

Relieving Neck & Shoulder Tension

Kim Thompson • Wise Traditions Conference 2011 Workshop Notes

Shoulder Streams

Technique

- Begin with your hands in front of you about shoulder-width apart, palms down, elbows straightish.
- Raise your hands and straightish elbows in front of you to shoulder height.
- Bring your hands in toward your shoulders (hands stay shoulder-width, elbows will go wider).
- As you lower your hands down along your sides, rotate your arms from the shoulders so that the palms of your hands point forward. Arms and hands will end up slightly in front of the body.
- For comfortable standing posture, keep what you can of this arrangement in the shoulders. Soften your shoulders and arms and allow your arms to turn from the elbow so that the palms of your hands face your body.

Shoulder Streams in Daily Activities

- arm circles / exercise
- driving: hold bottom of steering wheel or use stream to bring hands to top of wheel
- typing: set stream, then turn from elbow
- reaching a high shelf: stream, then turn from elbow

Puppet Strings

- **Elbows:** Your shoulders will be much more comfortable if your elbows have weight. Imagine a small weight tied to your arms and hanging down from your elbows. Allow your arms, shoulders and neck to follow the downward invitation of this weight.
- **Fingers:** It is very common for the hands to be more or less curled, even when they are empty and your arms hang at your sides. Especially when you are standing and walking, imagine small weights tied to the tip of each finger so that each finger is gently pulled down and straight. This should not create any tension in your hands or arms. The imaginary weight does the work.

Slight external rotation of the upper arm in the shoulder socket is your best bet for comfortable neck and shoulders.

Knee Streams

- Your knees will be able to support your overall structure much better if they are making an ongoing gesture that is slightly up and out.
- If your knees tend to move in and down, the result will be a general collapse: for the arches of the feet, for the spine, for the chest. This is very stressful on the neck and shoulders.

Key to Clenchers

- If a muscle is in chronic contraction (clenching), most likely another muscle or muscles closer to the ground are under participating. If you have chronic neck and shoulder tension, look to your low back, your legs and your feet. Improving alignment and properly engaging muscles in these areas may bring a great deal of relief to the tight muscles up top.

Stack Up Your Spine

- Sit with your pelvis in a forward tilt, weight evenly distributed on your sit bones and your spine balanced and erect. This is the best chance for your head to rest on top of the spine and for your shoulders to rest on top of the ribs.

Cardinal Movements of Shoulders

- up, down, forward, backward, in, out
- make circles in three planes

Breathe

- Ocean Wave

Resources

Aplomb / Balance

www.isaplomb.org

www.BalanceCenter.com

Feldenkrais Method®

www.Feldenkrais.com

Spacial Dynamics®

www.SpacialDynamics.com

book: *The Fourfold Path to Healing*