

Quick Tip 3 – Working From the Middle Out

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Working From the Middle Out – Part 1

Most people approach the world visually. And our eyes tend to go to the most obvious – the brightest color, the quickest movement etc. And riding instructors are no different. We notice the most obvious flaws – toes pointing down or out, one shoulder higher than the other, a head leaning to one side, a collapsed waist, a shoulder-in left with no bend, an inability to canter right etc. What we don't always see is that often these flaws are symptoms of an underlying problem that goes undetected and therefore ultimately unresolved. I am interested in what causes one shoulder to be higher than the other, why your toes are pointing out etc. Yes, sometimes it is a lack of understanding (Oh, you mean my toes aren't supposed to point down?) And sometimes what you see is what you get (For some reason a shoulder is carried higher to alleviate pain in the neck or rotator cuff perhaps.) But more often than not the problem lies in the middle of the body – the pelvis.

A torque, a twist, or a rotation in the pelvis radiates out the ends of our appendages. Imagine a giant 3-D “X” floating upright in the air. The pelvis is the place where the two lines cross. The arms are the two upper parts of the lines and legs the lower. What would happen to the “arms” and “legs” of the “X” if you twisted the “X” at the intersection point? The “arms” and the “legs” would no longer be in the same plane. I.e., one of the rider's shoulder's would be forward and one back and/or, one leg would be forward or back relative to the other.

What would happen if you bent the “X” to the right at the intersection point? The right “shoulder” would be lower than the Left and an unevenness in relative leg length would occur too. (Usually the right leg would appear shorter, but not always.)

What would happen if you torqued the “X” at the intersection point? Let's say brought the upper right part of the intersection forward? The lower part of the right intersection point would go backwards, leading to a hollow back on the right side, perhaps a right leg that is shifted back or shifted forward to counteract the arched back etc., etc.

If in any of these cases, you fixed the obvious, what would happen?

Let's use a lowered right shoulder as an example. To fix this crookedness, you bring your right shoulder up, so that it is in the same plane as your left. Looks better, right? Yep. You have to use muscle to hold it there, right? Yep. Over time it will get sore, right? Yep. As soon as you take your mind off of keeping your right shoulder up, it will plop back to where it naturally wants to go, right? Yep. Since you are not tackling the source of the problem, all of your good efforts at fixing the problem will not work in the long run. In my experience the middle of “X” marks the source spot 9 times out of 10. So how do you work on un-torquing, un-twisting and un-rotating the pelvis? We will take that mystery up in our next session – **Balimo Chair to the Rescue.**

Working from the Middle Out – Part 2 – Balimo Chair to the Rescue

This unique Chair allows unrestricted, natural, yet complex three-dimensional motion; these are the motions that are required for humans to maintain balance. By sitting on the Balimo Chair, you are constantly in motion, constantly balancing. Even the smallest movement in your hips and pelvis invigorates your whole body from head to toe. The range of motion and the constant fixed alignment of your spine with the pivot point reactivates diverse muscle groups. This unrestricted and self-initiated motion coupled with an upright and balanced posture produces a pleasing and unique body awareness and training effect.

The patented BALIMO Chair was created by a bio-medical research scientist in conjunction with a professor of sports physiology and kinesiology to help the user develop a better sense of balance and to regain and increase flexibility of the hips and spine.

Using the BALIMO Chair regularly helps:

- Mobilize and extend your range of movement in the hips and pelvis
- Activate and revitalize vertebrae through gentle but complex motion
- Train and reconnect muscles along the spine, and in the head & neck area
- Integrate and train the autonomous muscle and nervous systems
- Reconnect neural pathways
- Sharpen your senses and increase your confidence
- Support the digestive system
- **Features and Benefits**
- **1. Fosters the most optimal spinal alignment possible.** Because the seat of a Balimo chair is not stable, your body needs to balance on it dynamically. The best spinal posture is coincidentally the easiest to balance. Your body will automatically align itself into the proper posture. This helps improve spinal health, range of motion, stamina, and decrease back pain.
- **2. Lets you frequently change position without interrupting workflow.** The Balimo chair causes you to change your position often to balance. For example, if you bend forward, or turn 45 degrees to grab the phone, your body will assume a new position effortlessly. This helps reduce damage to nerves, tissue and muscles caused by prolonged sitting in the same position.
- **3. Fitness and conditioning time is more abundant.** Another great thing about using a Balimo chair, is that you can do stretches or mini-workouts anytime, without getting up! If you've ever stuck waiting for a minute or two, you can make productive use of that time with a quick workout or stretch. Because it's much more convenient, you will probably do it more, thus resulting in better health.
- **4. Improves your balance.** Sitting on an unstable surface all day will improve your sense of balance, as well as the reaction and tone of your muscles. The result? Overall better balance and awareness of your body's "center."
- **5. Get the 6-pack stomach you've been wanting, without really trying.** Your body primarily uses its core (abdominal) muscles to compensate for changes in balance. With a Balimo chair underneath you, you are essentially getting a low-key abdominal workout. This may not sound like a big deal, but consider the amount of time you spend in front of your computer at the office, or at home. Those hours add up quick, and time spent on a Balimo chair can result in strengthening of your ab muscles, more range of motion, and less flab around your midsection!

- **6. Improves your circulation.** Using a Balimo chair keeps the blood flowing to all parts of your body, all day long. A regular desk chair on the other hand, reduces circulation to parts of the body after prolonged use.
- **7. You'll feel more energetic.** It's a given that staying seated in one position will make you and your butt cheeks more tired, while moving and being active generally gives you more energy. With a Balimo chair underneath you, you will feel much more energized and alert during work hours, and you'll have more energy after you finish your work.
- **8. You'll burn more calories per day.** More movement during the day equals more calories burned. For example, burning off just 350 calories per day can equal losing one pound of fat every 10 days.
- **9. A healthy investment in yourself.** The Balimo Chair comes with a 30 day money back guarantee, has a lifetime defect warranty, and it's modestly priced. Other balance chairs, such as the [Swopper](#), can cost \$400 and up.
- **10. A Balimo Chair is healthy, smart and fun!** Most people need to get more exercise, right? The Balimo chair is an exciting, healthy alternative to static chairs, and may just give that spark of fitness and fun to your life you've been missing.
- Though originally designed to help equestrians improve pelvic motion, everyone can benefit. Even well conditioned athletes often have restricted motion within the pelvis and hips. This lack of motion is responsible for chronic low back pain, hip pain and knee pain. Many exercises using the balimo chair have been developed that help address issues in the upper body also. The emphasis is not on strength, but flexibility and coordination, somewhat like flowing yoga in a seated position. Each balimo chair comes with a DVD which demonstrates these exercises. Many people ask "I'm using a exercise ball, isn't that good enough?" The simple answer is no. The soft "cushyness" of the swiss ball does not provide the same quality of input into the nervous system. Nor does the ball allow significant rotation of the spine and pelvis.
- Whether you are a [equestrian](#) seeking a better "seat", a athlete with stiff hips or low back or a person suffering with chronic low back pain chances are the Balimo chair could be the answer you have been searching for.