



MUDWALKING

Unleash the Power of Walking for Vitality + Rejuvenation + Longevity

LARRY SAROKIN

Today, in the U.S., 145 million men and women walk for fitness and health.

Doctors are prescribing walking as a “wonder drug” with a wide range of benefits.

State governments are spending millions of dollars to develop pleasant places to walk to encourage people to get off the couch.

Four thousand years ago, in the mountains of China, a group of monks also realized the value of walking. Over time, they evolved the simple act of walking into a complete physical, mental, and neurological training system with powerful rejuvenative effects.

Mudwalking is a Westernized version of this ancient exercise. It will transform your daily walk into a complete mind-body workout that takes less time than your ordinary walking routine.

Mudwalking changes lives, and can change your life.



Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a few special people who have made this book possible:

My wife, Debra, who first suggested I should teach what I had learned over the years,

Holly Palance, who was the first person who asked to learn Mudwalking and was my cheerleader and muse from Day 1, and

Robert Wallace, Holly’s husband, who first had the idea of writing a book about Mudwalking and who became my friend, editor and “muscle” behind the project.

Thank you all!

Mudwalking: Unleash the Power of Walking for Vitality+Rejuvenation+Longevity
Copyright © 2012 by Larry Sarokin
All rights reserved.
Published in the United States by Asahina & Wallace.
Edited by Robert Wallace
ISBN-10: 0615797512
ISBN-13: 978-0-615-79751-9
Printed in the U.S.
First Edition

MUDWALKING

Unleash the Power of Walking

for
Vitality
+
Rejuvenation
+
Longevity

by
LARRY SAROKIN

A S A H I N A & W A L L A C E

A Note from the Author

Unfortunately, I can't spend time with you as you learn Mudwalking. I can't see if your alignments are correct or if your mental attitude is getting in your way.

Mudwalking itself is quite simple to learn and practice. However, to get the most out of your practice, it is important to learn not only what to do, but also why you are doing it.

To this end, I have written this training manual to give you an understanding of the principles of Mudwalking, as well as the techniques, both physical and mental, to make your experience a success.

I have included a lot of material in this manual. Some ideas or exercises will work better for you than others. I encourage you to focus on what works for you in the beginning. As you progress, try to incorporate other ideas and techniques into your training.

If you need help, visit us at www.mudwalking.com.

Wishing you all the best...

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Larry Austin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The name "Larry" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and "Austin" is written in a slightly smaller, more compact script. The signature is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Contents

PART 1 Introduction to Mudwalking 1

- WHY MUDWALKING? 3
- WHAT IS MUDWALKING? 6
- DOES IT INVOLVE WALKING IN MUD? 6
- IS MUDWALKING A COMPLETE TRAINING PROGRAM? 9
- DOES IT STRENGTHEN THE CORE? 9
- FOR WOMEN? FOR MEN? 10
- WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS? 13
- VITALITY 13
- HOW DOES MUDWALKING REJUVENATE THE BODY? 14
- WHO CAN LEARN TO MUDWALK? 17
- IS IT WORTH MY TIME? 17
- HOW QUICKLY WILL I PROGRESS? 18
- WHEN WILL I SEE SOME RESULTS? 18

PART 2 A Different Perspective 21

- A NATURAL EXERCISE 23
- WORKING WITH GRAVITY 23
- HEALTH VS. FITNESS 25
- A VERY DIFFERENT TRAINING STRATEGY 25
- MUDWALKING VS. TAI CHI 26

PART 3: Mudwalking Basics 29

- WALKING THE CIRCLE 31
- WALKING IN MUD 32
- THE FIRST FIVE NATURAL PRINCIPLES 32
- INNERVISION 35

PART 4 Mudwalking and Your Body 39

- UNBINDING 41
- THE PLUMB LINE 42
- HOW TO FEEL YOUR PLUMB LINE 43
- ELONGATE YOUR SPINE 44
- YOUR CENTER OF GRAVITY (COG) 46
- THE TWIST 49
- THE BACK OF YOUR KNEES 50
- BREATHING 50

- IN BONES WE TRUST 52
- PRACTICE SEEING YOUR BONES 55
- WIDE EYES ON THE HORIZON 55
- LARGE VS. SMALL MUSCLES 56
- CARDIO 58
- BECOMING MORE ATHLETIC 60

PART 5 Mudwalking and Your Brain 63

- PROPRIOCEPTION 65
- BODY SHIFTING 65
- RELEASING 66
- FREE YOUR CEREBELLUM 67
- NEUROPLASTICITY 68
- MONA LISA SMILE 70
- TAKING UP ALL OF YOUR SPACE 70
- THE ENEMY OF MUDWALKING 71

PART 6 The Training Overview 73

- TRAINING PHILOSOPHY 75
- WHERE, WHEN, HOW OFTEN? 76
- THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING 79
- MUDWALKING FOOTWORK 85

PART 7 Your Personal Training Program 89

- THE FIVE MODULES 91
- THE WARM-UP 92
- MUDWALKING 96
- ADVANCED MUDWALKING (FREESTYLING) 97
- ABSORB AND TRANSFER 101
- ADVANCED EXERCISES 102
 - 1. Cloud Hands for Health 102
 - 2. The Carousel 104
 - 3. Spinal Strength 107
 - 4. The Daily Facelift 108
- HOW TO PROGRESS RAPIDLY 109
- MEDITATION 109
- PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS 110
- THE NATURAL TRUTH 111

APPENDIX A Your Skeleton and Key Joints in Your Body 115

PART 1

Introduction to Mudwalking

Why Mudwalking?

Over the years, I have tried almost every type of exercise and fitness program invented by man. And, to paraphrase American humorist Will Rogers, I never met an exercise I didn't like.

In addition to running, weights, kettlebells, Rollerblading, body-weight exercises, yoga, and other programs, I also spent significant time learning tai chi and chi gung, so I developed both Eastern and Western perspectives.

But I was getting to the age at which taking care of my body was no longer about looking good and being athletic—it was about the quality and length of my life.





I decided to stop bouncing around from one fitness program to the next, settle down and find just one that I could do for twenty to thirty minutes a day, one that would give me the best chance for a long and vibrant life.

After doing a significant amount of research to find this perfect program, I noted that one type of exercise, repeatedly mentioned in Chinese texts, produced remarkable flexibility and strength, even as one aged. I also found that people of all ages who practiced it were generally considered to have exceptional health and vitality.

Taking a closer look, this simple training method was based on a four-thousand-year-old exercise practiced by Chinese monks. It was extremely easy to learn; yet to master it took both physical and mental commitment.

It seemed to provide everything I wanted. I could do it aerobically or use it to quiet and balance my breathing. I could develop tremendous leg strength or focus on developing balance and coordination. I could use it to relax my nervous system as well as challenge my body and give me more strength and endurance. I could focus my mind and reduce the mental chatter that causes stress and insomnia. And most important, I could improve every day. In fact, as I got older, I would only get better.

That's why I do it.

What is Mudwalking?

Mudwalking is a Westernized version of four-thousand-year-old Taoist circle walking as practiced in the monasteries of northern China. The tradition of “walking the circle” was passed down through the centuries and later adopted as the primary training method of bagua, a highly respected and effective martial art.

I have tried to provide the essence of this powerful exercise in a way that a Westerner will find accessible. I have also tried to present it so that you can learn the basics quickly and, most important, progress quickly.

While it is not unusual for Chinese practitioners to devote hours a day and years to this training, the benefits of health, vitality, and longevity can be realized by only twenty to thirty minutes of attentive practice each day.

Does it involve walking in mud?

No! It involves *imagining* you are walking in mud.

As you imagine walking through deeper and deeper mud, you increase the difficulty of the training and adjust to both the daily needs of your body and your training goals.

Although it might seem counterintuitive that imagining you are walking in mud will make it as hard for you to move as walking in real mud, using



“There is almost
a religious
reverence for
the power of
the **CORE** and
a passion
to continually
cultivate
its power.”

a mental component such as this is part of every elite training program. Athletes and actors, among others, use visualization all the time. Albeit to different ends, they both use the mind and body together to perform at the highest level.

A Mudwalking session can end with a feeling of relaxation and lightness, a feeling of healthy exhaustion, or anything in between.

Is Mudwalking a complete training program?

Absolutely! Most Western training programs focus on strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance. Mudwalking does all of this as well, but adds agility, coordination, relaxation, mechanical efficiency, and awareness.

Mudwalking can also complement an existing exercise program. By providing what elite athletes call “base training”—foundational training that enables them to take on more advanced (and more difficult) training—Mudwalking prepares you for your particular workout goals.

Mudwalking can change lives. It can restore, rejuvenate, energize, calm, balance, strengthen, and allow you to live as long as you can, as well as you can.

Does it strengthen the core?

For thousands of years across India, Japan, and China, the strengthening of the core has been the primary focus of both health practices and fighting arts.

The navel chakra, the *hara*, the *tanden*, and *dan tien* are of some of the names given to the core. It is believed that not only our physical power but our emotional power as well comes from a strong core. Within certain training schools, there is almost a religious reverence for the core and a passion to continually cultivate its power.

As in ancient times, Mudwalking is about balancing, strengthening, and energizing all 360° of your core. It takes Western core exercises one large step farther by training your body to develop a “core consciousness”—an increased awareness of your core and how it balances your body and mind. As your core consciousness grows, you will be able to initiate all movement from your core and train your mind to quietly rest in your core.

If you are currently involved in core-based training (e.g. Pilates, Power Yoga, etc.), adding a Mudwalking component will turbocharge it. If you are looking for holistic, all-encompassing core training, Mudwalking is your answer.

For women? For men?

Today, most men and women want the same thing from their training. They want to be fit, they want functional strength, they want to be athletic, they want to look good, and they want to feel good. They want to hike and dive and ride and adventure and go for it.

Mudwalking is highly customizable, allowing you to create a personal pro-



vi•tal•i•ty

1. The capacity to live, grow, or develop.
2. Physical or intellectual vigor, energy.
3. The characteristic, principle, or force that animates living things.

gram that emphasizes a particular aspect of Mudwalking—physical strength, mental strength, agility, endurance, etc.—without losing the overall benefit.

What are the benefits?

While in the West we focus primarily on the fitness of our muscles (including the heart), in China, physicians believe health and fitness are based on flexible joints, a relaxed nervous system, balanced breathing, and unblocked circulation of the blood and lymphatic fluids to every organ and cell in the body. Any tension, tightening, binding, or emotional blockage in the body inhibits circulation, causes weakness in the organs, and eventually increases the possibility of disease.

Mudwalking directly addresses these needs and over time restores the body to a healthier state. The body begins to unbind. Circulation is increased. Core strength and natural flexibility grow, balance and body awareness are improved, nerves are calmed and strengthened, and the body is trained to move and act in a relaxed manner.

This broad spectrum of benefits has enabled circlewalking to be recognized throughout China for its rejuvenative effects.

Vitality

In the West, we train for strength, endurance, etc.—measurable physical traits. In the East, however, the emphasis is placed on cultivating vitality.

The dictionary definition of vitality:

vi·tal·i·ty

1. The capacity to live, grow, or develop.
2. Physical or intellectual vigor; energy.
3. The characteristic, principle, or a force that animates living things.

In Mudwalking, we train for vitality. The training encompasses fitness, health, a positive and creative mind, and a belief that we can continue to grow and progress.

It is a lightness of being that becomes part of who we are.

How does Mudwalking rejuvenate the body?

- Develops 360° core strength and “core consciousness”
- Unbinds connective tissue (fascia) that restricts movement
- Activates the spine, opening vertebrae and disks
- Loosens and centers joints
- Realigns the body with gravity
- Strengthens and balances musculature
- Deepens circulation to internal organs
- Increases oxygen delivery to cells
- Massages internal organs
- Trains the body to relax under stress



A twenty-minute **MUDWALKING WORKOUT**

=

twenty-minute
brain workout

+

twenty-minute
organ massage

+

twenty-minute
spinal adjustment

+

twenty-minute
internal oxygen bath

+

twenty-minute
strength and agility workout

+

twenty-minute
*quieting and awareness
meditation*

Who can learn to Mudwalk?

If you can walk, you can Mudwalk. You can easily adapt your practice to your fitness level as well as your long-term goals.

In China, there are two paths that both begin with walking the circle. Initially everyone trains in the same manner, as you will be taught in this manual. At a certain point, however, some practitioners will branch off into the martial arts applications. Others will continue to focus on the health and fitness aspects.

In China, men and women of all ages walk the circle. It is not unusual to find ninety-year-old Mudwalkers moving with the speed and agility of those half their age.

Is it worth my time?

Mudwalking provides extraordinary value for your workout time. If you do it for strength and agility, you get the health and meditative benefits for free. If you do it for the health and meditative benefits, you get the strength and conditioning benefits for free.

A twenty-minute Mudwalking workout = twenty-minute brain workout + twenty-minute organ massage + twenty-minute spinal adjustment + twenty-minute internal oxygen bath + twenty-minute strength and agility workout + twenty-minute quieting and awareness meditation.

How quickly will I progress?

Your progress will not be measured by how long you walk, how fast you walk, how much you sweat, or how much your muscles “feel the burn.”

Your progress will be based on how quickly you incorporate the basic principles into your practice and how quickly your body awareness develops.

When will I see some results?

Mudwalking starts working immediately, though beginners may not be sensitive enough to see these changes until they develop a greater level of body awareness. However, students can generally see the effects of Mudwalking within a week of starting attentive practice. Within a month you should be able to observe both the physical and mental changes. Progress is generally continual with almost no “plateauing.”



PART 2

A Different Perspective

A Natural Exercise

Mudwalking is the essence of natural exercise. By working with the laws of physics and the laws of nature, your body returns to its proper natural state—strong, balanced, unbound, and energized.

By cultivating a naturally calm, creative internal state, you begin to both strengthen your mental muscles and develop the quieting mental tools you need to deal with our stressed-out world.

Working with Gravity

I don't know who got the idea that gravity is the enemy of our bodies, but I know that it wasn't a scientist. Gravity is a constant gentle force that has shaped our universe and everything in it. Over millennia, gravity has served as an invisible framework around which our bodies evolved—and each evolutionary step was designed to allow us to do more things using less valuable energy.

Everything in our bodies—bones, muscles, internal organs, even our circulatory system—was “engineered” to work with gravity.

The problem is that once our bodies fall out of alignment with gravity, they have to work very hard and use a tremendous amount of valuable energy to compensate for the misalignment.



“**Natural** exercise creates
a **natural** body...”

As your alignment with gravity improves, you will begin to move with a natural grace and relaxed energy.

Health vs. Fitness

There is a difference between health and fitness. Fitness is the ability of your body to do what in physics would be referred to as “work” without becoming tired.

Health, on the other hand, is about the flexibility of your joints, the functioning of your internal organs, the circulation of blood and lymph, and your state of mind. You can be healthy and not particularly fit, or you can be fit and not particularly healthy.

Mudwalking addresses both health and fitness.

A Very Different Training Strategy

In Western exercises, the most widely used training strategy is adaptive training—continually pushing yourself, utilizing the body’s adaptive mechanisms to get stronger to handle the increased demands.

In Mudwalking, the training strategy requires that you establish a calm, relaxed manner, and by utilizing proper body mechanics, use as little energy as possible. Then, while remaining calm and relaxed, you continually increase the workload. In time, you will be able to do a great amount of “work” with very little effort.

Mudwalking vs. Tai Chi

Both tai chi and bagua (circle walking) are “internal” styles of Chinese martial arts which are based on the cultivation of a powerful energy known as chi. They share many similar principles and might be considered to share the same DNA. They both promise (and deliver) fitness, health, internal balance, and mental calm, but circle walking and its Western counterpart Mudwalking add the strength and aerobic elements that are not part of tai chi training.

They also differ substantially in their training methods. The training method of tai chi consists of doing 108 movements very slowly, connecting each movement in an unbroken “dance.” The training method of bagua consists of one simple movement (walking the circle) with a few minor variations in stepping technique and hand positions.

You cannot learn tai chi from a book, and to learn enough of the 108 movements to have a significant effect on your life and health can take two to three years of study with a good teacher and lots of practice.

The essential elements of Mudwalking, on the other hand, can be learned from a book and/or in a few training sessions, and the impact on your mind/body begins immediately.

And while tai chi is wonderful at doing what it does, Mudwalking is both adaptable and customizable and can naturally accommodate a wider variety of training goals.





PART 3

Mudwalking Basics

Walking the Circle

Mudwalking is simply walking in a circle, approximately twelve to fifteen steps around, first in one direction and then in the other, back and forth. It can be done indoors or outdoors, around a tree or a pole. It can be done in a group, individually, or with a partner. It can be done fast or slowly depending on your training goals.

One arm is extended towards the center of the circle, the other arm is held in front of your navel. Your eyes gaze at an imaginary person standing in the center of the circle.

The natural geometry of a person walking a circular path while focusing towards the center of the circle creates a twisting motion along the spinal column, which loosens and strengthens the spine.

This continual twisting motion also reaches the deep muscles of the torso and internal organs, improving circulation and giving each organ a deep massage. In China, this continual twisting is considered the secret to circlewalking as a rejuvenative exercise.

Within this simple exercise there are many subtle techniques and variations—some will build enormous leg strength, some will increase coordination and agility, some will calm mental chatter.

The challenge of Mudwalking is to do these simple but demanding exercises, perfectly aligned to gravity and with a calm, relaxed mind.

Walking in Mud

The uniqueness of Mudwalking is that you can vary the intensity of the workout by imagining you are walking in mud of different depths and thicknesses. It's clearly harder to walk in water than in air. As the water gets muddier and thicker, it gets more and more difficult.

When you Mudwalk, by imagining the mud getting thicker and deeper, your body responds by utilizing deep core muscles to provide the additional power you need to walk through this mud. This happens automatically—you don't need to consciously mobilize these muscles. Typically, a Mudwalker will vary the depth and thickness of the mud during his or her training session.

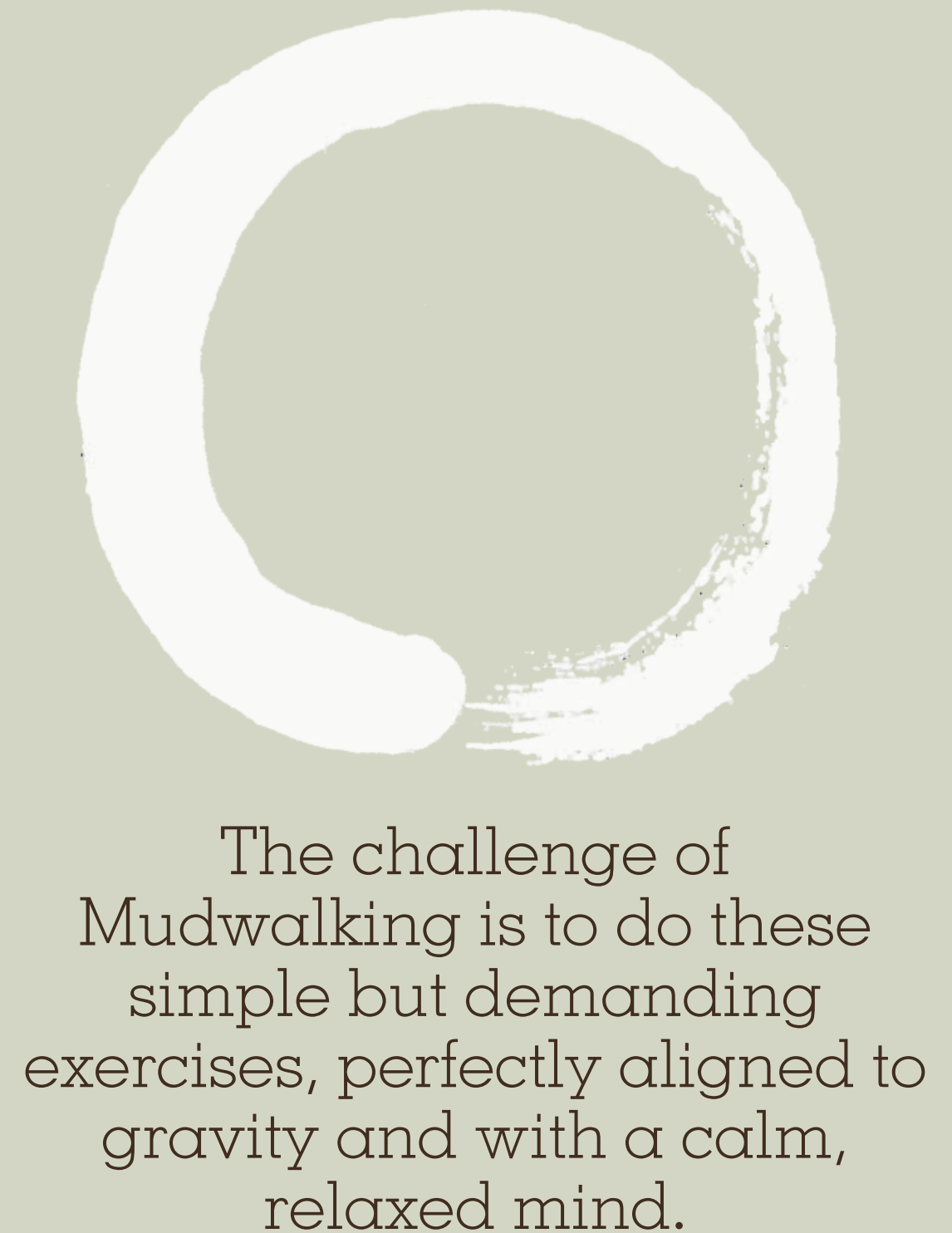
The First Five Natural Principles

The five foundational principles of movement in Mudwalking are simple. Each will be explained (along with five more principles) in detail in Part 6, "The Training."

PRINCIPLE I RELEASE TO GRAVITY

Release to the force of gravity, and allow it to gently position your body into a more proper alignment.

Gravity acts to streamline the body. Gravity hates a protruding belly, a misaligned spine, and chronically tensed muscles. These stop gravity from doing its job of keeping you aligned, balanced, and efficient.



The Fundamental Principles of MUDWALKING MOVEMENT

1.

Release to gravity

2.

Open your joints

3.

Establish your plumb line

4.

Move from your center of gravity

5.

Widen your field of vision

PRINCIPLE II OPEN YOUR JOINTS

Open and center all the joints in your body, paying special attention to the joints of your spine, allowing each one to “breathe” and your skeleton to move more freely. Imagine your muscles and organs disappearing. Feel as if you are a skeleton walking.

PRINCIPLE III ESTABLISH YOUR PLUMB LINE

Once you’ve released to gravity, feel the plumb line from the top of your head through the center of your body and down through your pelvic floor into the ground.

PRINCIPLE IV MOVE FROM YOUR CENTER OF GRAVITY

Identify the true core of your body, your center of gravity, and learn to generate all Mudwalking movement from that point.

PRINCIPLE V WIDEN YOUR FIELD OF VISION

Use your peripheral vision throughout the exercise. Try to see your entire field of vision at once. It may seem strange at first, but you’ll feel big changes in your body when you get comfortable with it.

Important: Never let your eyes drop below the horizon.

InnerVision

We humans are born with the ability to observe what’s going on inside our bodies. We can feel our heart beating; we can feel when our

stomach is upset. We can also feel our muscles and with some practice even feel our bones. We just need to close our eyes to the external world and focus our minds on our inner landscape. In Mudwalking, we call this innervision.

As a culture, we have gotten out of the habit of looking inside ourselves and as a result, have overlooked a powerful hidden talent. To feel, hear, and understand what your body is saying in real time is a pillar of Mudwalking training.

To practice innervision simply close your eyes and spend some time observing yourself from the inside. Don't try to do or change anything—it will happen by itself.

The more you practice innervision, the more sensitive you become to your own body. Your plumb line becomes straighter, you feel your center of gravity more exactly, your balance and coordination improve, and your mind and body relax.

As your innervision develops, your Mudwalking and your life will take on a new, inner dimension.

Q: *Is innervision like meditation?*

A: *Yes, it is similar to what is called awareness meditation. However, your goal is to have the focus and calm of meditation while you are moving (i.e. walking the circle).*



Q: *Can you give me an example of how innervision will improve my practice?*

A: *One innervision technique is to “see” your bones. As you internally focus on your bones, the muscles around the bones automatically relax and your body shifts into a more correct alignment. Achieving this realignment by consciously directing your muscles into proper alignment is virtually impossible because of the huge number of muscular contractions and interactions involved in even the simplest of movements.*

PART 4

Mudwalking and Your Body

Unbinding

Our muscles and organs are tightly wrapped in a tough Saran-wrap-like tissue called fascia. Fascia holds our bones, muscles, and organs in place. It also connects every part of the body to every other part in a complex communication network.

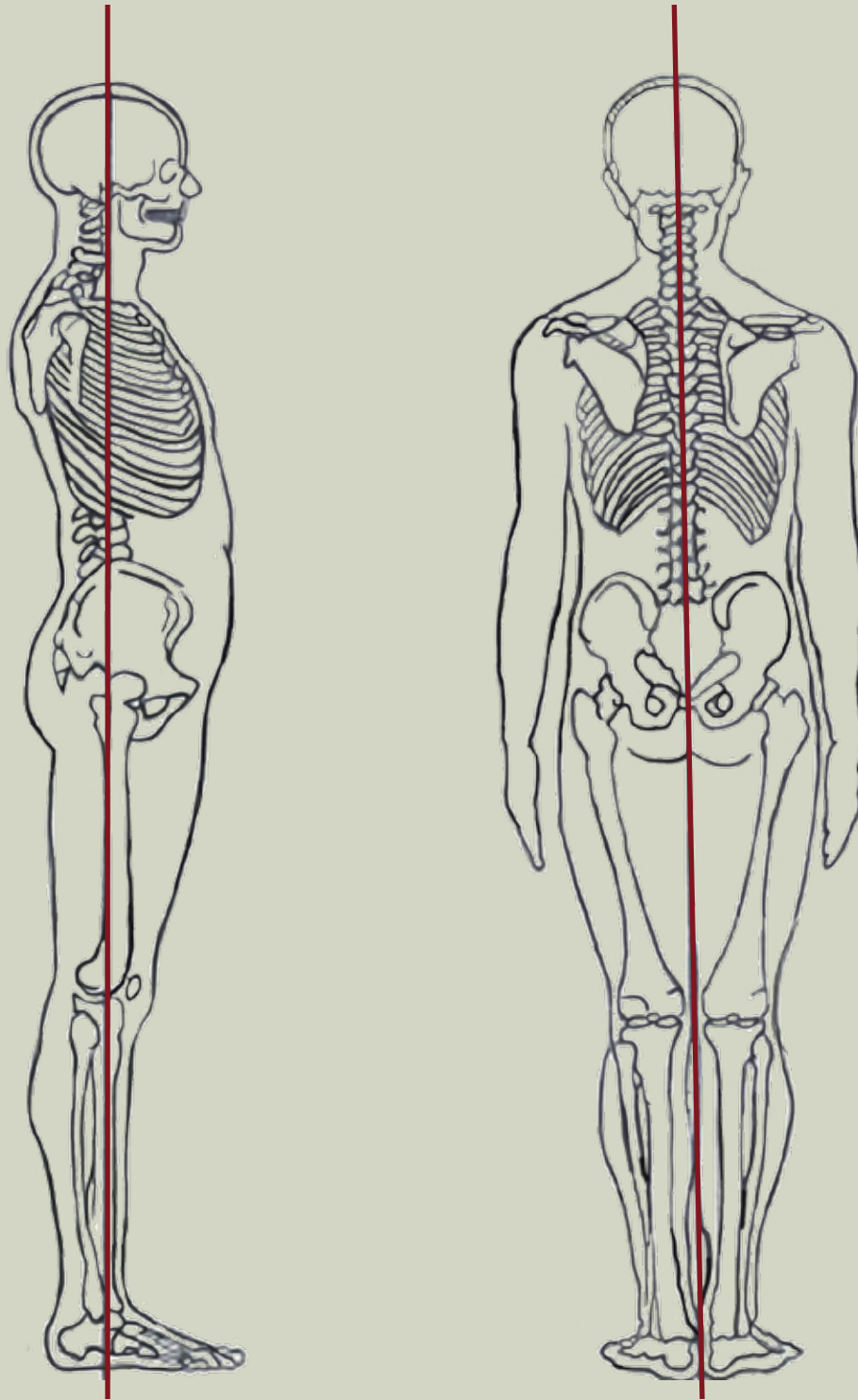
For example, when you turn your head to the right that movement reverberates via the fascia and can be sensed throughout your entire body—if you are sensitive enough to feel it.

Fascia binds our musculature whether we are properly aligned or not. If our shoulders are contracted, the fascia wraps around the musculature and holds this contracted position in place. Therefore, before you can return to your natural alignment, you must gradually loosen the fascia and free your muscles. We call this unbinding.

Q: *Can't I just stretch the fascia like I do my muscles?*

A: *Unfortunately, fascia doesn't respond to static stretching. It can be forcefully (and painfully) pulled apart by Rolfing, or gently lengthened over time by Mudwalking.*

Joints that are off-center, bound, tense, and unable to move as nature intended severely restrict your body's ability to move in an effective, coordinated manner.



The Plumb Line

The Plumb Line

A plumb line is a string with a metal weight at one end that, when suspended, is pulled by gravity directly towards the earth's center. It is used to determine when something—a building, a painting on a wall, or a person—is exactly vertical. The plumb line is an exact visual representation of the force of gravity.

In Mudwalking, by finding the plumb line within your body, you can cultivate a perfect natural alignment.

NOTE: *When standing with a proper plumb line, you will have more stability if the tip of your tailbone is slightly tucked under (barely visible to an observer). You will notice that this tiny tuck movement will flow up your entire spine, providing a more complete integration of your spinal vertebrae, as well as a spring in your step.*

How to Feel Your Plumb Line

- 1** | Feel where the plumb line goes through the top of your head; center it front to back and side to side.
- 2** | Feel where the plumb line goes through your throat; center it front to back and side to side.
- 3** | Feel where the plumb line goes through your chest; center it front to back and side to side.

4 | Feel where the plumb line goes through your center of gravity; center it front to back and side to side.

5 | Feel where the plumb line goes through your pelvis; center it front to back and side to side.

6 | Feel where the plumb line goes through your pelvic floor; center it front to back and side to side.

Once you become sensitive to these areas along your plumb line, your body will instinctively “connect the dots” and you will have achieved a relaxed natural alignment.

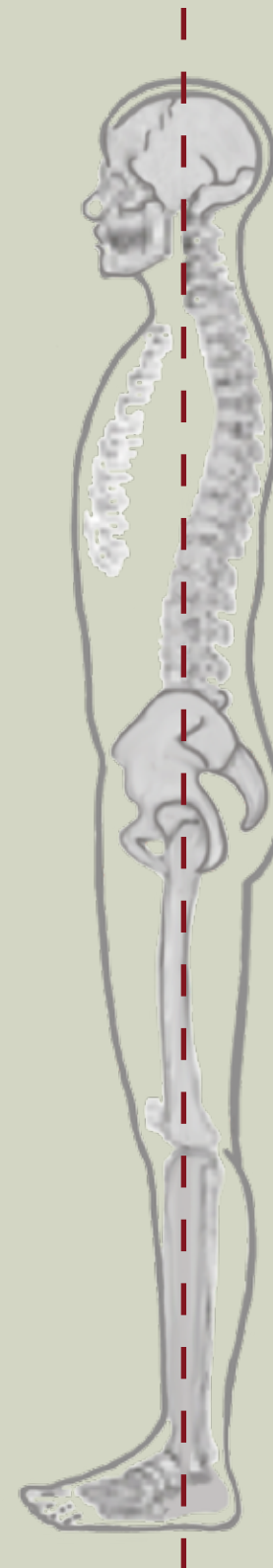
NOTE: *You can also do this exercise by starting with number six (the center of your pelvic floor) and moving up your body to number one (the center of your head).*



Elongate Your Spine

Your spine is not straight—it has three major curves. It’s not thin—it’s large and it’s wide. At your waist it fills half of your body cavity. And most movement takes place on the inner portion, not the spiny outer portion.

To find your true plumb line, your spine must be open and elongated. We don’t say “stretched” because that suggests that you are actively stretching your spine. Borrowing a concept from tai chi, imagine that the top of your head is suspended from a hook and the tip



Once you become sensitive to these areas along your plumb line, your body will instinctively “connect the dots” and you will have achieved a relaxed natural alignment

of your tailbone has a small weight attached. Gravity will naturally elongate your spine without any effort. That's the natural elongation we are looking for.

An equally effective way to elongate your spine is to try and relax the discs between each vertebra. Go from your tailbone up or the top of your spine (the atlas vertebra) down. Remember, the disks are on the inside of your spine, not the spiny protrusions along your back. This technique is particularly effective when you are lying down.



Your Center of Gravity (CoG)

In physics, the center of gravity is a point where:

- The total weight of a material body may be thought to be concentrated
- The point in any solid where a single applied force could support it
- The mass of the object is equally balanced

Basically, your CoG is the center of your body, its balance point, the core of your core. In a human, the CoG is located at approximately the level of your navel, midway into the body. The CoG may be slightly higher or lower based on body proportions and weight distribution.

In Mudwalking, by balancing and moving from our CoG, we move our bodies as nature intended—with ease, strength, precision, and efficiency.

Moving from your CoG uses energy so efficiently that you will gain



In a standard
Mudwalking session
of 20 minutes,
you will do over
1000 TWISTS,
each one working
your core, loosening
and strengthening
your spine
and nourishing your
internal organs.

strength and endurance whenever you do so. A goal of Mudwalking is to train your brain to remember to move from your CoG all the time.

It is interesting to note that in the Department of Defense Military Dictionary the center of gravity is defined as, “The source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.” The military ascribes significant strength of character as well as physical strength to our CoG.

The Twist

The key to the power of Mudwalking as a rejuvenative training is the natural torso twisting that occurs when you walk in a circle while facing towards the center. As you release to gravity, your body relaxes and your joints loosen. When you twist around your plumb line, it works your core muscles, and also goes deep into your body, loosening every vertebra and massaging your internal organs.

You will find that the more you release your muscles and joints, the deeper the twisting motion goes into your body. Eventually, you will even feel the movement in your lungs as you twist out the “old” air (high in CO₂) that often is not fully expelled. This creates additional space in your lungs for fresh air (high in oxygen).



In a standard Mudwalking session of twenty minutes, you will do over one thousand twists, each one working your core, loosening and strengthening your spine, and nourishing your internal organs.

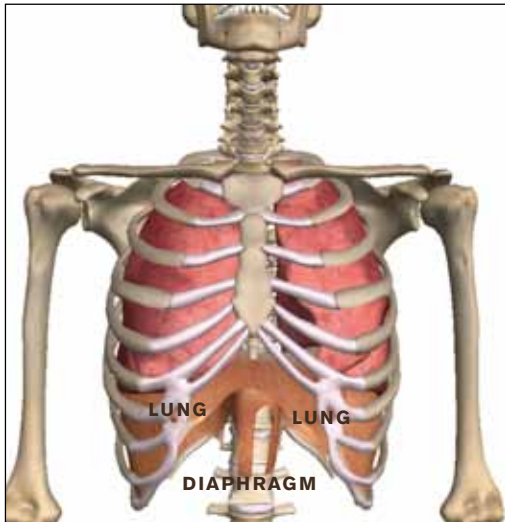
The Back of Your Knees

Most people walk with their weight on the front of their knees. This puts excessive stress on the knee joints. In fact, the back of your knee joints should support most of your weight. In Mudwalking, we bend by opening and closing the back of our knees. This not only reduces stress on the knees, but also adds explosive power to one’s gait, which is useful in both cardio Mudwalking and martial arts.

Breathing

In Mudwalking, we cultivate two types of breathing: outer and inner. Outer breathing is taking air into our lungs. This happens when we inhale. Inner breathing transfers the oxygen to the bloodstream and then into the cells; it transfers CO₂ from the bloodstream to the lungs and out of our bodies. All this happens when we exhale.

There are no breathing exercises per se associated with Mudwalking. The breath should be natural, but this can’t and won’t happen until the musculature is unbound and the body has fully released.



Cultivate natural free inhales and slow exhales to allow maximum exchange of oxygen to the cells. This natural breathing is called free breathing.

THE BEST WAY TO TRAIN FREE BREATHING IS:

- 1| Become aware of where your diaphragm attaches to your rib cage at the back, front, and sides.
- 2| Become aware of how your ribs, diaphragm, and lungs operate as you breathe.
- 3| Try to “see” and feel these movement within your own body.
- 4| Check in on your breathing periodically while you are Mudwalking to make sure it’s free.

Q: *Isn’t it better to take in more oxygen when I inhale so that more oxygen gets into the blood?*

A: *The body doesn’t need more oxygen in the bloodstream, it needs the correct amount of oxygen. Too much oxygen will cause hyperventilation and other problems. If your breathing is free, your body will take in all the oxygen it needs.*

Q: *It sounds like you’re saying that my exhale is more important than my inhale. Is that true?*

A: *Yes, it is. Exhaling is when oxygen is transferred into the bloodstream and the carbon dioxide is removed. We want to encourage longer exhales to give the gas exchange process more time. In addition, when your exhale is restricted, a lot of the bad air with CO₂ stays in the lungs and limits the amount of good air you can inhale.*

In Bones We Trust

Muscles change. Muscles get weak. Muscles get tense. Muscles you don't use disappear from your awareness, while muscles you use too much will become chronically contracted and never relax.

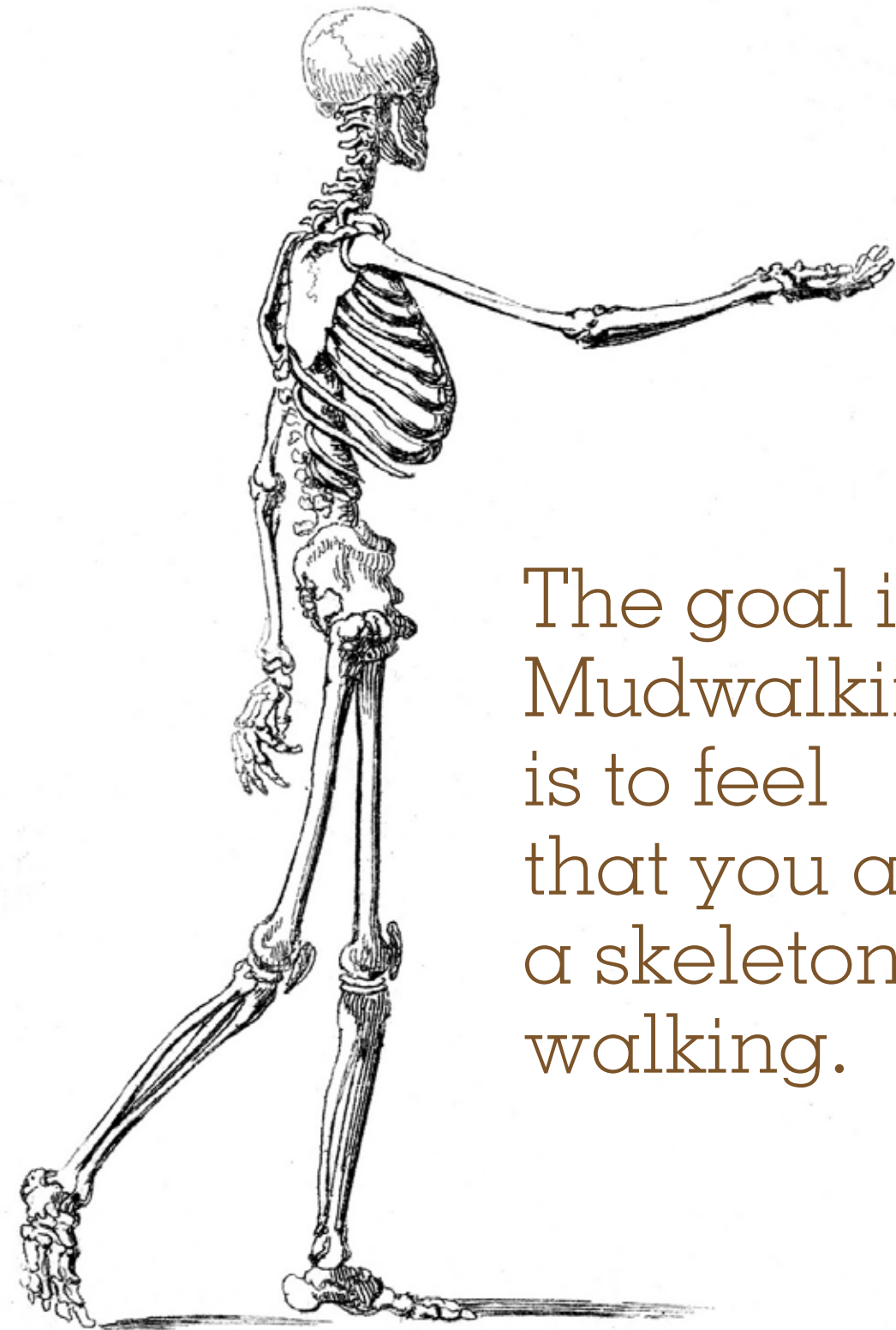
Muscles also lie. They will tell you that you are standing straight, when a glance in the mirror tells you that you are not.

Bones, however, are always the same. They don't get tense, they don't get fatigued, and they don't contract. When we gain or lose weight, or when we do or don't exercise, our bones remain the same. As we age, the composition of our bones changes (i.e. osteoporosis) but their shape and position remain essentially the same.

In Mudwalking, you use the bones and the proprioceptive cells in the joints as the primary focus of your body. As you become more aware of your bones, you will find that the musculature surrounding them automatically releases. As you begin to rely on your bones as a means of physical orientation you can more easily release to gravity and apply the principles of Mudwalking.

It is important to be as anatomically precise as possible when "seeing" your bones. Investing some time in studying the skeleton will significantly accelerate your training.

The goal in Mudwalking is to feel that you are a skeleton walking.



The goal in
Mudwalking
is to feel
that you are
a skeleton
walking.



Q: *How do you become more aware of your bones?*

A: *It's quite simple. Just lie down, relax, and try to "feel" different parts of your skeleton. At first, some bones will be easy to sense and others will not. In a short while, however, all of your bones will come to life and you will feel like you have a whole new body. You can also go to www.zygotebody.com (the best site on the internet for learning about your skeleton). See what your bones look like, and then try to feel them inside of your body.*

Practice Seeing Your Bones

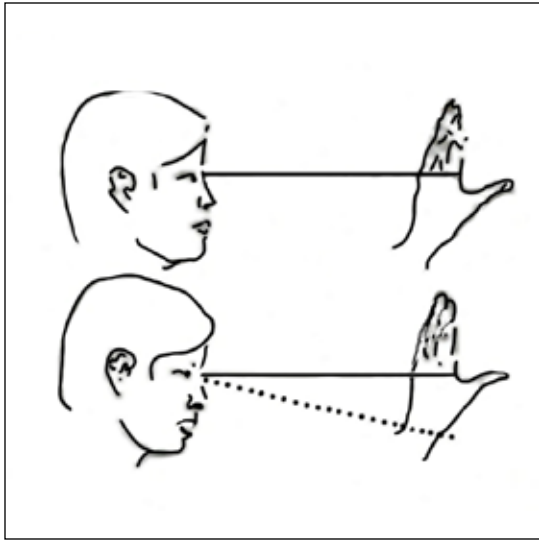
- 1** | Pick a joint that seems clearest in your mind's eye (e.g. your left wrist).
- 2** | Look at a picture of it from all angles
(see APPENDIX A or zygotebody.com).
- 3** | Compare the picture to your own wrist.
- 4** | Make tiny movements of your wrist while picturing how it looks.
- 5** | Compare your left wrist to your right wrist.
(Just compare, don't move anything.)
- 6** | After doing this with all your joints, see how they move and coordinate with each other as you Mudwalk.

NOTE: *We all have the capacity to see deeply inside our bodies. In the beginning, however, most people need to reacquaint themselves with this latent ability. It just takes some attention, some practice, and some patience.*

Wide Eyes on the Horizon

It's impossible to hold tension in your body when your eyes are relaxed. And when your eyes are tensed, it is almost impossible to relax. This is how we are wired.

It is also a fact that our primitive ancestors used their peripheral vision a lot (to avoid being a lion's lunch). They needed a much wider field of vision and only occasionally used their focused vision (like you do on a computer screen).



In Mudwalking, we try to emulate the wide-eyed vision of our ancestors. We do this by emphasizing our peripheral vision when we walk the circle. You will notice that the more you use peripheral vision, the more your eyes relax and soften, and the more relaxation is transferred to your body.

We also keep our gaze parallel to the ground—this keeps our head in the proper position.

It may seem strange to focus on your hand in the center of the circle and at the same time use your peripheral vision. However, using your peripheral vision doesn't mean you can't see in front of you; it just means that you widen your field of vision to include the sides as well as the front. At first it may feel strange, but this is the beginning of the neurological growth that is a major benefit of Mudwalking. Just give your nervous system some time to adapt.

Q: *Won't I lose my balance if I'm looking to both sides simultaneously?*

A: *No, your balance and depth perception will greatly improve.*

Large vs. Small Muscles

Our muscles are often classified as either work muscles, those larger muscles that we use to move our arms and legs, or postural muscles,

smaller muscles designed to stay in the background and keep us properly aligned with gravity.

Unfortunately, when we are out of alignment, the large muscles often take over the job of the small postural muscles. This creates overwork and fatigue in the large muscles, while our postural muscles get weaker and weaker.

For millennia, Chinese martial artists have used static exercises to rebalance the body and build power. They stand motionless with the arms in various fighting positions for ten minutes to an hour or more. Eventually the large muscles get fatigued, and the smaller muscles are activated and



strengthened. They believe that the strength of the large and small muscles together is greater than the strength of the large muscles alone.

Mudwalking addresses this muscle-balancing problem by combining the active walking and twisting of the lower body (from the CoG down) with a completely static posture of the upper body (from the CoG up).

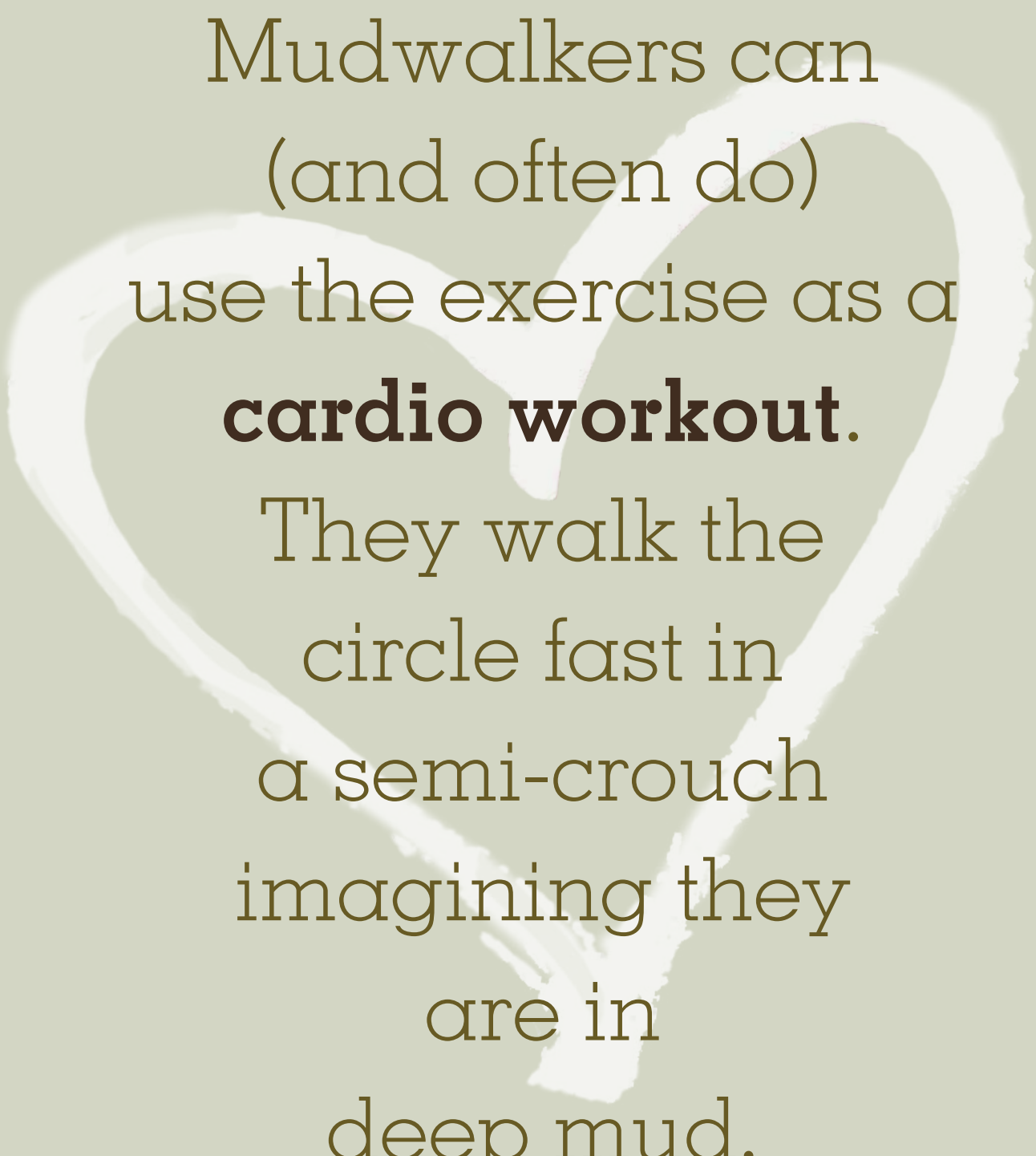
Cardio

Although the strategy of Mudwalking is to train the body to do more work with less effort while breathing naturally, Mudwalkers can (and often do) use the exercise as a cardio workout. They walk the circle fast in a semi-crouch imagining they are in deep mud. This puts enormous strain on the body and gets the heart rate up. This style of Mudwalking will leave you sweating and shaking and is very beneficial in building overall body strength.

If you are training for a specific physical challenge such as a triathlon, 10K, or climbing Everest, a daily Mudwalking session is excellent for both foundation (base) training and developing the ability to do more work using less oxygen.

Q: *Does it replace my usual thirty minutes of jogging or power walking?*

A: *Yes. Recent research has suggested that HIT (high intensity training) is preferable to LSD (long slow distance) training in overall conditioning. You can make your Mudwalking session as difficult and demanding as you wish or work hard for a portion of the training session (till your legs give out) and then resume a relaxed pace.*



Mudwalkers can
(and often do)
use the exercise as a
cardio workout.
They walk the
circle fast in
a semi-crouch
imagining they
are in
deep mud.

Becoming More Athletic

A major difference between us and elite athletes is their superior ability to 1) be aware of their bodies in space (proprioceptive sense) and 2) give their bodies instructions that are carried out by their nervous system. It's not so much their physical strength, which can be developed by hours a day of training, but rather their coordination and learning ability that separate them from the rest of us.

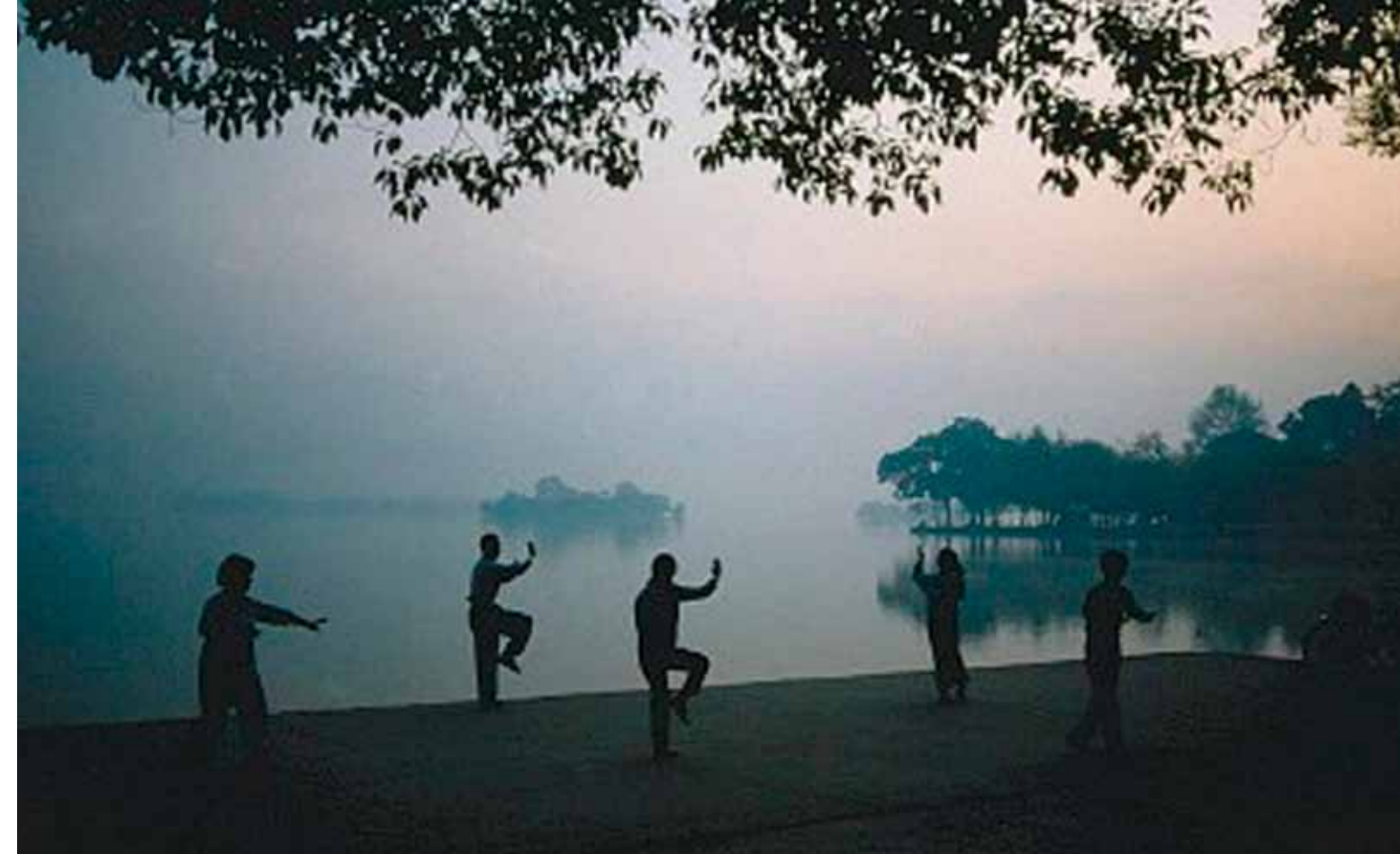
Mudwalking helps you develop these key attributes of elite athletes.

Q: *Are you saying that Mudwalking will make me more athletic?*

A: *Yes, and more coordinated.*

Q: *Will it transfer over to other sports?*

A: *Yes, and to all other physical activities—hiking, chasing the kids or grand-kids, samba dancing, golfing, skiing, even horseback riding.*



PART 5

Mudwalking and Your Brain

Proprioception

The term proprioception is derived from the Latin word “proprius,” meaning “one’s own,” and the word “perception,” how you translate sensory input into a coherent and unified picture of your environment.

Proprioception is the way that your body communicates with itself. It is your ability to feel your body in space. To be able to walk, run, or jump, all of the different parts of your body have to be able to talk to one another. The joints give feedback to the muscles, and the muscles react to what the joints tell them. Proprioception is a combination of balance, sense of joint position, and body awareness. It is vital to sports performance and rehabilitation following an injury.

Research has discovered that for each signal sent by proprioceptive cells in the joints to the brain, thirty signals are sent back in response from the brain to our muscles. Even a slight movement in a joint results in a large muscular response.

Body Shifting

Your body learns by trying a movement in different ways and deciding which way is most efficient (i.e. uses the least amount of energy).

When unable to perform a movement efficiently due to tight, chronically contracted muscles, your body quickly adjusts, finding ways to compen-



sate and perform the movement any way it can. Unfortunately, this wrong way can become habitual and the tension permanently locked in.

In Mudwalking, we try to stay out of the way while our bodies experiment and reorganize themselves according to both gravity and the geometry of walking the circle.

REMEMBER: *Let it happen, don't make it happen!*

Q: *How do I know if a shift is happening naturally or if I am forcing it?*

A: *A natural body shift feels good and is often accompanied by a wave of relaxation throughout the body.*

Releasing

Releasing means, quite literally, releasing to the gentle pull of gravity. While it is very difficult to relax a single chronically contracted muscle,

such as the deltoid (the shoulder cap muscle), it is much easier to release a larger body part (the entire shoulder area). Gradually, you learn to release all of your body parts and let Mudwalking's principles of natural movement and gravity take over.

When you release an area, you will notice a wave of relaxation passing through your body. Each wave that passes through your body brings you into a more correct alignment.

Q: *How do I practice releasing when I'm Mudwalking?*

A: *First, you should learn to release when you are not Mudwalking. You can practice releasing anytime or anyplace—sitting in a chair, waiting on line, in bed. Once you get good at it, you can practice releasing periodically during a Mudwalking session.*

Free Your Cerebellum

In Latin, cerebellum means “little brain.” It is the area at the back of your brain that controls coordination, balance, posture, equilibrium, and muscle tone. It does this by relaying information between muscles and areas of the cerebral cortex that are involved in motor control.

Most people have a lot of tension in the area near the cerebellum. This tension restricts natural movement at



the back of the skull and cramps the cerebellum. It also inhibits fine motor coordination, balance, and body intelligence.

It is important during Mudwalking to periodically check the muscles near your cerebellum and if they feel cramped, release the tense area at the back of your head. When the cerebellum returns to its natural condition, a wave of relaxation (gravity) will flow through the body and your movements will become more balanced and fluid.

Q: *How can a part of my brain become tense?*

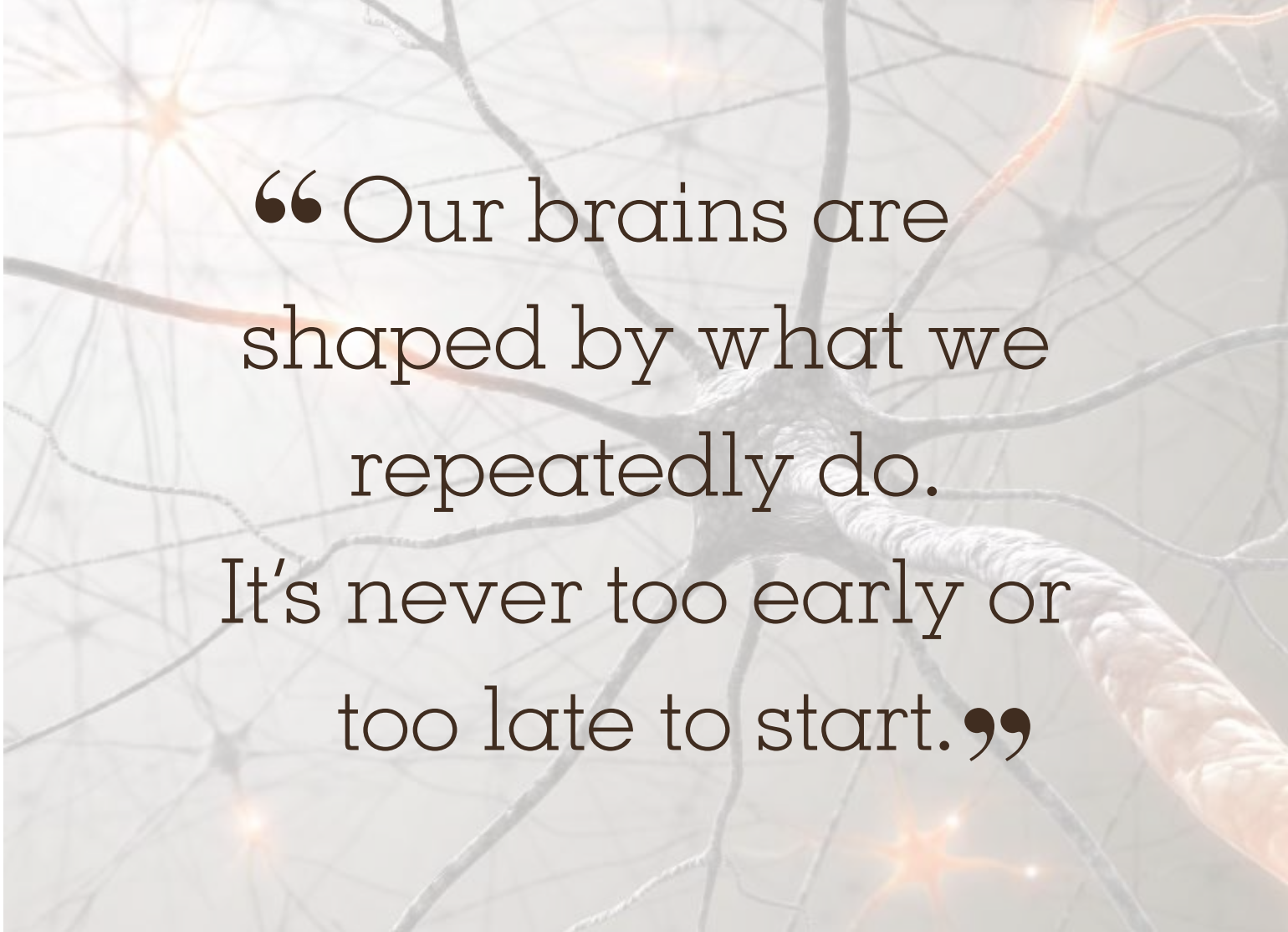
A: *Your brain doesn't become tense, the muscles, nerves, and connective tissue become tense and impinge upon the space of the cerebellum. A relaxed cerebellum is a quick way of checking if your body is "loose."*

Q: *Is Mudwalking similar to the cerebellum training that is used for ADHD and stroke patients?*

A: *Yes, Mudwalking is a relaxed but intense cerebellum training in addition to its other benefits.*

Neuroplasticity

Until a decade ago, mainstream science believed that our brains were hard-wired, and consequently unable to grow, learn, and improve in adulthood. However, a mountain of new scientific evidence has shown that you can improve your brain. You can also reprogram your nervous system, and, yes, you can teach an old dog new tricks. This is called neuroplasticity.



“Our brains are shaped by what we repeatedly do. It's never too early or too late to start.”

Techniques for revitalizing your brain and nervous system are incorporated into Mudwalking. As you Mudwalk, your mind, body, and the connections between them are strengthened. Day by day you will improve—today you will be better than yesterday and tomorrow you will be better than today. There is no limit to your improvement.

REMEMBER: *Our brains are shaped by what we repeatedly do. It's never too early or too late to start.*



Mona Lisa Smile

There has been much discussion over the centuries about the enigmatic smile of the Mona Lisa. It is interesting to note that a gentle smile relaxes many of our facial muscles and “cues” the entire body to relax.

In Mudwalking, we make use of this helpful reflex by smiling like Mona Lisa when we walk.

Taking Up All of Your Space

As we lose track of the parts of our body through disuse, injury, or trauma, in our mind’s eye we become smaller. Our bodies work overtime to compensate for the “missing” parts and coordination and agility go out the window.

An essential part of Mudwalking training is to bring these body parts back into awareness so that we become, neurologically speaking, our natural size again.

In the beginning, this is difficult to do while focusing on the other principles of Mudwalking, so I would recommend spending a few minutes a day simply closing your eyes and feeling all of your body. Some parts will

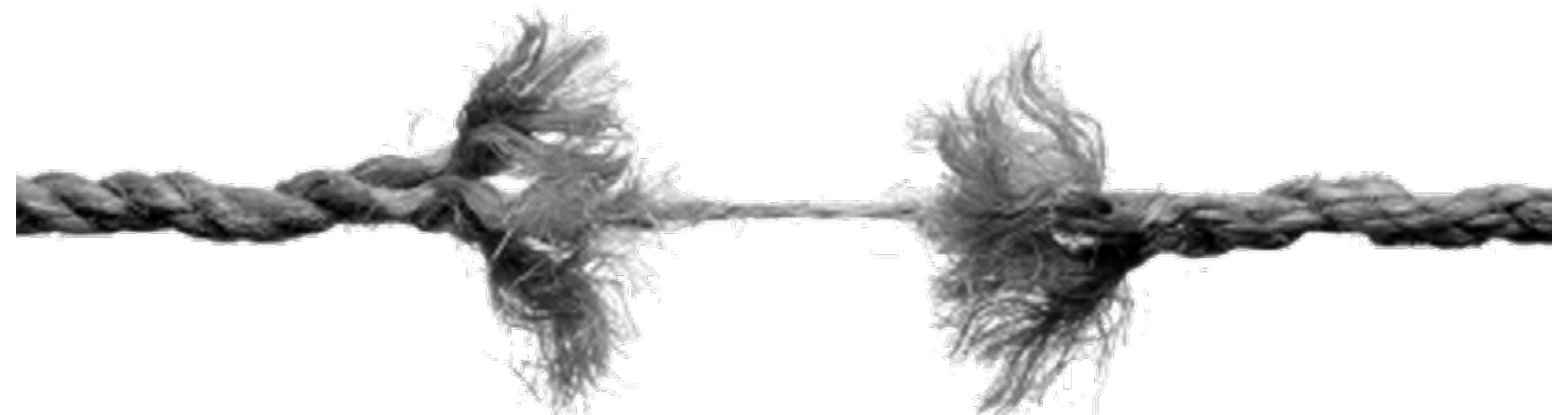
be somewhat clear, and other parts will feel “hazy” or “dark.” However, you will quickly learn to see your entire body and transfer this awareness to both your Mudwalking practice and all your waking moments.

A SUGGESTION: *Try feeling your skin in minute detail all over your body to establish the outer limits of your body and then work inward.*

The Enemy of Mudwalking

The enemy of Mudwalking (and everything else we do) is mental tension. Pushing ourselves, questioning ourselves, criticizing ourselves, obsessing over perfectionism all create mental tension (and I’m sure you can add to this list).

To become a successful Mudwalker, you must first learn to identify your mental tension and eliminate it by using your innervision. However, be aware that focusing too hard or “obsessing” over innervision can also create mental tension, so go easy.





PART 6

The Training

Overview

Mudwalking is simple and straightforward: you walk in a circle with your inside hand extended toward the center. After a minute or so, you turn and walk the circle in the opposite direction.

Depending on how much lower body strength you want to develop, you can walk at your regular height, or sink down to a medium or very low crouch.

Based on how much core strength you want to develop, you can imagine walking through an inch of mud, or thick mud up to your knees or waist.

Although the act of walking the circle is simple, the principles that must be applied while Mudwalking make the training complex for both the mind and the body.

REMEMBER: *The challenge of Mudwalking is to walk the circle while observing the key principles of the training.*

Training Philosophy

Research has strongly suggested that shorter, more frequent training sessions are better than fewer, longer sessions.

In the beginning, sessions can be five to ten minutes long. As you progress, you can expand the length of your sessions, based on your training goals and your schedule to a maximum of thirty minutes a day.



Where, When, How Often?

WHERE: Mudwalking can be done indoors or outdoors. It can be done during the day or night. Some days I do it at the park, some days I do it in my living room. There is no difference (except to my dog, who prefers when we do it at the park).

WHEN: Some Mudwalkers prefer training in the morning to get themselves energized for the day's activities, while others prefer the evening to release the tension absorbed during the day. Others split the training into a few short sessions so that they continually return to a more efficient, relaxed state throughout the day.

INTENSITY: Maximum effort should not be your goal! Sixty to eighty percent effort is the range we use in Mudwalking. Neurological learning doesn't happen when we are using maximum effort.

“Although the act of walking the circle is simple, the principles that must be applied while **MUDWALKING** make the training complex and a challenge for both mind and body.”



FOOTWEAR: Barefoot is best, but socks or cheap, flexible-soled shoes are also good. Expensive shoes with cushioning, arch supports, and structure are bad—they restrict or mask natural movement in your ankle joints.

HOW LONG: To reap the maximum benefits of Mudwalking, thirty minutes of training daily should be your goal. However, start with five to ten minutes and gradually build up to thirty minutes. You can also vary the length of your sessions depending on your time constraints on any given day. You should work with a timer that allows you to set a specific number of rounds at specific intervals (e.g. for the warm-up, set it for five one-minute rounds, for the Mudwalking, ten one-minute rounds). If you have an iPhone or Android there is free app called Round Timer from Plain and Simple Software. There is also a good interval timer for \$19.95 from www.gymboss.com.

The Ten Principles of Training

In addition to the five key principles noted in Part 3, there are five more that need to be incorporated into your training as you progress.

It is impossible to remember all of these principles at once. The goal is to focus on the first few until they become habitual (coaches call this “muscle memory,” although it actually occurs in the brain), then incorporate a few more at a time as you progress.

NOTE: *Trying to remember too many principles at once will create mental tension. If your mind begins to work too hard, relax and focus on one principle until your brain quiets down.*

PRINCIPLE I RELEASE TO GRAVITY

Release to the force of gravity and allow it to gently position your body into a more proper alignment.

Gravity is called the sculptor of the universe and this holds true for your body as well. Your body is designed to work with gravity. When you are in alignment, your muscles move almost effortlessly, your internal organs are properly nourished, and your brain is relaxed and sensitive. When you are out of natural alignment, your body and brain have to work harder to keep you erect, your internal organs are restricted and congested, and everything you do becomes more difficult—and uses more valuable energy.

Gravity wants to streamline the body. It hates a protruding belly, a misaligned spine, and chronically tense muscles. These stop gravity from doing its job of keeping you aligned, balanced, and efficient.

PRINCIPLE II OPEN YOUR JOINTS

Open and center all the joints in your body, paying special attention to the joints of your spine, allowing each one to “breathe” and your skeleton to move more freely. Imagine yourself without muscles and organs. Feel as if you are a skeleton walking.

The Ten Principles of TRAINING

1.
Release to gravity

2.
Open your joints

3.
Establish your plumb line

4.
*Move from your center
of gravity*

5.
Widen your field of vision

6.
Twist around your plumb line

7.
Open your cerebellum

8.
Breathe naturally

9.
Work hard and work easy

10.
Walk through the mud



PRINCIPLE III ESTABLISH YOUR PLUMB LINE

Becoming aware of your body's plumb line is the easiest way to align your body with gravity. Start at the top of your head and "feel" the plumb line go through your body and exit in the center of your pelvic floor and down through the ground between your legs.

NOTE: *Make sure your spine is elongated before you find your plumb line.*

You can imagine your plumb line as thin, thick, a column of water, or solid pole. It doesn't matter as long as it is straight, perfectly aligned with gravity, and positioned so you can easily twist around it.

In addition to your plumb line aligning you with gravity, it also provides you with a reference line around which you twist as you walk the circle. The plumb line is also your reference line as you raise and lower your center of gravity to adjust the difficulty of your Mudwalking.

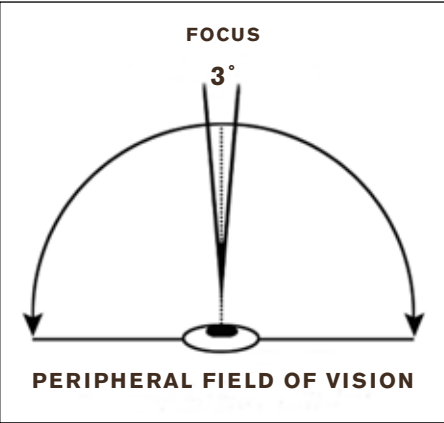
PRINCIPLE IV MOVE FROM YOUR CENTER OF GRAVITY

Identify the true core of your body, your center of gravity (CoG), and learn to generate all Mudwalking movement from that point.

The CoG is "the core of your core" and the power point of your body. The more sensitive you are to your CoG, the stronger your core will become.

A fast way to learn to move from your CoG: Imagine your CoG as a metal ball inside your body. As you Mudwalk, imagine a magnet in front of your

CoG “pulling” you around the circle. Next, imagine that same magnet behind your CoG “pushing” you along.



PRINCIPLE V WIDEN YOUR FIELD OF VISION

Use your peripheral vision throughout the exercise. Try to see your entire field of vision at once. It will seem strange at first, but with practice, your full field of vision will return.

NOTE: Keep your gaze on the horizon, parallel to the ground.

PRINCIPLE VI TWIST AROUND YOUR PLUMB LINE

Release your body so that the natural twisting motion of walking the circle reaches the inside of your spine and your internal organs. The deeper the twist, the more value to your organs.

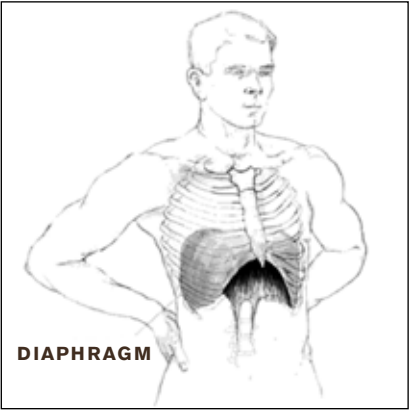
PRINCIPLE VII OPEN YOUR CEREBELLUM

The area at the back of your head (where your neck meets your skull) surrounding your cerebellum is a good indicator of tension. It’s important that you keep this area open by releasing any tension that you feel.

NOTE: Placing the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth behind your upper teeth will prevent your head from dropping down and allow you to release the musculature surrounding your cerebellum.

PRINCIPLE VIII BREATHE NATURALLY

There is nothing to “do”—no big inhales or exhales. However, if body tension is restricting your natural breathing, release the musculature around the rib cage. Eventually, all these muscles will release. Make sure your diaphragm returns to its proper position when you exhale (it happens automatically unless you get in the way).



PRINCIPLE IX WORK HARD AND WORK EASY

The goal is to work hard while being very relaxed. If you feel you are working too hard, slow down, relax, and then gradually increase the workload on your body.

PRINCIPLE X WALK THROUGH THE MUD

The deeper the mud, the harder the workout. You decide how hard you need to work. Feel free to mix easy and hard within the same Mudwalking session.

Mudwalking Footwork

Over the centuries, many different footwork styles have been developed. Some are used for walking especially fast or especially slowly, and some have been developed for martial arts applications.

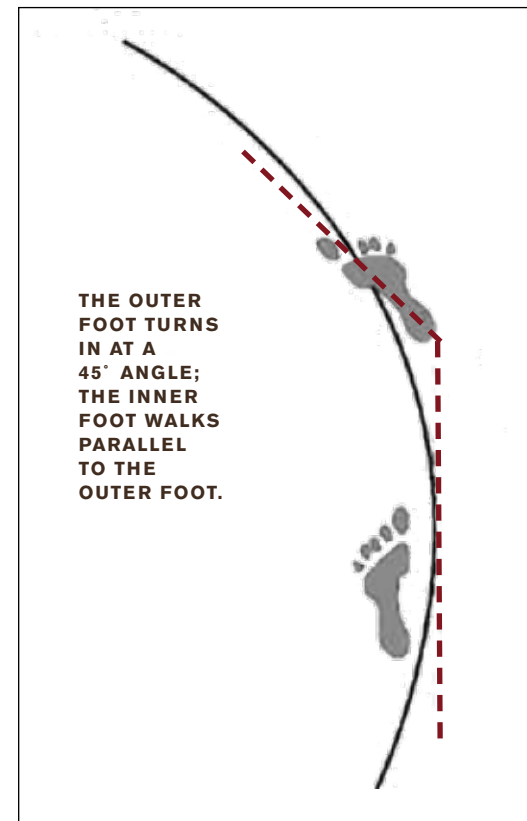
In Mudwalking, we use a style that emphasizes real-life strength and agility.

As you walk the circle, the inside foot walks in a straight line and the outside foot turns in at a forty-five-degree angle. This keeps you on the circumference of the circle.

Walk like a tiger, landing on your forefoot first (don't land on your heel first). Most



people are balanced too far back. Becoming aware and strengthening your functional center will give you exceptional balance and lightness.



As you walk, stretch your toes and feel your tiger claws gripping the ground. This will make your feet and lower legs very strong.

Make sure your ankle joints are open, and also make sure that when your ankles cross during your walking, they are no more than two to three inches apart.

If you want to walk very quickly, you can change to a heel first walking action, but as you slow down return to walking like a tiger.

Alternatively, walk so that your entire foot meets the ground at the same time. Neither the front of your foot nor the heel touches first. This



means that as you lift your back foot with each step, it leaves the ground all at the same time, not heel first.

In China, advanced students will increase the difficulty of walking the circle by walking on bricks, small platforms, or posts driven into the ground.

PART 7

Your Personal Training Program

The Five Modules

The Mudwalking program is broken down into five modules:

The Warm-Up—*five minutes*







Mudwalking—*five to ten minutes*

Advanced Mudwalking (Freestyling)—*five to ten minutes*

Absorb and Transfer—*five minutes*

Advanced Exercises—*Cloud Hands, The Carousel, Spinal Strength, Daily Facelift*

The chart below shows a sample training schedule, which you should adjust based on your available time each day. Feel free to personalize your training as needed. Each module is equally valuable, so as long as you’re doing something, you’re making progress.

PRACTICE TIME					
5 MINUTES	 WARMUP OR MUDWALKING 5 MIN				
10 MINUTES	 WARMUP 5 MIN	MUDWALKING 5 MIN			
15 MINUTES	 WARMUP 5 MIN	MUDWALKING 5 MIN	FREESTYLING 5 MIN		
20 MINUTES	 WARMUP 5 MIN	MUDWALKING 5 MIN	FREESTYLING 5 MIN	ABSORB AND TRANSFER 5 MIN	
25 MINUTES	 ADVANCED EXERCISES 5 MIN	WARMUP 5 MIN	MUDWALKING 5 MIN	FREESTYLING 5 MIN	ABSORB AND TRANSFER 5 MIN
35 MINUTES	 ADVANCED EXERCISES 5 MIN	WARMUP 5 MIN	MUDWALKING 10 MIN	ADVANCED MUDWALKING 10 MIN	ABSORB AND TRANSFER 5 MIN



The Warm-Up

FIVE MINUTES

YOU CAN DOWNLOAD FREE AUDIO OF A GUIDED WARM-UP SESSION AT OUR WEBSITE, WWW.MUDWALKING.COM.

The warm-up for Mudwalking is not designed to warm up your muscles—it is designed to warm up the connection between your mind and your body.

You begin by standing with your eyes relaxed (open or closed). For one minute each, focus on one of the key principles below. Although I’m not there with you, I have included some things that I would say to you if I were.

MINUTE ① RELEASE TO GRAVITY

- “Feel gravity in every part of your body, each joint, each organ, each muscle...down to the water in each cell...”
- “Feel the gravity field surrounding you...gently pulling you to the center of the earth...”
- “Feel how, with proper alignment, when you release to gravity your body stands erect with less effort...”

MINUTE ② OPEN YOUR JOINTS

- “Visualizing your whole skeleton at once, gently feel the movement in all of your joints...”
- “Check out each joint in your body, feel if it’s centered, if it feels oiled...”
- “If a joint feels hazy or hard to ‘see,’ go look at a photo of the joint after the session, and try to locate it inside your body...”
- “Imagine all of your body has disappeared except for your bones...”

MINUTE ③ FEEL YOUR PLUMB LINE

- “Feel your plumb line from above your head, through the center of your torso, through the center of your pelvic floor, and down to the ground... Just make sure it aligns with gravity...”
- “Imagine twisting around your plumb line and how the twisting motion goes deeper and deeper in your torso...”

MINUTE ④ FIND YOUR CENTER OF GRAVITY

- “As you release to gravity you will begin to identify an area around your

navel in the center of your body (along your plumb line) where your body feels balanced...”

- “Once you find that point, move very slightly left to right and up and down...”
- “Imaging the twisting of your body being initiated from your CoG on your plumb line...”

MINUTE ⑤ WIDEN YOUR FIELD OF VISION

- “Relax your eyes and be aware of your peripheral vision...It is always there...you just need to use it...”
- “Bagua fighters were trained to fight multiple opponents from all angles...thus the need for the maximum field of vision...”
- “Whatever you do, don’t tense your eyes...The goal is to develop both relaxed eyes and an expanded state of vision...not either/or...”
- “Don’t neglect your field of vision up and down as well as right to left... You’re training your WHOLE field of vision...”

NOTE: *When you become fluent in the five principles above, feel free to incorporate the other five principles of training (outlined in Part 6) into your five-minute warm-up.*

If you want to spend more time exploring a single principle, you can spend most or all of the warm-up session focusing on that principle. Every principle deepens the link between your mind and your body, and all are equally valuable.



Mudwalking

FIVE TO TEN MINUTES | YOUR STARTING POSITION



BEGIN MUDWALKING

- Begin walking around the circle at a moderate speed. Have the palm of your inside hand held parallel to the ground and towards the center of the circle. Your eyes should be looking beyond your hand at an imaginary person standing in the center of the circle.
- At the end of one minute, turn around, put your other towards the center of the circle, and walk in the opposite direction (i.e. when you are walking clockwise, change direction and walk counterclockwise, and vice versa).
- When you turn around, it's fine to turn either to the inside of the circle (an inside turn) or to the outside of the circle (an outside turn). If you want to turn to the inside, use the outside foot to start the turn and if you want to turn to the outside, use the inside foot to initiate the turn.
- Continue changing directions every minute.

NOTE: *In the beginning, each time you change direction, stop for ten seconds and make sure your alignment is correct, then continue walking. As you get more proficient, you can eventually eliminate the ten-second alignment check.*

Advanced Mudwalking (Freestyling)

FIVE TO TEN MINUTES

Once you have become fluid in your turns, you can begin freestyling, which consists of stringing together multiple turns and changes of direction, until you look like someone in a Hong Kong martial-arts movie.

In freestyling, there are no rules or patterns to follow—turn inside, walk a few steps and turn outside, walk a few steps and turn inside again, and keep repeating unique patterns for as long as you can. You can go fast and then slowly and then fast again. You create the pattern and decide how quickly you make your turns.

Whatever the movements of your freestyle walking, remember to twist around your plumb line and move from your CoG.

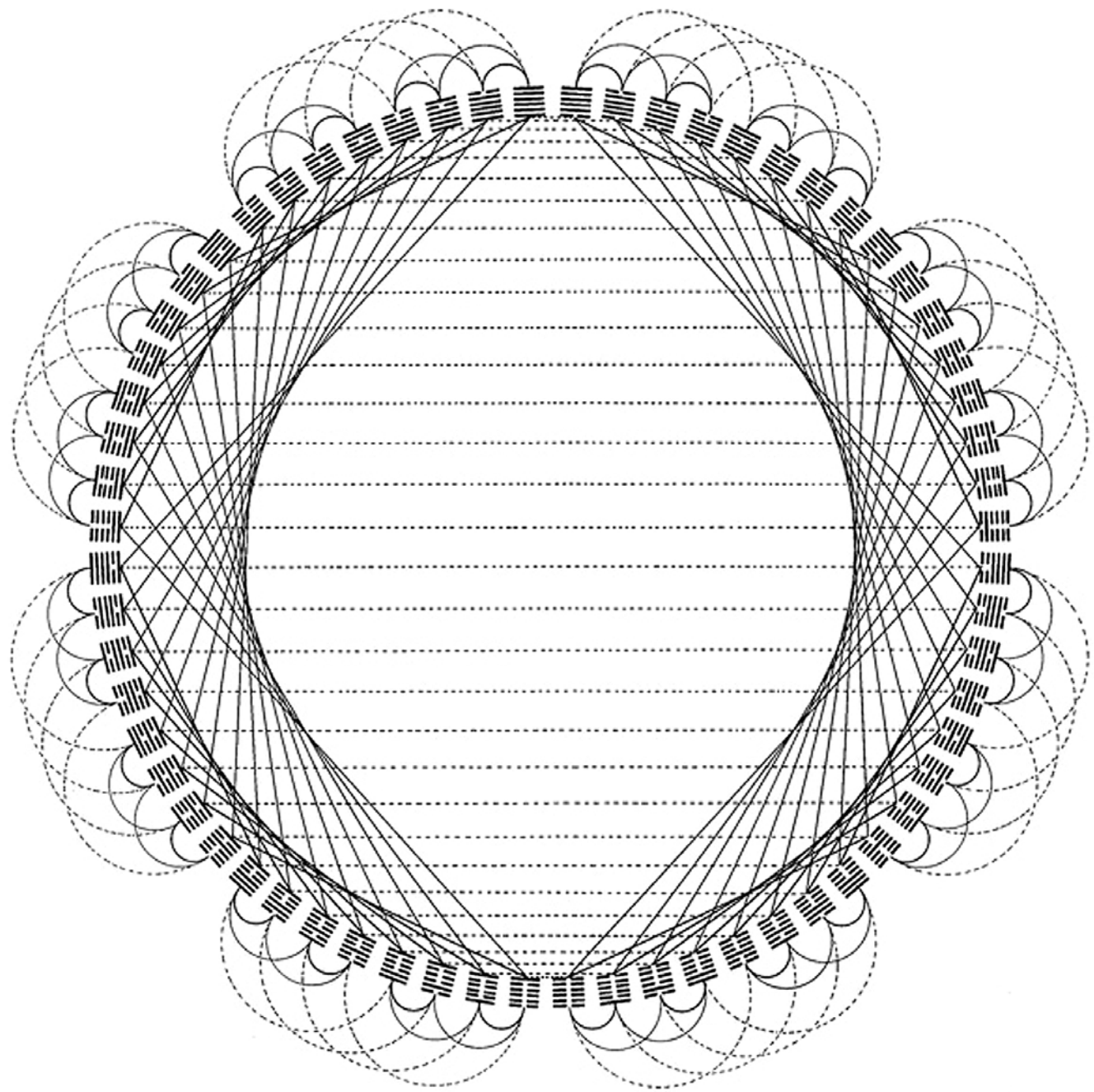
Freestyling not only allows you to express yourself in a “martial arts dance” but also increases your core strength and agility. It also helps you mentally change direction quickly and stay focused on what’s in front of you, which is a valuable skill in all areas of your life.

Another type of freestyling incorporates Cloud Hands (see Advanced Exercises later in this section) into walking the circle. Face directly into the center of the circle and begin to do Cloud Hands as you sidestep around the circle. After a minute, change direction, again using the sidestep. Next, continue doing Cloud Hands, but this time with your back to the center of the circle.

Freestyling is not only physically challenging, it is mentally challenging as well. Your mind must be both focused and in the moment to enable you to keep continuously turning and twisting while observing the key Mudwalking principles.



Training Notes



Absorb and Transfer

FIVE MINUTES

YOU CAN DOWNLOAD FREE AUDIO OF A GUIDED ABSORB AND TRANSFER SESSION AT OUR WEBSITE, WWW.MUDWALKING.COM.

During your Mudwalking session, your body has twisted, turned, loosened, experimented, opened up, pushed itself, and relaxed.

Now is the time for you to quietly absorb these experiences, sort them out, and come up with an improved sense of your body and its muscular/neurological organization. It is also the time to transfer what you have learned from Mudwalking to your daily life.

1. Let your body begin to quiet down.
2. Feel gravity through your body and down into the ground through the center of your foot.
3. Make sure your cerebellum and jaw are relaxed.
4. Relax into your plumb line.
5. Relax into your center of gravity.
6. Try to take the good feelings and mind/body insight you have experienced during your Mudwalking session and imagine using them in “real” life (e.g. moving from your CoG at the market, or moving like a skeleton while walking to the mailbox).

Doing this is not mystical gymnastics, it is learning the skill of transfer-

ring neurological information from the specific (Mudwalking) to the general (daily life). You will get more proficient with practice.

A common mistake is to try to improve on yesterday’s results. Your body doesn’t work that way. From your body’s point of view, each day is a new experience with new discoveries. Remember, “a-ha” moments come when least expected, so stay out of the way and relax.

Advanced Exercises

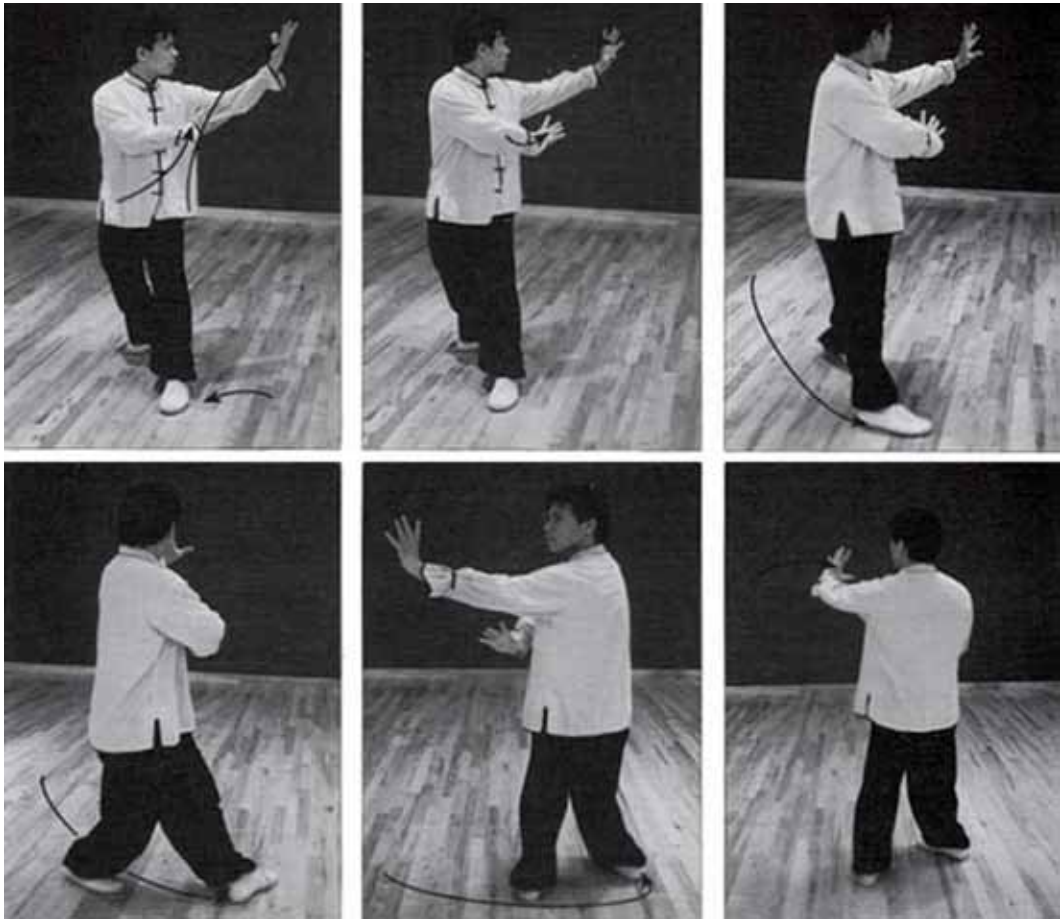
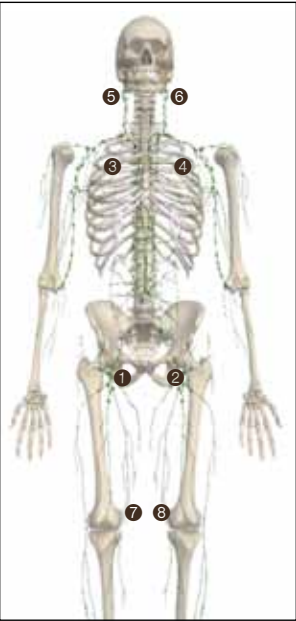
1 | CLOUD HANDS FOR HEALTH

WATCH A VIDEO DEMONSTRATION OF CLOUD HANDS AT WWW.MUDWALKING.COM

Cloud Hands is a powerful energy exercise that has been incorporated into many Chinese health practices. The great value of doing Cloud Hands is that it opens the areas in the body where there is a concentration of lymph nodes. The lymphatic system is responsible for removing pathogens and

toxins from our cells. The lymphatic system doesn’t have a pump like the heart—fluid is pumped along by muscular contractions. Muscular tension and congestion leads to lymphatic stagnation and lowered immunity. Cloud Hands is a daily strengthening of your immune system.

There are eight areas of particular importance for lymph circulation: the inguinal grooves (1, 2), the armpits (3,4),



the lymph glands under your chin (5,6) (the glands that get swollen when you get a sinus or tooth infection), and the back of your knees (7,8). When you do Cloud Hands, make sure that these eight areas are relaxed so that your movements circulate blood and lymph.

NOTE: Recent research has suggested that sitting for five or more hours a day is statistically just as bad for your health as smoking. It is thought that reduced lymphatic flow due to sitting is responsible for this.

Cloud Hands is the perfect antidote to this “sitting disease.” If you sit a lot during the day, you should consider doing Cloud Hands for a minute or two several times throughout the day. Cloud Hands can also be done to flush out your lymphatic system when you feel as if you’re getting sick.


2 | THE CAROUSEL

This exercise strengthens and balances your lower body and CoG. The Carousel can also be incorporated into walking the circle. It’s a fast way to build core strength.

Imagine a carousel with the horses going up and down. They are not going side-to-side or forward and back. They are moving up and down along a pole. In this exercise you do the same things as the horses, but instead of the pole, move up and down along your plumb line.

1. Establish your plumb line.
2. Establish your CoG.
3. Press your arches into the ground firmly (but without tension) and hold the pressure throughout the exercise.
4. Move your CoG up and down slowly along your plumb line. Only go down as far as you can while keeping your CoG on your plumb line (not more than a few inches or so).
5. Lower yourself by first letting your pelvis release to gravity. Don’t drop your rib cage.





The Spinal Strength exercise

can be done
anywhere and
anytime. No one can
tell you're doing it.
It's an immediate
energizer before you
get out of bed in the
morning, or anytime
you need a quick
pick-me-up.

NOTE: *If you go off your plumb line, don't go down as far next time. The value of the exercise depends upon staying on your plumb line.*

3 | SPINAL STRENGTH

The muscles attached to and around your spine can be developed just like any other muscles. They can also learn to relax like any other muscles.

In this exercise you directly work the muscles of your entire spine as well as the musculature surrounding each group of vertebrae. You should practice the spinal strength exercise while lying down.

Lie on your back and gently relax your spine, letting each spinal disc have some breathing room.

1. Go up and down the left side of your spine (from the tip of your tailbone to the top of your spine), contracting and releasing the musculature around each individual vertebra. Go slowly and hold the contraction at eighty percent of your max. Then repeat the contractions on the right side of your spine.
2. Next, contract the left and right sides of your spine at each individual vertebra (i.e. first the left side neck vertebrae, then the right side neck vertebrae)
3. Now do these contractions on the inside part of your spine (that faces your internal organs). This takes a little more sensitivity, but you'll feel it after a few tries.
4. Finally, release and relax your entire spine so that your disks can "breathe."

Combining this exercise with the natural twisting that occurs when you walk the circle will give you a strong, flexible spinal column.

NOTE: *The Spinal Strength exercise can be done anywhere and anytime: standing, sitting, or lying down. No one can tell you're doing it. It's an immediate energizer before you get out of bed in the morning, or anytime you need a quick pick-me-up.*

4 | THE DAILY FACELIFT

This simple exercise/meditation will relax and tone the muscles in your face, and make you look younger. It can be done either lying down or sitting in a comfortable chair.

Each step is done for one minute:

1. Observe/feel where your scalp meets your forehead
2. Observe/feel the muscles where your ears (the front and the back) meet your head
3. Observe/feel your eyebrows
4. Observe/feel the inside and outside corners of your eyes
5. Observe/feel the edge of your nostrils (360 degrees)
6. Observe/feel the muscle that encircles your mouth (orbicularis oris)
7. Observe/feel the corners of your mouth
8. Observe/feel the tip of your jaw
9. Observe/feel your upper teeth
10. Observe/feel your lower teeth

During the day, do a quick check on these areas to see if they have tensed up. If they have, just allow them to release.

How to Progress Rapidly

The speed at which you progress is a direct function of:

1. How regularly you practice
2. How well you adopt the key principles, and most important
3. How well you cultivate your innervision

Innervision is developed by simply looking inside—seeing your skeleton, taking up your whole space, feeling deep inside your joints. Remember, when you look inside, DON'T TRY TO CHANGE ANYTHING, JUST OBSERVE!

NOTE: *Innervision is interrupted by thinking, analysis, self-judgment, inner commentary, and brain chatter.*

Although innervision is an inborn talent, we have to practice to get good.

Remember, you are trying to create better mind/body habits, and that takes repetition, not intensity...

Meditation

While a goal of Mudwalking is to walk in a meditative yet alert state, for those who wish to deepen their practice through a sitting meditation, there are a few meditations that are particularly useful to Mudwalkers:



- 1. Relaxed innervision:** Observe everything inside of you all at once. If you have any mental chatter, let it melt into the larger sensation of your whole inner landscape.
- 2. Observe your skeleton:** Try to visualize every bone and each joint. Be as anatomically correct as possible.
- 3. Imagine yourself without a head:** That's it. No thinking is required.

Physical Considerations

Consult your doctor before beginning this or any other exercise program. And please don't construe anything in this book as medical advice. Your doctor is the only one qualified to make health recommendations.

If you have back or joint problems, go easy. As you open tight joints, the muscles and connective tissue around the joints may be weak from disuse and need time to get stronger.

Although Mudwalking seems gentle, it works your legs and core hard. Some of your muscles may feel “dead” after a workout—that's good. However, if your body feels dead the next day, it hasn't completed what conditioning coaches call the “recovery phase.” Take a day off or at least go easy until your body “comes back.” Do not train a fatigued body.

The Natural Truth

A natural you already exists. It is literally just trapped inside you. Fortunately, you have a body that has been designed to relearn and return to the natural state that is your genetic inheritance.

Your body will work with you if you just give it a chance. And your mind will take the energy it uses to deal with stress, both physical and mental, and rechannel it for intellectual and emotional growth. And creativity. And vitality. And positivity. And whatever else is important in your life.

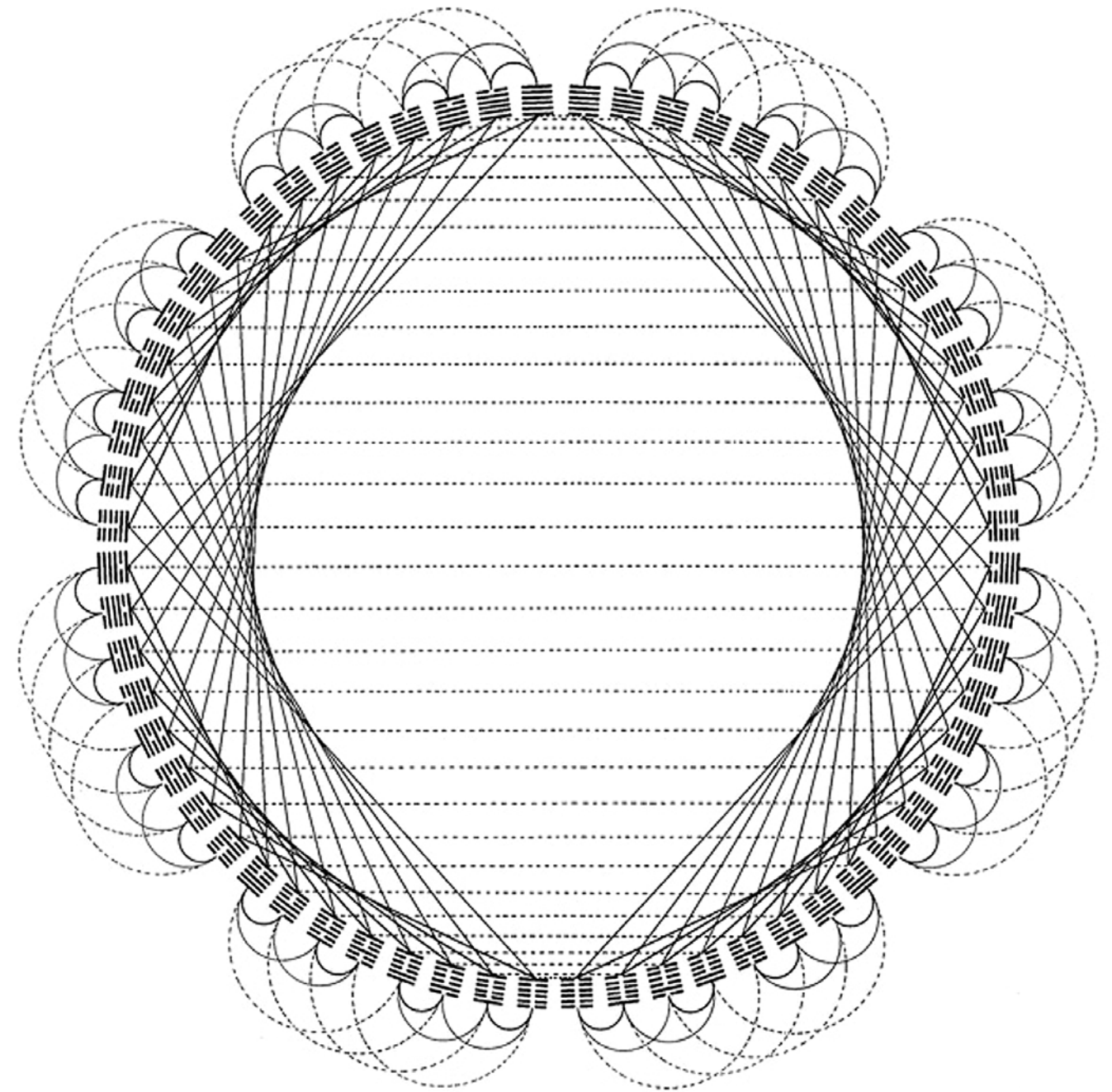
Mudwalking works. Best of luck with your training...

PLEASE VISIT US AT WWW.MUDWALKING.COM IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR INSIGHTS.

An inch of practice,
an inch of progress.

—Ancient Wisdom

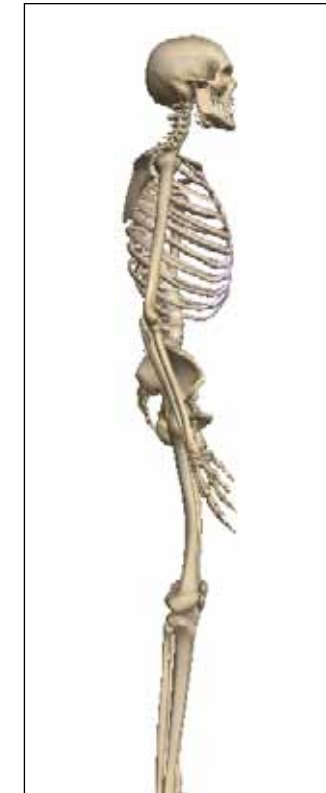
Training Notes



APPENDIX A

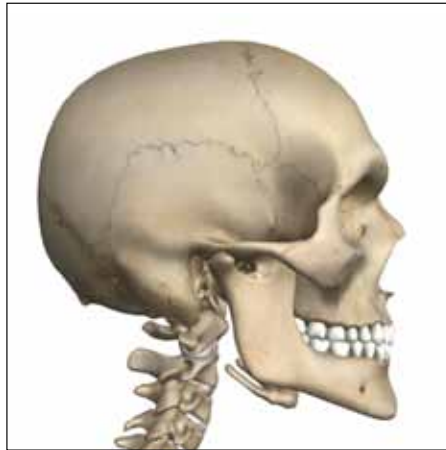
Your Skeleton and Key Joints in Your Body

Your Skeleton



ALL THE SKELETON IMAGES IN THIS SECTION AND THROUGHOUT THE MANUAL WERE REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM WWW.ZYGOTEBODY.COM. CHECK OUT THEIR WEBSITE; IT'S A GREAT LEARNING TOOL, AND GENUINELY FASCINATING.

1. Your atlas joint—where your skull rests on your spine, located in the center of your head (not the back of your neck).



2. Your feet and ankle joints.



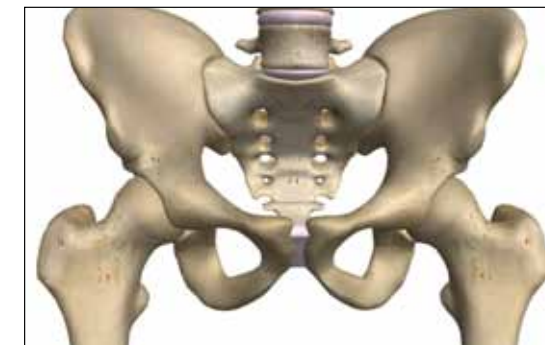
3. Your knee joints. Don't forget the back of your knee joints—they carry the most weight.



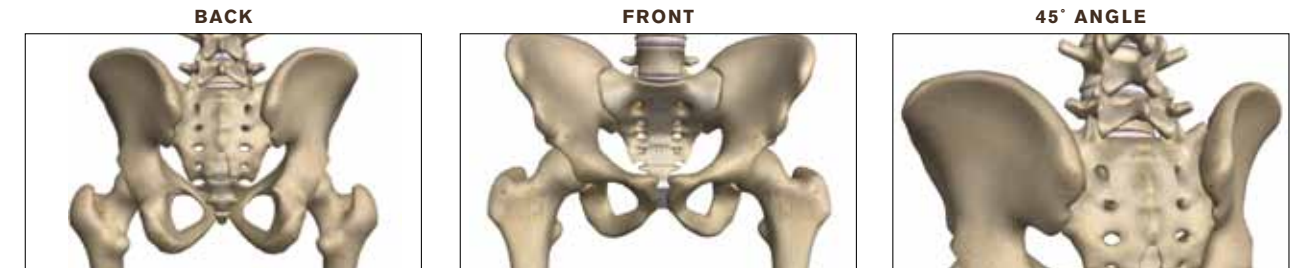
4. Your hip joints. They are at the inside of your legs, not at the widest part of your pelvic area.



5. The pubic symphysis, where the left and right side of your pelvis connect at the pubic bone.



6. The sacroiliac joints where the sacrum (and the whole spine) connects to the back of the pelvis.



7. All the joints of the spine, from the tailbone to the top of the spine where it meets the skull. At first, it's hard to become aware of each spinal joint, but quiet attention for a few minutes a day will give you excellent results.



8. The joints on your back where the rib cage attaches to your spine.



9. The joints where your collarbone meets your breastbone. This is the only boney connection for your arms and shoulders.



10. Your shoulder joints, where your clavicle, your scapulae (i.e. chicken wing bones), and your upper arm bones attach to each other.



11. Your elbow joints.

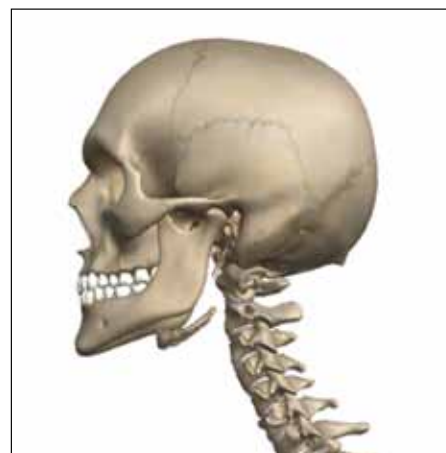


12. Your wrists and the multiple joints of your hands and fingers.

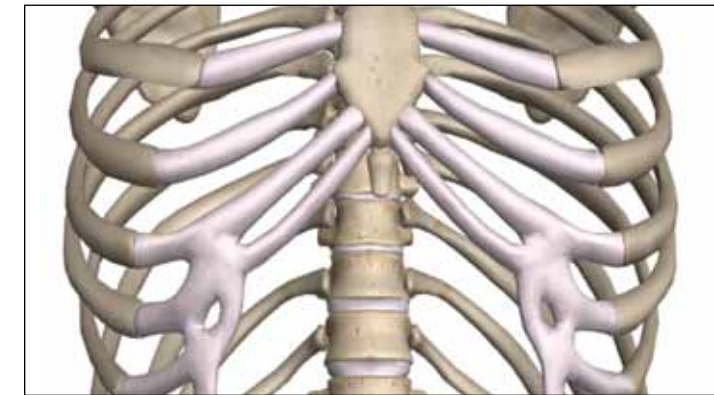


13. The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) is where your jawbone meets your skull (just in front of your ears). Pay particular attention to this joint. Your mind/body tension will trigger a tightening of the TMJ giving rise to a wide variety of painful and annoying conditions.

On the positive side, we can use the TMJ as a quick check for the level of tension within our bodies.



14. The tip of your breastbone. This is obviously not a joint, but is key point in balancing your upper body.



15. The tip of your tailbone. Again, not a joint but a key point in balancing your lower body.





Today, in the U.S., 145 million men and women walk for fitness and health.

Doctors are prescribing walking as a “wonder drug” with a wide range of benefits.

State governments are spending millions of dollars to develop pleasant places to walk to encourage people to get off the couch.

Four thousand years ago, in the mountains of China, a group of monks also realized the value of walking. Over time, they evolved the simple act of walking into a complete physical, mental, and neurological training system with powerful rejuvenative effects.

Mudwalking is a Westernized version of this ancient exercise. It will transform your daily walk into a complete mind-body workout that takes less time than your ordinary walking routine.

Mudwalking changes lives, and can change your life.

