

Three Helpful Awareness Practices

*These can be seen as **Pre-Alexander Technique Procedures** but should not be confused with the Alexander Technique itself.*

1. Fingers in the ears to define head balance location on spine

- With easy arms and shoulders place your index fingers just underneath the earlobes in the crevice between the jawbone and skull. Alternatively you can place the tip of the index fingers lightly in the ear (this is not as anatomically correct but can give you a stronger sensory input).
- With your awareness climb up your neck spine until you reach the place in between your fingers.
- Allow your jaw to soften and imagine your head balancing on the two tiny cups of the atlas bone (the 1st cervical vertebra) either side of your spinal cord.
- Sense the small rocking chair protrusions of bone at the bottom of your skull. Invite the muscles of the neck to do less and become more aware of the balance and poise inherent within that top joint.
- Take the arms away from the ears before they begin to tire or tighten!
- Expand your awareness to the whole of your body and notice how your body is re - organising itself under your head.

2. Turning under head

- *This can be a continuation of the above procedure or can be explored as a separate procedure.*
- Bringing to your awareness the balance and poise of the head on the spine (at the back of the mouth, just underneath the ear lobe), allow the possibility for the length of the spine, weighted with the pelvis at the far end, to dangle down from the head. Not only the spine and pelvis though, but also the ribcage, the arms and the legs. As if you were a marionette suspended from your head with all the other moving parts dangling and flowing out underneath you.

- Maintain a forward gaze of the head without over fixing the eyes and a gentle jaw.
- Turn your body so that it rotates, turns , pivots underneath your head. The feet need to move from their forward facing position for this and will slide and turn to the right and left as your body turns in the same direction.
- Let the movement happen with a light and easy tempo, swivelling your whole body underneath your head until the sense of your body being easily underneath your head flows into your awareness.

3. Walking backwards

- *Again this can either follow on from the above or be a separate procedure.*
- With a gentle jaw, a sense of balance of your head on top of your spine and a neck that is doing less, extend your awareness to your back which is opening out into the space behind you.
- Maintain a balance of weight between both feet and bend one knee forward, sending it into the space in front while allowing your back to open into the space behind.
- Roll the weight into the ball of the foot to experience the width of the foot widening and folding, the ankle opening up at the front and the heel lifting.
- Sense the space between the crown of your head and the soles of your feet as well as behind your back.
- Take a small step backwards, the weight moving from the ball of your foot and spreading back into your heel. Your weight will already be moving out of the other foot.
- Experience the weight lightening through this foot and leg as the knee bends and again you move into your back as you take another small step backwards.
- Continue to take a few small steps backwards until you feel your awareness opening into your back.
- Then begin to walk forwards from your back.