

Structure, Function, Integration.

Journal of the
Dr. Ida Rolf Institute®

March 2023



A Regional Study of the Pelvis

Dr. Rolf said the living pelvis is dynamic, where structural and functional balance is key to overall well-being. In this issue, articles consider the substantial individual difference between people's pelvises when taking their clients through the Rolting® SI Ten Series. Plus, an illuminating conversation about the pelvic floor with anatomist Gil Hedley, PhD.

The Living 'Line'

Certified Advanced Rolfer®, Darrell Sanchez, PhD, takes the time to sense gravity on the unstable surface of The Original Tuning Board™. Read about vertical integration that can have an exquisite state of stillness in motion.

How Rolting® SI Shaped my Life

When a young basketball athlete suffered a serious traumatic injury, she and her family had never heard of Rolting SI; it became the solution that got her back to the court.

Also in this issue

Measuring Soft Tissue Mobilization

An interview with researcher Isabelle Gilbert about her study of the effects of fascial mobilization on the viscoelastic properties, pressure pain thresholds, and tactile pressure thresholds of the Cesarean section scar.



Darrell Sanchez

Structural Integration and the Living ‘Line’

By Darrell Sanchez, PhD, LPC, Certified Advanced Rolfer®, Rolf Movement® Practitioner

ABSTRACT *In the structural integration paradigm, a good standing posture is one that is organized in the gravitational field. Said another way, a person is free to breathe, feel, and allow continuous muscular adjustments for an unceasing interplay of movement. This fluid verticality is evoked when standing and working with The Original Tuning Board™. In this article, Darrell Sanchez describes the tuning board paradox of dynamic balance, where humans both stand with stability and motion. He explains the refined foot position, the neutral experience, and the folding exercise using the tuning board, all of which enhance the client’s experience of their own living ‘Line’.*

Editor’s note: This article is a reprint, it was originally published in the IASI 2022 Yearbook of Structural Integration. We have made some modifications here to allow for our journal’s style.

Sensing Gravity

Take a moment to simply stand quietly in a peaceful setting with your eyes open. Become aware of your breath, its rhythm, its depth, its presence in your ribs, and your diaphragm, however it

is being expressed. There is no need to adjust or ‘fix’ it – just notice. As you do, take note of your experience of how your body is relating to the gravitational field surrounding you, supporting you. Can you feel the subtle fine adjustments as your body innately ebbs and flows with the constant movement throughout and around you? Take time to sense if there is a flowing feeling or notice if there might be some holding. Is there a sense of familiarity with what is happening in and around you and your body? Does something feel off-kilter? Is your balance

skewed? Observe what your relationship is to 'grounding'. Do you feel neutral, centered, and at peace with a silent sway as your body gently joins the earth's gravitational rotation and pull?

Now imagine a client walking through your door, maybe someone new, perhaps someone whose rigidity or structural alignment issues are so deeply ingrained in the fabric of their being that even after ten sessions of structural integration work, they still have a difficult time realizing the goals of the work you both have done. You resonate with their feelings, with the bracing, the myofascial holding, and the tension throughout their mind and body. You know these structural inhibitions have evolved over time, whether the result of trauma not fully integrated or habitual physical holding patterns in response to personal experiences. Regardless of how or why these responses compromise their body's ability to orient successfully to their environment. Their 'stuckness' impacts the transmission of connected micromovements that are the hallmarks of healthy vertical integration. You've tried what you know. There's been some movement and change, but more is needed. What's next?

A gull standing on a floating buoy is not stationary, it will need to have continual movements and adjustments to remain upright. Photo by Shutterstock.



Gravity as the Therapist

From the very beginning of my interest and explorations with creative movement, body awareness, and psychological well-being, I see that my journey to structural integration was a predetermined conclusion. The breadth of this work helps people integrate and access the creative flow of movement through their bodies and minds. The process of *gravity as the therapist* introduces clients to the continual movement deep within their nervous system and teaches them how to negotiate their experiences and find resources within themselves. It guides them to let go of holding patterns, of restrictions lodged within the deepest part of their being, and find peace in the dynamic never-ending movements and micro-adjustments creating the polarities in their lives: stability and motion, rigidity and flexibility, consciousness or not.

As a structural integration practitioner, one of the most fundamental questions I continue to reexamine is the concept of structural integration. What exactly is it?

I repeatedly reaffirm in my own experience that Ida P. Rolf, PhD (1896-1979) had it

right from the start: structural integration is synonymous with vertical integration of the whole body within the field of gravity. And that vertical integration is the anatomical, functional, and experiential connection and coordination of differentiated parts of the body in the experience of verticality. Our relationship with gravity is fundamental to our human condition, and structural integration, with its expression of true verticality within the gravitational field, is essential for psychological health and well-being.

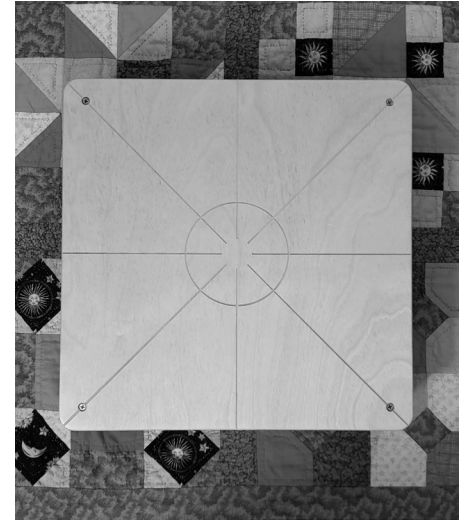
According to Rolf (1977), structural integration was more than a tissue manipulation technique, it was a way of thinking and living. Her goal for structural integration was *true verticality*, the experientially real and functional phenomenon of a line around which the body's energy force fields balance and prepare for the use of gravity.

Rolf noted that movement was key to all life experiences. She was not the first to make such an observation, obviously, but it is interesting that she found it essential in the alignment of the human structure

and its relationship to gravity. In her book, *Rolfing: Reestablishing the Natural Alignment and Structural Integration of the Human Body for Vitality and Well-Being* (1977), she showed a picture of a seagull standing on a buoy in the ocean. The caption below that image reads:

"We think of the gull on a buoy as still, but his need for continual adjustment to the moving water keeps his muscles in an unceasing interplay of movement. In humans, no matter how still a man may be, he is always adjusting to his respiratory needs, his circulatory needs, his perceptual needs . . . In an organic world, there is no such thing as complete lack of movement" (Rolf 1977, 152).

We know from our practice that the vertical human posture is not intended to be rigidly static no matter how 'perfectly' it may be expressing alignment and the vertically of Rolf's 'Line'. From Rolf's statement (*gravity is the therapist*), to kinesiology tests, to the reality of being in the gravitational field and the energy field of a living planet, there is always some movement happening, even if the movement is motility and the



The Original Tuning Board™ is a professional quality balance board, pictured from the side and the spatial orienting design can be seen on the top surface. Photos courtesy of Darrell Sanchez.

micromovements of refined adjustments of being in gravity.

Fundamentally, structural integration is about a lived relationship as a human with *gravity, core, Line, and movement*. From a clinical sense then, how can I implement practical actions and strategies to support my clients' transition from the instability of chaotic disorganization or the rigidity of fixated patterns to organized fluidity? How can I support the integration of all the sundry parts, systems, functions, and elements that make up the structure of the human body so that they connect and

function as a whole, so there is coherence and flow?

The Unstable Surface

In a moment of inspiration, my desire to bring together my experiences from dance, Rolfing® Structural Integration, and Somatic Experiencing® resulted in the creation of the Original Tuning Board™. The tuning board is a professional quality balance board that provides an unstable surface upon which to place our vertical posture. The name comes from attuning

the movement of our verticality in the field of gravity. It allows a gentle movement in every plane and, as such, permits all the fine adjustments of posture in gravity. The tuning board gives us a chance to experience those adjustments in a polarity play of stability and motion. The board will never be perfectly still but, as we progress in our attuning, we are able to know a stable motion that is grounded and centered without becoming rigid. Clients learn how to accept the reality of continual movement, partial control, and relative stability on the board and in life itself.

I repeatedly reaffirm in my own experience that Ida P. Rolf, PhD (1896-1979) had it right from the start: structural integration is synonymous with vertical integration of the whole body within the field of gravity . . . Our relationship with gravity is fundamental to our human condition, and structural integration, with its expression of true verticality within the gravitational field, is essential for psychological health and well-being.

The practitioner stands near the client on the board and supports them with subtle balancing tasks and suggestions while monitoring the process. Standing on the board for a few minutes daily improves grounding, balance, and somatic awareness of connection.

The experience of standing on the tuning board offers a safe and constant flow of movement through the body that gently touches the deepest parts of the nervous system. The movement on the tuning board accelerates and amplifies the natural motions of continual reorienting to *fluid verticality*. There is play between state changes, from stability to motion, and motion to stability, this also has important implications for the resiliency of the vagus nerve (Porges 2011).

The moderate physical challenge presented by the tuning board is a hallmark of the creative process. It feeds fluid sensory experiences from the feet and up through the body. It simulates polarities of order and chaos, tension and release, and discomfort and flow. Because the tuning board will never be perfectly still, the person standing on it is challenged at many levels to surrender rigidity, fragmentation, and habituated holding patterns. One is gently challenged to find and quietly attune to the reality of relative stability, a *relative*. One's deepest beliefs and emotions are challenged to trust this mysterious and paradoxical coexistence of stability in the midst of motion.

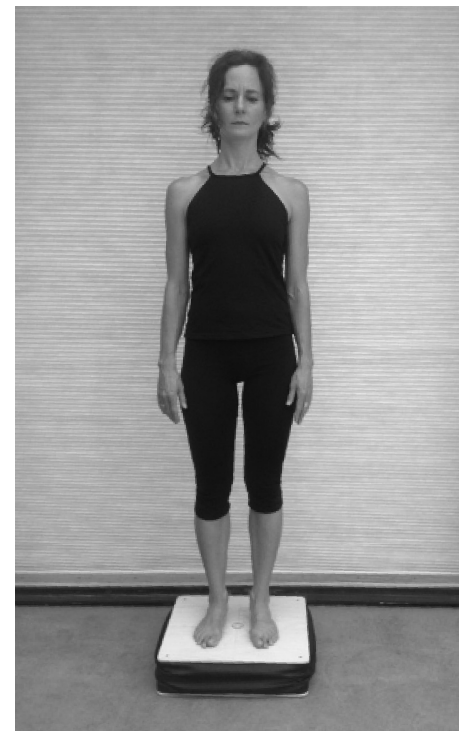
On the tuning board, one gets an immediate sense of a deep inner truth about oneself and the world. Because we are never truly still, any given posture is a referent moment for those immediately preceding and following it. When our perceptions are attuned to this, any given posture implies continuous movement. This awareness opens a door to a new way of working with postural patterns that reflects the tension and ambiguity of constantly both *being* and *becoming*.

The practitioner stands near the client on the board and supports them with subtle

balancing tasks and suggestions while monitoring the process. Standing on the board for a few minutes daily improves grounding, balance, and somatic awareness of connection. Clients learn kinesthetically to feel and know balance as a continual fine adjustment. Any large imbalance will tilt the tuning board and stop the refined process, and it will need to be supervised for safety. This way, subtle imbalances are addressed as body motility coaxes the release of restrictions that keep the body off-center.

Benefits from working with unstable surfaces, also referred to as *instability resistance training*, include (Zemková 2017):

- Increased activity of the co-contractile muscular, flexor/ extensor balance.
- Refined spinal stability and coordinated activation of core musculatures.
- Healthy and efficient functioning of the stress feed-forward and feedback systems.
- Increased muscular recruitment.
- Increased core activation to maintain postural equilibrium.
- Improved dynamic balance.
- Improved postural stability.



Neutral vertical standing posture that is in motion on the tuning board. Photo of person courtesy of Darrell Sanchez.



The plumb line is a true vertical gravitational line where a weight on a string indicates the vertical line, often used in masonry to ensure brick walls are straight up and down in gravity. Photo by Ognianm on iStock.

Neutral is an exquisite state of stillness in motion. It is a vital experience for our somatic and psychological well-being. It represents centering and grounding as well as spaciousness and resiliency.

Benefits from working directly with the tuning board include:

- Liberating the viscera and the diaphragm from excess tension to support healthy vagal tone.
- Supporting neural flow to and from the lower body to the brainstem, cerebellum, subcortical structures, and neocortex.
- Reducing stress and supporting homeostasis.
- Opening perceptual pathways and sensory organs for responsive interactions with the environment.
- Encouraging dynamic movements of joints throughout the body.
- Supporting a reduction in chronic pain.
- Informing us of our interoceptive state.

I designed exercises using the tuning board to work with the living Line, our fluid verticality. It offers attunement with the whole body, neutral verticality, three-dimensional breath, and balance to support our response to gravity. I talk with my clients about the basic vocabulary and questions to stimulate self-reflection, to nudge their awareness toward what is happening in their body while on the tuning board. We talk about:

- **Grounding:** Fundamental safety.
- **Balance:** The natural function

of *homeostasis* and *dynamic equilibrium*.

- **Orienting:** Where am I? What's happening around me?
- **Centering:** The core of fluid verticality.
- **Spaciousness:** What movement possibilities are available or necessary? How do I relate to space? Can there be flow?
- **Tone/Resiliency:** Am I able to respond? How do I respond?
- **Connection:** Is it safe to join? What is the nature of joining?
- **Movement, Curiosity, Imagination.**

The following discussion highlights how I work with clients on the tuning board and simple exercises that bring them into their flow.

"Our nervous system is vertically distributed, ascending from the body proper through the brainstem and limbic areas and finally arriving at the cortex. From head to toe and back again, vertical integration links these differentiated areas into a functional whole" (Siegel 2010, 72).

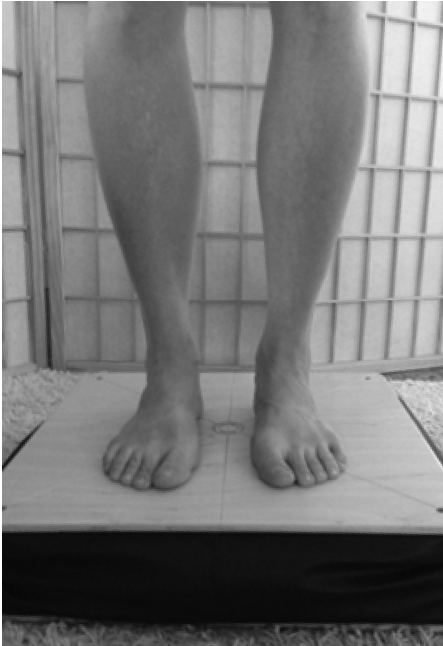
Attunement

The tuning board got its name from the word *attunement*, meaning in this context, to bring into harmony, to make aware or be responsive to what is happening in

our body. When we position our head over our pelvis and then over the base of support of our feet, we are engaged with reconciling the body's flowing movements and the firm geometry of the plumb line.

Take Tim as an example, he is an energetic guy in his mid-fifties who loves to ski, cycle, travel, and logs many overtime hours at work. He is more on the sympathetically oriented end of the activity spectrum. When I introduced him to the tuning board, he immediately took it as a challenge to either make it stop moving or to see how much movement he could do on it.

He used a balancing strategy that alternated between total body tensing to make the board be still and then doing excessive movements to force stability. When I explained that no matter how much he tried, he would never be able to make the board stop moving completely, he began swinging his hips in a circle to convince himself he was 'balancing' and that the tuning board would not conquer him. He was in a semi-crouched posture while his head made little movement. Even though he wasn't falling off and could athletically move on the unstable surface, I would not refer to his actions as finding the deep integration of fluid verticality. It took repetitions of getting on and off the tuning board and educating Tim about another way of relating to balance to slowly drop into a different experience of his nervous system and what balance could be.



The refined foot position on the tuning board should depress the board evenly under the body. Photo courtesy of Darrell Sanchez

Without the knowledgeable assistance of the practitioner, the user's typical interaction with the tuning board is quite random. The person will most likely place their feet arbitrarily on the surface and have an initial response to the moving surface, which is usually surprising to them. They will then engage in some habitual efforts in order to make the board stop moving.

There will likely be a *tilt bias* where the tuning board predominantly tilts off-center, either more back, more forward, from one side, or to the other. The random orientation of the center of gravity relative to the center of the tuning board, along with the random placement of the feet, is what I call the *random foot position*. We need to neutralize these two factors to fully benefit from the movement the tuning board offers. To get the full advantage of the flow of movement, it is essential to negotiate our way to what I refer to as the *refined foot position* and the *neutral experience*.

What is Neutral?

*Stand like a mountain,
move like a river.*

Ancient Taoist saying.

Neutral is an exquisite state of stillness in motion. It is a vital experience for

our somatic and psychological well-being. It represents centering and grounding as well as spaciousness and resiliency. Neutral is a mindful, calm, and centering state while orienting our nervous system vertically in the gravitational field. It's a dynamic balance, a fluid verticality. Typically, it takes us a moment to reconcile this paradox in our embodiment. We all know that mountains are not really immovable, but they change all the time, and rivers have a constancy of flow path that lasts a long time. I often play with this as a felt change in my body and perception by reversing the saying, *move like a mountain and stand like a river*. The feeling of resolving those two ideas is a neutral experience, stable but in motion, as when standing calmly on the tuning board.

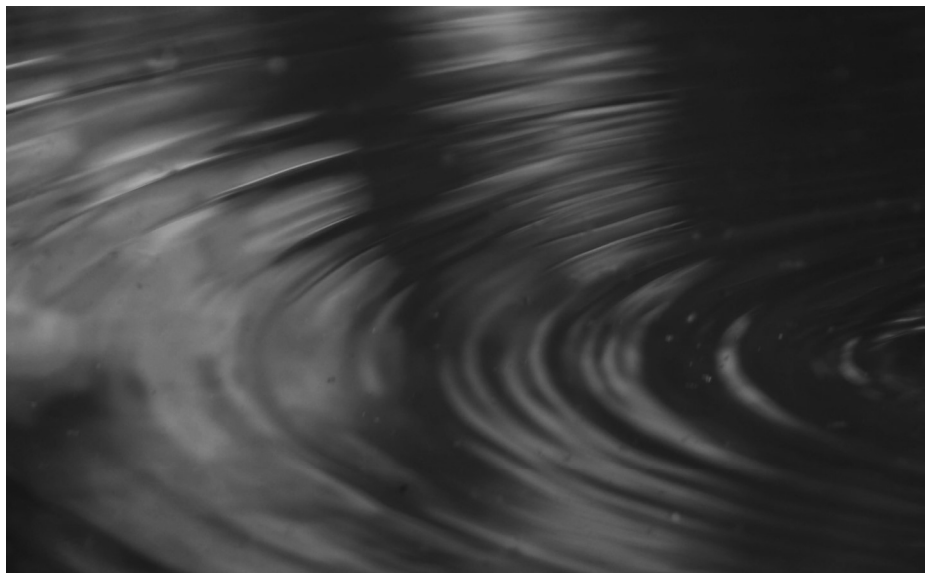
Neutral represents home for the balance and flow of our nervous systems, the presence of our mindfulness, and the living balance of being vertical in gravity. The centered neutral space brings a feeling of psychological and neurological calming. On the tuning board, neutral standing represents a movement-oriented mindfulness experience where we can refer to and receive information from the polarity of left and right, front and back, and up and down. This posture exercise aims to engage with embodiment resources (balance, grounding, orienting, centering, spaciousness, tone, resiliency, connection) to increase refined mobility of the spine and encourage the stable flow of movement with connection

throughout the body, stimulating verticality reflexes.

The experience of the neutral space is when we feel the reconciliation of the unbending geometric vertical Line used in constructing skyscrapers, the intersections of the cardinal planes, and the living, responsive, and uprightness of trees and humans. Watching someone on the tuning board shows this dance in a touching way. Starting with the position of the feet on the board is important in setting a more optimal likelihood of seeing the dance emerge quickly and deeply.

Refined Foot Position

With the feet oriented forward, the heels line up under the sit bones (ischial tuberosities), and about two-thirds of the foot is forward of the frontal plane line on the tuning board. The board should depress evenly under the vertical centering of the body so that the tuning board is free to move in all planes and is not stuck in any one plane. Little adjustments should be made so that the center of gravity is making the board depress evenly to eliminate any tilt bias. In this way, no extra effort is exerted to counter the bias. This will allow for a cleaner flow of a vertical wave of motion moving through the body. This, in turn, stimulates more practice for the postural reflexes of the spinal cord, brainstem, cerebellum, and vestibular system (Rolf 1977). This is the *refined foot position*.



The tuning board can transmit soft waves of motion through the body and nervous system. Photo by Alma Snortum on Unsplash.

Once the position is established, then I encourage the person to simply stand and allow the movement of the tuning board under their feet to have its effect on being vertical. This is the beginning of the *neutral experience*, a mindful movement meditation of fluid verticality.

Finding Neutral Verticality

In the neutral balancing posture, like the bird on the buoy, our feet and ankles initiate the work of making fine adjustments in gravity. This involves subtle combinations of flexion and extension, inversion and eversion, which initiate and have the potential to transmit soft waves of motion through the body and nervous system. For this to happen, the knees must *hover* relatively straight, neither locked in hyperextension nor fixed bent, even slightly forward in flexion. Hovering is not a static experience. There is a subtle awareness of actual and potential motions, as adjustments

in the feet and ankles reflexively transmit motion upward.

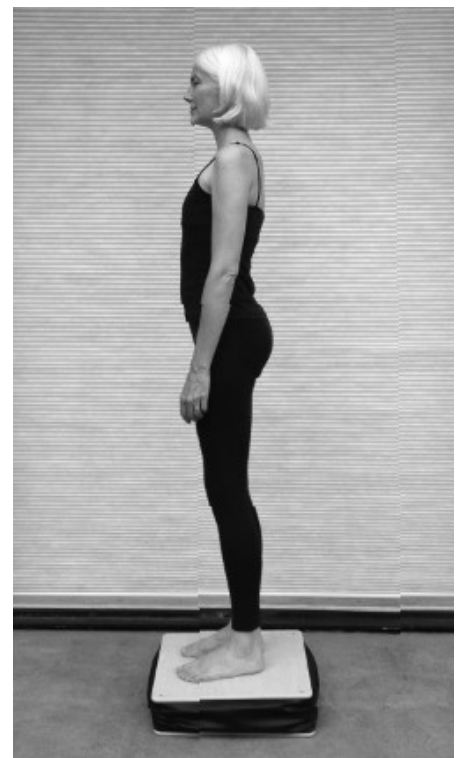
Finding neutral verticality becomes tracking the movement that proceeds up into the hips and pelvis, sacral joints, into the lower lumbar, and nerve plexuses, and from there, up into the spinal cord. Experimenting with micromovements of the hips and pelvis is an important station for allowing the breath and movement to continue further and carry up through the whole body, which is where we are going with this.

When working with clients in this stance, I ask them to follow their movement into the spine. I invite them to look for

places in their spine where they feel the movement and places where they don't. Next, I encourage them to allow their head to float with gentle micromovements of the upper spine and occiput by *micro-sensing* the smallest gesture. These head-spine movements mirror the subtle movement in their feet and ankles. If their upper girdles respond to the movement coming up through their lower extremities and spine, then I ask them to feel that response transmitting through to their fingers. Whenever their mind drifts, I suggest they simply allow it to return to the presence and experience of the body knowing how to be vertical.



Standing on the tuning board can elicit kelp-like movement – rooted to the seafloor, reaching upward toward the sun, and fluidly moving with the currents and tides. Photo of kelp by Marco A. Mazza. Photo of person courtesy of Darrell Sanchez.



Once the position is established, then I encourage the person to simply stand and allow the movement of the tuning board under their feet to have its effect on being vertical. This is the beginning of the *neutral experience*, a mindful movement meditation of fluid verticality. The feet and ankles respond to weight shifts and the proprioceptors are stimulated. The short reflex arcs do much to counter the tilts responding to gravity and maintaining the upright position. As the movement starts to include the hips and pelvis, the stimulation proceeds upward into the spinal cord and spinal reflexes begin sending information to the brain stem and cortex.

The vestibular system is also involved in finding neutral verticality as it registers the sways of the foot responses, the movements of the eyes, and the motor stimulation of the feet and the body. Taken together, there is a continual flow of information about balance and equilibrium in motion through sensorimotor stimulation the entire time.

Another example is Sally, a healthy woman in her forties who loves yoga. When I placed her on the tuning board for the first time, she had the typical initial reaction when changing from the stable floor to the moving surface – one of surprise – followed by a moment of disorientation, random foot placement, and bracing.

One of the more common balance strategies people use in this kind of task is to use minimal foot and ankle movements, elevate their center of gravity, and use larger circling movements of the head and upper body. At first, there can seem to be little awareness of the relationship between the movements of the feet and ankles, their responses to the shifts in gravity, and the feeling of grounding therein.

After guiding Sally into the refined foot position, she found herself managing the moving surface task in a different way. Her feet and ankles started to be more responsive to the moving surface and her head circling became smaller. Her whole-body movement became quieter and more settled. Her functional center of gravity was dropping lower in her abdomen, toward grounding through her feet, while her upper body was extending upward as she became taller and more upright within the movement.

I invited her to stay with this postural change for a few minutes. Then I asked her to step forward off the tuning board

and stand quietly in front of it, curious about what she noticed. She said she could not believe how grounded her feet felt and could feel the 'tide' still moving through her. We lingered with that experience to give her nervous system and her awareness a little time to 'learn' and integrate. This is the coming together of grounding and fluid verticality offered by the tuning board.

Breath

In this neutral sojourn, the breath is quiet and somewhat shallow. As neutral progresses, there is a breath that happens like a sigh. It is spontaneous and involuntary. When it arises in this neutral state, it means that the mind and the body are calm but active, present with the moment of safe verticality in the field of gravity. It means the diaphragm is free, the ribs are responsive, and the core is elastic. It feels like all the horizontal structures move with the breath, and no extra effort is needed.

Immediately following the relaxed exhale, there is a reflexive extension of the standing Line and an increase in the vertical thrust – generous movement, arcs, and spaciousness – and pushing down through the feet as they continue their adjustments. There is a feeling of slight settling of the extension before the next impulse for reaching up through the Line, as the breathing and waves of motion augmented by the tuning board continue uninterrupted. This represents a deep practice of coordination and awareness along with finer attunement with the autonomic nervous system. It is a starting place from which expressive movements arise and return.

Kelp: A Metaphor

The tuning board provides us with deeply intimate attention to the paradox of opposites – stability and motion. It is a moving resolution as to how we can know not only either/or, but both/and, in the lived moment. To do so requires the activation of motor mobilizations and allowing receptivity of sensory information to also flow. The accelerated and amplified movement under the feet poses a challenge to our relationship with effort and ease, the tuning board teaches us to accept and include an accompanying relationship with *allowing* movement.

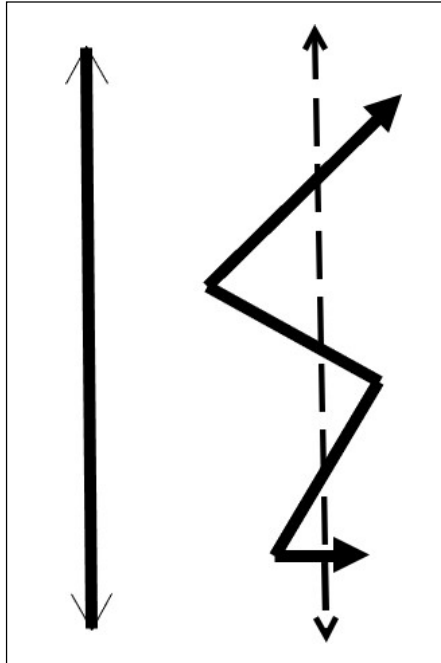
A good beginning exercise to acquire the full neutral posture is what I call *ankles to occiput*. Keeping the eyes open, I invite clients to begin with a bottom-up awareness of the feet and ankle movements to manage the tilting of the tuning board. Then they add their attention to the occiput and allow themselves to feel that corresponding mirroring movement at the atlanto-occipital joint and upper cervical vertebrae. Then, we track any restrictions to the sensorimotor flow up and down their body, continuing to allow their awareness and the nervous system to practice and learn how to habituate themselves to this new way of balancing – for them to come to prefer it.

The next level of this exercise is to perform it with their eyes closed. Though this exercise may seem simple, it is very revealing about the integration of their mind and body. Being in fluid and continuous motion in the gravitational field reveals our embodiment of the Line. Continued practice of these exercises will open the door to neutral and beyond.

The Line extends beyond the confines of our bodies. Kelp is a good metaphor to show how verticality can be alive and in constant motion. Kelp is securely rooted to the seafloor. Its upper part reaches toward the sun far above its own top. It is vertically aligned and moves fluidly with the currents and tides. The seabed, the sun, the kelp, and the sea are all in a relationship together – and they are constantly moving. In that dance, the kelp does not lose its verticality, nor does it become unbending or unyielding with the sea. Its verticality moves with the motions of the sea, like our vertical Line moves with our breathing core and our motions in gravity.

Relative Balance

The neutral experience I am describing here is an exercise in the mindful movement of the structural integration Line, this is *dynamic balance*. Balance is not a fixed state. It is relative to the interplay of stability and motion. It is support created through continuous small muscle adjustments. Dynamic balance, seen from a Taoist perspective, is one of the essential principles of the creative life. The synthesis of two opposing forces of action (yang) and rest (yin) links us to a universal pattern of growth, renewal, and harmony (Dreheler 1990). Jung (1969) also talks about equalizing the energy between opposites



Folding of the Line with all segments extending bidirectionally may seem like a simple squat movement, yet profound coordinative gains can be made transitioning between verticality and folding. Photos courtesy of Darrell Sanchez.

in order to develop new psychological attitudes.

Working with polarities can lead to potentially transformational turning points. As already mentioned, the primary polarity of the tuning board is the range between stability and motion. In the neutral exercise, I use stability and motion to support the client on the board to arrive at stable motion wherein they can have a lived experience of fluid verticality. The goal is to be in a calm but active state, riding the wave of the reflexive extension of the body along with a vertical intention. Good posture is a continuous subtle fluctuation between stability and mobility, maintaining balance, and it involves the need for “centering as the source of support” (Bartenieff 1980, 21). The dance is continuous. “Stability and mobility alternate endlessly,” Bartenieff wrote quoting Laban (1980, 101). Centering for support or grounding is done *in motion*. Relative balance, a dynamic equilibrium, is a good way of describing this subtle experience of two polarities.

Basic Folding Exercise

This exercise has different names, and various versions exist in many different health and fitness domains. It is most commonly called by its obvious appearance, the squat. In yoga, it is

known as *utkatasana* or the chair pose. In the domain of structural integration, it is known as folding. It is essentially folding the vertical Line. This is an exercise in moving and perceiving movement while extending in all directions at once. It may seem like a simple squat movement, but some aspects have profound implications that inform every session of a basic structural integration series.

Begin by orienting your feet in the refined foot position and stand for a few moments to stabilize with the movement on the tuning board. Start to visualize your vertical center Line extending up through your head and down through your feet, two directions of awareness at the same time. Next, bend the knees straight forward over the center of each foot. Feel the front and back of the feet on the tuning board, making sure that the heels do not come off the tuning board.

Next, decrease the angle of the torso at the hips and fold the body forward. The pelvic floor and buttocks should open, and while reaching back as if sitting down, the spine feels like it gets longer. The crown of the head should open upward as it reaches to the sky, in the opposite direction as the pelvic floor. Bring a toned awareness to the anterior abdominal muscles so that the abdomen is not spilling toward the floor, rather there is containment so that there is a feeling

that the anterior spine is complimenting the extension of the whole spine.

The arms can hang or reach down from the torso directly toward the floor or overhead in line with the spine. The latter position of the arms reaching upward is the most challenging. Draw your attention to the feet, making sure that the whole foot is interacting with the surface of the tuning board. This exercise is an excellent one for increasing the client’s awareness of weight transmission through the legs, ankles, and feet into the ground – grounding. Keep bringing the client’s attention back to the lines their body are making and the movement of the board, in the basic folding exercise, the tuning board continues to stimulate proprioception and balance mechanisms.

In this exercise, the body expresses fluid verticality as four continuous lines. Although the angles of the anterior ankles, behind the knees, and the anterior pelvis have decreased, the experience we go for is that each line in the sequence is extending bidirectionally. It brings together several important elements of awareness in integrating body and mind, including enlivening and coordinating core muscles and nerves, visualizing energy moving in all directions simultaneously, and organizing and toning the spine. It is

also excellent for preparing the mind and body for the exercise of neutral standing and the living line.

In Summary

The plumb line of gravity itself is not a thing we can touch. It is a tool of our imagination so that we may orient ourselves in gravity. *The Line is a vector of gravitational response*, Peter Melchior is known for saying when he taught structural integration [(1931-2005), trained with Rolf]. He was implying that the Line is a living, moving relationship between our bodies and the gravitational field. Imagining the living Line as a stiff geometric plumb rod does not lend itself to movement. How do we reconcile continual fine adjustments, a breathing body, circulation, visceral motions, and the fluid verticality of the bird on the buoy with an inflexible pole? The structural integration Line represents exquisite and refined centering from which movement in all directions is possible. Accelerating and amplifying the movements of dynamic equilibrium on a tool such as the tuning board reveals, and offers the possibility of improving, the individual's experience of their own living vertical Line.

Dynamic equilibrium is where there is a "continuous subtle fluctuation between stability and mobility" (Bartenieff 1980, 21), where everything in the body expresses a sense of balance, but it is a dynamic balance. Nothing reveals this more clearly than standing on a tuning board.

Darrell Sanchez, PhD, is a Certified Advanced Rolfer, psychotherapist, teacher, Rolf Movement practitioner, craniosacral therapist, and professional dance instructor and performer. Sanchez has been studying, practicing, teaching, and performing in the movement and healing arts since 1974. The common thread woven through all of his work is the facilitation of creative transformation in the experience of the whole person. Over forty-four years of knowledge and experience in dance, psychology, functional movement, body-centered work, and the creative process contribute to the rich array of skills that he brings to his work as a holistically-based Rolfer, therapist, and instructor. For more information about The Original Tuning Board™ go to: <https://www.rolfingboulderdenver.com/store/tuning-board>.

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Keywords

tuning board; embodiment; structural integration; movement; core; gravity; letting go; restrictions; integration; Dr. Ida Rolf; vertical posture; the Line; unstable surface; fluid verticality; balance; grounding; orienting; centering; spaciousness; tone; resiliency; connection. ■