do affirms and reinforces the structure in which it is performed — for better or for worse.

Please put your hand behind your neck. Place your little finger at the base of your skull, and your index finger at the big vertebrae at the base of your neck — the protruding “C7” vertebrae. [Your thumb rests somewhere on your shoulder.] Now open the span of your fingers: your fingers are glued to your neck — and so when they open, your neck elongates. Do this several times. Let your hand guide your neck to elongate. Our necks are blind, we aren’t usually aware of what’s going on there behind us . . . but by using our hand, with clear intention and clear orientation, its touch can help our neck to straighten itself. Your neck becomes straight, and it also aligns with your spine.

Stay like this, and in this position start walking in place; allow your knees to be springy — bending and straightening with each step. *This walking trains your neck to stay straight while in activity. You’ll see that your body begins to trust itself to operate with a straight neck. There is even a chance it will adopt some of this pattern for use in your daily life.*

Please stop now. Slowly take your hand away, and confirm that your head now finds itself in a slightly different place than usual. Maybe it’s more aligned now on your spine; the top of your head over your tailbone, over your heels.

What about that other problematic curve in your back, at the lumbar spine? *Many people have a deep compression in the small of their back, and every step they take echoes there, uncomfortably.* Please put your hand on your waistline, behind your lower back: place the back of your hand so that your little finger is attached to the pelvic wall — the sacrum — beneath the belt line; and your thumb touches some vertebrae above your waist. In this position, open the span of your fingers . . . and you may see that, in doing this, your lower back learns how to elongate and straighten. Do this several times; each time that you spread your fingers, also bend your knees slightly. Your knees partner with your lower back, and now, each time you bend them, your lower back learns to release its tension, and suspend itself in space.

Repeat this several times, gently. Focus on the *quality* of your movement — not its quantity, or range. Okay, rest now with your fingers spread open: your hand is extended and your lumbar spine is long. Invite your vertebrae to lean back slightly against your hand, and, in this position, begin to run in place. With each step let both knees bend; your pelvis first goes down, then up — and all the while your lower back leans on the support of your hand, which reminds it how to be long, straight, and aligned.

Let go of everything, stand quietly, and slowly remove your hand. Notice what has changed in your way of standing? How do you feel? How are your feet planted on the ground? Above all, notice how long you can stand like this, without any effort.

It is also possible to align *both* curves of your back, at the same time. If you can comfortably stand away from the support of a wall or chair, place one hand behind your neck, and the other hand behind your lumbar spine. Spread the fingers of both hands, opening their span, while *both* your neck and lower back elongate. Repeat this several times, and each time you spread your fingers, also bend your knees slightly. Your neck elongates, and your back sinks down — ever

so slightly suspending its weight. In this position, with both curves released, start bouncing on your heels to reinforce this newly lengthened organization of your spine – “Pum-Pum” ... “Pum-Pum” ... “Pum-Pum.”

Okay, let go of everything. Slowly remove your hands, and feel this new posture that your body has reached on its own, just by using the winning combination of *optimal organization* and *dynamic movement*. Notice whether the projection from the top of your head now falls more precisely over your tailbone, and over your heels.

With such simple movements, done several times during the day — any time you choose — it's possible to improve your posture, help your heart circulate blood, and also strengthen your bones. Thank you, Shalom!