Teardrop Three

Sitting?
?The Knee Raise
‘Method’??

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Intro

Institutional workouts are getting amazingly specific for aesthetic or sport results. But the base of this system seems to be missing basics and more focused on making an addictive experience. You can have experts almost bored as they explain how to achieve specific results, but the next moment are saying humans have apparently been defeated by sitting down. It’s getting everyone, aargh.

Like in the previous bit, standing is not a position that I’ve seen in models and I started with that. This time it’s going to be sitting.

Like the last bit of my theory, I am going to focus on using what I consider more balanced muscle function. To start with I think cuing knee raises helps tune the sitting motion. From their I will work at providing ideas for alignment in sitting.

Then more detail will be gone into for several areas. The first will be theoretical categories of a persons hydraulic function. Then I will work through some examples, adjustments and where I see things being built toward.

Knee Raises

What on earth do knee raises have to do with sitting down?

To discuss in terms of more common movement language, I think knee raise cues, are best at cuing the muscles that create a good ‘hip hinge’. To continue along this line, some strands of training theory suggest it is critical to describe the feel and the muscles used to give the best chance for someone to understand a movement.

The feel bit, is often covered. Some version of a squeeze happening between the base and the legs as you sit down, is easy enough to verbalise. The muscles you ask to do this, so your base can maintain the best shape during this movement, are not mentioned. I find the knee raise cues the best for creating and adjusting a stable sitting action.

To take it one silly step further, If you a sitting or squat motion with your legs wider, your torso moves less. Try this, do a couple of knee raises to each side focusing on keeping the teardrop stable as the leg comes up. Then imagine your body was floating in space and as you do a double knee raise the ground comes up to meet you. As your knees continue to rise imagine your outer quad and inner thigh working to smoothly slow the ground to a stop with the knuckles and heels of your feet.

Of course the physics are that the ground movement is super-duper miniscule. But sometimes exaggerations can help imagine better moving with the world, rather than against it. With that I shall consider knee raises to cue sitting introduced. Next up is a sitting frame alignment breakdown.

Teardrop Base

I'll continue with a focus on the bottom of the teardrop, or pelvis area. Ideally a sitting position would not only be a balanced position, but also easily utilise available hydraulic capacity. For this, I guess you would say you would need a gross cue. A cue that could simplify stabilising pelvic pressure, knee raise cues, leg abduction cues and reverse stomp cues. Not only that, but allow peaceful function, to use hydraulic capacity as available.

For this, the best cue I have found, is to imagine a ring that processes information for the teardrop. The ring sits on the front of the body between the belly-button and the bottom of the hips. It hits the sides of the body at the pinch of the legs and hips. I don't think it intersects at the back unless you tail-bone were to stick out of you body a couple of inches.

If this ring visualisation goes well, I believe it helps allows hydraulic capacity throughout most of the abdomen (for example a feeling of buoyancy bubbling out the top of the ribcage and pulling the teardrop into line). I believe this is better than, a groin forward and a little down modification based on pelvic floor theory. Because as far as I can tell with the later, the best that you can get is slight buoyancy for the diameter of the neck

Knee raise cues can be used to achieve the best possible sitting position. The trouble is, that this position takes a lot of energy to maintain. The ring cue relies on a certain amount of functionality and feel in the hips. For those with more challenging situations, I suggest a human spider visualisation would be a better point to develop functional cues from.

The first idea to play with is the idea of a reverse stomp. Imagine you are sitting down, with two ghost legs coming backwards out of the hips. Stomp down into the ground behind you with these imaginary legs. Then keep gentle downward pressure against the ground. Does this help your body rise and straighten? If so, make note of where the positive change is and figure out how to isolate it. This would be a basic four leg model.

For a six or eight leg sitting visualisation model the process is the same. You can start with imagining another two ghost legs extending out of the side of your hips. Stomp them down, look for positive change as pressure stays. For the eight leg model, you would instead imagine the legs coming from the Meids and Bliqs.**

Overall the feeling should be that if progress is being made, the body will be opening up and sitting on the base more evenly. If things are going wrong, the body will be folding, compressing and becoming more segmented. I feel the idea is not to charge for perfection. Small manageable changes, that make lasting daily affects, are much more helpful.

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Egg Cup Connection

If the basics of the base are working reasonably well, there will be some hydraulic pressure through the muscles along the spine. Having a level ring at under pec height as a gross cue will finish the job off nicely. The trouble is, that the eggcup in my way of thinking, has a function-inverted, hybrid wishbone suspension frame on it.

Then the base of the eggcup has an amazingly adaptive computer on it protected by a solid casing. If that wasn't complicated enough, there is a whole lot of other sensors wired in and a jaw that functions off this structure. It is not surprising when things get a little jammed up in this department.

A lot of the time the wishbone frame of the shoulders is to jambed up to let further correction happen. So let's look at one option, that can give information if you have collapses or jambing here. I will start with a gentle option.

The first option, is the arm circle indicator. Stand up and have your fingers hovering an inch from the side of your legs. With the help of a mirror, use both arms to make the biggest, roundest circle you can. Then relax back to your starting posture again. Do this a couple of times.

If the shoulders do not move and you get a nice round circle, great. If one or both shoulders move to make a nice rounded circle, you can begin to figure out where you need to work. If a shoulder is too locked up to make a rounded shape then some intervention or assistance might be required to release this.

If you can get this far, things should slowly and steadily work out from there.

Their are specific overcompensation practices you can go through to help re-align the shoulders, neck and head. I spent a bit of time wondering if it was worth going into depth about a ring around the level of the cheekbones and base of the skull. From my experience, once you have the equivalent of being able to activate expansion along the collarbone line and magnetic like traction of the shoulder blades back into the base, your base can only improve.

There are definitely a lot of other factors involved, but if you understand base position then there is always the opportunity for lasting growth. The only thing that will change is how fast this can happen.

Hydraulic Function Categories

This section will start with outlines of ideas for three categories to group people in regards to their hydraulic function and then have suggested courses of actions associated with. If a person has healthy hydraulic function, minimal or no adjustments are required.

If someone has minimal hydraulic function, hydraulic balancing exercises completed for one term a year might be all that is needed. If a person has structural collapse or serious teardrop related injury, it is different. Up to two or three years of retraining starting with walking and sitting could be needed. Then have this integrate with their other day to day activities.

To some people they will really have to look for this to be relevant to them. If they have been brought up in an environment that has left their body functioning well, it may not be worth the effort to process this. Others will be functioning with restrictions that if their existence is manageable they will only have a bit of pain unless things go really wrong. Some will have structural collapse where part of their base permanently compromised.

From what I understand of the first category, when factors are in a persons favour, you can tell them to tighten their abs and this will be enough for their base to function. The characteristics of a person in this category is that they will have excellent base hydraulic expansion pressure and reasonably healthy movement patterns.

For adjusting their focus, ‘tightening their abs’ will fully expand the ab and back connection. This will create a stable and balanced pressure throughout the base. This expansion will be at a slight angle. It will push forward towards the front of the groin and back toward the back of the rib cage.

It will also open up the shoulders and chest allowing the head to remain light and aligned. An example of a person in this category, is someone who cannot understand why others cannot do single leg squats.

The next category of this model would be a person with a restricted base. They would have a little base hydraulic expansion and there body could mainly cope with the stress of the movement patterns they used. It would take manageable amounts of cues to focus and work correctly with their body.

With this person they, would have higher tension in localised areas of their base. It would be possible to coach them to derestrict posture or movement with cues and limb position. In this category a person can get through day to day or sport function mainly without the body struggling too much. Otherwise, it would usually take a bit more rest or holiday to allow the body to recover from unusual happenings.

The next category would be someone functioning with a collapsed base. In this category one part of their base will have no hydraulic pressure, causing a collapse and an equivalent pressure spike elsewhere. To change, it would take serious change to their routines, behaviour, eating, belief etc. Also in my opinion learning to overcompensate in the other direction is helpful. While initially destructive, it seems to be the fastest way to achieve long term change, with limited resources.

Teardrop Elaboration

To go into more depth for the alignment of the bottom of the teardrop, once their is function hydraulic function here, the other main issue is going to be muscle balance at the hip joint. Stabilisers muscles seem to be underrated because of their lack of bulk building or perceived sport improvement trainability. With the focus of sitting, I can work through what I understand of the benefit of taking the time to begin exploring this.

Where the leg connects into the base of the teardrop there is a couple of layers of muscle that can do cool things. To make a simplified exaggeration from what I understand, there is effectively muscles written off as ‘stabiliser’ muscles. If people like dancing or climbing learn to use these well they will offer efficient and wide ranged movement. Bizarrely these muscles tend to have less feel feedback.

Then there is the more outer ‘performance’ layers, that I think act as a supporting sleeves for when more force is applied. If the performance muscles dominate, the sleeve moves less over the stabilisers and the muscle becomes a thick unified muddle. It is useful for people constantly doing heavy work, but can cause issues in more basic areas.

For examining the process of freeing up these layers, I recommend the following. First do six sumo squats or plies whichever is more relevant to you. Then lying on your back put both knees up and drop one to one side. Raise your hips and put the foam roller under the glute med on one side. After two minutes repeat on the other side. The foam roller will effective be resting under muscle directly below the bumpy bone beside the tail bone, sticking straight out to the side.

Then put the foam roller to one side and with the knee that is still raised, put your heel into the top of the leg still down on it’s side. This is similar to putting pressure on the crease of the leg by lowering yourself onto the handle of a small kettle bell. For people with basic ranges of flexibility the friction of this position will help free up the layers of muscle in a much more gentle fashion. After two minutes repeat on the other side. Try six sumo squats or plies again.

The other things to keep in mind as you go through this process is that if the pressure is not stable through both legs you will be limited. Also for those with stiffness that need to redo the cues for this, imagine you are almost falling over backward as your hips pivot freely. If despite feeling like you are falling back, that your hips still stay over your heels, you are doing well. If not this cue doesn’t work for you.

To bring this back to relevance for sitting, one cue you may need for creating stable hips is to request the sleeve on one side to let the stabilisers move (kind of like a wrap opening up around the sandwich filling). If you femurs are level or your knees slightly higher, the falling backwards cue can help with creating only the needed pressure if you are sitting with your back supported and a stable teardrop.

There is still the issue of, if shoulders are off-centre this will affect things, but overall there should be enough room to adjust all function around the bottom of the teardrop.

To go through base cue priorities, we will start with people in the collapsed category and work toward the healthy. The most important cue is that slight forward pressure allows the base to open up or unfold. The next group a cue towards having the hip joints pulling away from each other is similar to the collarbone equivalent of expanding pressure.

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As things develop more having the upper legs with balanced muscle control will be part of the focus. Knees should be soft and the only thing that should be monitored in them, is that they experience only the appropriate level of tension for stabilisation.

To further the introduction for feet, it will be best to elaborate from the walking idea and then apply to sitting. I found the cues for my feet were inaccurate and much higher than where I thought they were. In one foot what should have been base of heel, was up in the ankle and what should have been tips of toes was, in-between the tarsals.

Again lets start with the person with a more jammed up foot, then work towards those with healthier feet. For an easy starting place imagine putting on big chicken or dinosaur slippers. These slippers magically stretch your feet as you walk. Your feet may still be tight and sore but if you trust them, a lot of the time you will find tension releasing.

A medium cue to help relax feet when walking can be to imagine that poking just out of the end of your toes you have ghost toes. As you walk these flow a little more smoothly than your toes and sink into the ground, giving more support as you walk.

Lets use the image of strange ghost flippers for the most complex cue. Imagine their is a comfy pair of flippers that look like they will flow, they almost flutter in the breeze. They have an odd ring the width of the heel. The ring comes straight down from the heel loops behind the foot and connects into the back of the heel.

You put them on and walk. As your foot approaches the ground, the heel ring gently sinks in and your foot rolls forward. The end of the flipper flows like a wave with the knuckles of you foot make contact with the ground. The roll then continues, with the flippers sinking into the ground. Then as your weight moves over and past the foot the ring under the heel releases, followed by the flipper that has flapped a time or two, flowing through the ground till your toe lifts off again.

Just to make a note though, the most complex cue is not always the most appropriate. If you are exhausted and running out of energy, the ghost flipper cue will only put you in a worse situation. Cueing the equivalent of your hips back to the bike fork idea, with some dinosaur slippers on the end, can improve situations.

On the other hand, having your body always stiff and efficient, is pretty lifeless. Being able to run, jump, climb and dance, also does your body a world of good, if you have the resources.

Eggcup Elaboration

I think the best way to continue to develop this theory is to examine the differences between the two types of rings or functions that are interacting. I think the ring of the teardrop all the way down to the ankle area, align best by cues of space creation or supportive hydraulic pressure.

I think the connection of the eggcup to the base, the base of the eggcup interacting with the head and the wrists are better understood as rings though which forces can be stabilised. To begin with, if the connection of the eggcup to the base is seen to happen around a bearing or magnetic hover system, I think you will get much better function.

Next imagine the top of the shoulders like upper control arms of suspension. If there is suitable hydraulic pressure under them, they will feel light and the body will move well underneath them. If there is collapse, either the front or the back can pinch down on the ring below, restricting function.

The most common instruction people will be given related to this, happens when someone has been exercising seriously and are out of breath. They may be told to stay standing up and put their hands on top of their head to help them to catch their breath. While this turns some muscle off, it still forces the ‘control arms’ up and allows the base to maintain pressure. Thus easing breathing and stabilising, compared to bending over, gasping.

A common exercise to help understand the release of pinches, is hanging from something like a bar. I feel this releases a limited amount of muscles on different layers and can make it easier to better position the eggcup over the base. These were introduced as common ideas to hopefully aid with understanding, lets now work on ones for getting balanced muscle function for this theory.

Raise your arms out to the side and push really hard through your third and fourth fingers. Walk around and adjust the positioning of your eggcup over your base to get the most space out of it. The more supporting pressure you have, the more your torso will be elongated and pulled into a balanced and healthier form.

For those using more force through the chest a broomstick might be needed to help for the next stage. Hold a broomstick, hovering just behind your back, with your palms facing forwards. Pinch the broomstick with your thumb and second finger, then push out as if you were trying to pull it apart. This can cue good activation in a very mild over-compensation position.

The most interesting thing I think I have seen, is a girl that appeared to cue off hydraulic pressure or something close to it. She moved with hyper elevated shoulders and it seemed to make her very light on her feet. She could probably very quickly adjust to stabilising the shoulder frame with expanding collarbone pressure and bottom of shoulder-blade squeeze, as long as she got the resources to do it.

For the head the main focus will be on the squeeze of the lower shoulder-blades supporting a ring through the cheekbones and at the height of the base of the skull. If this is happening and the head is not sitting back erect over the shoulder blades then restriction on the front of the body is the first place to re-examine. The other thing is that this should leave the jaw soft, if not things need to be double checked for where there is an absence of support that is being compensated for.

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For the scope of this theory in the start walking and sitting will be focused on. For this the actual shoulder joint and elbow will be considered joints to be kept as light as possible. Again they will only be monitored for correct loading.

I consider the wrists the final through rings, that the hands function through. If inline with the torso the third and fourth fingers will be the points of full extension. As a beginning example in a complex walk I will find the third and forth fingers as the final extension of movement through the arm.

Climbers will often talk about getting the thumb involved for gripping things. This relates to gripping especially for things in front of and above ab height. The more your are gripping in this direction the more this will stabilise.

At the moment the most common time I use the thumb and forefinger grip is when lifting full gas bottles onto a forklift. If I have a stable wishbone frame it means I approach a chicken wing position at the top of the lift. Allowing a strong pinch between the thumb and second finger keeps a nicely balanced muscle interaction, through what could otherwise be a compromising position.

In the other direction you can work with your hand behind you. Stability being found from the outside of the palm when pushing is a place to start. Otherwise if gripping in terms of mechanical efficiency, biasing towards your pinky will work better.

At this stage, leaving things here is probably suitable for a general introduction. Next I will look at making everyday adjustments.

Everyday Adjustments

For the everyday adjustment section I will start with sitting in a chair. For this theory I will imagine a chair as a joint socket to fit into. When you fit well you get efficient support. If you don't fit well then you can use this joint view to see if their is any improvements that can be made.

Lets start with a full size car seat. General adjustment suggestions for people with slumped posture, is that cushioning is added to take sitting positions from a big forward hunch, to a slight forward hunch. For a standardised recommendation I'd suggest that the back of the hips, shoulders and head should make contact with the seat. In my case I'm tall, so depending on the head-rest some adjustment may be needed there as well.

As examples, for a basic car seat (if there is enough head room), I may only need to put something behind my lower back and then I will have teardrop pressure from the front of the hips to the upside down eggcup. The eggcup in this case relating to the back of shoulder and neck connection.

In the case of the van, to have a chance of creating a decent sitting position, the seat had to be tilted back and lowered. With a cushion behind the small of my back my neck was overstretched. With the cushion behind the back of my hips and the small of my back, the lower back of my skull just rests comfortably on the top of my head-rest.

In both of these case slight tension in the neck initially is a good indicator. Strong neck tension that doesn't release, is a sign adjustment is still needed.

In terms of legs if I am lucky there is a footrest besides the clutch. This helps have the foot in a similar position to keep a stable balance with the other. In other cars I have had to revert to more basic structural support. By creating slight pressure against the centre console and drivers door, a medium health base frame can be made. A lot of smaller forklifts will have angled side supports on the side of the footwells. These can make a very nice footrest.

Let's move to a mid or low back chair. For this the knee raise cue is a good place to start. When talking about using knee raise cues, I am meaning to focus on that action as if you were doing an isometric activity. In normal speak, imagine your feet were concreted to the ground, while sitting in a chair. Do as strong a double knee raise as you can without moving your knees or feet. (If leg movement happens, double check you feet were evenly spaced around your hips).

If things went well, pay attention to any movement of your torso over your hips and how muscles have adjusted to make this happen. If you can change your torso alignment to match any improvements in day to day function, it will make all the difference for those with collapse issues.

From there you are looking to develop the use of more efficient cues. Can you create the same balance by cuing as if two pincers were pulling the balls of your femurs out and into line? Can you create the same balance by cueing muscle to pinch behind the hip socket? Can you push forward evenly with both front points of your pelvis?

For your eggcup start with you hands on you head. The try with you hands palm down, with thumb and second finger under the rib cage. Imagine they were stuck to the band and as you pressed out with your elbows, the applied gentle upward pressure. Finally squeeze the bottom of your shoulder blade onto your base and apply expansion pressure along the collarbone. Where can you best rest the arms to keep the shoulders light?

I think chair design has oversimplified sitting to an action that only happens on one plane of movement. Having my legs heading out beyond the corners of the seat will stabilise sitting position. Next even though I'm on chairs technically to small for me I have my knees bent, so that my heels come together and rest on a foam roller. From my heel, the arch of my foot follows the foam roller down to where the last tarsal of my big toe sits on the ground. The knuckle of my smaller toes rest on the ground.

As far as I can tell this position is a slight over correction, made obvious by slight pressure in my knees. With a more comfortable chair, at the correct height, I would be looking to have my knees supported above my heels. The purpose of the overcorrection position though, is that it seems to help the area around the hips decompress and let communication rebuild for the nervous system.

Before the next block of writing it will help to cover a lying position, for using a dead ant base for exercises. There isn't much to introduce for lying on your back. For your base it will give you more of an opportunity to focus on if there is equal hydraulic pressure in each sides ab and meid. It will also give a chance for the hips to settle a bit removing some of the tension of working in gravity. As this is happening see if you can balance the pressure heading to the front bottom of the pelvis.

Once you have wriggled around to get your hips settled as well as possible, you will be focusing on changes that help your body lengthen and relax. The next step will to be to wriggle your shoulders around. You are looking to both move side to side over the torso for alignment and to open the shoulder frame so the eggcup connection ring has consistent space.

Obviously the head and limbs need to adjusted in a similar fashion so the whole body rests as evenly on the ground as it can. I would cover lying on your side, but beds and the ground are so disastrously shaped for anyone with shoulders that extend beyond waist distance, that it doesn't really fit into the adjustment section. Rather a changing furniture approach would be needed.

For applying this lets use a basic bed, with a firm mattress as an example. I've had a goat sorting this. I've been sleeping on a pretty basic bed with a pillow between my knees and under the curve of my lumbar area.

I had been told I needed a new mattress to solve my problems. So one was found without consulting me. Despite any adjustments I made on the fancy new mattress, the only improvement it seemed to make was in stabilising one small section of the spine. In doing so it threw everything else out of line and created a more compressed or shorter sleeping position.

You would think that if you have bed shops, you could walk in and find one with nice shoulder grooves in. Maybe if I get the time I'll experiment with cushion combinations for camping. Whatever the case, I suggest the exercise of imagining that someone has asked you to figure out how to make the ultimate bed for you. Your job is to start experiment with cushions on a mattress or sleeping on the ground ideas to see if you can make positive improvements.

As an in-between, try this partial version of a spinal twist. Lying down have legs all the way to one side with a pillow in-between. Have your torso almost twist over onto your back, with the higher shoulder tucked behind. Have a pillow supporting your lumbar curve. Have your head on it's side. This half twist has the potential to relieve tension.

This may or may not affect you. It will make more of a difference for people with taller, less streamlined bodies.

Since a ‘furniture adjustment’ section was not done for standing and walking, covering it now will do. The most simple clothes adjustment a guy can make, is to go from having a belt holding his pants up, to having suspenders hold his pants up. The biggest change this will make for people in the collapse category is that it will create new feedback with the straps on the shoulders. It will give information on how the top of the eggcup is relating to the base of the teardrop.

Some people carry a lot in the pockets of their pants. This can make their belt dig into the side of their base and dull input. Removing this will begin to reverse the problem, creating further input to be available. Obviously this is at a day to day level.

To go beyond this a farmers walk, or something like the barbells with a shoulder yolk in the middle will also provide more information. With this you will start to re-include the ‘tensing’ of the abs back over the top of the stable position.

Why Sitting?

Of everything I could examine for a theory, why would I cover sitting as the next major focus? If you haven't guessed by now my main interest is currently in developing areas of theory that I see as overlooked basics. Hopefully I have used sitting as a stable and secure point to discuss body function cues and adjustments from. To take it further, this position is a position I consider needing to be sorted, for training exercises and adjustments I want to examine next.

I have tried a few times to work with developing ideas within the existing system for better base understanding. I mixed weighted dead ants and standing corrections into programmes with various results, for people with day to day misalignments. The dead ant position seemed to balance hydraulic pressure. It failed to develop functional cues though.

With standing adjustments, I did not have the language at the time to help them progress and in the worst case it put major stress on a knee. While in the long term it would out work out well, it was a short term motivation killer.

Part of developing this theory, is so that I have the tools to talk through structure and plan safer adjustments. With this I will be a lot more confident at working through sitting chest, arm and shoulder exercises for functional improvement.

Other benefits to this is that I have more and more accurate cues to quickly copy small chains of movements in a huge variety of work or recreational settings. Now in dance it is being noticed how quickly I can learn movements. It can take up brainpower though, sometimes leaving you with the brainpower of a cliche jock.

Another way to look at this is that I'm trying to make the building blocks for adaptability. This is great for being able to explore a lot of areas with stable movement (movement with less potential for injury). Focusing solely on this would give you a jack of all trades master of none Range of movements. So balancing this with a focus to develop the specific sequences or patterns needed in more complex disciplines is also important.

In some ways you could try and imagine I am trying to study the keys for people with hyper-adaptive bodies, to be able to find stability. For example I ran into an orchard worker who had been given a cue to balance his posture. Let's say it had taken six years of focusing on this cue and his body had become overbalanced in the other direction.

The lighter you are and the more your body trusts you, the faster it can adapt. So as far as I can tell some people can go through this process within a year. Developing these stable cues for them to develop well is also interesting. Then, at the other extreme it could give the structure for people to drop down to skinny fat and have the structure for apparently impossible things like ab asymmetry to reshape over a couple of years, would also be really cool.

The other big gap out there that this could help, is for injured initiated retraining. Being able to help people understand which cues they are actually working with and the other options they have is pretty interesting.

I guess you could say because training ideas are becoming more and more fragmented, you almost have to make up a fragment to pull them back together. For it to appeal calling this discipline power/strength stability would give you a structure to put puzzle pieces together in.

Whatever the case I think sitting was the next step for un-packing ideas. I hope it has helped.

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