



NATURAL

movement[®]

FITNESS

natural movement[®] **FITNESS**

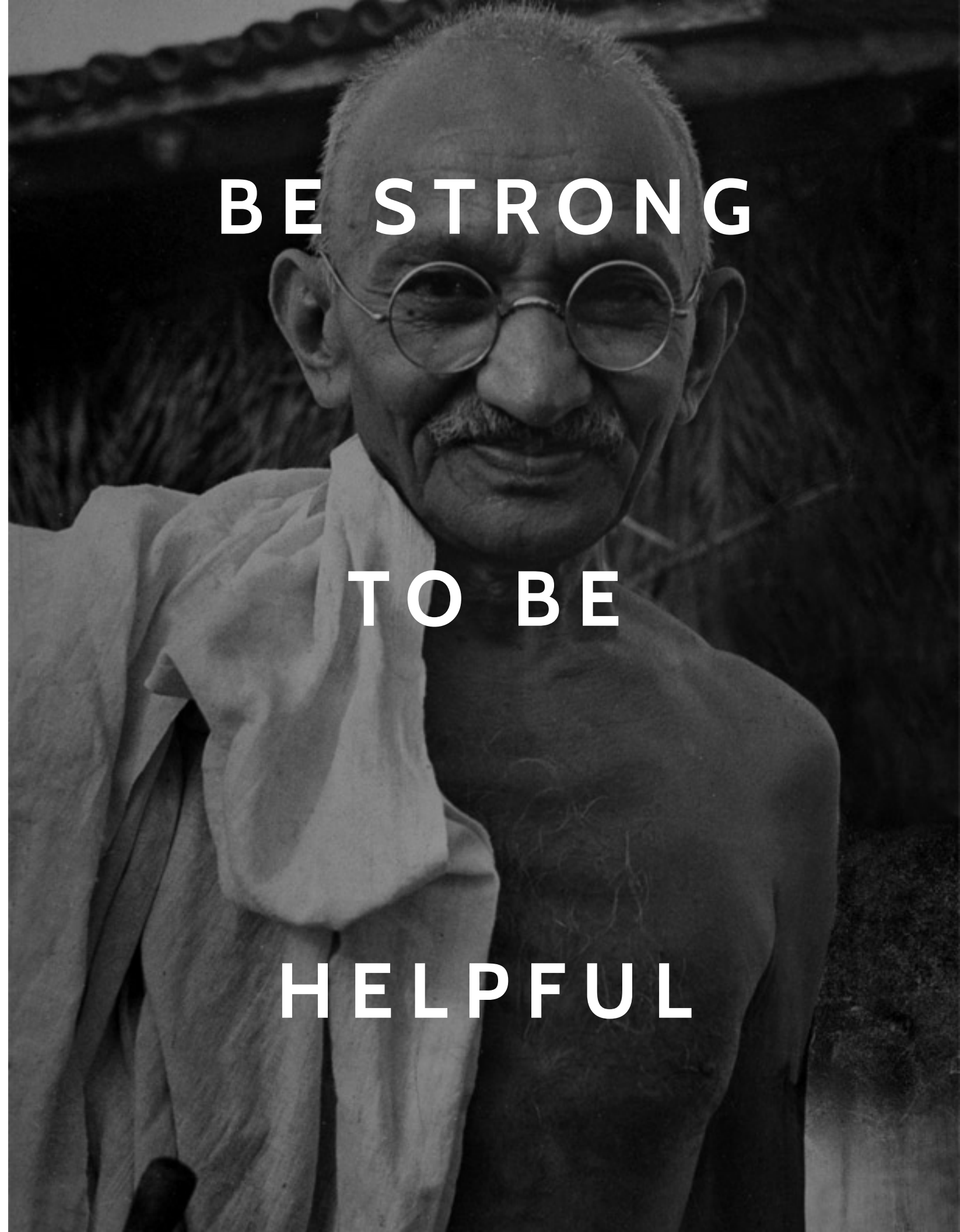


STARTER *guide*

BE STRONG

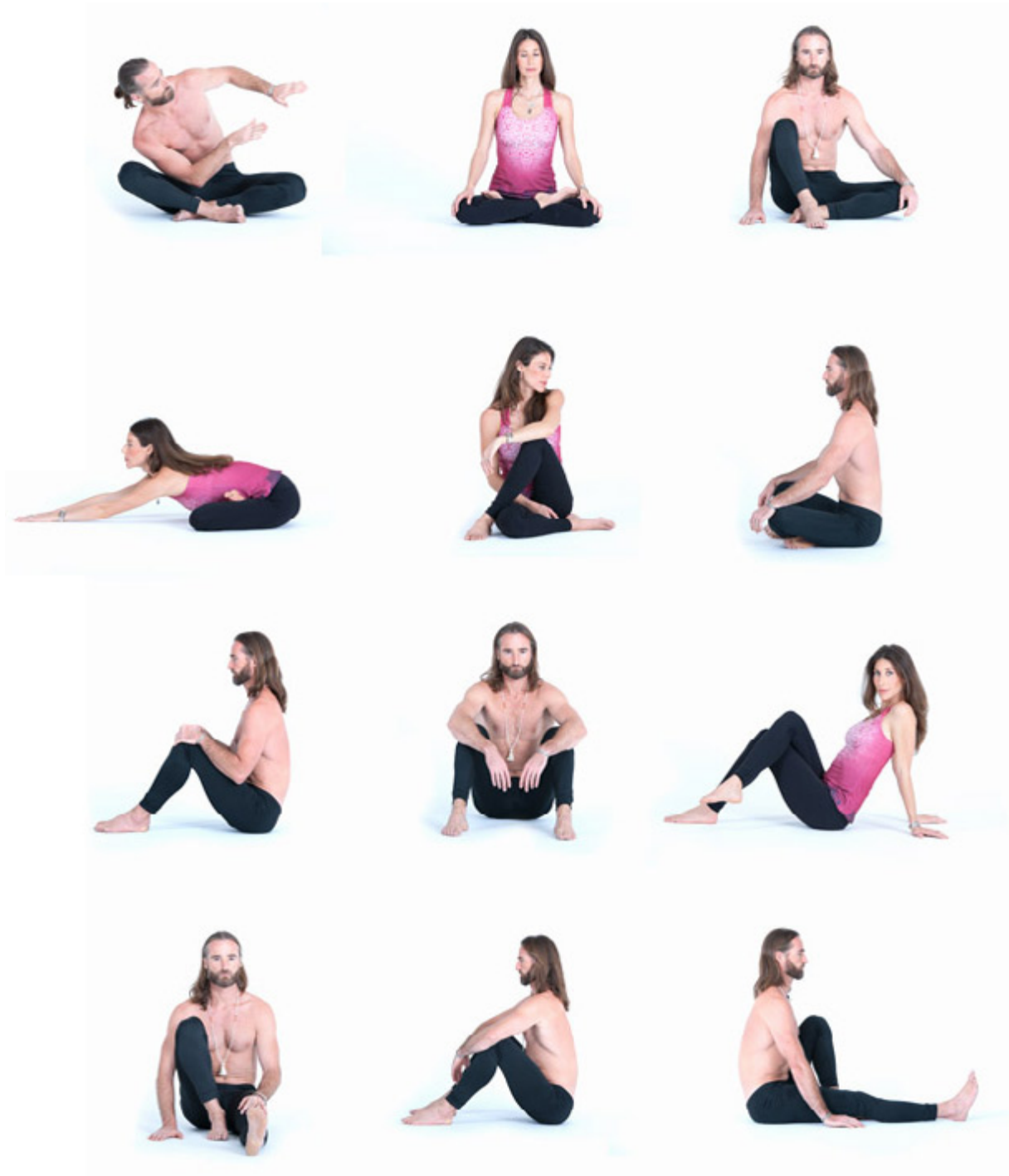
TO BE

HELPFUL



GETTING STARTED

Sitting is actually good for you,
if you make it so.



SITTING

While scientific studies are gathering evidence of the many adverse health effects of prolonged sitting, MovNat emphasizes healthy ways to sit.

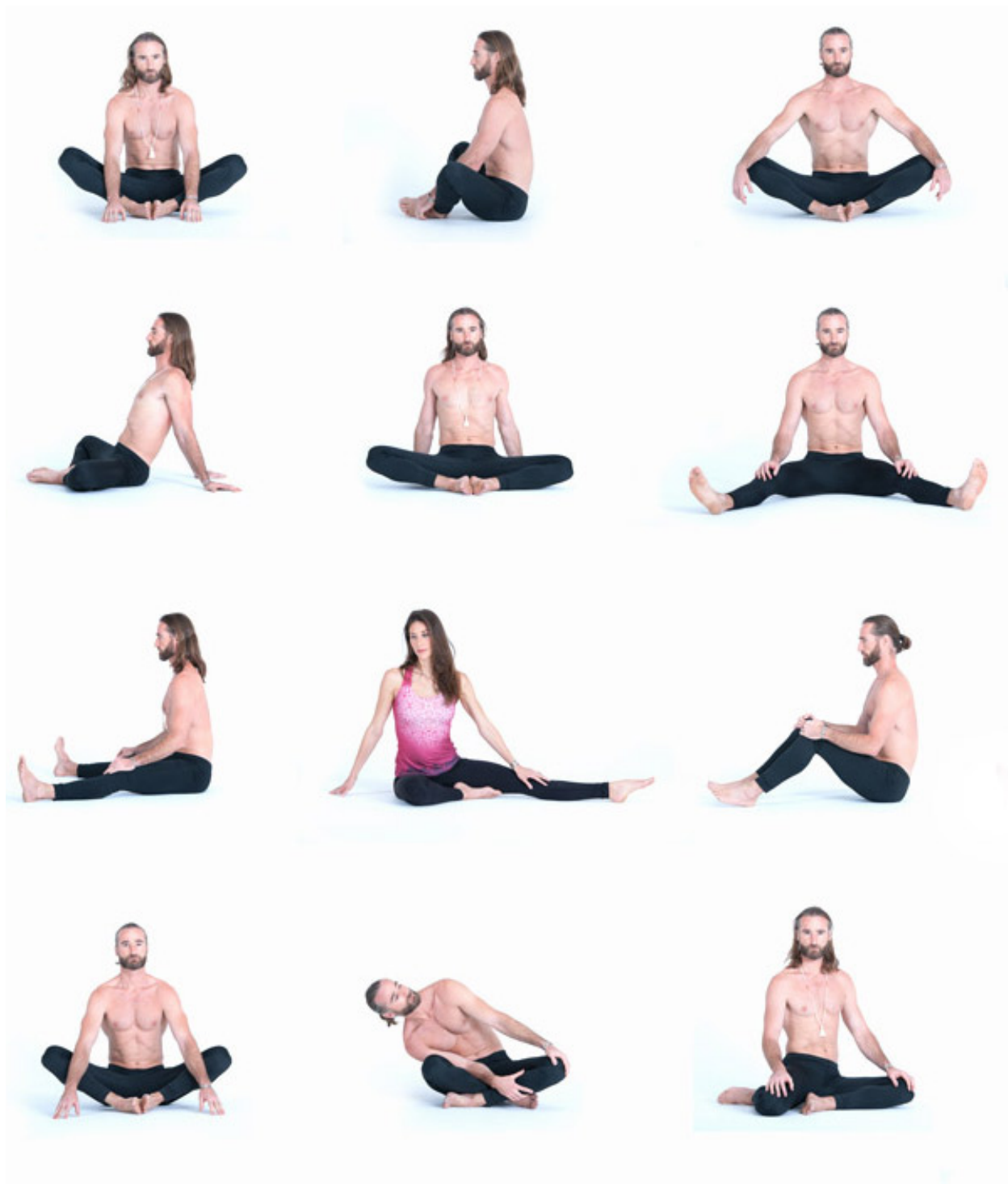
Sitting is a practical movement ability that allows you to take a break and rest, wait, observe and work. It helps improve and restore your mobility if your body has become stiff over time. Of course, hours of sitting a day, everyday, in the same exact position, most of the time in a bad position, is harmful. Standing all day is not really a solution, as the adverse effects of prolonged standing are known as well.

MovNat sits are regarded as practical positions, and practical positions are part of Natural Movement. Therefore they should never be forgotten or neglected. You might notice that the more sitting positions you practice, the better your mobility gets, with immediate benefits to other movement skills, including squatting.

If you are working from home with a laptop or a low desk, you can easily keep working while practicing sitting. This is a great way to add healthy Natural Movement to your day without taking extra time.



The key to effective, beneficial and enjoyable sitting is variety.



THINK WITH YOUR
WHOLE BODY

MOVE WITH YOUR
WHOLE MIND



THE GET-UP GET-DOWN TEST

A recent study has shown that our ability to sit down on the floor and then get back up may be an indicator of how long we're going to live.

Middle-aged and elderly people who need to use both hands and knees to get up and down are almost seven times more likely to die within six years, compared to those who can spring up and down without support. While the ratio of muscle power to body weight is the most important factor, there are other very relevant aspects. Aside from strength, mobility, balance, and coordination also participate very significantly in the transition from standing to sitting.

So, when was the last time you sat on the floor, and how easily did you move from standing to sitting and back to standing? Do you remember how well you performed, how you felt? Do you remember having to use your hands. Such a simple test gives a quick, yet objective window into your ability to function from day to day. If this movement gives you trouble, it is a good sign that some more practice is in order.

How many ways do you know to get up and down from the floor? How many of them can you do smoothly, with minimal effort? Natural Movements cover over 20 different ways, including several that are done without hand support.

Fitness is not limited to strength, cardio and stretching. Fitness is the practical ability to physically perform in the real-world. When you are older, you may not be able to lift as much or run as fast as you could when you were young, but you should seriously consider now that the simplest movement aptitudes will define your levels of physical autonomy in your later life. Will you be able to pick up your glasses after they fall on the living-room floor without being at risk of losing balance and hurting yourself?

Next, ask yourself if you are ready for the standing to deep squat to bent sit sequence. As you will soon realize, it can be MUCH more difficult that it looks. It is important to note that what is simple is not always easy. Before you start, make sure you are not wearing smooth synthetic fabrics or attempting these movements on a smooth floor as your feet and rear will slide and give you trouble.

GETTING UP AND DOWN

This is a good movement test. If it's easy, you can move. If its hard... *time to practice!*



Stand and then lower yourself to the deep squat... slowly. If you are unable to assume a stable, relaxed deep squat, you absolutely need to prioritize it, for it means you have lost significant natural movement abilities. There is no magic quick-fix for solving squatting issues.



Keep or bring your heels together and your feet splayed out. Gravity will pull you back and let you reach the bent sit. If your bottom isn't close enough to the floor because of a lack of mobility, the transition might be heavy, loud, and not so comfortable. Avoid this part of the movement if your squat position is not deep enough. But if you insist, place a pillow where you intend to sit!



Pull your feet close to your bottom, heels against each other and firmly planted on the floor with your feet splayed out, as the position of your feet is crucial to successfully transitioning to the squat. Extend arms forward.



Quickly lean forward to generate momentum (you'll need abdominal strength) but also to shift weight to the front, shifting your center of gravity over your feet as fast as possible. Imagine you are using your heels as handles on the ground, and pull from your feet into the deep squat.



You are now back in the deep squat, ready to stand back up, *right?*

GETTING-UP GETTING-DOWN: THREE TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

- If you're outside, find a slightly inclined area, and start the movement facing downhill.
- Use something you can hold on to (such as a fence, a small tree etc.) to assist your squat and the transition from the squat to the bent-sit. From the sit, lay back and swiftly rock forward to generate some helpful momentum.
- Find a partner, and cross the index finger of one or two hands. One of the partners helps the other to control and perform the movement on the way down and back up. Switch roles.



The irony of this movement is that it should be considered one of the simplest, most basic human movements. Very young children can do it. Unfortunately, most people, including some of the strongest and fittest, have trouble doing it.

So let's not blame our strength or conditioning, but rather our natural-movement-poor lifestyles. Most importantly, let's seriously reconsider the value of practical, fundamental movements in our daily lives.

Simple isn't always easy, but it is worth doing.

FURTHER PRACTICE

Here are a few more basic techniques to practice. But this is just the tip of the iceberg— as there are many varied techniques, each with its own benefit.



NATURAL MOVEMENT
IS TO FITNESS

AS ORGANIC
IS TO FOOD

Author of the international bestseller, *Born to Run*
CHRISTOPHER MCDUGALL

NATURAL BORN HEROES



The Lost Secrets of Strength and Endurance



“Erwan, in fact, could be one of the best living examples of what our bodies were originally designed to do.”

- CHRISTOPHER MCDUGALL, *NATURAL BORN HEROS*

BREATHING

Breathing is a movement.
Everything starts with breathing.



Breathing is not a movement of your body through space, but rather an internal movement your body needs from the moment you are born to the moment you die. Most of us take it for granted, but ask anyone with breathing issues and they will tell you that they would give anything to regain healthy breathing. Without normal, healthy breathing, the body and mind can become extremely stressed, even to a state of absolute panic.

Here's something important to reflect on- just like any movement, breathing is a **SKILL**. While everyone who is alive is breathing, one can breath efficiently or not.

Because it is a skill, it can be practiced mindfully and improved upon. To improve your breathing is one of the most important and **POTENT** ways to improve your movement and physical performance.

The benefits carry over to every area of your life.

Diaphragmatic Breathing



STEP 1

Let's learn to control where breathing takes place on a mechanical level. You want to be able to use your diaphragm only (abdomen area) and not your chest. Start breathing OUT by contracting your abdominal muscles. As you do this, the diaphragm relaxes and your belly pushes IN. Breath out all the way until you cannot push your abdomen in any further. It doesn't matter whether you breath out through the nose or mouth.



STEP 2

Time to breath in. The common reflex is to inflate your chest and make it big. Resist this. Avoid any voluntary movement from your chest and upper respiratory muscles (STEP 4). Of course chest breathing is very useful in movement...when intensity demands it. Learn to dissociate and select various ways of breathing, at will. Today, focus on your abdomen area and diaphragm.



STEP 3

Now that we have made room for new air, it's time to breath in! The diaphragm contracts as you push your belly OUT and inhale fully. It won't show your 6-packs abs, but it is essential to learn to breath in a relaxed manner. When you breath in while simply sitting or standing, you don't need the superficial layer of your abdominal muscles to contract. If there is a slight motion in your chest, it is the sole result of your deep inhale, not the result of a voluntary use of other respiratory muscles other than the diaphragm. Keep your mouth closed and inhale through the nose.



STEP 4

Once you start to feel and control your diaphragmatic breathing, you may release the lower hand and keep only the upper one in place, keeping the chest in check. Then release both.



STEP 5

A breathing drill is just that- a breathing drill. The goal is to improve your breathing as you move and perform physically, in any situation of life, especially when intensity comes into play.



STEP 6

Controlled, ample, powerful diaphragmatic breathing is best practiced when abdominal muscles are forcefully contracted. Performing the same exercise while sitting with your feet off the floor is also great way to accomplish this.

Breathing Progressions & Variations



#1

Practice rhythm. Breathe in and out increasingly fast, or alternate a fast inhale with a slow exhale, slow inhale and fast exhale, etc., without losing your pattern, getting confused, or bringing the chest into your breathing practice.

#2

If you lose your ability to control your breath while in motion, then the standing drill is practically useless, as it doesn't transfer to actual movement. Practice transitions from varied sitting positions to varied crawling techniques, at LOW intensity first, then increasingly fast. Keep practicing your diaphragmatic breath control with other movement skills, at varied levels of intensity, until you feel that it has become an integral part of your movement.

THOUGH YOU MAY NEVER MASTER
YOUR ENVIRONMENT -

YOU MAY LEARN
TO MASTER
HOW YOU MOVE
THROUGH IT

Forward Roll



Rolling is one of those natural movements everyone loves to do on grass, sand, or a foam mat. It is also one of these movements everyone thinks they know how to do until they are asked to do it in a controlled manner.

As a practical movement it allows me to change my body orientation from prone (facing down) to supine (facing up) as well as my body direction. It can be quite useful in situations that require staying low to reduce visibility or vulnerability.

VERY IMPORTANT SAFETY POINT

In the case of the forward roll, it is essential to not push bodyweight onto the neck. It is also essential to turn the neck and head in the OPPOSITE direction of the weight-bearing shoulder and tuck the chin in. Keeping the head straight, or worse, trying to turn it in the same direction as the weight-bearing shoulder (as in the backward roll) could strain or badly injure the neck. It is simply not bio-mechanically compatible.

FORWARD ROLL *movement sequence*



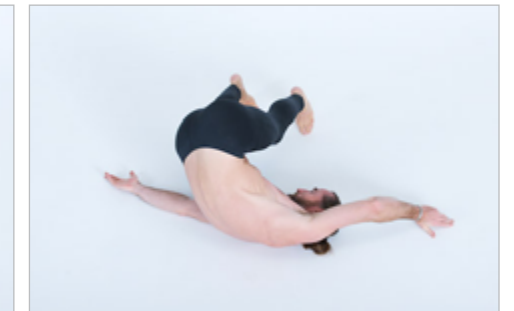
STEP 1

Assume a prone lying stance with your arms out, perpendicular to your body. Pushing off the balls of your feet, take a wide step forward, placing the foot at about hip level. The leg you move forward is the one opposite to the shoulder you roll over. This move advantageously starts positioning your body sideways in the direction of the weight-bearing shoulder. Preventively and protectively, tuck your chin in.



STEP 2

Pushing off the foot of the bent leg, drive your body forward, rear up, while shifting your weight onto the weight-bearing shoulder. Avoid pushing your body towards the head and neck.



STEP 3

Having pushed off your feet and extended your legs fully, the balls of your feet should still be on the ground, ready for the final push that will make your center of gravity go beyond your base of support. Your body will topple and unfold as you roll on your back to the other side. Use both your arms on the ground to stabilize your body and direct your upcoming roll. Inwardly rotate your shoulder and arm during this phase to facilitate the smooth repositioning of the body into the supine lying position.



STEP 4

You are now rolling on the other side at no extra energy cost. Let gravity pull your weight and lower limbs down. Immediately turn your head to verify that you are headed in the right direction.



STEP 5

As you unfold your legs, you can still adjust the direction of your body to some extent.



STEP 6

Reposition your body to "land" your roll exactly aligned with your starting prone lying position, only now in a supine lying position.



“I’ve had the opportunity to start working with Erwan Le Corre founder of MovNat. It has added a new dimension to my training, and given me a new perspective on fitness and performance.”

- CARLOS CONDIT, CHAMPION UFC FIGHTER

Inverted Foot-Hand Crawl



Though the inverted foot-hand crawl (aka “crab crawl”) is well known to everyone, it is common to see people struggling with it, because of inefficiencies in breathing, positioning and timing. This technique actually requires great shoulder, elbow and wrist mobility, so it is normal to see people being quite uncomfortable when assuming the inverted foot-hand crawl position.

Practical applications are varied but, most importantly, it can be used when going forward down a steep or slippery slope, allowing greater balance and a wider base of support. It is also used in hiding and stalking, to enable one to move while staying minimally visible, or in confined areas where standing is not an option.

INVERTED FOOT-HAND CRAWL *movement sequence*



STEP 1

Start in a typical contralateral stance, with the foot and hand relatively close on one side of your body, and on the other side, the foot and hand wider apart. Your ideal position should be the most comfortable, not too wide or too compact. Both arms should be in the locked-out (extended) position. Lifting the top part of the foot and planting the heel firmly on the ground will help you to gain better traction, especially when the terrain is slippery.



STEP 2

Pushing from the front foot and letting go of the rear hand, shift your body weight on to the supporting front hand, making sure to keep the front arm in the locked-out (extended) position for stability. You will momentarily find yourself in a contralateral stance.



STEP 3

Pull the rear foot backward and place it on the ground, leg bent, while at the same time extending the trail arm backward in the direction of your movement. The moving foot and hand should reach the ground at the exact same time, and the body weight should shift on them so quickly that the opposite foot and hand can be lifted such that it doesn't look or feel like the body is resting on all four points of support.



STEP 4

Resume the same motion as in Steps 2 and 3 to find yourself in the exact same position as Step 1. For optimum technique, your ideal position will be replicated very closely on both sides with every cycle, except for when the terrain dictates modifications.

Inverted Foot Hand Crawl

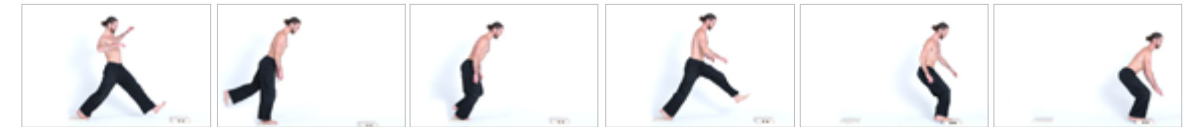
Forward Motion & Progressions



Going forward, the main technical point is to use the heels as “anchors” and pull the body forward with the legs. This simple cue will correct the common perception that one should only push themselves forward with the arms, which is energetically costly. When you imagine pulling your body to the front with your feet, you will use your legs much more, distributing the load and effort more equally throughout the upper and lower body.

Typical faults in the inverted foot-hand crawl include an overly compact stance, keeping the upper body vertical, hunched shoulders, and bent arms.

Progressions for this technique include increased distance, speed, and complexity with uneven, slippery, or inclined terrain. For training purposes, one can choose the counterintuitive options of going downhill backwards or going uphill forwards. This can also be done on stairs, making for an efficient and brutal workout.



Leg Swing Jump



If you have to get over a gap that is a little too big to step over, or a landing surface that is too narrow or unstable, go for the Leg Swing Jump. It is a great introductory technique to jumping because it involves a short distance and is low impact.

LEG SWING JUMP *movement sequence*



STEP 1

If you are not familiar with jumping practice, it is preferable and safer to not start at floor level, not with an elevated gap. Tape a line or place a small stick on the ground to get a sense of context. A good test for proper leg swing jump distance half a step, or one step beyond the maximum distance you could reach by stepping out in front of you.



STEP 2

Stand up straight and focus on your target. Get a mental sense of how much energy you'll need in order to reach the landing surface without pushing too hard or landing heavily.



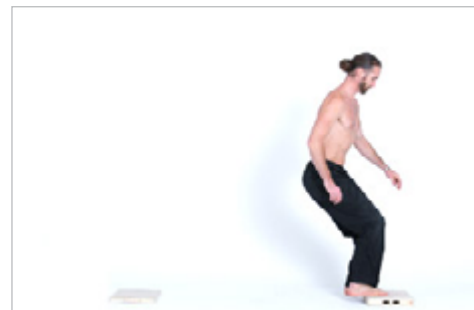
STEP 3

Shift weight on one foot only, bend your knee slightly and pull the other leg behind your body, as your upper body leans forward. Maintain a straight posture with your arms relaxed and keep looking at your landing target.



STEP 4

Swiftly swing the trail leg forward in the direction of your landing surface to generate and transfer momentum to the whole body. As the trail leg passes to the front, push off with the supporting leg.



STEP 5

While airborne, rapidly pull the trail leg toward the front one. The front foot will land a moment before the trail foot. The landing on both feet takes place on the ball of the foot, in a tiptoe fashion. If the landing surface is big enough, allow both feet to come flat after landing first on the balls of the feet. Bend your knees to disperse force of impact while keeping a tall back.



STEP 6

You may secure the landing by bending your legs a bit more and stabilizing your balance fully before you stand upright.

Leg Swing Jump Progressions



The leg swing jump applies to short distances only. The progression of this technique is not to jump higher or farther. The progression is to gradually increase in environmental complexity, for instance, a more narrow, unstable, or elevated landing surface.

Nature is the ideal environment for this practice. Practice short, mindful jumps among rocks, trees, and over streams.



YOU
ARE
MEANT



TO BE
STRONG

Straddle-Sit to Split-Squat

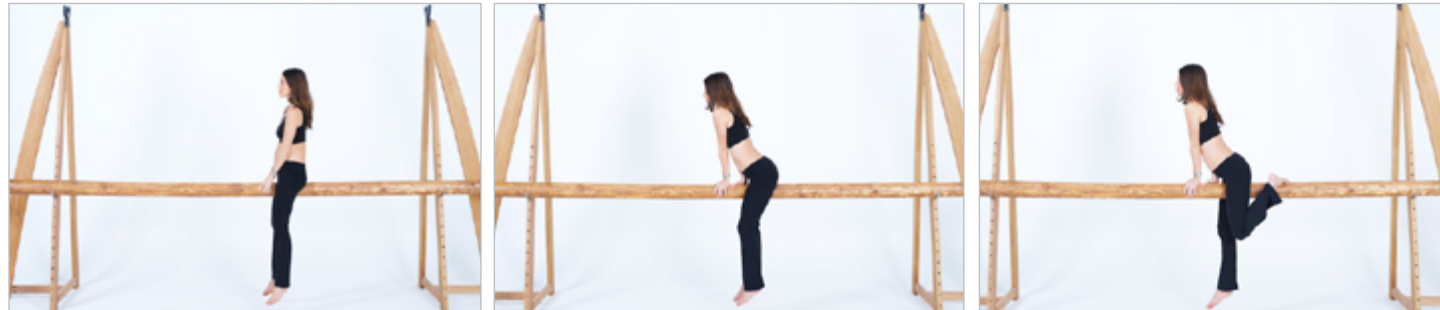


When you balance on a fallen tree, or even at the top of a narrow wall, you often need to get up or down. The get-up can be quite intimidating if you are at a significant height. The get-down can be a cautious way to ensure balance with a much lower center of gravity and greater surface contact for your base of support.

This is a very secure transition that allows you to use both hands for support (though it can also be done with single-hand support). It is somewhat easier to do than the tripod transitions, as you can keep facing one direction. The foot-hook is a great way to engage your foot for better foot and ankle mobility.

Don't try this movement on a high or narrow surface at first. It can be performed on fallen trees or similar objects.

STRADDLE-SIT TO SPLIT-SQUAT *movement sequence*



STEP 1

Start in the straddle-sit, your hands close together in front of you, upper body leaning forward.

STEP 2

Pull one foot up behind your rear and hook it on the surface of the bar. You need to feel that you will be able to pull from it, so you need to engage your whole foot, not just your toes. If you lack the flexibility to pull your foot up this way, you can elevate your waist by pushing off your arms.

STEP 3

Having positioned your foot adequately to create friction, you now can push down with it to elevate your waist, while leaning and shifting weight a little more toward the front.



STEP 4

Having created the vertical space you need, you can now pull your free foot up and place it flat on top of the bar.

STEP 5

Modify the position of your back foot from hooked to bent (dorsiflexion) on the ball of your foot. From there you can push off your hands and front foot to establish a stable split-squat, with good posture and relaxed arms.

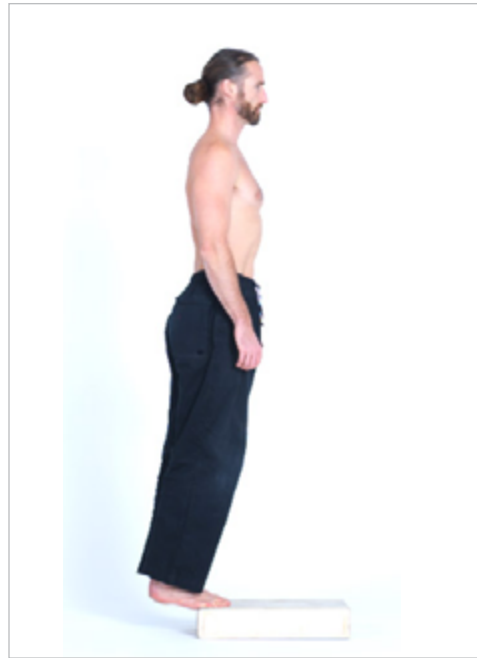
Balancing



This deceptively simple yet nuanced movement has many far reaching implications.

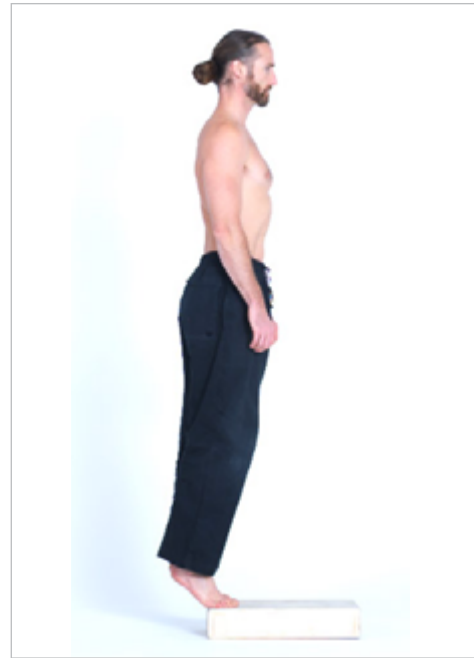
This movement is not a “calf-raise” drill. We should call it, rather, “standing tiptoeing”. It is a balancing movement. This is movement nuance. The goal of this movement is not to target your calves. This is one of the outcomes of practicing this movement, as it will also improve your ankle mobility, strengthen your foot muscles and tendons, challenge your vestibular system and improve your balance. From a practical standpoint, the ability to perform this move effectively is essential to balancing on narrow surfaces before jumping or after landing. It will also benefit your walking and running gaits on uneven terrain, your jumping skills and more.

BALANCING *movement sequence*



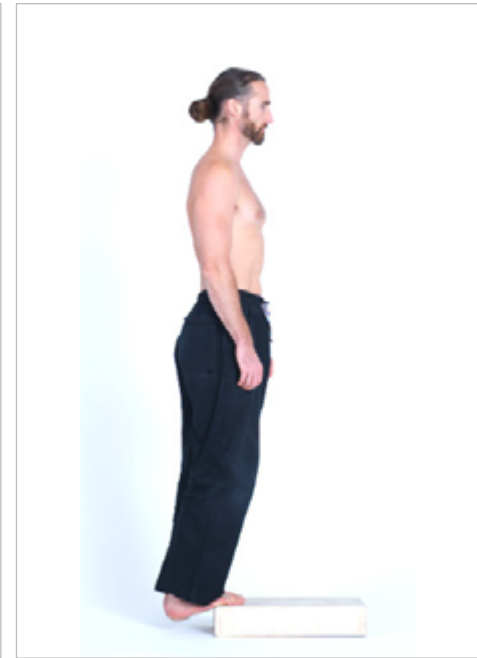
STEP 1

Step on a box, the ledge of a flat stone, sidewalk curb or anything stable and slightly elevated. Keep a neutral stance (toes and heels level). Place only the balls of your feet on the surface, maintaining an erect posture with your head up. Make sure that you are first able to hold this position for at least ten seconds at a time without losing your balance. Then begin to raise or lower your heels. In the beginning, slide your feet slightly forward to increase your surface of support for better balance, if needed.



STEP 2

Pushing off your feet, raise your heels slowly, elevating your center of gravity in a controlled, balanced manner. Don't try to go too high at first.



STEP 3

Slowly lower your center of gravity by lowering your heels below the surface. Stop going lower if the stretch feels painful or too uncomfortable.

Balancing Progressions & Next Steps



Once you've managed to perform this movement slowly and with balance (without stepping off the box involuntarily), gradually move to the following progressions, in any order you want:

- Increase the vertical range of your ankle motion.
- Increase velocity. Make the up and down motion faster, or alternate fast and slow motions.
- Slide your feet backward to reduce the surface area of support.
- Practice the movement on a round, elevated, or unstable surface- or a combination of all three.

As you progress, you will see how this one movement, when applied to different environments and conditions, becomes incredibly varied and challenging.



REMEMBER

Animals don't "exercise."

They do what is required to survive.

Birds don't read a flight manual- they fly.

*Fish swim. A tiger is a powerful, graceful
animal simply by being a Tiger.*

*This is what we have lost, and what
Natural Movement can restore.*

