
PT HEALTH UPDATE

Kern & Associates Physical Therapy Wellness Classes & Yoga

The Alexander Technique

“Our human upright posture is a unique accomplishment....a most delicate poise and balance, an equation of forces brought about by an interplay of the sensory and motor mechanisms, by which all muscular effort is practically eliminated. The unique quality of the whole performance lies in this reduction of effort” W.H.M. Carrington -
Teacher of the Alexander Technique since 1939

THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

As people recognize the importance of proactive approaches to health care, it is helpful to learn a practical method of performing everyday activities with more ease and less stress which can often result in injury. Through self awareness, the Alexander Technique helps one to let go of tensions that lead to aches and pains affecting our musculoskeletal and neurological systems. One learns to retrain body motions and stop unhelpful responses, movements and postures which are a result of reacting habitually and unconsciously. This is extremely helpful in addressing chronic conditions as well as more acute, traumatic injuries. With the Alexander Technique, individuals learn how to use the body more efficiently, avoiding stresses on bones, joints and internal organs.

WHAT IS THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE?

The Alexander Technique is an intelligent way to solve common movement problems by training a person to notice their movement, release compression and move with ease and expansion. This skill will help prevent injuries and enhance performance. It is also a re-education in learning how to use your body appropriately during the course of your daily activities. The result is the reduction of stresses on

bones, joints, and internal organs.

The primary principle of the Alexander Technique is balancing the head on the neck thus helping to coordinate movement of the spine and body, resulting in greater ease and freedom. Through light touch and directed movement, the Alexander instructor teaches a person to sense and identify injurious movements and habits, to find a way to stop these patterns and then move with greater ease and support. This new opportunity for poise and movement effectively changes how one feels and performs and may prevent further injury.

“...the most valuable knowledge we can possess is that of the use and functioning of the self, and of the means whereby the human individual may progressively raise the standard of his health and general well-being” F.M. Alexander

To learn more about the Alexander Technique and other wellness classes, contact us at (310) 315-9711.

WELLNESS CLASSES ARE GOING ON NOW!

BEFORE YOU HURT YOURSELF... ...EDUCATE YOURSELF!

- Lower Back Class
- Feldenkrais™
- Yoga
- Sports Injury Prevention
- Pilates Mat
- Balance Class
- Chair Aerobics
- Alexander Technique

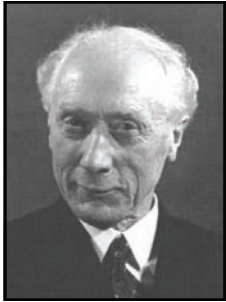
All classes are designed and taught by
licensed professionals

Call TODAY to sign up!
(310) 315-9711

www.kernpt.com

WHO WAS ALEXANDER?

Frederick Matthias Alexander, (1869-1955), was an Australian actor who would frequently lose his voice while reciting. As doctors could not find anything physically wrong with him, he reasoned that he must be doing something while speaking which caused this condition. Through self-observation and experimentation, he discovered the crucial importance of the relationship between the head, neck and spine in movement. He was able to restore full use of his voice and developed a way to teach this to others to use in their daily lives.



WHO BENEFITS FROM THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE?

Since the Alexander Technique is a method of self-awareness and self-care, anyone who wishes to change poor postural or movement habits can benefit. One does not have to be disabled or injured to benefit. Anyone who wants to improve performance in athletics, music, dance, theater arts or just daily activities can benefit from learning a more efficient way of moving.



WHAT CONDITIONS CAN BENEFIT FROM THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE?

Spine Pathology - This technique works with how we move during our daily activities. If there are unchangeable factors such as disease or structure, the soothing gentle-hands on approach can carefully guide the student. This enables the student to reach full potential for function and decrease the pain.

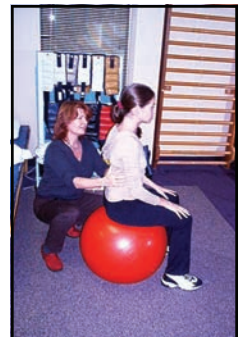
Arthritis - With the help of a skilled teacher, the student will slowly regain mobility and increase range of motion in the joints. The Alexander Technique teacher helps you to see what in your movement style causes joint compression. With this knowledge the instructor can re-educate your overall coordination to allow your torso muscles to support rather than compress your joints. With this reduced compression you can increase strength and flexibility to function with less pain.

Chronic Pain - Chronic pain is any disorder that lingers beyond the normal healing time. In the spine this is usually anything more than 6-8 weeks. In other joints depending on the cause of the pain, the time may be longer or shorter; nonetheless, the condition manifests itself with increased muscle tension, impaired movement messages to the brain and reduced movement in general. The Alexander Technique can not cure chronic pain; however, it can help reduce stress which feeds into the chronic pain cycle. It also helps movement efficiency so that daily activities can be performed with a surprising degree of relief.



Asthma and other breathing disorders - Those that suffer from asthma know the panic that arises with the fear that the next breath will not be achieved. The neck muscles tighten, shoulders rise to the ears and abdominal muscles contract. These are all elements of the startle pattern. Alexander Technique teachers can guide the student to halt the startle pattern and calm the nervous system allowing for easier balance in the body and mind. Expanding space in the torso and learning how to breathe can help anyone who wants to improve breathing capacity.

Neurological Conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis and Stroke - These problems are a result of damage to the neurons either in the spinal cord or brain and will not be cured by movement therapy. Instructors in the Alexander Technique can, however, help patients with these disorders by improving balance and overall functioning through increased awareness of the body in activity. Teaching focused thinking in activity allows the nervous system to calm and reorganize. This results in more ease of movement with activities of daily living.

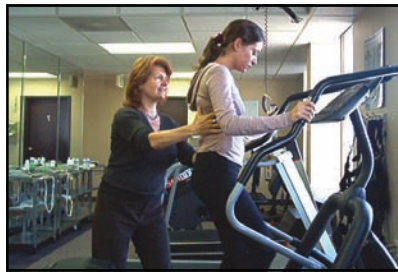


Repetitive Strain and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome - Often these problems are made worse by incorrect postural support and excess joint compression. The Alexander Technique teaches how to eliminate strain and to perform necessary activities with more ease

and comfort by improving posture and efficiency of movement

Pregnancy - With pregnancy your body's center changes continuously. It is very easy to develop harmful postural habits. The baby's growth limits the mother's internal space and her organs become compressed causing digestive problems and shortness of breath. With an Alexander's help, one can improve balance and co-ordination and strengthen pelvic muscles which will help decrease the risk of low back pain and allow for more internal space for the mother and baby. After delivery, the continued use of the skills learned from an Alexander teacher will help the mother better manage the constant lifting and carrying that comes with parenthood.

Scoliosis and Kyphosis - Scoliosis is the curvature of the spine from side to side making one shoulder or hip higher than the other. This can be a functional scoliosis which is less prominent and can be managed with exercise or progressive scoliosis that may continue to progress, but will experience less discomfort with training. Kyphosis is the increase in the body curve from front to back. This may manifest itself as the appearance of rounded shoulders, forward head and rounded low back. With training this can improve dramatically. The Alexander student learns to move up and out of the curves enhancing ease of movement.



Stress - Who among us has not had to deal with life stresses? Through experience we all know that when we experience stress, our neck gets tight and our body becomes contracted. We unconsciously hold our breath or breathe shallowly. If we do not unwind from this contraction we stay in a state of constant emergency. Most people who are "Type A" personalities (those who are high achievers) particularly experience this and it takes a toll on our body. The Alexander Techniques offers a set of body/mind skills that helps release contracted muscles and calms the nervous system.

HOW IS THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER APPROACHES?

This technique gives you a mode of self-management that allows for independence in maintaining your health. With this method you learn to soothe your nervous system, release tight muscles and balance your structure. This technique does not give you a set of exercises such as those you might learn in yoga or Pilates or with a trainer in the gym. It works by increasing your awareness of your own movement habits so you can exercise intelligently with ease and efficiency.

WHY LEARN THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE?

The interaction between mind and body is a recognized medical phenomenon which has been applied to alter heart rate, blood pressure, skin temperature, and brain waves. The Alexander Technique utilizes this same mind-body connection to achieve improved conscious control of the neuromusculoskeletal system. It also employs your "thinking" to change patterns of muscle use, strength, and balance through the nervous system. As you consistently move in a manner much closer to optimal use of the human frame and nervous system, you experience strengthening of weak support muscles and are able to perform daily activities in a balanced and efficient manner over time.

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them"

Some of our ongoing services

- Sports Injury
- Women's Health
- Incontinence prevention
- Post-Op Rehabilitation
- Pilates
- Pediatrics Physical Therapy
- Community Seminars

Let us to take care of your physical therapy needs.

Our therapists are available to speak to your organization, club, or school.

Call for more information

(310) 315-9711

www.kernpt.com

KERN & ASSOCIATES 2901 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 440

Santa Monica, CA 90403

www.kernpt.com



PHYSICAL THERAPY