

Ep #197: Getting Out of Pain: The Key to Deep Muscular Release



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hatelty

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

Welcome and welcome back. We are in the middle of a new mini series that I'm running on helping you reduce and eradicate pain. Over the next number of episodes, just like over the previous couple, I am sharing some key concepts that I use with my clients to support them in their journey out of physical pain.

I'll be covering some of the theoretical basis for what it is that I do and how I do it, share some stories about how this has played out with clients and I'll also guide you through practices so that you can explore them with yourself.

All in all, I have put words to ways of thinking and acting when I'm working with my clients. Ways of thinking and acting that I don't actually believe are all that novel, but my clients experiencing the experience do have novel insights and ahas that are steps along the way in their healing journey where they reduce and or eradicate their physical pain and have other related experiences that change up the way they feel inside.

So today I want to talk about a technique that I've been using with my clients, which is what I call the fine art of doing nothing. And this doing nothing in the way that I'm describing can be a remarkable way for experiencing deep releases and also of deeply letting go.

It's a process that you can do for yourself. And I am very purposefully distinguishing it from a bodywork type of release, which is like you would receive from an osteopath or massage therapist or other type of body worker. And the reason I'm distinguishing it is because this is something you're doing to yourself and the other is an outside stimulus being done to you.

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So again, this doing nothing is what you do to yourself. It builds upon a common thread I've shared throughout this podcast about the significance and importance of feeling and the significance and importance of reducing compensatory patterns as a way to lessen and eradicate pain. And how letting go is not an action or something to do, but rather a result of what you have done. Which leads me to this episode of the art and truly the act of doing nothing.

Now, as you listen to this episode you might hear yourself saying, "Yes," because you know at the core of what I'm teaching today it just really resonates. You're like, "Yes, this is what I know is needed. This really inspires me."

And if that's the case, I encourage you to join me at the therapeutic yoga intensive that I'm leading on October the 28th through November 22nd. And this is six days of working directly with me. We're all online from 8 am to 2:30 Mountain Time, where you'll learn fundamental concepts that I use to help people reduce and eradicate pain.

Now, this is a professional training, so we're learning it from the perspective of the professionals who are learning to do this for themselves working with clients. But also for themselves because almost everyone who comes to the therapeutic yoga intensive has some degree of physical pain somewhere in their body. So they're doing this for themselves, like truly for themselves, as well as what they're learning for their clientele.

Now, while there will be recording following the training, the program is only available to people who are coming for synchronous or real-time training. You can't purchase this as a recording to watch later on. I need you to attend real-time because of the way that I teach and what happens in the Zoom room when a group of people come collectively together to learn what I'm teaching in this way.

It's very much of an embodied learning process, where I'm teaching to the group and I'm teaching individuals. So you can learn in a group as well as

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you can see me working with others. And you can also have me work with you if you would like, it's not required.

So, if this is interesting to you and you would like to dig in with this, you can read more at learn.functionalsynergy.com/intensive. And that's this October, October the 28th to November 2nd.

All right, so let's dig in now. Nothing, we're digging into absolutely nothing. Both the art of doing nothing and the act of doing nothing. To describe what I mean by the art and the act of doing nothing, let's first describe what this is not.

This is not laying around watching Netflix. This is not napping. It is about coming to a stunningly remarkable state of rest, where both your body and brain are in a settled and quiet place where you can simply be and feel. It's a state that I think we've all felt at one time or another, where the monkey mind is quiet and a calm connection is felt.

From a neuroscience lens, this is a place with less sympathetic drive, less analysis, less approaching the exercise or movement process from this righteous sort of to-do state, like this is the right thing to do. Which we know from the mindfulness research is not all that helpful. But when we can come into a curious exploratory state, then we can actually make some more changes.

Interestingly enough, we also know that norepinephrine, when there's lesser amounts in our system it can trigger curiosity, whereas more or higher amounts of norepinephrine can trigger anxiety. So working in this way that I'm sharing can help lessen norepinephrine and help trigger curiosity, lessen anxiety.

From a pain science lens being in the state of rest, the state of curiosity elicits feelings of deep, deep inward support and safety. And those states have been correlated to feeling your symptoms with less intensity, and less painfully. So there's a lot of benefit in the experience here. I also would say

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that when we come to a place of rest, we're just more at ease with ourselves, no matter what's actually going on.

As you go through this process that I'm about to guide you through, it's very likely that you'll experience feelings or sensations that are distinct from stretch sensations or using a massage ball. Okay, so if that's what I'm guiding you through, then you know what this is not, then what is this state exactly and what the heck are we doing?

I am guiding you to a place of slowing way down. Way down. Of being ultra deliberate, of moving in a way where you don't feel strained during or after the fact. It's a place where you aren't analyzing or thinking about what you are feeling, but rather just feeling.

I want you to imagine that you're watching a sunrise or a sunset. You're just watching it. You're just looking at it. You're just taking it in for the colors that are there. Just being in that space. Slowing down to the pace of nature to actually experience what is happening with you. And in turn, you'll be building or nurturing the relationship between you and you.

Now, as you are going through this and as I'm guiding you through it, this process might be asking you to move differently than you likely have before. Consider, for example, those times you've moved through a rehabilitation exercise or a yoga movement or a stretch and you've ended up straining or hurting.

Or when you've been seduced by the stretch sensation, that super juicy, yummy stretch sensation. But you kind of went into that just inadvertently a little too hard, maybe a little too fast. And maybe you didn't even realize you were going too fast or too hard, but after the fact you're like, oh yeah, I went way too fast or too hard. We're not doing that.

We're slowing down and being deliberate. We are doing nothing. The doing of nothing. That place that enables you to not push too fast or too hard. A

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place where you feel absolutely nothing. No stretch sensation. No ache. No strain.

Now, if you're not asking this already, you might find that as you do this nothing I'm speaking of, at first you might wonder, why on earth are we doing this? Or what the heck? And as you spend time in this space, you will begin to experience a deeper, more close to the bone experience that exists. And I mean that metaphorically and literally. There's a deeper unwinding, a deeper release that can happen simply because you're not pushing. Simply because you are doing nothing.

You will also begin to recognize this distinction between simply going for the stretch sensation and what I'll be guiding you through. And you'll recognize that when we do that stretch sensation work, it's fine work, it's great work.

And even though you can have a really big, loud stretch sensation, if I can put it that way, because it can be very juicy and very yummy and very big. You begin to see that you're more so doing this at a surface level. Whereas in the doing of nothing, just sitting there for a little bit longer, that unwinding happens at a deeper level.

Now, I want to emphasize that when I refer to the stretch sensation working on a surface level, I'm not saying it's bad or even inappropriate. It's clear that it's at a surface level, it's just different. And what I'm helping cultivate is something else.

So in a moment, I'll walk you through a short series. And please remember that the aim here isn't to strengthen, though after the practice you may feel stronger later. It's also not to make a release happen, though you may feel more released and at peace later. You might feel more unwound and easeful later.

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More of my purpose is to help you to deliberately feel nothing and allow for the result that arises to be the feeling that is actually there. To simply perceive and experience what is there. Ready to go?

All right, so have handy close by to you some pillows, bolsters, maybe a chair and let's get going. The act and the art of doing nothing. And we'll begin on our backs and we'll start by bringing the knee to the belly. However, I've got a specific way I'd like you to proceed. So you might need to grab the props. Just press pause. And then when you're ready, come on back.

So beginning on your back, you'll feel your legs and you'll feel your pelvis. And you'll feel your torso. And you'll feel your breath. And pay attention to your back and your spine and your pelvis and your leg specifically. And begin to lift your leg to bring your right knee to your belly. And only move the leg, only move that knee toward the belly as far as you don't feel a stretch.

Not through your hip. Not through your leg. Not even as a pinch in the groin. When I was walking some students through this the other day, one of them couldn't take her hand around her knee. And so what she did is she placed her foot on a wall. Another one, placed some bolsters underneath the foot. Another one really gently put a strap around her knee.

Now, all of these people are used to bringing their knee to their belly. There's nothing wrong with that. It's just not what we're doing today. So allow for that leg bone to move into flexion, knee toward the belly, but you're feeling nothing. So allow for whatever support underneath your foot.

Maybe your foot is resting on a chair or on the wall. And just be. Feeling nothing, no sensation. And if you need to back it up, then back it up. As one trainee mentioned to me in a course that I ran just recently, she said, "So my actual range of motion is much bigger than my pain-free range of motion." That's likely so.

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And the beauty of that is that your actual range of motion, the way she was describing it, shows you what your potential is. We're not doing actual range of motion today. We're doing the range of motion where there's no feeling, no sensation, you're doing nothing.

Now, what might happen as you're doing this nothing, your leg might come closer towards your belly quite naturally. And still allow for the doing nothing to exist. Even as it might come closer towards your belly, still allow for this to be nothing. It's the doing of the nothing.

Notice what you do feel in this space of nothing and then gently bring the leg back down, foot back to the floor. And then switch sides. Bringing that leg toward your belly. We're doing the left leg now, if you're following that direction.

So nothing around the hip or the leg or your knees. Nothing through the front of the hip. You're not pulling at all with your leg. You're just letting the leg do nothing. And notice what you notice, like watching that sunset. As a student of mine said the other day, it's like there's something really deep that's just unraveling. And there was a distinction of what that sensation was. It wasn't stretch. It was this other kind of release happening.

See, what's happening as we come to a profound place of rest is that our system is relaxing. Our system is feeling safe. And we're nurturing both of those states inside of ourselves. We are doing this to ourselves. Okay, and then let that go and come on back. Now, you can do this for a longer period of time if you'd like.

And now we're going to bring the leg back to our belly again. And we'll be moving into what's commonly called a supine twist, where if I have my right knee to my belly and I bring the right leg across the belly and we start to move into a twist, you might feel some stretchiness on the outside of the hip or some pinching in the inner groin.

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And I would love for you to feel, you got it, nothing. We're not going for the actual range of motion with this practice. We aren't going for a stretch with this practice. We're going for absolutely nothing. We're doing something, and that something is nothing.

And notice what starts to happen in the space of nothing. Really do your best to only go as far as there's no ache, strain, sensation of any sort. And you might find that placing a bolster, depending on how far you go, you might put a bolster or pillows underneath the hip.

So say if it's your right leg moving across your body, that you put pillows underneath the right hip. Or maybe you're coming more into a twist and then you place bolsters on the right side or on the left side of the body to let your leg rest on. But it just depends on the range you have when you do nothing.

When I was teaching this to a group the other week and someone was doing this movement, all sorts of things started to unravel around her ribcage in a way she has not ever experienced before. And there was a groundedness and a connectedness that she experienced that she had not ever experienced before. And another felt a release through their jaw and behind their eyes.

And then when you're ready, let's come out of this for a moment. And then from here, placing the foot on the floor, and let's take the other leg up. And we're finding the nothing with the knee toward the belly and then continuing the nothing as we come across. If you need to straighten the opposite leg, then go for it.

And just watch where your brain is as you play in the space of nothing. I recognize that sometimes this can lead to thoughts of, "What on earth? I'm not doing anything." And that's the point. That's the point.

And what can be so interestingly profound, and sometimes absurd, is how quickly one progresses when they do nothing. When people tend to push

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through strain, push through ache, get seduced by stretch, there tends to be less rest, less relaxation in their system. And there seems to be a correlation between that and not reducing pain at the pace that they would truly like it to happen.

And while it can feel a little counterintuitive and a bit of a mind F bomb, to put that politely, it can really mess with someone's mind sometimes. As you begin to see the evidence of the result, you'll see what I mean. So if you're ready, come back out of the twist and let your legs rest back on the floor with knees bent, feet on the floor or legs straight out.

And notice, notice what you now feel. Notice your breath. Notice your body. Notice your brain. Now I'm going to just let you settle out here.

If you want more of this idea of coming to rest, of being able to feel and of being able to connect this with bigger movements and stronger movements and working with greater intensity through your body, but from a really subtle and nuanced perspective, and how you are biomechanically moving, how well you are moving, really tuning into the how of you're moving and learning this for yourself to help other people, then join me at the therapeutic yoga intensive. And you can read all about it at learn.functionalsynergy.com/intensive.

Have a really great time exploring and we'll see you next time. Thanks for being here.