

Ask the Movement Faculty

By Mary Bond, Certified Advanced Rolfer™, Rolf Movement Instructor

Introducing a Column Devoted to Discussion of Rolf Movement Theory and Practice

Ida Rolf was well aware that recipients of Rolfing® Structural Integration needed movement education in order to fully embody the process. I remember lying on the floor of someone's living room while she talked us through the classic arm rotation patterns that we now call "Rolf yoga." She knew that her standard injunctions – "Top of the head up!" and "Waistline back!" – were not sufficient to make the work sustainable. But her hands were full, launching the structural aspect of her work. By the time I met her in 1969, Dr. Rolf had assigned Dorothy Nolte and Judith Aston the task of creating the functional work that would accompany the structural work of Rolfing.

From that time forward there have been many more contributors to the development of Rolf Movement Integration®. Thanks to the dedicated and passionate work of people too numerous to name here, we now have a comprehensive movement theory and curriculum that includes client-active table work, practical ergonomic advice, and in-depth neurological and perceptual re-patterning. The Brazilian basic Rolfing training includes so much functional work that practitioners are dual-certified in structural and movement work. The U.S. basic training now includes three movement sessions, although how those sessions are presented has only recently been standardized. The Australian and Japanese trainings each incorporate movement in different ways. In Europe, a modular training incorporates both structural and functional modalities so that students understand all sessions in terms of functional as well as structural goals.

The scope of Rolfing continues to expand as we discover ever-more-effective means of interacting with structure. The collective endeavor has been enormous. The structural faculty no sooner developed a principles-based theory of the work than they began to see how understanding articular mechanics and inherent motion could further the process even more. In tandem with these developments, the movement faculty's understanding of human movement has become ever more sophisticated.

Achieving the profound results possible through functional intervention is an art and science in its own right. Mastering the subtleties of touch and communication involved is not feasible within the time frame of our basic training. It is during the movement certification training that Rolfers finally have an opportunity to immerse themselves in functional education.

The movement faculty would like to open a community dialogue about the functional aspect of Rolfing, especially for those who have not yet taken the movement certification training. We'd like to talk about quandaries you may have about incorporating movement education into your interactions with clients. Ask us simple questions, like "How do you incite a client's interest in self-care?" Or questions that have more complicated answers, like "How do you teach movement to clients who seem to have no body awareness?"

Please submit your questions for the Rolf Movement Integration Faculty to Sue Seecof, Managing Editor, at seecof@aol.com. We promise engaging and moving responses.