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NOTICE

The information presented is not intended for the treatment or prevention of disease, nor is it a substitute for medical treatment, nor as an alternative to medical advice.

This publication is presented for information purposes, to increase the public knowledge of developments in the field of strength and conditioning. The program outlined herein should not be adopted without a consultation with your health professional.

Use of the information provided is at the sole choice and risk of the reader. You must get your physician's approval before beginning this or any other exercise of nutrition program. This information is not a prescription. Consult your doctor, nutritionist or dietician for further information.

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I. THE DARK SIDE OF TRAINING

In the latter years I have come to realize something about training: there is much more than what the eye can see. On the outside you see people doing snatches, handstands and flows, but what you never get to see much is the sacrifices this people have to make to get there.

One example would be Dorian Yates. This bodybuilder, admired by many as one of the most muscular men in history, confessed in his London Real interview that during competition his feet hurted because he didn't had enough fat to protect the heel. He was literally a walking skeleton, all surrounded by muscles.



Fortunetly, most pains are not that severe. I remember when I got to train seriously for the planche. Many times I felt like I could advance in the progressions, but what stopped me was a nasty pain in my forearms. One day this was so bad that I felt my tendons were literally going to explode. The month I took to rest after that showed me something amazing.

Most people were broken.

What I mean by this is that my mother had a knee injury, my dad couldn't quite move his shoulder and some training partners had tendonitis in their elbow. One day I went to a Yoga

class and the instructor said with amusement that he had been dealing with a wrist injury for 2 years.

In fact, the word “dealing” is a bad description, as what he’d really been doing was ignoring his pain. That’s where I saw the dark side of training, that which we don’t see: it’s the world of pain.

Maybe it’s a matter of lack of hope, but most people just accept their pains. They feel life can’t be that good. Who could function in a proper body, train and live in a stressful environment without some scars?

What I came to experience, not intellectually but as a very real thing, is that this is just a lie. Training should not be separated from health and longevity. There are some dark areas between them, but for someone who is not looking to go to the Olympics it really doesn’t have to be that way.

You can live in a body that is healthy, strong and resilient.

This is what I’ve learned.

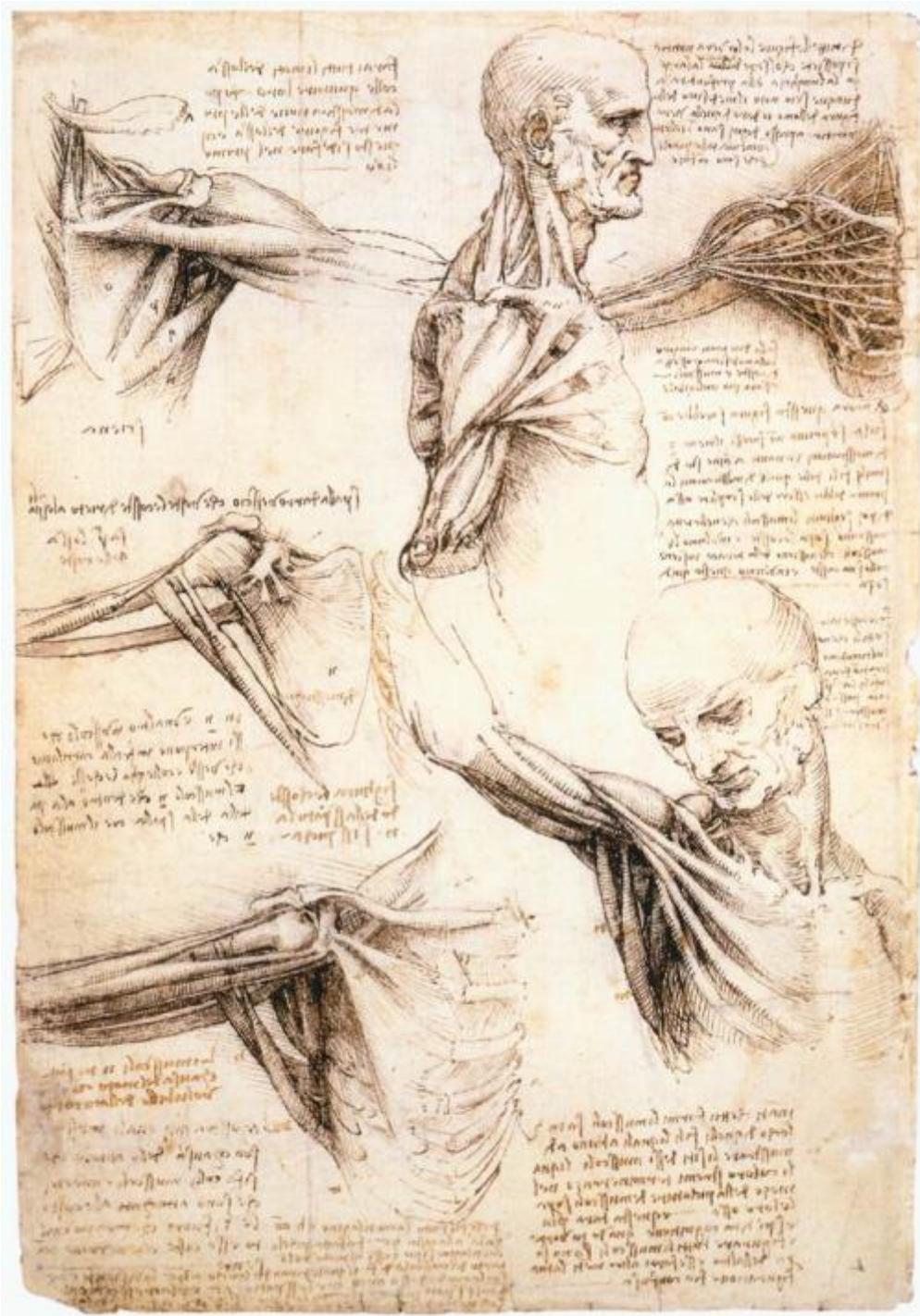
II. THE WHY OF STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

First of all, if you care about your body, you should care about your joints. You see, the skeletal system is between the muscular system and the nervous system. What this means is that bones, and specially joints, are what unify the commandment of movements (nerves) with the actual manifestation of them (muscles). Without healthy joints, not only will your movement practice suffer, but it may have a dead end at some point.

When we train we not only use our muscles, but in fact the whole organism is working together. As a whole, where the part suffers, the whole does.

This is where the concept of structural integrity comes in. In the words of Charles Poliquin in his book *The Poliquin Principles* (3rd edition, Location 1611) “Structural balance refers to the major muscles of the body being in balance with each other. This means the balance between opposing muscle pairs (such as the biceps and triceps for the arms, and quadriceps and harmstrings for the legs) and also between the limbs (such as the right leg and the left leg)”.

So, for example, assuming you were crazy for developing the “beach muscles” (biceps, chest and abs) and didn’t care much about the muscles on the back of your body or even little stabilizer muscles, you would surely have a muscular imbalance. In this case, your shoulders might collapse fowards, irritating the muscles in the back of the shoulder that try to put into proper place the shoulder. Soon you are dealing with shoulder pain, not to mention this would cause many other maladies in your body that would spread through it.



Hence, this are 4 benefits of looking for structural integrity:

1. Injury prevention

Most of the injuries that come silently with the years, that are not caused by the sudden fall or accident, come from an structural imbalance issue. As said before, the bones are between

muscles, which means that an imbalance in those will create unnecessary pressure on the joints and will, if not addressed, cause an injury.

2. Longevity

For many it will seem surprising that George Leeman, the North American raw deadlift world holder with a lift over 900 lbs, has said that the most important aspect to getting stronger is actually injury prevention. Even if you do many things wrong in nutrition, form and rest, I assure you that if you keep training you will get stronger with time. Progress might be slow, but in the long run it is almost a certainty. Actually, when you realize the magnitude of the problem, Leeman's statement is just logical.

The things with injuries is that they rob you all opportunities. If you really love training, which means that you'll want to do it until the day you die, injury prevention and treatment should be a major consideration in your training.

3. Amazing qualities

Many qualities in your own body are right now being held back due to a structural balance issue. For example, many people cannot get flexible because the body is trying to protect itself from an injury.

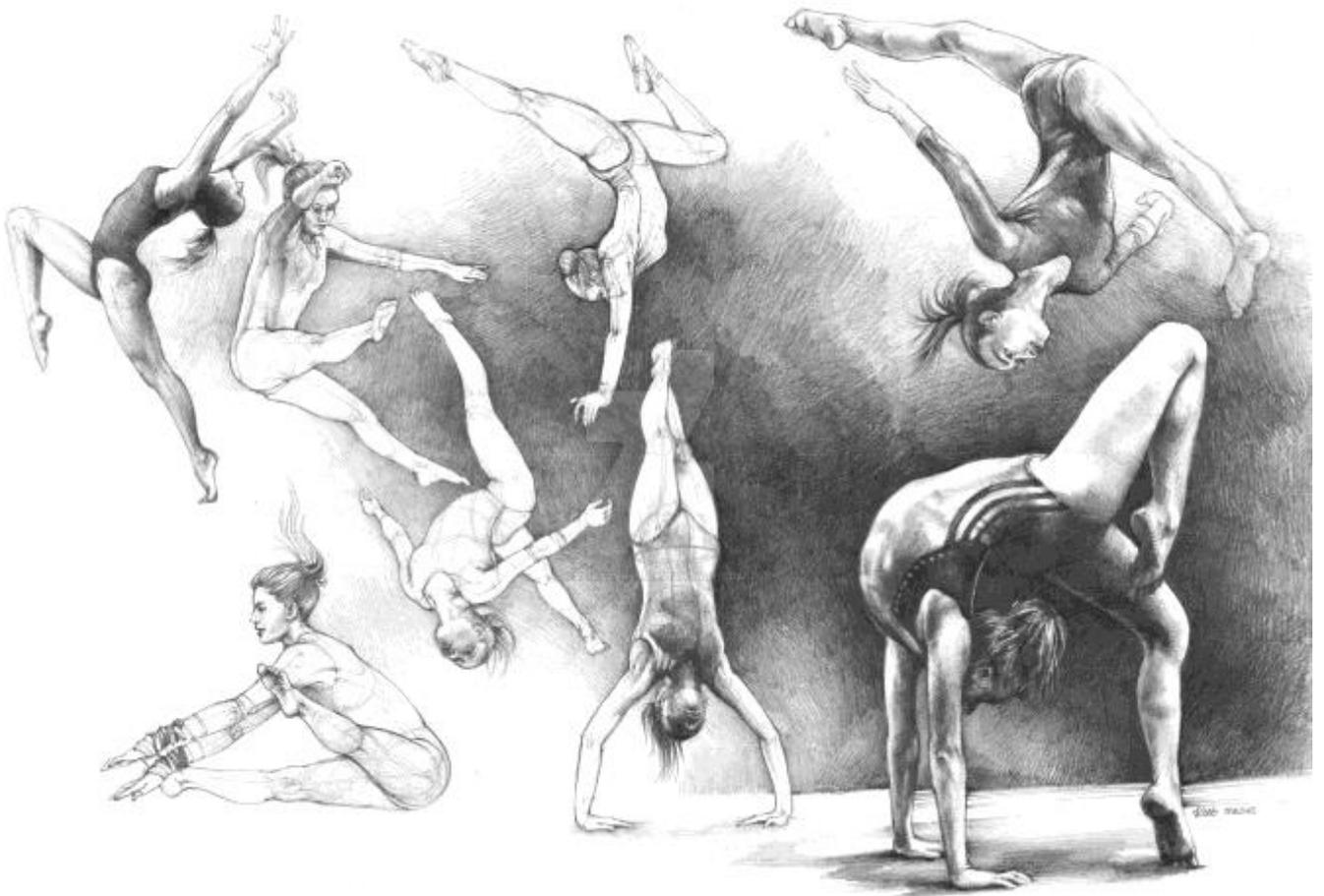
All bodily functions are based on trust. Your health, strength, flexibility, movement quality and suppleness, breathing depth and so much more is held back in the name of security. If there is an underlying issue that makes your body prone to injury, you will not be able to reach your potential, at least without some degree of violence to yourself.

4. Real functionality

One of the major trends today in fitness is the search for "functionality". This word is suspicious to say the least. Functional means to function in regards to something, the question then becomes to what. I would agree that doing an snatch (not so much a plank on a swiss ball) is a movement that will benefit your life in many ways, but let's not fool ourselves here.

We are progressively moving to a society that doesn't need the body anymore. Our lives no longer need crazy fitness abilities to be able to survive as in the old days and, even though I will still train many positions that are not really “useful” like a handstand, you have to agree that functionality must be something else.

For me, functionality means the ability to be able to play, to feel good in your own body, to get to an old age feeling great, to have a body that is healthy enough for you to be able to love, laugh and be happy. I am of the belief that the best that our movement niche can offer to the world, more than crazy push ups, is the knowledge of taking care of yourself, and structural integrity is a major part of that.



Keep healthy to keep moving!

III. THE HOW OF STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

Now that you have hopefully understood the importance of structural integrity, let's see how to achieve it. According to the Poliquin's definition provided before, the simplest answer would be "stretch the muscles that are tight and strengthen the muscles that are weak".

For example, in the forward shoulders position the normal therapy would be to stretch the front part of the shoulder (internal rotators) and strengthen the back part of the shoulder (external rotators). Even though this approach is fine, I find that it is highly simplistic in many cases.

You see, our bodies are not a fixed structure where you just arrange something and that fixes all. Our bodies function on biomechanics, not mechanics. This means that it has a lot of functions, and one of the main ones is moving.

That is why I have come up with this 6 step process to alleviate structural imbalances around the major joints in the body involved in athletic movement. This joints would be:

- Shoulders
- Elbows
- Wrist
- Neck
- Spine
- Hips
- Knee
- Ankle



This are the joints that are most commonly injured during exercise, or even without it. In all of this joints, the procedure for achieving structural balance would be:

-Mobilize: The whole joint in its various movements. A healthy joint is one that can move properly.

-Release: You need to release the tight spots in your body that are causing pain and pressure on the joints.

-Stretch: The muscles that are overly tight.

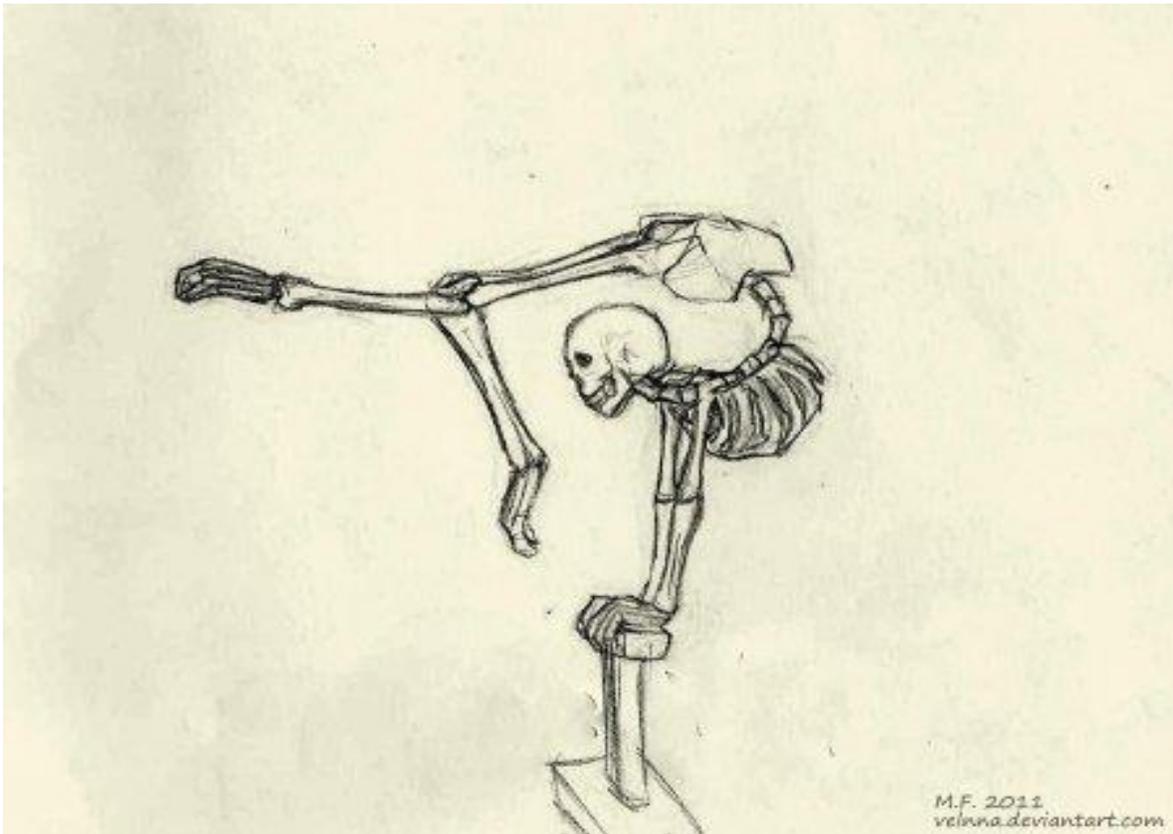
-Strengthen: The muscles that are overly weak.

-Integrate: It is of no good to have healthy joints that cannot work in conjunction with others to create movement. The integration part assures that a shoulder is able to do what is suppose to do in relationship to the whole body.

-Relax: It is of great importance to work on an energetic level. We usually just think about bones and muscles, but there is more than meets the eye. Oriental practices show us that we have energy that could be literally trapped inside certain areas of your body and be causing unnecessary tightness or weakness.

The last thing I want to say is that every muscle imbalance has an effect on the joints, and an effect on your posture. Remember the bench pressing syndrome? An imbalance in your shoulders can cause pain in the specific joint but also rounded shoulders that will translate into other areas of your body.

This is why, when looking to solve your imbalances, work on these joints, with these steps and, if after some reasonable time you haven't seen improvements, take a look at your posture. Don't despair: the whole affects the part, but the part also affects the whole.



Don't let your joints keep you from doing this kind of positions! You deserve challenging, beautiful and complex movement practices.

IV. CONCLUSION

If there is one point I want you to take of this little guide is the importance of taking care of yourself. Far too many people enter the movement world with a lack of empathy for themselves- they just want to crush their bodies. If this is what you want, fine, but I sincerely think the “no pain no gain” (which is useful in some circumstances) is more a ideology they have imposed on us, as nobody wants to sincerely suffer. It is the ideology of maximization of productivity under any cost, which is a market thinking. The system does not care if you work until you die, so it is your responsibility to love yourself and fix all of your broken pieces. I hope this guide helps you on that journey.

So, are you going to accept this call? I have written this book to show you that there is a better way, but it is now your turn to make a choice. It doesn't have to be radical, you can just start incorporating some of the principles laid out in this book little by little.

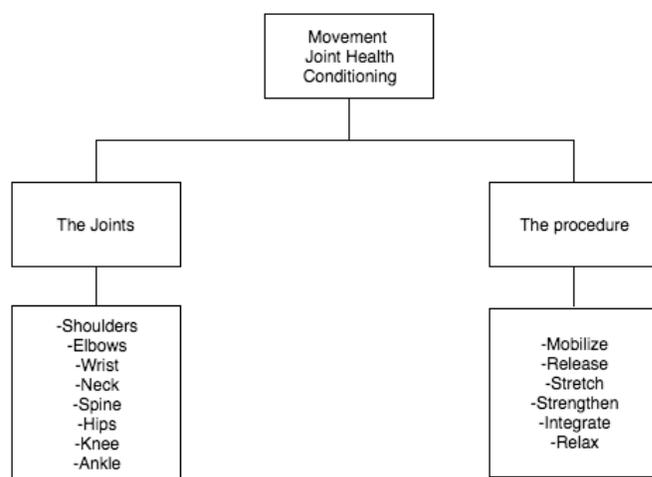
Remember: even the enormous Ganges is born out of a little fond that, drop after drop, goes on generating a great river.

Would you rather keep ignoring that annoying knee pain that has become your silent companion? The bigger picture is not the joint health conditioning that this books offers, but the widder world of movement that awaits for you out there.

But we have to start somewhere. Probably you want to have the freedom to go a have a cathartic deadlift session or to survive a martial arts class, or maybe play with your

children and being able to fully engage in the moment, only worrying about learning new movements but not about being physically incapable of responding to whatever life throws at you. There is something liberating about going to a contemporary dance class and knowing that your body is prepared to do anything that it is faced with, where your only job is to align your mind and soul with this reality.

We want life to be an skill challenge, not a joint health one.



The proposal in a nutshell

This is the road I offer you. Blending this Joints with this Procedure is the way to go for Movement Joint Health Conditioning. I know it works, it has proven to do with myself and thousands others through history. It is a road full of excitement, amazement and growth. I still remember the moment I actually felt that my body was capable and adaptable, it was fascinating, remarkable and scary at the same time, and I want you too feel that with me. You were a kid, so deep inside it's all about remembering.

Will you join us, or remain in the world of Separation?

6. FUTURE EDUCATION

If you are looking for ways for applying this and so much more for really optimizing your joints, The Dynamic Structure is your answer. [Click here](#) if you want to know more.

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