

From Felix, student of the Technique for 4 years:

The Alexander Technique is more of a long-term tool than a fix or a treatment. Sure, it's a good and thoroughly relaxing feeling to have an Alexander teacher working on you (and I'm sure a lot of the technique's efficacy comes from this -- a valid social context in which one can just enjoy being touched, in a society that often doesn't provide that), but the real benefits of the Technique come later.

As an IT worker who spends long periods of time sitting in front of computers, I'm probably a prime candidate for all kinds of repetitive strain injuries (carpal tunnel syndrome, back problems, you name it). I'm young enough that it wasn't a problem yet, although I did sometimes feel pangs and twinges after particularly long working weeks. I would correct these in my own ways; going for long hikes or jogs usually fixed them in short order. But while I would recommend long hikes to anyone, that's not news.

The most important thing the Alexander Technique gave me was the ability to notice not pangs and twinges, but things that were likely to lead to them, before discomfort appears. Coupled with that, once I spent many sessions picking apart such basic actions as standing, walking, and sitting, came the realization it's perfectly acceptable to do this.

Things grown humans are expected to be able to do without thinking take on a kind of subconscious enshrinement, without one even realizing it. You can't touch them; can't re-examine them -- even a child can do these things; question them as a grown person? If you were to say to a colleague, "Hey, have you ever wondered if there's a different way to sit down?" there's a good chance they would laugh at the slight absurdity.

But it's not absurd. All of these basic actions are well worth questioning, because they're often the best place to find solutions to minor (and sometimes not-so-minor) aches and pains. Hate getting hand cramps while writing a long exam? Question the way you're holding your pen. Ever have someone pull a chair out from behind you as a prank? Did you fall on your arse? Here's a little-known fact: You didn't have to. It was the way in which you sat that did that. Study the Alexander Technique!

-- Felix, systems administrator for [Victoria Free-Net](#) and owner of [Skeena.net](#) .