



Embracing Movement Variability

A key theme of traditional treatment for pain-related conditions has been that there is an idealistic way of moving – and if we can achieve that, it will help with alleviation of your pain. Some common statements that you may have been told include:

- ◆ You have a weak core
- ◆ Your pelvis is out of alignment
- ◆ Your 'glutes' aren't firing properly
- ◆ Your knee drops in when you squat
- ◆ Your shoulder blade doesn't move properly

All of these have no strong evidence to support them. Surprisingly, these 'biomechanical' explanations for pain actually have a very poor relationship to pain.

We have evidence that shows as human beings we are highly variable, existing on a spectrum of movement variability, and we cannot say with any confidence that we know the right way to move.

- ◆ Frequency and degree of bending has not been shown to correlate with low back pain
- ◆ Variation in core muscle timing has been shown to be a normal movement variation
- ◆ Delayed glute timing has been shown to exist strongly in people with and without pain
- ◆ Knee alignment is highly variable in people without pain
- ◆ The shoulder blade moves in lots of different ways in people with and without pain

References:

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We are Variable and we are Adaptable.

These assumed 'dysfunctions' can exist in people without pain. We are designed to move differently and with variation; and the reason that is okay, is because we have the ability to adapt to variable movements.

It can be very empowering to accept that we are variable, and sometimes, there is little we can do to address some of these factors anyway. Instead, we can collaboratively come up with a holistic, well-rounded recovery plan that embraces your own unique way of moving.

Priscah Jeptoo is a Kenyan long-distance runner who has won marathons all over the world. As you can see in the photo, her knee dramatically falls inwards. This movement variation is often demonised, and many Therapists will attempt to correct it. She has no pain and can run a marathon. Why? Because this is a normal movement variation and a unique way of moving that she has adapted to over time.



Everyone needs to embrace their uniqueness.