

How Best to Learn the Magic of Somatics

To be effective, the somatic transformations require concentration, care, and undistracted *time*. Act deliberately, knowing what you intend to do. For that, you need to understand the instructions. It may be helpful to listen to them on tape as you follow along in this guidebook before doing them the first time. That will help boost your concentration.

The meaning of the instructions becomes clearer with experience. Always do them in an exploratory way. There is an unsuspected depth in you. The more you do the movements, the more you will discover. The somatic transformations are more than you think.

To get the most benefit from a somatic transformation, go slowly enough *to sense the movement as you do it*, gently enough to be comfortable, and using *only the muscles needed to accomplish each movement*. That way, you will continually uncover patterns of tension you have held without awareness and be able to release them into a greater grace and freedom. Practically speaking, you are likely to start out using more muscles than necessary; with practice, you will be able to distinguish the muscles that are essential to the movement and to use only those.

In general, the earlier sessions prepare you for those that come later. To start, do one new session (one part of one SECTION) several times within a week until it's very familiar to you. Use the guided instructions until you know them so well that you know what's coming ahead of time – and you're right! After you've done all twelve sessions, start over. You'll be surprised at the new richness of your second pass through.

If a transformation seems too difficult or feels painful, go more slowly and more gently. You may need to go back to an earlier session to prepare yourself better.

The somatic transformations have several levels of complexity, which you may add as you improve. The simplest steps of the movement are numbered. More advanced additions to movements appear indented, as follows:

1. (main instruction, basic level)

TRY THIS! ⇒ addition (intermediate level)

TRY THIS! ⇒ addition (more advanced level)

After you have learned the movements of a session, refer to this guidebook to refresh your memory and to learn finer nuances of the movements, which boost their effectiveness.

Note: The improvements you get from the somatic transformations are cumulative. Unlike conventional postural training, you do not need to hold good posture to have good posture after doing these transformations. Your posture will improve naturally. *Do not hold "good posture", as it only adds tension to your other habitual tensions. If anything, relax into good posture.*