

# The Alexander Technique



***"You can't tell a person what to do, because  
the thing you have to do is a sensation"***

F.M. Alexander

The Alexander Technique, before anything else, is a "sensation", a new feeling.

Alexander's discoveries are all about our habits, all about finding out what we are already doing to ourselves.

The primary premise behind Alexander work is that if something, let's say a certain movement, feels uncomfortable it will be because we might be doing something to make that movement feel uncomfortable. The Alexander teacher will then guide you to find out what it is you might be doing as you are moving, become friends with the pain, if there is any; get to know the details of that uncomfortable feeling – and eventually choose for a different strategy of performing that same movement with the least of tension and effort. As Alexander always used to say, "The right thing does

itself." Most of us always want a little bit of something. And the something is our habit. That is why Alexander work is about unlearning. It is about increasing an awareness of yourself so you can discover, right under your nose, the things you are doing that are causing you harm.

What the Alexander work isn't is a therapy or counseling technique. Nor is it a treatment-although it will make you feel better. You are a student, not a patient and you are going to a lesson.

Alexander's lessons are like getting behind your eyeballs and seeing how you are seeing. You have to stop, make space in your mind, consider alternatives and make a thoughtful, wakeful response to your problem.

This learning process can have many benefits, including

- **More free and comfortable movement,**
- **Relief from strain, chronic pain, and excess tension,**
- **Improved posture and alignment,**
- **Easier and healthier breathing,**
- **Increased vitality and strength,**

and most importantly, the development of skills that can be used to change habits that interfere with optimal functioning.

The fundamental improvement in the reliability of sensory appreciation/feedback that occurs with Alexander Technique lessons can have positive, significant effects on a wide range of behaviors and skills, including the ability to learn. In my practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine, I find it to be a powerful tool to prevent injuries from re-occurring.

The Technique can be very helpful for people dealing with chronic pain, excessive stress, or injury. It is also used by performing artists to enhance performing techniques.

Alexander Technique can be summarized quite simply: it is a **"practical technique that interrupts the habitual reaction to a certain stimulus allowing you to choose how to respond to a given situation as opposed to just reacting from learned physical habitual patterns of behavior"**.