Project: RES-CPT
Marketing/Educating for a Specific Population

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Walk the Walk

By

Melissa A Smith

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The following information is for the 'walkers' of the Sonoran Desert Foothills: my neighbors, most of us older, who walk daily for health and pleasure. It will be presented during an open-house planned for cooler weather that includes food, stretching, and a walk into Cottonwood canyon.

Walking is the best so-called exercise because we recruit more muscles for this activity than most any other. Our goal is to be consciously aware of how walking in *Whole-Body Alignment* changes according to terrain—level ground, uphill, and down—**decreasing flexion, friction, joint degeneration, and thus pain.**

Whole-Body Alignment is from the work of Katy Bowman: young, contemporary goddess, daughter of Minerva (Ok, that's my personal laud) bio mechanist and founder of the *Restorative Exercise Institute TM.* Katy, whose work is well renowned, used blood physics and geometry to develop this science based work with which to mentor us all.

Natural walking is accomplished one leg at a time. The one leg carries the weight of our entire body forward while simultaneously pushing back: ball of foot, calf, hamstrings, and buttock all firing. Our gait is intended to be a posteriorly driven action that propels our body forward onto the next leg. The landing foot prepares with a heel-strike and the process of walking one leg at a time begins again.

Our feet face forward—no waddling—leg muscles elongated, the arms free to swing reciprocally in opposition to our legs. This allows us to walk without lurching side to side, our delicate central nervous system safely inside us as we glide vertically along, our crowning heads towards the sky, and our eyes scanning the horizon.

Flexion of the hips and knees, an acquired habit in walking, can be overridden with healthy gait patterns that originate in mindfulness. This is accomplished by sending a conscious message to activate the backside of our anatomy to fire *electrically* and lengthen, thus, tugging in *nutritious blood* and pumping out *waste* through our lymph system. This is fundamental to the teaching of *Restorative Exercise* in that these qualities of *'flow'* are our allies in **cellular regeneration**.

Why do we need someone—a **coach**—to walk, a natural movement? Just as every writer needs an editor all of us need to have an educated second pair of eyes and hands "thoughtfully" prescribing for us in this modern world where we have overridden natural and reflexive movement. The following expertise formula can guide us in the acquisition of a deliberate practice so that we may 'walk the walk.'

Unconscious Incompetence

Conscious Incompetence

Conscious Competence

Unconscious Competence

FLAT EVEN GROUND GAIT

PURPOSE: Smoothly propel forward.

FEET; Point straight ahead.

Long efficient lever to propel forward. Develops gait from ground up; feet, legs, buttocks, torso, head. Provides base to vertically stack bones which stimulates cells to create bone.

Wear minimalist shoes.
No positive heels.

Frees feet to read the ground in pixels. Callouses = more vascularization = healthy feet.

Heel-strike.

Creates vibration, stimulates bone building, heel engages posterior muscle. Increases strength in gluteal muscle.

Toes are not gripping.

Toes are active in gait and push off = strength & stability.

LEGS: Straight. No bent knees! Hamstrings, lateral Hip, calves and feet fire.

Vertical stacking creates bone density. Decreases friction and heat. (Degeneration).

Don't land on bent knee.

Straight leg increases *flow*, uses muscles intended to ambulate. Decreases knee degeneration.

Motion of femur (upper leg bone) relative to Pelvis. (Like the clacker swings to and fro in a Bell).

Requires hip range of motion, especially extension (to the back side of body), uses more and larger muscles plus burns calories.

ARMS: Reciprocal arm swing.

Have arm swing back actively, passively
Moves forward like a pendulum.

Upper back arm coordinates with pushing back leg.
Push back to move forward.
Allows center of mass to move forward without twisting body.

DOWNHILL GAIT

PURPOSE: To slowly lower body weight.

FEET: Forward.

Protects knees.

LEGS/PELVIS/HIPS: Piston like.
Glide side to side. [Like a Horse's bottom]
[Quadriceps fire eccentrically, not concentrically]

Protects knees.
Mediates downhill momentum and protects knees by not over using quadriceps (muscle group on front of thigh) so knee cap is not drilled into soft tissue causing inflammation.

PELVIS: Sit a little as you descend but don't tuck Pelvis!

Protects back.

ARMS: Forward swing, actively in front of your body.

Balance/stability. Keeps you upright and moderates decent.

UPHILL GAIT

PURPOSE: Lifts body weight up and over.

FEET: Straight ahead.

Front foot: Flexed and planted. (Dorsiflexion)

Protects knee. Assists lift. Active hip extension occurs.

Back foot: Push forefoot down and lift through calf. (Plantar flexion)

Lifts you up with hamstrings.

LEGS: Front leg: Push through planted flat foot with straight Shin (shank). No traveling of knee side to side or forward.

Knee stacked directly over foot protects knee and overworked quadriceps (muscle on top front of thigh).
[Body bears weight of one leg only.]
Uses gluteals (buttock) instead of knee cartilage. Quadriceps are not made to lift us.

Back leg: Push through forefoot (ball) straight up (Plantar flexion)

This lifts our center of mass up and over.

TORSO: Upright vertical, not bent forward.

Uses more muscle mass: Head is upright to scan horizon.
[Bending forward decreases amount of weight lifted and increases strain on joints].

ARMS: Reciprocal.

Actively swing forward, passively back