

Skillful Movement from A Yogic Perspective

1. In my opinion, posture and movement can be effectively evaluated and treated as skill, rather than in terms of strength or flexibility. Strength is a vague concept that is difficult to relate to function.
2. Motor skills can be defined as grounding, centering, stabilizing, extremity extending, spinal lengthening, hinging, and letting go.
3. Integrated motor skills can be defined as supine, prone, sitting, standing, and locomotive gross motor behaviors in a continuum of posture and movement, as seen in everyday life, in activities of daily living, work, play, sport, dance, and yoga. Asana are arbitrary integrated motor skills.
4. Efficiency and utility of gross motor skill is its ultimate performance goal when aesthetics or competition are not the priority.
5. Mindfulness can be defined as the awareness of one's kinesthetic experience. One's interpretation of their sensation can be defined as perception.
6. Intention, as direction through words and imagery, need be precise, elegant, and integrative to be effective.
7. In most cases, one pauses on their inhale and moves gradually into the direction of the pose as they exhale. This allows them to go deeper, into the provocation at the edge of their pose on their exhale.
8. Skill is not too dull nor too tense, in terms of muscle tone.
9. Skillful movement is steady, fluid, graceful, efficient, and functional.
10. The body moves through space, in a combination of the sagittal, frontal and transverse planes in gravity
11. Upright midline postures demand a steady grounding, a neutral center, and a spinal lengthening up into gravity.
12. Grounding through the floor and extending into space is always a combination of the inner and outer spiraling of the extremities, with a predominance of one spiral over the other, depending on the direction of movement.
13. The direction of the poses is initiated and maintained by the tail of rooting through the floor. The physical body moves in the opposite direction to the angle of force through the floor; that is, the tail of the root.
14. All joints glide [sliding in the opposite direction to the roll] in the concave/convex relations from a stable base, with sufficient joint space, softening into the fold of the joint and lengthening along the long side of the joint, preventing impingement or subluxation.
15. Many images direct movement from our centers (chakras), inside outward, along the contours of our bones and soft tissue from a foundation into gravity and the spaces around us.

16. The perineum (1st center) leads the movement of many poses, from root to crown (7th center) through the sushumna in vertical poses. Perineum leads the counter-nutation of the sacrum and all vertebrae in back bends and upright standing poses.