



Getting The Most From Your ATSI Sessions

Now that you are starting your ATSI sessions, here are some suggestions for making the most of the experience. The ATSI series is a project, a project of realigning your body, educating your kinesthetic sense, and reclaiming your whole bodily self from the many alienating influences we have in our culture. You may find that some of the following ideas are more to your liking, while others do not fit your situation – consider them all, and then take what you like.

- It is recommended that you keep a journal during the process – you may be surprised at the changes as evidenced by your sensations, dreams, attitudes, or experiences. Start by standing in front of a mirror, and writing down everything that you can see, think of, or feel about your body. Be as honest as you can, noting areas you like, ones you do not, the areas that give you pleasure, and any chronic aches or pains. Think back to the things that have affected your body shape and body image – accidents and surgeries, incidents and imitations, your parents and your heroes. Try to make an entry just after and just before each of the sessions in the series, as well as any other time you are so moved.
- Leave time for a walk before and after your session – this will give you a chance to feel the 'before' and 'after' in your body, and in the familiar kinesthetic experience of walking. The walking will help you integrate the changes from the session as well, and give a chance for your head to clear before returning to the everyday absorption of driving and the rest of it. You could, for instance, simply park your car several blocks from the office.
- During the session, the most benefit is derived from letting your practitioner in. It is common to react by tightening or pulling away. If your practitioner is creating too much sensation with their pressure or speed, let him or her know that they should lighten up, or slow down, or get out. While your practitioner knows what he or she is doing, you know you the best. This is your session, and the best results come with your ability to stay with the work and let go with it.
- People have different ways of opening up to the work. It is voluntary but subtle - bring your awareness to the part that is being worked, and accept the pressure. But if the pressure is so much that you have to mentally 'leave', then the work is too hard, and probably less productive. The exception to this can be an area that was physically traumatized and is still storing a lot of pain. Here, the pain can be intense, but it is pain leaving your body. In any case, develop a dialogue with your practitioner about how they can best work with you.
- Between sessions, listen to your body. We are accustomed to dictating to our bodies from above. During the series is a time to listen for the messages coming up from below. Your body may want you to use it more – you may feel restless, for instance, so go with it: dance or do some stretching. Your body may give you signals of needing more rest as it repairs itself – go with that if you can.

- Break up long periods of sitting with movement. Give yourself a few minutes break during every hour of driving, for instance, or do some stretching during long bouts with the computer. Long-held patterns of sitting can be very damaging to our structural integrity.
- A warm bath on the evenings after a session is often a treat, and adding Epsom Salts (magnesium sulfate) to the bath will reduce any residual soreness.
- You may notice odd stresses and strains in your body in the days following a session, as your body readjusts its tissues to the changing forces. This is normal. These feelings or pains should be passing – your practitioner will want to know about anything that lasts more than few days, or anything severe or worrying.
- Likewise, you may feel odd emotions between sessions, coming seemingly from nowhere. This is normal and these too should pass. As much as you can, just accept and watch them happen. Again, anything lasting should be reported to your practitioner.
- Avoid imposing an ideal on your body – holding yourself into what you think of as a ‘proper’ posture. The sessions are designed to bring you toward a better balance without effort. Pinning your shoulders back or tucking your tail under to where you think it ‘should’ be will only get in the way. Your body has its own wisdom - allow it to unwind toward its own natural length and balance. In the end, this may conform to some plumb line or grid, but it very well may not. To thine own self be true.
- Your ATSI practitioner may give you exercises or awareness designed to help overcome old habits between sessions and bring in the new, but this awareness should be tried on gently and frequently, not imposed or held for long periods of time. Holding someone’s (even your own) idea of ‘good’ posture will only substitute a new set of strains for the old ones you left behind.
- Many times, the most helpful thing that the client can do is to notice when old patterns of holding are creeping back in and drop them. Noticing them as they reassert themselves is easier after they have been released in the sessions, but they do have a way of creeping back in. Your job as a client is to notice these holding patterns and just let them go, as often as necessary. After a period of watching the tendency come and go, it will simply relent and the new position will be your ‘natural’ place. Remaining gently sensitive to what your body is doing is your chief responsibility in this process.
- Your body will also give you messages about your environment. Your way of standing over the sink, or, as mentioned, sitting at your desk may need to change to be consonant with your ‘new’ body. Your practitioner can help you with these adjustments, but you can also stay alert to when you are using yourself in way that no longer works.
- You can expect that the novelty of the changes you feel right after the session will feel less pronounced toward the end of the week. They are still there – it is just that your body has become more used to them and integrated them. The ATSI series is carefully worked out in a sequence that is designed to prevent you from regressing. In fact, you can expect positive changes to keep developing in the months following the end of the series.
- Finally, enjoy yourself! The ATSI series is a wonderful way to explore your body posture and movement. It was so important and positive for your practitioner that he or she took it up as a career! We look forward to sharing this voyage of discovery, healing and ease with you.