

## Proprioception...Proprio Who?

Written by Admin\_html\_test  
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Physical therapists, chiropractic physicians, and other health practitioners that help to rehabilitate musculoskeletal conditions are constantly talking to their patients about retraining and strengthening their muscles after they have experience trauma to a specific part of the body. If you are like most patients, you do the exercises/homework until you start feeling better. This is very much like when people don't finish all their antibiotics that they were prescribe for their strep throat. Once your throat feels better, why would you need to keep taking those nasty little pills? What you can't see or what you can't feel is hard for the human mind to grasp. Perhaps it is leftover from evolution to protect yourself from unneeded expenses of energy or perhaps it is just too much for the human psyche to grasp. Either way, sometimes not finishing that round of exercises can cause for greater complications later on.

Many people suffer from chronic low back pain. I have spoken with a lot of people who have just started to accept that every six months they will have a 'back pain episode'. They take to bed rest, medication, physical medicine, and perhaps even start doing those exercises that their chiropractic physician taught them to do to alleviate pain. They get better in a couple of days and then head back to their normal routine.

Well, there are ways to break that cycle and one of them is proprioceptive rehabilitation. **What is proprioception?**

According to Webster Dictionary, **proprioception (prō-prē-ō- sep-sh n)** means the reception of stimuli produced within the organism. Basically, this means that your ability to balance and navigate through the day has to deal with your ability to perceive your surroundings in relation to your muscles and ligaments. Take for example, your ability to balance on one foot. Some people topple after two seconds while others could stand all day. The people who can stand all day have trained the appropriate muscles and reflex patterns in their brain to keep them

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standing till the bitter end. That is why when you try different positions in yoga like the Warrior pose for the first time, you topple over. You haven't taught your brain how to keep you in that position and the muscles that are suppose to be doing the work are not strong enough to keep you there. When you become a master yogi, you can be a warrior all day long.

What does this mean to rehabilitation? When people normally think of rehabbing their ankle after they have sprained it, they focus on rebuilding strength in the area due to the fact that you have been limiting activity. As this is very important to the process, you must also reteach your ankle how to interrupt its surroundings again and to be able to properly maintain your balance again. When you don't have the ability to properly balance, you end up putting more strain on muscles, ligaments and joints throughout the body.

Everywhere I go, people are talking about about during core exercises. Core exercises are all about balance and teaching your body how to balance properly in different positions and not about getting those perfect abs. This means that all the strength training in the world will not help prevent you from recurring back pain if you are not training the right muscles. And sometimes the right muscle is your brain. Otherwise when you think you are using the right muscles to pick up the heavy load of laundry, you actually are putting extra stress on muscles that are not strong enough to pick it up. So next time that your physician tells you to balance on a little board that wobbles back and forth, perhaps do it more than the one time you are shown in the office. And if that wobble board is too hard to do at first, keep trying. As someone once told me when I was discouraged from trying an exercise, "Try harder!"