

Alexander Technique Principles

Primary (Relationship)	<p>A dynamic relationship between the neck, head, and back/torso that we cultivate to organize our posture and whole self into a more expanded, balanced, and dynamically toned state in relation to gravity.</p>
Whole Body Response To Gravity	<p>Students of the Alexander Technique experience the feeling of a natural 'whole body response to gravity' that self-organizes their postural supports upwards, into more dynamic-balanced muscle tone, and into a more expanded (vs. constricted or collapsed) version of themselves. The nickname for this response is that you're going 'UP'.</p> <p>It's helpful to think of the whole body response to gravity as a 'total pattern' in how you use yourself. In other words, for graceful, efficient, poised movement to happen, every separate action - for example activity of the arms, hands, fingers, jaw, tongue, legs, breath etc.. - happens in harmony with the coordination of the whole self (especially the head-neck-back relationship).</p>
Force of Habit	<p>We are not always conscious of what we are doing with ourselves. When not aware, we act more automatically, falling into habitual ways of doing things. Some habits are beneficial and essential, but others are inefficient, unhelpful, or even harmful. For instance, habits of excess tension, co-contraction, or collapse all interfere with a more optimal use and functioning of ourselves as a whole.</p> <p>The <i>force</i> of habit is very strong and part of how we behave and function as humans. It is not something we will ever get rid of, but we can learn to become more conscious and increase the amount of choice we have in our lives.</p>
Alexander Inhibition (Inhibitory-control)	<p>Alexander inhibition unlocks more of your ability to choose a new response. Alexander inhibition is becoming aware of and withholding a response to a habit in which you constrict, collapse, or pull yourself down.</p> <p>It's a kind of 'pause' or 'saying no' to the unconscious habit you would normally do, so that you can instead connect to yourself, your support, renew your intention, and let an 'opening up to gravity response' happen.</p>
Direction	<p>Directing or "sending directions" refers to consciously using your awareness and intention to influence your coordination. Directions refine and connect your thoughts with your physical self. They're a kind of intention that shapes the connection between mind and muscle - between thought and neuromuscular coordination - without any attempt to carry them out muscularly.</p> <p>In some instances you can think of directions as a kind of spatial thinking or 'flow' of energy that takes place within the body.</p> <p>The primary directions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let my neck be free... To let my head to go forwards and up... To let my back lengthen and widen...

Secondary Directions	<p>Secondary directions can include many different conscious intentions that help connect your thoughts and physical actions. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow the ground to support me ● Think up along the spine
Unreliable Sensory Appreciation (Unreliable kinaesthetic perception)	<p>Your perception of body positions and tensions aren't as accurate as you feel/believe they are. This is because perceptions of body position and tension are coloured by a lifetime of using ourselves in a particular way - by our habits. Our sensory perception can become more accurate with improvements in our awareness and coordination.</p>
End-gaining	<p>The habit of placing all attention on the end goal without enough attention to optimize your primary relationship as you attain your goal - thus, compromising the integrity of your whole self and through this, limiting your full potential in your action.</p>
Thinking In Activity	<p>Using your conscious awareness and intention (inhibition and direction) to positively shape your coordination in action. It's the opposite of endgaining.</p>
'Doing' vs. 'Non-doing'	<p>'Doing' is making a voluntary movement happen with an expectation or result in mind of <i>how</i> you want to perform the movement and how exactly it should turn out. 'Non-doing' is deciding what movement you want to make (what you want your movement to do) but letting your brain/nervous system figure out 'how' exactly to make it happen - you consciously set-up the conditions for a movement to occur (with inhibition and direction), then give your consent to the movement but let your brain/nervous system figure out the best way to do it.</p>
Psychophysical Unity	<p>The idea that brain and body work as one in our actions and behaviours - that despite thinking of them as separate things, they are not separate in action. Instead mind and muscle always function together as a unified process in every moment, movement, action, feeling, sensation, or even though you have. Psychophysical unity describes an embodied self.</p>
USE (of the self)	<p>The principle that the whole self is expressed in every single action you make (not just your body, or any one part of your body). The goal then is to improve not just how you use your body or any one single part of it...but rather to always enhance your total pattern of coordination - to enhance <i>the use of the self</i>.</p>