

## **Stillness and Motion: Finding Posture**

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When I was young, I loved to skate at night on the frozen lake. In the dark, I was free to focus on the experience of changing direction merely by shifting my balance on the edges of my skates. A sudden gross action could throw me into the snow bank and a subtle action could send me gliding the length of the ice.

One night, I became interested in the stillness I felt while skating. What was this stillness? How could I feel still yet be moving? What did this 'stillness in motion' have to do with balancing and changing direction with the shift of an edge? I decided to make an effort to be completely still while skating. This quickly resulted in rigidity! I began shivering with cold, developed pain in my joints, lost my ability to balance and eventually fell hard on the ice. With my effort to maintain stillness, every attempt at action became extreme, lacking any refinement. Then I decided to be completely mobile, with no sense of stillness, moving constantly. This quickly translated into fumbling sloppiness with no clarity or direction, and a sense of disconnection from my actions.

Where was the center of balance in stillness and motion? Were movement and stillness actually opposing? Did anything actually have to be done on my part, or could they just play on their own? I began listening, observing, sensing, and learned to find complete freedom on ice. Stillness was motion. Motion was stillness. Stillness did not negate movement. Movement did not negate stillness. They are not the same. They are not different.

Nice story, but what does that have to do with posture in sitting meditation?

1) How do you experience good meditation posture? How do you picture it? Is a good meditation posture an experience of stillness or motion? How useful is rigidity in respect to your physical, emotional and mental posture?

2) Does maintaining the correct meditation posture mean that you are 'right'? How will you know it is right? What is your success rate at maintaining anything?

3) What is the experience of self-supporting dynamic alignment? I will give you a hint. We are not a series of blocks that have to be stacked in a special way. The spine is naturally not straight. These are widely used images, and completely misleading.

4) What does it mean to balance? What is the experience of physical balance and emotional balance? Is there one point of balance or are there several points? Can you experience balance without gripping, tensing or willing your muscles to relax or contract?

5) What is the physical experience and effect of a thought? An emotion? A sneeze, cough or shout? What do these have to do with posture?

Dynamic self-supporting alignment; where is the stillness? Where is the motion? What can you learn?