

***On the Level***  
***Pelvic and First Cervical Alignment Are Key***  
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**MOVEMENTWISE**  
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Whatever the musculoskeletal problem, I always check for structural symmetry. Why? Because unequal forces on any part of the body cause distortion and deterioration over time. For foot, knee, hip, back and neck problems, unevenly distributed forces cause uneven wear and tear in joint cartilage and over-stretch ligaments. For arm/hand problems, misalignment of neck and thoracic vertebrae contribute to nerve compression. A low riding shoulder and/or collarbone can compress blood vessels and nerves, which pass from the chest into the arm.

My goal in this newsletter is to **give you a technique** for helping to restore balance to your lower body. In many cases it will provide lasting relief, in others, additional treatment of your first cervical vertebra and/or muscles will be needed for the pelvis to hold its alignment. When your pelvis is unbalanced you are likely to find one leg functioning as short.

**Let's see if you can sense whether or not your pelvis is balanced.**

**Standing:** As you push your thumbs in along the top of your pelvic crest, does one side seem higher or lower in relation to the floor? It should be level.



Slowly shift your whole body a **little** to the right, then to the left. Do this without bending sideways at the waist or sticking one hip out, just shift your whole body a **little**. Repeat this slowly and see if you feel the same support through each side. Maybe one side feels like you are standing on a tall column of support and the other seem to sink down a little? They should feel the same.

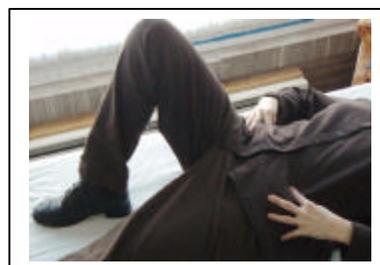


**Walking:** As you walk, listen to the sound and feel of your footsteps. If your pelvis is unbalanced, one leg will behave as if short. Your walk may feel “wonky”, which involves going up higher when on one leg and a dropping down when on the other leg.

**On Your Back:** With your legs flat, push your thumbs again into the top of your pelvis and place your first two fingers under the little protruding knob on the front of your pelvis. Can you sense if one side is higher towards your head or lower towards your feet?



If so, on the low side, bend your knee sliding your foot on the bed or floor and feel how the knob rocks up towards your head, essentially rotating that half of your pelvis into the bed. Slide your leg back down and feel the knob return. Try your other knee and get a sense of how each half of your pelvis can move in this rotational direction because we will use it to balance the pelvis.



**What can cause pelvic asymmetry?**

Pelvic asymmetry can be brought about directly by five types of activities.

**First** is sitting with one's legs crossed at the thigh. People usually have their favorite side and it jacks up and twists one half of the pelvis. If you habitually sit like that for more than 10 minutes with your favorite side crossed, your pelvis will likely stay high on that side.



**Second** Kneeling on knee with the other knee bent in front/foot flat on floor (called **half kneeling**). This is very much like the correction procedure given below but if done with the same side habitually, it creates an imbalance. Right-handed people tend to leave the left knee up because it leaves more space to use the right hand. Switching knees is a challenge. If you can't switch, then correct it afterward and change activities often. I often recommend the use of the S'port All support shorts when involved in bending, kneeling and lifting activity (see product page of movementwise web site) I recommend balancing one's pelvis prior to putting it on. Since it is best worn low around the pelvis it has mild squeezing effect, which can create more pain if the pelvis is not balanced first.



**Third** Sitting with one leg propped up on a stool, table or wall.



**Fourth** Prolonged side sitting.



**Fifth** Habitually lying with one leg up and forward.



**When do I do this procedure?**

Any time you feel that you are unbalanced in your lower body. The onset of lower extremity, back or sacroiliac pain may be a sign your pelvis is unbalanced. This procedure combined with taking anti-inflammatory medication may significantly reduce pain in the low back and/or sacroiliac joint. If you are finding relief of pain doing this procedure you may do it first thing in the morning, when pain returns during the day, and before bed. If you know your neck needs adjustment doing this procedure may buy you some time before you can get in to see your chiropractor.

**Precautions:** Do not attempt this procedure if you have a herniated or bulging disc that increases in pain when rounding your back. Do not do this procedure if you are observing hip replacement precautions, per your doctor. This procedure may aggravate a strained hamstring, groin pull or an arthritic hip.

**Procedure:**

**Lie on your back on the bed or floor. Be sure to have a pillow under your head, so that as you reach you don't strain holding your head forward. Start with the leg you think appears longer.**

**1) Put one hand on the top of your knee, the other hand around the ankle. Angle the knee up, yet out.**



**Starting position**

**2) Pull your leg upwards a little more to get your pelvis to rock a little towards the bed. Don't pull as far as you can, you may over round your back and/or pull the hamstring. This should be painless. Hold this position 20 seconds.**



**Starting position**



**Just a little more**

**What if I can't lie on the floor?**

This procedure can be done standing or seated, as needed, however one must be even more careful in sitting not to over-round your back. You may place your foot up on the chair seat, knee out to side, while sitting. If standing, lean your back on a wall and pull your leg up.



**What if the procedure doesn't correct the asymmetry or the correction doesn't hold?** If the procedure doesn't correct your asymmetry, a number of factors may be considered.

**One,** you may have a fused/stiff sacroiliac joint and or pubic joint, this may be the case if you are older and have arthritis.

**Two,** you may have muscle tightness in your low or mid back that pulls the pelvis out balance. This may be reduced with gentle massage and then by gentle stretching.

**Three,** your first cervical vertebra is misaligned and until it is corrected the domino effect of your spinal misalignment will prevent a lower body correction from holding. See the link [www.nucca.org](http://www.nucca.org) to find an upper cervical practitioner near you.

