

BIOENERGETIC EXERCISES NEWSLETTER

Healing the Body/Mind split

November 15, 2007

GROUNDING

Take 20 minutes and try these exercises

Bioenergetically, grounding refers to feeling the free movement of energy through your body from your feet to your head. To be grounded is to feel your contact with the ground, to feel supported by the ground and through this, feel support for oneself. With a sense of stability in the world, we can then claim the ground we stand upon if we are threatened or challenged. From this grounded position, we can create choices that allow room for the other person.

Lying flat of the floor - first, let yourself feel the support of the floor while you breathe gently. Let the floor support you. How much can you give in to that support? Now stretch your right leg by trying to make it longer than your left. Relax. Stretch your left leg in similar fashion. Continue to alternate right and left for about two minutes.

Knees to chest - continue to lie on the floor. Bring both knees to your chest. Push your right leg out, then left leg out while bringing your left back to your chest as though you were riding a bike. Continue for two minutes.

Knees to chest, rocking - continue to lie on the floor. With both knees drawn to your chest, rock back and forth to almost a sitting position. Play with this, trying different speeds, size of arc, side-to-side etc.

The above exercises help you ground into your back, to feel "backed up". As you move to grounding in an upright position, you bring with you this increased awareness of support from your body. Feeling this can make it easier to let down into your legs.

Sitting, grab ankles - From a sitting position, legs straight out in front, reach as far down your legs as you can (past those knees now) and hold that position for one minute. Do you want to try two minutes??? Go for it!

Squat, forward bend - squat with your feet flat on the floor. Think how great you look! Slowly straighten your legs by pushing your heels into the floor until you are in a standing position, with your torso hanging forward as though you were trying to touch your toes. Stay for two minutes, remembering to breathe into your belly.

Bear walk - with your feet shoulder width apart, bend forward so your hands can be flat on the floor and walk around the room. Feel the stretch in your legs and back. Notice how people at work look at you differently! Make some bear growls.

Unfolding - move into a crouch, push your feet into the floor and uncurl upwards, pushing your pelvis under your back for support as you move into a standing position. Your head comes up last and you stand in the align position.

Align position - standing with your feet shoulder width apart, balance your weight over the centre of your arch, and find where your centre of balance is. Breathe slowly & deeply, as though breathing into your belly. Imagine your bones balanced on top of each other. You don't have to hold yourself up, your bones do that for you.

This is the basic grounded position in Bioenergetics. Let yourself be aware of your energy moving through your body - you may experience your muscles shaking, you may feel tingling at the surface, you may have the sensation of a stream running through your body. Try to notice **how** you are organizing your body to feel this way. What sensations, emotions, thoughts pass by as you stand in this aligned, grounded position?

Statue of liberty - In a standing position, extend your right arm above your head, pushing the heel of your hand towards the ceiling, elbow slightly bent, and at the same time push your right heel into the floor, knee slightly bent. Breathe into your abdomen. Hold for 30 seconds to one minute. Do the same on the left side. Repeat three times. If your limbs tremble, its O.K., you're not falling apart, just shaking out some chronic tension.

Shoulder shrug - lift your shoulders up to your ears and let them drop (your shoulders that is). Do this at least five times. Imagine stretching all your bones up, then let go ... like you were a marionette. Shape this movement into a bouncing motion, keeping your feet on the floor. This exercise helps you to gently increase your energy, to fill up the space left by letting go of the tension in the previous exercise. This is a "charging" exercise.

These 2 exercises help you make room for more aliveness. Feeling grounded, you can nudge your boundaries, feel their flexibility, encourage yourself to expand, to soak up some of this freed-up energy. Return to the align position. What do you notice? How do you feel differently now? How can you carry this sense of yourself into your day? If you are doing these exercises at night, omit the *Shoulder shrug* - as it is a charging exercise, it can interfere with sleep.