The Alexander Technique: what could it do for you?

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The Alexander Technique has been used for more than 100 years to

improve performance, posture and other body mechanics, yet it's arguably the least well known method for achieving these benefits.

Though some people call it a form of bodywork, practitioners describe it as an educational method, because it teaches you to recognize and then *unlearn* negative habits, like bad posture and tensing muscles in reaction to stress. The Alexander Technique shows you how to do everyday activities with less effort and greater ease. Business people can benefit by using it to improve vocal projection and voice quality when making presentations.

Benefits include:

- Better mobility and reduced stiffness.
- Pain relief through better coordination of your head, neck and back.
- Enhanced performance for athletes as well as performing artists, through better breathing and speed and accuracy of movement.

The self-named technique was developed by actor Frederick Matthias Alexander, who was plagued by chronic hoarseness that doctors couldn't explain. Thinking that the problem could be related to how he was using his voice, he identified habits that were indeed causing it and then how to undo them.

Though the number of lessons you'll want to take varies based on your needs, one study on back pain, published in the *BMJ*, found that just six one-on-one lessons with an Alexander Technique teacher followed by a home plan was effective.

If you're interested in trying it, look for a teacher certified by the American Society for the Alexander Technique. AmSAT-certified

Alexander Technique teachers have completed 1,600 hours of training over a minimum of three years in an approved training program.

More information: Learn more on the website of the American Society for the Alexander Technique.

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