



The Great Deception

training, rehabilitation and the Axis Syllabus menace
a personal viewpoint

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Working with the human body, people through the ages come to similar if not identical conclusions:

All activity, whether fine-motor or large scale, requires some endurance, some flexibility and some strength

Exercise should support target activity

Strength and flexibility need to be balanced against coordination

Moderate tone facilitates modulation

Repetition builds specific coordinations and will sculpt the body in a specific manner

Improvisation allows adaptation to the unpredictable

Rhythm and musical interpretation allow a more accurate sense of time and depth perception

Different kinds of symmetry are useful for various states, static to dynamic

Good teachers adapt their methods to the unique learning curves, individual limitations and strengths of their students.

Excessive solicitation and social pressure will likely inhibit.

The absence of challenges can weaken and make the student injury prone.

Health is never one-sided, and any imbalance has an emotional, environmental, histological and/or bio-mechanical aspect, and might also be diet or life-style related.

Acquiescence to the inherent spiral trajectories, and figure eight patterns in the body's design and movement capabilities are expressed in training protocols and preparatory exercises in a similar manner the world over.

Even though flawed at the outset, physical practices are important, because they embody many assumptions or policies a society has towards the body. The wiser the practice, the more likely it

is to transfer a strong legacy of skills, preparation for a wide array of potential scenarios, and the more it will have in common with other similarly wise approaches.

Where rigid local concepts about the human body have been repressive, knowledge of how what and why have disappeared for a while, resurfacing as older sources were accessed. Sometimes, knowledge of the body has been discouraged but cannot be suppressed for long, for the simple reason that all people are in possession of the living hardware. Where this suppression has occurred, for example in many industrialized countries, it is now normal that most people never train, and certainly never dance, not even recreationally, which used to be standard for practically all peoples the world over.

In these countries, forgotten knowledge that used to be common is often subject to proprietary battles for a market share in the population's ignorance. And so it is that we see hundreds of trademarked approaches and methods touted for their ability to rehabilitate injury and/or lend the client strength, speed, correct posture, flexibility, health, even sexual prowess or emotional and spiritual "balance".

While I would cautiously allow that these claims might be true, I surmise or rather suspect that the reason we can expect many of these results, is because all of the methods are in reality drawing from the same source of information. In other words, they do not differ from each other substantially, they only vary slightly in protocol and procedure.

I also think that the living body's own will to heal itself and survive should receive more credit than it does from the practitioners of the various approaches. A living organism struggles to right what is wrong, and mostly only needs encouragement to do the work itself. Knowing this, we can attribute most of the healing process to the patient, rather than this or that method. Often, it is enough for a person to start moving, or at least to start out towards the body-worker of their choice for them to begin to feel better.

There are, of course, specific treatments for specific ailments. My observation is more that it is the causes of the ailments and/or nature of the treatments that are similar in principle. There are also notably better or worse ways of responding to a need or ailment.

A word to the role of science in dispelling or affirming the claims made by the various methods. The scientific method is based on query. Experimentation is supposed to set out to disprove the presumptions of the investigators. If this method is rigorous, the results of the investigation can yield fairly objective findings. The devices or methods used for testing a theory might obscure some relevant data, making the reconsideration and renewed testing of previous findings with different or better methodology an imperative.

Sometimes the test protocols are poor. Although diligent scientists usually figure out where the procedures were wrong with time, erroneous results take in many unsuspecting innocents. Even though the truth will out, confidence in the scientific method and in science in general is undermined when scientists flub or fake the results of their experiments. The same goes for when politicians make presumptions based on preliminary scientific findings to shape laws or when industry leaders use scientific sounding jargon to sell a "healthy" product that may have undisclosed hazards. The possible contribution a method might make to general health and well being could be damaged as well. Real, independent, disinterested science, however, can peel away layers of erroneous presumption, revealing the causes of unnecessary stress and

disease, providing the basis for mitigating strategies. Perhaps more to the point, science can provide the guidelines for developing superior technology.

The Axis Syllabus International Research Community is one such independent initiative to test and retest presumptions about the preparation, training and rehabilitation of the human body. To date, this initiative has placed several such presumptions under the sceptic's spotlight, and has brought supporting evidence that, if taken seriously by the various industries in question, would cause a marked change in terms and methodology. The AS compendium is an archive of answered or posited questions. The AS community sponsors the license to ask questions and reconsider what is told to us by ostensibly well-meaning elders and colleagues.



The Axis Syllabus Menace

Even after 20 years of existence, the Axis Syllabus International Research Community still suffers from image distortion in the dance world. People outside the community presume that we judge ballet, yoga, and fitness training traditions; that we think these traditions should either be eliminated or partially dismantled. Presumably, misrepresentation by some of our members or students plays a role in building and maintaining this distortion. However, part of the negative impression that dancers and leaders of the dance world have of us can be attributed to the real threat that we pose, not to the teachers per say, but to the persistence of certain training traditions by explaining mysteries and debunking lies and myths. We have pointed out that ignorance of the body's structure and limits, as well as the misuse of power and authority over young people has proven itself a social liability.

This notwithstanding, the various forms of moving all represent valid somatic research, and should not be discontinued. Their legacy should be conserved and their evolution guaranteed. A logical way to do this is to make sure that knowledge continues to be acquired and integrated into the various practices.

Personally, I am careful to state at the beginning of each workshop that we (the ASIRC) are not out to eliminate any styles of moving, nor are we trying to inhibit or dissuade people from attempting potentially dangerous activities of any kind. I state that the AS is merely a reference of new and old technical specs on the body's operating parameters, which might support anyone doing anything to mitigate the risks of the chosen endeavor. In many cases, knowing the information in the AS offers a possible technological advance over current methods.

Some risks cannot be mitigated, no matter what the strategy. Injury is the logical result. In this case, it is the right of the individual to be fully informed of these risks, so that they are able to truly exercise the power of consent. Our own fieldwork tests suggest that there is no "wrong" movement or position; there are a few movements that are more, and many that are less appropriate to a context. The appraisal of a context must include the intended activity itself and the external as well as the internal conditions of the body performing the activity. Knowing what these options are, or at least being able to surmise what they might be is the most obvious tactic for avoiding injury while potentially taking on more risk. The best kind of training considers a wide range of applications outside the class or training space. However, it is also very likely, that no single training approach will prepare us for every circumstance. Every training approach

proposes unique variations of human movement patterns. Repetition of these patterns might allow us to acquire grace and power... but mostly when executing these patterns. Although each pattern contains information that can be applied to other patterns, the very acquisition of these habits is likely to inhibit us from choosing to move in a different way when the context demands it.

The existence of the AS and the ASIRC are indeed a threat. But not to training science, and not to the general legitimacy of the various approaches. The AS threatens to overturn marketplace dynamics. The collection and wide distribution of knowledge about the human body makes the individual student less susceptible to indoctrination, more suspicious of a "hard sell" that promises miracles. The awareness of the utility of regularly altering habits makes them less likely to adhere to a particular teacher or approach for life, even if that teacher demonstrates informed competence. The unquestioning acceptance of authority is weakened by the AS. This is a general effect of knowledge in all social instances. The perspective afforded by this knowledge, is that when we subtract the nonsense and ignorance, no one training approach is more valid than another, but none of them are enough on their own. This perspective places pressure on the individual teacher to study and widen the scope of their practice, as well as listen and work with their students' needs and wishes. More and more, with the advance of proactive public education, teachers are under pressure to be creative and get informed, or be sidelined, even after decades of leadership.

That's uncomfortable, certainly. But the good news is the potential recognition of a teacher's unique contribution to the ongoing need for methods that create useful habits and challenge them at the same time. Once it is a social habit to question habit, teachers and project leaders need no longer feel threatened when a positive change is integrated. And best of all, training can be tailored to suit the needs of the trainee. Potential dangers can be recognized and addressed without fuss. This means less injury, less wasted time practicing irrelevant exercises, and ultimately less social risk for the teacher, as the responsibility of the student to consider, choose and integrate relieves the teacher of the burden of proving their thesis, or suffering the blame for injuries when they impose.

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websites:

freyfaust.org
axissyllabus.org
senseingin.com

a few videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0Jy-UcRGh4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBzbptTHCgo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWtWPZQQy38>

Facebook pages abound. Take a tour of your internet resources!

SOME QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Is there such a thing as "optimal" movement?
Is there such a thing as "natural" or "unnatural" movement?
Are human movement patterns natural, or habitual?
If the spinal sections have different shapes and functions, is it wise to expect the same movement possibilities from each vertebra?

Should everyone have three curves in their spines, or should we all have a "J" shaped spine?
Should the tail-bone be "tucked" under (lumbar flexion) when moving or bending forwards?
Is there a fitness, yoga or dance training system that is good for everyone?
Are mono-planar stretches or movements useful, safe and practical?
Is the function of a muscle to create force to move the body?
Can muscles push?
Are our bones the foundation of our "structure"?
Does isolated muscle training prevent injury and support coordination?
Is more flexibility always good?
Does stretching make muscles longer?
Is parallel stance synonymous with correct posture?
Is parallel walking the healthiest strategy?
Should the knees bend towards the big toe...the second toe...third toe?
Center of the heel to the middle of the big toe side ball, and the center of the little toe side ball...is this triangle functional for walking or running?
Is the body's "center" really three fingers below the naval?
Is this "center" the same thing as the center of gravity, or center of mass?
Is this center the most proximal point?
Is there such a thing as a "core unit"?
Does a constant contraction of the so-called "core" support the spine?
Are "crunches" good for posture?
Does the symmetrical use of arms and legs support the learning of complex coordinations?
Does learning to hold still positions help to execute dynamic motion... Or vice versa?
Does doing slow movement help to execute dynamic motion?
Does dynamic motion help with still positioning?
Is more strength always good?
Is "belly breathing" the best way to breathe?
Should the breath cycle be regular?
Does "alignment" in the human body have something to do with a straight line?
What do movement teachers mean by "impulse"?
What do movement teachers mean by "moving from"?
What do movement teachers mean by an "open" joint?
What is meant by "release" or "contraction" in the Graham style?
What is meant by "release" in "Release Technique"?
Movement teachers often advise the student to make "space" in the joints. Is this possible?
What does "space" mean when applied to spinal posture or joints in general?
Does cervical flexion increase "blood flow"?
What do movement teachers mean when they refer to "energy"?
Is there a separation between the mind and the body?
Is there a difference between the physical and the "energy" body?
If our bodies suggest certain ways of moving naturally, why do we do otherwise?
Can we draw conclusions for adult posture from babies?
Do babies "know" how to move correctly without instruction?