



Understanding Alexander's Insight

And its relation to mindfulness and well-being

Victoria Door PhD (**PAAT**)

Alexander saw that we have a tendency to use more muscular effort than necessary. It hurts us.



Then some parts can't work as much as they should, and that hurts US

‘More than’ and ‘not enough’ are known as:

- ▶ Mis-use.
- ▶ Framework distorted
- ▶ Shorter & narrower
- ▶ Joints tightened



All this 'more than' is done

- ▶ with our own muscles
- ▶ directed by our own
brains



Because of the connections between the parts of our structure ...

- ▶ ‘More than’ anywhere means more than, or not enough, everywhere
- ▶ Alexander discovered that there is an underlying pattern



‘More than’ and striving to overcome it



The total pattern of habitual misuse can become constant. We get used to it. It becomes our norm.



Andrea Piacquadio (Unknown Year) <https://images.pexels.com/photos/3777568/pexels-photo-3777568.jpeg?>

The only way we know how to be. It makes doing new things hard. We can get stuck in the old stuff

- ▶ Limits ability to be different, to grow, to flourish
- ▶ Pay lip service to new ideas, but be unable to carry them into practice
- ▶ Sleep more! Drink less! Work out! Eat healthier! Join a group! Smile at someone! Do a good deed!
- ▶ These things are all good, but what if we are still engaging the whole our self in a pattern of misuse?

Misuse is exaggerated when a stimulus is perceived as negative.

Sue hears she's to lose a colleague and take on on extra responsibilities

Ian hears he is going into lock-down again with someone he finds difficult



By PHM/Danar/Picture/Unknown Year/ https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/stock-photo/148950223/148950223-0234714386/152571467024269841_1289.jpg
Free for Most Commercial Use / No Attribution Required / See <https://www.gettyimages.com/servicecenter> for what is not allowed
Photo Attribution by PhotosForClass.com



By Andrea Piacquadio (Known as Yash) <https://www.pexels.com/photo/3777508/pexels-photo-3777508.jpeg?auto=compress&cs=tinysrgb&h=656&w=940>
Free To Use / No Attribution Required / See <https://www.pexels.com/licenses/> for what is not allowed
Photo Attribution by PhotosForClass.com

At a very basic level, misuse takes more energy and makes us less efficient

Sue is less able to move and has to work harder to be upright

Interfering with the neck-head relationship means interfering with the blood supply to the brain. It gets harder to think and sense

Ian finds it harder to think clearly and he comes over to others as irritable



- Pulling down damages the joints, pulling them together (close-packing)

When joints are close-packed on a constant basis, surfaces can be damaged.

Surfaces fit together
Ligaments taut
Spiral twist
Screw home articular surface



There is an impact on ‘what it is like to be me’ when we misuse ourselves.

- ▶ People report on subjective state of pulling down.
- ▶ I feel angry...
- ▶ I’m worried...
- ▶ How dare you.....! (about a colleague)
- ▶ I feel low/no good
- ▶ I just don’t feel I can cope
- ▶ I’m in a bad mood
- ▶ It’s your fault! (of anybody!)
- ▶ You’ve given me a headache (ditto).
- ▶ I don’t feel anything at all!



I’m so fed up...

Does it make sense to use ourselves in a bio-mechanically unsound way?

- ▶ *if we sit, read, stand, walk, type, hold our phones in a way that is at odds with the best biomechanics, we undermine our wellbeing*

The answer?



Notice, learn to
stop creating the
unnecessary
muscular effort.
Striving to put
things right causes
more of the same

Hurray!

- ▶ This underlying pattern of ‘too much’ is learnt...So we can learn to stop doing it
- ▶ Which is what we have been beginning to do today.
- ▶ More info from The Professional Association of Alexander Teachers
- ▶ <https://www.paat.org.uk/>