

[Tips for ATM - Awareness Through Movement®](#), Online.
with Inês Machado Berman

***Do each movement slowly**

When you move slowly, you create the ability to sense and feel how you're doing the movements. When you move fast, you tend to reinforce your old habits and ways of doing things instead of learning new and improved ways. Slow movements also help you to shift into a parasympathetic nervous system (relaxation mode), and this is essential to the ATM learning process.

***Use minimal muscular effort**

Try to use the least amount of effort possible to do each movement. That will enable you to sense and feel more differences and changes throughout the lesson. Less is more!

***Make each movement small**

Try to do the movements in a range of motion that is truly easy and comfortable for you. There's no stretching or straining sensation in this range of motion. Therefore, the movement might be very small – an inch, mm's, or even imperceptible on Zoom. If the movement suggested is not comfortable for you, then simply initiate or imagine the movement. By doing just the beginning of the movement or actively imagining, you're already stimulating your brain and nervous system to create new neural pathways . This occurs because the brain is inherently linked to motor functions, and even an imagined movement can trigger subtle muscular and neurological responses, so you'll still receive the benefits of the class.

***Make each movement easy and comfortable**

Do you know what true comfort feels like? ATMs give you the opportunity to discover that. In everyday life, you may be used to ignoring pain and discomfort - and likely for very good reasons. But in an ATM, please, don't ignore pain and discomfort. Aim to be as comfortable as possible. If you feel pain, discomfort, strain, or even stretching sensations, do less, go slower, change your towel supports, add more cushion or take a rest. Within this comfortable sphere, your sensory input will be small enough to detect fine details and changes. Your nervous system will feel safe to facilitate improvements in your organization. You'll develop your ability to differentiate between various kinds of sensations. You'll learn to take better care of yourself. You'll move from a place of confidence and clarity.

***Pause between Movements**

After completing a movement, wait a moment or two before you begin again. That way you won't repeat the movement mechanically, as in your everyday life. Instead, each movement will have your fresh attention, and you'll be better able to focus on the quality of the movement. Quality over quantity. Each movement will have its own potential to be different, better, smoother, simpler, or more enjoyable than the last. You'll also be better able to distinguish between rest and moving, and therefore further reduce any unnecessary efforts.

*** Rest Whenever You Feel Like It**

Rest is an important part of the ATM learning process. I will provide specific moments in class to rest, but you can stop and rest whenever you want. A rest provides an opportunity to check in with yourself and observe any changes in sensation overall. It also allows you to rest your attention and efforts. You may only need a few seconds of rest to feel ready to move again. However, if you continually wait to rest, you're more likely to get tired, use unnecessary efforts, and move from a place of trying to do more, rather than a place of curiosity, calm and attention.

***Don't compete, even with yourself**

Try to adopt a non-judgmental attitude by not doing your best, not trying too hard, not knowing what's going to happen, not being so concerned with answers, and not needing a certain outcome. With this attitude, you'll free yourself to better observe and discover what you're actually doing, rather than what you think you should be doing.

***Turn your attention inward to sense and feel yourself**

You know better than anyone what you're feeling, and therefore, what you need. ATMs encourage students to be more independent in their self-care and self-direction. That can start with things in class like choosing your own pace instead of following mine, entertaining your own answers to questions before asking me, or adapting a direction to suit your needs. For example, I may direct the class to start a movement on your right side, but your right side aches. Don't fight it - adjust the direction to suit you and start the movements on your left side. Every time I say right, just think left. Develop a trust in yourself to discover your needs, and make choices that are good for you, even if it goes against the norm or what I say. You'll develop a relationship with yourself that works better for you.

***Beginnings and Endings**

All classes begin and end with some sort of body scan. The scan allows you to develop your kinesthetic ability to sense yourself in space, and it will also allow you to detect changes in sensations between the beginning and the end of the lesson. This is important, because your brain understands things by sensing differences. The scan is not for you to judge, evaluate, or correct yourself, but to improve your ability to sense and feel yourself and notice differences. At the end of class, notice everything that has changed, you might feel quite different. Please, transition out of class slowly. Give yourself time to integrate what was learned. You may take a slow walk or a nap, or go to bed earlier (if it's evening). Don't go straight into looking at a device. Taking time to sense how you feel after an ATM will increase the benefits of the class and make them last longer. Learning takes time and it happens in a series of approximations. Meaning, it doesn't all happen at once. It starts with a few small improvements that add up to major improvement over time. Like any learning process, the more consistently you do ATMs, the greater and faster the rewards. Repeat a few movements in bed before you go to sleep or when you wake up, or, you could just imagine the movements. Repeat the recorded lesson once or twice before the next session. Improvement will come as a result of your increased kinesthetic sensitivity and awareness.