

## 4 Remapping Verticality

*Alignment is relationship, not position. How can we encourage both mobility and stability in movement?*

Begin standing:

-Feel the ground and the space around you, orienting bi-directionally.

-Tap the outer side of your ankle. This bump is the first landmark in postural alignment. Rub it to encourage sensation.

-Touch the large knob on the side of your upper leg, the second landmark. Move the top of your leg directly over your anklebone. Relax your knees, so they are not back-locked.

-Touch the center side of your ribs. Measure front to back, and find the center. This is the third landmark. Shift it directly over your upper leg and ankle.

-Touch the center of your ear—the ear hole, and bring this fourth landmark into easeful vertical alignment.

-Tap the top of your head and pull a few hairs or imaginary hairs upward into space, extending your vertical axis.

-Now use the pointer fingers of both hands to touch the center of your ears. Imagine your fingertips meeting in the center of your skull creating a horizontal axis. Do a small “yes” nod around this central joint where the weight from your skull passes down to your spine.

-Grow a plumb line from the top of your head, and imagine it descending along the front of your spine, through the hole in your pelvis, between your feet, and down through the layers of earth to the solid iron core where all plumb lines meet. Orient your three body weights around this imaginary vertical axis.

- Now let your spine move from side-to-side, like a fish. Imagine you are moving between two planes of glass. The fish’s head leads you from the top of your skull and there’s a front-to-back fish tail propelling you, like a shark or salmon tail. Disappear your legs and let your tailbone be free.

-Pause, noticing what you’ve stimulated with the fish-swish.

-Move your spine front to back. This is a mammal pattern, like whales or dolphins swimming through the sea, or a horse galloping. Notice any holding in the twenty-six vertebrae of your spine. Encourage each to move.

-Now spiral your spine. Leading with your mouth and eyes, see all the way behind you. (It’s like a flag wrapping around a flagpole.) Now initiate with your tailbone and spiral up through the head.

-A healthy spine moves in all three directions, side-to-side, front-to-back, and spiraling. This mobility supports our human multidimensional agility—the capacity to move in any direction with ease.

-Tipping your spine off verticality, explore horizontality. You can stay oriented to weight and space, head and tail, in any plane of movement.

-Spinal rigidity is one sign of holding in the nervous system. Balancing mobility and stability cultivates readiness for response—our ability to respond—responsibility.

-See or imagine two other people, and stand facing them. Can you see and be seen without changing who you are?

-Notice that in communication with another, you are standing on the same ground, sharing the same space.

-Explore on your own. Dance your own dance. Let your mobile spine be visible, audible, and expressive.

Alignment is not something we “do,” it’s something we “are.”