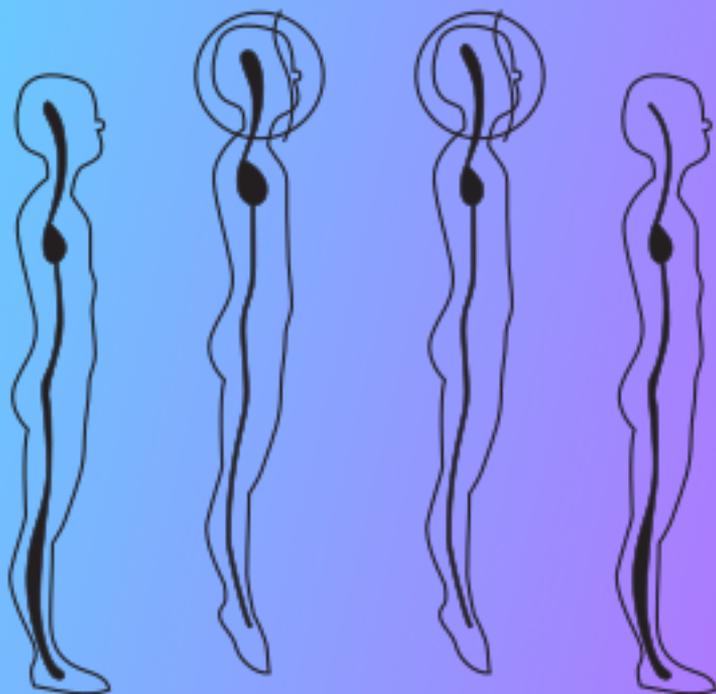


Introduction to

Alexander Technique

Psychophysical re-education



Pedro Souza

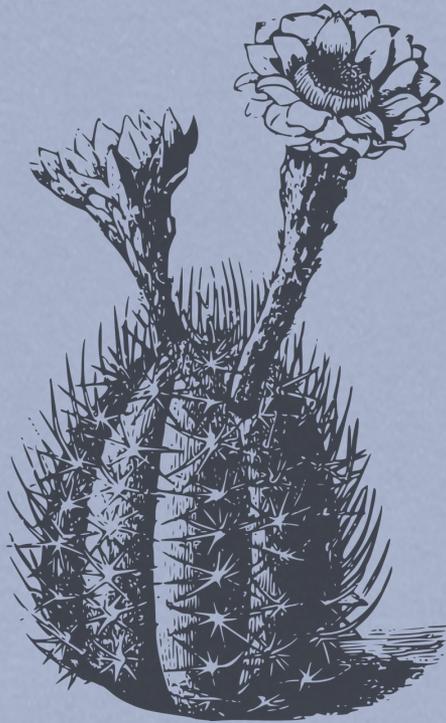
Bodily Thinking

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The information presented in this e-book is from my notes during my training as an Alexander Technique Teacher, 2015-2017. The knowledge shared here comes from my relationship with A.T. and lectures and classes with other teachers. The purpose of this work is to promote the Alexander Technique, its use and its benefits.

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Body movement is interrelated with the behaviour of the unconscious since the body is the physical manifestation of the mind and the mind the subtle manifestation of the body.



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- 2- Who was F.M Alexander
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About the author

1

What is the Alexander Technique

“People do not decide their futures, they decide their habits and their habits decide their futures”

- F. M. Alexander

The Alexander Technique is a gentle method focused on **re-educating the body and mind through body awareness**. This work brings particular **attention to our habits**, patterns of the subconscious, how we use our way of being, how we express ourselves, our posture, and our reactions to the stress and pressure we face daily. This method enables us to **reprogram our habits** and replace them with new, healthier ones.



However, this is not all that the Alexander Technique has to offer! When we refine our attention (mind) with the body, we automatically start to **awaken an intimate relationship with our being**. The Alexander Technique prepares us to lead a more conscious life of our emotions, actions and behaviours.

In most cases, a wide variety of disorders such as muscle and joint pain, sciatic nerve impairment, migraine and headache are, in some cases, directly linked to **postural habits**.

{ The Alexander Technique teaches us how to **improve our posture, breathing and manage or eradicate musculoskeletal disorders**. }



2

Who was F.M Alexander

"You translate everything, whether physical or mental or spiritual, into muscular tension." - F. M. Alexander

Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869 - 1955) was an Australian actor and creator of the Alexander Technique. F.M started his career in the theatres with a great passion for reciting Shakespeare.

When he was a successful actor, he began to suffer from hoarseness to the point of losing his voice. In his book, **The Use of the Self**, Alexander mentions that his friends also noticed an audible "sigh" during his recitations.

The frustration of not getting results with conventional treatments available in his time made Alexander question whether his voice problem was a result of something he was doing himself. Thus he began a process of **self-examination** in which he relied on the help of mirrors to obtain an objective view of himself.

F.M became **aware** that every time he started reciting, he tended to move his head backwards. This movement was creating **extra tension in his neck**.

This cervical compression was affecting his vocal cords and also **interfering with the general use of his body**. This relationship between the head-neck-torso and the rest of the body is known as the **primary control**.

Primary control refers to the dynamic reflex of the body's responses regarding the positioning of the head.

By **consciously inhibiting his habitual movements**, Alexander improved his voice and the breathing problems he carried since childhood. He also increased his overall health by reestablishing efficient coordination of his entire system.

Alexander refined his teaching method over a career span of more than fifty years. He started training teachers after teaching for over 35 years.

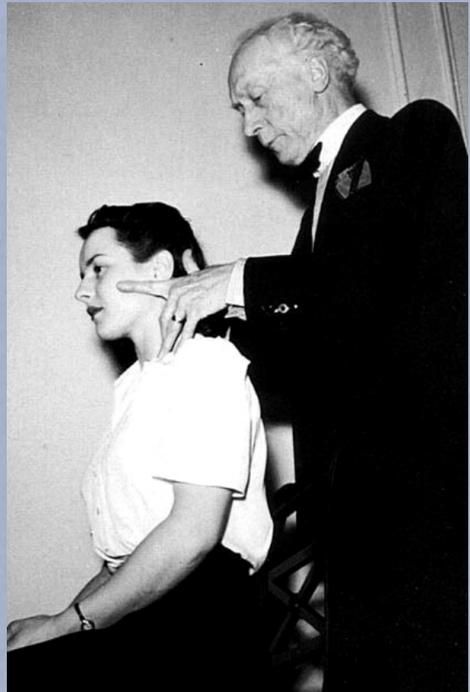
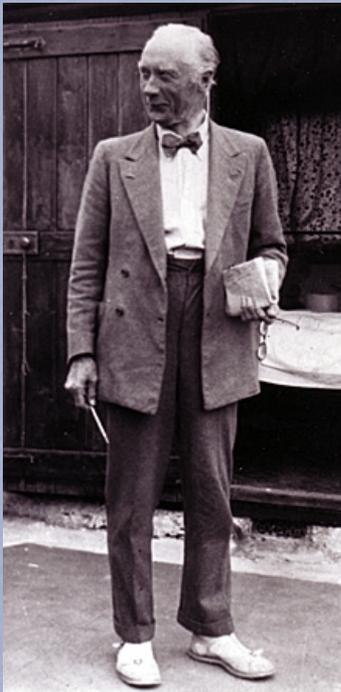
The training in the Alexander Technique lasts **three years**, and **1600 hours** are needed, which include practical training in body observation and gentle manipulations, allowing the student to refine their kinaesthetic sense. The course also includes the anatomy of movement and physiology.

A.T. is an educational method, but its effects are therapeutic. You can find studies that prove the

effectiveness of the Alexander Technique in the treatment and prevention of some degenerative diseases.



The Alexander Technique is a **pioneer**, in the West, in working with the **psychophysical unit**. On **integrating movement-thought** and **consciously reorganising our subconscious**.



Book written by F.M Alexander:

Man's Supreme Inheritance. 1^o.ed. 1910. UK : Mouritz edition, 2002. 250p.

Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual 1^o.ed. 1923. UK : Mouritz edition, 2015. 266p.

The Use of the Self 1^o.ed. 1932. Orion editora, 2001. 128p.

The Universal Constant in Living 1^o.ed. 1941. UK : Mouritz edition, 2000. 416p.



3

Benefits

"You get away from your old preconceived ideas because you are getting away from your old habits."

- F. M. Alexander

There are proven benefits that walking has on our general health and well-being. So why do so many people still experience back or knee pain even after a walk?

Excessive muscle tension and **poor posture** are the main factors in accelerating degenerative diseases and, unfortunately, one of the most common habits that many of us share.

The Alexander Technique is a **smart tool that helps us gain strength and endurance, improve performance and refine skills**. By improving **body awareness**, coordination and body posture, you can identify harmful movement patterns and eradicate them before injuries occur.

Broadly, A.T. promotes:

- Awareness of your postural habits;
- Increased body awareness;
- Improvement of deficient movements;
- Increased mobility;
- Extends artistic performance.



The Alexander Technique is very popular with musicians, actors, singers and dancers, helping them to:

- Improve performance and **prevent injuries** in dance, music (instrumentalists), and acting (theatre);
- Improve balance, stability and coordination;
- Develop confidence in public speaking.



This method promotes a sense of well-being, and its benefits can be profound and extensive. Those who took classes at T.A cultivate the power of **observation and refined awareness**.

+ **Benefits:**

- Physical tension decreases;
- Encourages relaxation;
- Reduces stress and anxiety;
- Enhanced sensory awareness;
- Ease of movement and coordination;
- Improves mobility and balance.

Estudos Acadêmicos

Alexander Studies Online (ASO) - is an academic platform with inputs into research material directly related to Alexander Technique.

You can also search for “Alexander Technique” at pubmed.gov and sciencedirect.com for more published studies.

4

Who is it for

“...the Alexander Technique teaches you **how to bring more practical intelligence into what you are already doing**; how to eliminate stereotyped responses; how to deal with habit and change. It leaves you free to choose your own goal but gives you better use of yourself while you work toward it.”.

- Frank Pierce Jones

This method is **for those who want to feel more comfortable in their own body, improve posture, movement and improve their skills.**

The Alexander Technique is also for:

- You who suffer from repetitive strain injury;
- Who has pain in the back, neck and shoulders;
- You who are uncomfortable sitting at the computer for long periods;
- Singers, musicians, actors, dancers and athletes wanting to enhance their performance.



5

How is it taught

“You can't do something you don't know, if you keep on doing what you know.”

- F.M Alexander.

The Alexander Technique is taught in private or group classes. The session usually lasts between thirty minutes to an hour, and each session (group or individual) is **according to the needs of each student or group.**

During classes, you will become **aware of movement patterns** that are generally harmful to your health and well-being. The session is not a treatment but a **reeducation of your psychophysical unity.**

The classes are dynamic and with a lot of movement. You can walk, sit, stand, sing, play an instrument, do an Asana or express yourself however you want.



Your teacher will guide you by **verbal instructions** and **manually**, giving you the **sensory perception to correct your habits**.

The Alexander Technique will teach you to **inhibit/stop** automatic responses to a stimulus. When we stop before the action, we gain time to use reasoning and evaluate which is the most efficient and appropriate way of moving.

This work allows us to **recognise what we are doing with the use of our mind and body**.

In class, we always bring special attention to the **primary control**, the relationship between the head, spine and the rest of the body.

Traditionally, classes always include two activities known as “chair work” & “table work”.

Chair work

With the aid of a chair and the actions of sitting and standing, we **gain awareness** and eventually **correct postural and movement habits**. Sitting and standing are among our most frequent activities, and they serve as the **basis for psychomotor re-education**.

Table work

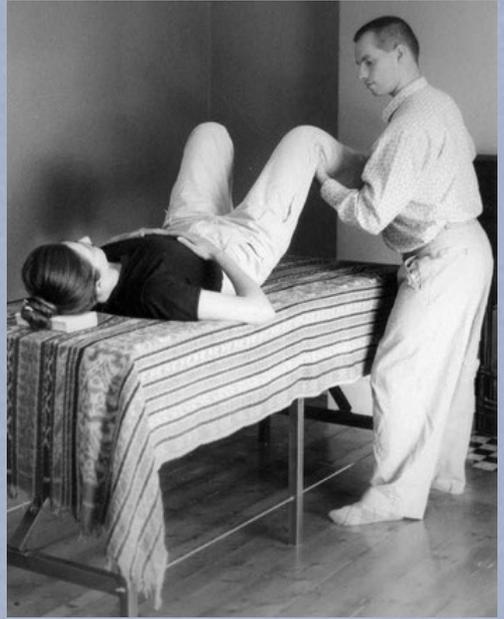
Lying on semi-supine, known as **constructive rest**, you are encouraged to inhibit excessive muscle tension and remain present.

By being on horizontal, the influence of gravity on the body changes, creating a perfect situation for you to let go of any tension that remains even when on a rest position. It is the chance to **meditate and re-educate tendencies rooted in the body and mind.**

You will learn from experience the power of perception and **conscious control** over movement patterns allowing you to move efficiently.

The three pillars of the T.A:

- **Observation:** identify habitual patterns of movements and thoughts;
- **Inhibition:** interrupting any automatic response to internal and/or external stimuli;
- **Direction:** conscious instructions for more efficient movements and thinking.



About Pedro Souza

Since 2015, Pedro has been specialising in how to treat the human body holistically. His career began at a Chinese clinic located in the city of Melbourne - Australia. During this Pedro worked with a vast clientele with a wide variety of physical and emotional conditions. This direct contact allowed him to learn the traditional Chinese method (Tui-Na) and how to treat, manually, dysfunctions in the musculoskeletal system.

In addition to his qualifying as an Alexander Technique Teacher, he also has experience and qualifications in Remedial Massage, Myotherapy and Yoga. His training was at the School of FM Alexander Studies in Melbourne, Australia (2015-2017), under the direction of David Moore and Jenny Thirtle. During his training, Pedro had the opportunity to learn from renowned teachers such as Caren Bayer, Cathy Madden, and other teachers from England, the USA, and Australia.

With his educational and professional experience, Pedro has a particular approach to dealing with musculoskeletal problems. His most recent graduation was as a Yoga instructor (200h YTT), where he studied in the city of Rishikesh - India (2019). This course added a greater understanding of the benefits of Yoga, allowing you to develop a specific sequence for each of your clients, facilitating the process of rehabilitation and alignment of the body. At the moment, he continues to study the Iyengar yoga method.

His professional philosophy englobes the holistic being by subtly treating each client with a focus on facilitating the body's natural self-healing ability. Clinical evaluation, prevention methods, postural correction and correction exercises are essential for the client to receive a personalised class.



Eu, meu colegas e professores na School for F.M Alexander studies em Melbourne, 2016.



Aula com a professora Caren Bayer, 2016.

Learn more about
the Alexander Technique

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www.bodilythinking.com

References:

ABTA: <http://abtalexander.com.br/>

AUSTAT: <https://www.austat.org.au/>

The complete guide of the Alexander

Technique:

<https://alexandertechnique.com/>

Images:

[Cactus](#)

[Cello lesson](#)

[Girl on piano](#)

[Lesson on chair](#)

