



By Eunice Mooney RMT CLT

Following, is information about “Movement Therapy” to help students of the [Back \(To\) Basics](#) courses more fully understand the concepts on which “Somatics” is based.

Most of the information in this article is taken directly from books and articles I have come across during my ongoing studies on the subject. There are many methods of “Movement Therapy” such as Feldenkrais, Alexander, Gindler, Biosomatics, Mitzvah, to name a few. The course I teach is based on Biosomatics and Mitzvah theory and movements as well as my experience as a Certified Fitness Instructor, and Registered Massage Therapist.

Thomas Hanna, the founder of the Biosomatics method, defined “Somatics” as *“the field which studies the SOMA: namely, the body as perceived from within by first-person perception”*. Our mental and emotional states, all of life’s experiences, and our thought patterns contribute to our physical state and vice versa. We cannot separate one from the other.

Hanna uses the term *“autonomous human being”* to emphasize that we are self-correcting, self-regulating human beings. Movement is one way to activate this ability to self-correct. Greater self-control is gained by means of greater sensory awareness (greater awareness of how we move and how we feel from the inside).

As we age, our loss of awareness possibly from taking our bodies for granted, and our alienation from our bodies as we lose the ability to feel, can be so extreme that we continuously injure ourselves without even knowing it - for example, when we habitually hold ourselves in certain ways, as in locking our knees, we prematurely wear out the knee joints (arthritis) and distort the balance of all the joints and organs of the body (more arthritis, sore back, neck, feet, diseases). The strain is there and taking its toll, yet it is as if the sensory apparatus in our brain has become distorted and does not register the strain. Hanna believed in what he called “the myth of aging”. Although skin and hair age, he believed that the body can remember and maintain its ability to be elastic. A way of maintaining that agility is by SLOWING DOWN A MOVEMENT, as we do in Movement Therapy, and ALLOWING TIME for learning (or relearning) and for sensory association. This internal awareness is the Soma. We must truly and deeply love this Soma, allowing ourselves to relearn, repair, and heal.

Some of the guiding principles of HANNA'S BIOSOMATICS approach are:

- 1) using the least effort by having the skeleton carry the load and the muscles maintain a state of quiet readiness for action;
- 2) developing the awareness of differences in quality of movement;
- 3) recognizing the moment of relaxation (learning to feel when muscles need to contract to perform a movement and when they are not needed and should remain in a state of relaxation).

I offer MOVEMENT THERAPY classes as a method of teaching you some "tools" for self improvement and pain reduction which you can use on your own, anywhere. There are four levels, beginning with Level 1 where you will start learning the basic concepts and simplest movements. Each level consists of six weekly one hour classes and focuses on relaxation, postural education and specific movements for decreasing joint strain and past injury, thereby increasing your ability to move freely.

Movement Therapy will benefit everyone, whether they are avid exercisers or those suffering from chronic pain and immobility. It is an excellent pre-requisite for all types of movement and teaches us to listen to the ultimate judge of our activities - our inner self.

For more information and to register please contact:

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