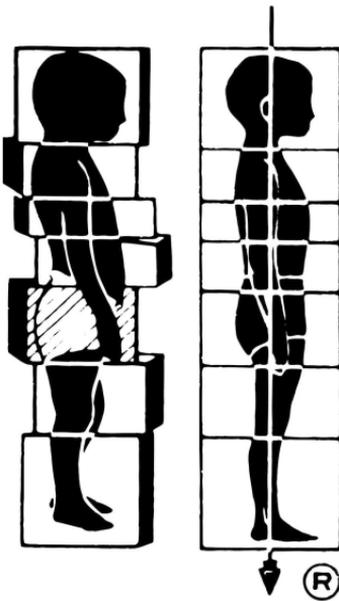


The CoreWalking Resource Guide



by Jonathan FitzGordon

CoreWalking Resource Guide

Welcome to the CoreWalking collection of things we like. This report will include information about shoes, bodyworkers and exercise toys.

We love all three of these categories. You can read my many blog posts about all of them at www.corewalking.com.

When I began the journey to understand my body I knew nothing about the subjects I write about below. The start of my yoga practice at thirty-two were my first steps but things kicked into gear three years later as I recovered from a series of knee surgeries.

Before that I had very little awareness of my body at all. Exercise wasn't my thing.

Growing up I owned one pair of sneakers that I wore all the time and a pair of shoes that sat in my closet for special occasions that were few and far between. The sneakers—Converse—that I put on in the morning when I woke up and took off at night when I went to sleep. There was no thought of taking them off when I was home, let alone going barefoot.

I never had a massage growing up and I had heard of, but didn't really know, what Rolfing was. The awakening to the idea that I had a body that required

maintenance coincided with the beginning of my yoga practice.

Now I proselytize endlessly about the need to learn anatomy and get to know your body. I believe with all my heart that knowing how your body works and exercising it in a way that helps you age gracefully is something you can't live without.

Our intention with this booklet was to gather together an overview of some of the tools we use to build a better body. I think if I had something like this when I started out on this journey it might have been a little smoother.

Baby Needs A New Pair Of Shoes

As I mentioned earlier I grew up wearing one pair of sneakers. Chuck Taylor Converse All-Stars, black high top. When they wore out I got a new pair. In retrospect I am pretty sure that I was lucky to like Chucks as they had no arch support and probably made my feet stronger.

Though to be honest I tried on a pair a few years ago and didn't like them at all. But that's me, and everything I report in this booklet is my opinion (of which there are many) and nothing more.



One of my strongest shoe opinions is the need to own lots of them. That is really the point of this section. You can't own or wear too many.

I try to wear three or four different pairs of shoes each day. Working mostly from home and having a dog that needs walking, gives me a ready context for changing in and out of shoes.

As of this writing I have more than fifteen pairs of shoes, wear most of them, and would have many more if I didn't have wife looking over my shoulder.

The advantage to wearing multiple pairs of shoes

is adaptation. The more your feet change and move differently the better.

What I look for most in a shoe is room for my toes to move. A tight heel with an open toe box is my preferred structure

When it comes to shoes it is a matter of fit and all feet are different. I have two favorite shoe companies because they both, in different respects, fit my feet perfectly.



Ecco shoe brand fits the tight heel box / open toe model perfectly. I wear a number of their boots and while it has always taken me a while to break them in, they last for years and years of wear and tear.

Their sneakers are very different and other than they first pair of their sneakers that I owned, which they then discontinued, all their sneaker models are too long and thin in a sort of European style.

For sneakers Merrells fit my feet like a glove which must be why the line I wear comes in



Merrell Road Glove

three styles—the Road Glove, Trail Glove and Vapor Glove. I like and wear them all but have a soft spot for the Vapor Glove which is the closest thing I have



Merrell Trail Glove

found to barefoot while wearing a shoe.

For me the goal is, outside of winter, which is when I wear my Ecco's, to be as minimal as possible. I want my feet to feel the ground.

People often ask me about the Vibram Five Fingers, which as far as I know began life as a boat shoe, which is why they are so rubberized. The rubber uppers and toes don't appeal to me because they don't breathe and therefore can make your feet stink.



Merrell Vapor Glove

But all of my Merrill sneakers and many other brands as well, have Vibram soles which I think are awesome.

Also I want to add a note on a walking shoe that I love but have always been wary of. MBT (Massai Balance Technology) is, honestly, my walking



program in a shoe. The first time you put them on you will likely find yourself exactly where I want you when standing well.

Maybe the second time as well. But before long your old patterns will likely creep back in. What that comes down to is shoes can't teach you to walk.

Manipulate Me Please

Bodywork as a category is very broad. The types of bodywork I will write about here vary wildly but all move you towards the same end—a healthy body that is both supple and strong.

There are many ways to achieve some semblance of this supple and strong body type and I think the more of them you can experience the better.

The reality is that for many people resources are a serious impediment and I wish there was an answer for that dilemma. I think these are all excellent self-care options and are all a wonderful compliment to the CoreWalking Program.

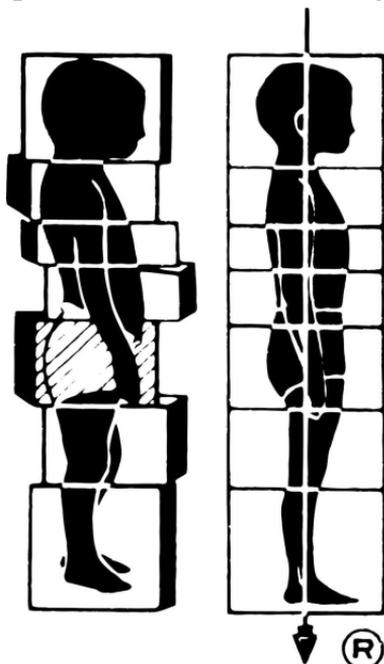
While I love all of the practices I will mention below and many others, the first two, Rolfing and Network Spinal Analysis are particularly near and dear to my heart.

I love and appreciate Rolfing enough to have named my daughter after the creator of Rolfing, Dr. Ida Rolf.

And I can't speak highly enough about Network Spinal Analysis, or Network Chiropractic. I consider my chiropractor to be my doctor and I see her every six weeks or two months for maintenance and I hope to keep that up forever.

I will let these practices speak for themselves:

Rolfing Structural Integration, named after its founder, Dr. Ida P. Rolf, is a form of bodywork that reorganizes the connective tissues, called fascia, that permeate the entire body.



More than fifty years ago, Dr. Rolf recognized that the body is inherently a system of seamless networks of tissues rather than a collection of separate parts. These connective tissues surround, support and penetrate all of the muscles, bones, nerves and organs. Rolfing Structural Integration works on this web-like complex of connective tissues to release

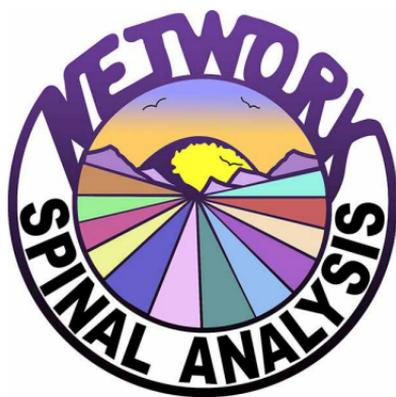
realign and balance the whole body, thus potentially resolving discomfort, reducing compensations and alleviating pain. Rolfing SI aims to restore flexibility, revitalize your energy and leave you feeling more comfortable in your body.

Essentially, the Rolfing process enables the body to regain the natural integrity of its form, thus enhancing postural efficiency and your freedom of movement.

Rolfing Structural Integration has the ability to dramatically alter a person's posture and structure. Rolfing Structural Integration can potentially resolve discomfort, release tension and alleviate pain. Rolfing SI aims to restore flexibility, revitalize your energy and leave you feeling more comfortable in your body. The genius of the work rests on Dr. Rolf's insight that the body is more at ease and functions most effectively when its structure is balanced in gravity.⁽¹⁾

Network Spinal Analysis is a safe, gentle and efficacious approach to health and wellness for anyone regardless of age, or condition of health.

Network Spinal Analysis teaches the brain and body how to connect and release stored stress and tension; transform the body's stored tension that may appear as illness and disease into fuel to further the healing process; and to awaken to a greater sense of personal and interpersonal peace, safety, and ease.



NSA uses very gentle touch contacts, applied at Spinal Gateways and certain contact points on the body, generally along the spine. These gentle contacts help the brain to connect more effectively with the

spine and body. The light touch stimulates areas of ease within the body, allowing that ease to spread. The more that peace and ease spreads throughout the body the more your brain and body can work together. This will help to unlock the source of problems or concerns and allow transformation to occur. The NSA system has been shown to help people with conditions ranging from back pain to post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and infertility, as well as many more, and studies have validated NSA care as a way to predictably enhance wellness and quality of life across the board.

Network Spinal Analysis was first developed in the early 1980's by Dr. Donald Epstein. Network is utilized by thousands of practitioners around the world and has been studied in several major universities both in the United States and internationally for its dramatic and impressive health and wellness contributions.⁽²⁾

Acupuncture is a method of encouraging the body to promote natural healing and to improve functioning. This is done by inserting needles and applying heat or electrical stimulation at very precise acupuncture points.

The classical Chinese explanation is that channels of energy run in regular patterns through the body and over its surface. These energy channels, called

meridians, are like rivers flowing through the body to irrigate and nourish the tissues. An obstruction in the movement of these energy rivers is like a dam that backs up in others.

The meridians can be influenced by needling the acupuncture points; the acupuncture needles unblock the obstructions at the dams, and reestablish the regular flow through the meridians. Acupuncture treatments



can therefore help the body's internal organs to correct imbalances in their digestion,

absorption, and energy production activities, and in the circulation of their energy through the meridians.

The modern scientific explanation is that needling the acupuncture points stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord, and brain. These chemicals will either change the experience of pain, or they will trigger the release of other chemicals and hormones which influence the body's own internal regulating system.

The improved energy and biochemical balance produced by acupuncture results in stimulating the body's natural healing abilities, and in promoting physical and emotional well-being.⁽³⁾

Pilates is a physical fitness system developed in the early 20th century by the Greek German-born Joseph Pilates whose father was a prize-winning gymnast from Greece and his mother a naturopath. He studied both Eastern and Western forms of exercise including yoga.

Pilates is especially practiced in the United States and the United Kingdom (where he lived and taught early stages of his method). As of 2005, there were 11 million people practicing the discipline regularly and 14,000 instructors in the United States.



In his book *Return to Life through Contrology*, Joseph Pilates presents his method as the art of controlled movements, which should look and feel like a workout (not a therapy) when properly manifested. If practiced with consistency, Pilates improves flexibility, builds strength and develops control and endurance in the whole human body.

It puts emphasis on alignment, breathing, developing a strong powerhouse, and improving coordination and balance. Pilates' system allows for different exercises to be modified in range of difficulty from beginner to advanced or to any other level, and also in terms of the instructor and practitioner's specific goals and/or limitations. Intensity can be increased over time as the body conditions and adapts to the exercises.⁽⁴⁾

MELT Method® (MELT) is a self-treatment technique that helps people get out and stay out of chronic pain in just ten minutes a day. When pain becomes chronic, the body's natural state of stability and balance declines.

When a body isn't stable, it can't be efficiently mobile. By learning how to MELT, you can learn to actively partake in decreasing stuck stress daily so it doesn't accumulate and cause symptoms that sap your vitality and energy.

With MELT, you can learn to assess your body's stability system before your body produces pain signals to alert you something is wrong. MELT was developed by manual therapist Sue Hitzmann as homework for her clients to empower them to actively partake in their healing regimen.



This saved her clients time and money and became the inspiration that brought MELT to the masses.⁽⁵⁾

A Boy And His Toys

Exercise happens for me in an assortment of ways. I practice yoga and stretch daily but over the course of my day I like to have toys handy that I can make use of—more to move than exercise. But all of these “toys” can be used for entire workouts.

Bosu, or BOth Sides Up, is a killer all-purpose piece of equipment. It is small but not so small that it doesn't



take up some space. Space can be a real issue when it comes to how many of the exercise toys one wants to collect.

The Bosu is effective in both iterations. I tend to use it most with the hard side up for squatting and balance work.

The flip side, or ball side, up is also great for developing balance. Standing balances such as tree are challenging and super fun.

Balance is far from the only use for the Bosu—there are an endless variety of core positions to be found from crunches to spinal extensions as well as oblique and side muscle work.

A most excellent piece of equipment.

The **Fitter First Bongo Board** is a gentle yet warming exercise that is a pure balance tool of the finest order.

I have been balancing on mine for years and I try to do 20-30 minute session while watching TV or listening to music.



The Fitter First Bongo Board is an exciting extreme balance-training tool. The unique double ball bearing and tapered design of the roller allows for not only end-to-end movement, but also allows for heel-to-toe rocking and rotation for increased difficulty. The Functional Bongo Balance Board will:

- Enhance core strength and stability
- Improve Balance and proprioception
- Increase coordination and responsiveness
- Heighten sense of body awareness
- Improve sports performance⁽⁶⁾

Chinese Meditation Balls, or Baoding Balls, named for the city in which they are most often produced, date back to the Ming Dynasty between the 14th and 17th centuries.



Functional exercise appeals to me to know end. It is why I always have a tennis ball near my desk to roll under my foot and my meditation balls are equally close.

The basic exercise is to roll the balls around in your palm while maintaining contact with the balls. As you improve your dexterity the balls will rotate faster and eventually not touch.

Learning to rotate the balls in both directions as well as work both hands with equally dexterity can be a challenge. When you are ready to go to the next level turn your hand upside down.

These exercises will help your hands and wrists a great deal especially if you spend a lot of time working at a desk. Keep your meditation balls nearby and use them often.

Pull up Bar — Well, I can't do pull-ups. This is one of the major limitations I have — in a body that is pretty willing to accommodate my desires. Pull ups are about one



particular muscle — the latissimus dorsi —and mine barely exists. It is long and weak and I have been trying to turn them on for many a year. And of late... they might be responding.

Since I can't actually do pull ups I use this handy little add-on to help me make them happen. The massive rubber band ties to the bar in a loop and hangs down for me to step into it.



I can then use it as a spring to do assisted pull ups which is the best I can do. And they feel great. Though to be honest, my kids use it more and a bouncy seat, and I use the pull-up bar for simply hanging more than anything else.

I am a big fan of hanging.

And finally, an old standby that covers so much ground...



The Exercise Ball is a multi-tasking machine.

- Great for a desk chair. I prefer to use it without the frame with wheels that they often sit in.
- Awesome for back bending—wheel pose over a ball is a beautifully supported shape and depending on the size of the ball can take you very deep.
- Amazing core tool in so many ways such as planks and forearm planks with either the hands or feet on the ball.
- Finally, give this one a try. It is a lot harder than it might sound.
- Sit on the ball with the feet on the floor and try to lift them up and balance. Good luck.

(1) Rolf Institute for Structural Integration

(2) Illumare Wellness

(3) American Academy of Medical Acupuncture

(4) Wikipedia

(5) The Melt Method

(6) Fitter First