

# INSPIRATION

HAWAII'S WELFARE JOURNAL

A JOURNAL  
FOR THE  
MIND, BODY  
AND SPIRIT

## EXCHANGING CULTURE

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Between Kauai  
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Our Philosophy: *Inspiration* is a reflection of the collective communities of Hawaii, the mainland and the world. It is a vehicle for holistic healers, for health, natural living, social and environmental professionals throughout Hawaii, to share their knowledge. We believe in cultivating an understanding of the body, mind and spirit in an effort to encourage the exploration of inner peace, harmony and balance.

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LIVING  
IN AROUND  
BODYIN A  
LINEAR WORLD

By Michaelle Edwards

**There are no straight lines in nature....**

Creation celebrates roundness ... a cloud, a tree, the moon, or a bird. We are educated with ideas that are linear and go from point "A" to point "B," but the world we live in is a continuity of roundness. You are round... eyes, head, mouth, neck, trunk, breasts, arms and legs. Your body is a series of tubes separated by a web of fascia from the larger limbs and trunk to the cellular level. Nothing is really linear. If all space were pressed out of our bodies, we would be three-inch balls of matter, since what is contained within our very skin and the structure of our atoms is mostly space. But we believe in our density, and move and think as though we were two dimensional beings.

**You are round...**

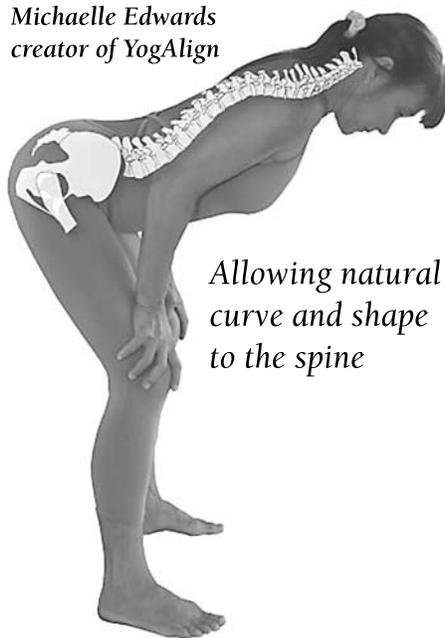
Your body is round, so sitting in right angled chairs, body in a bracket shape, or exercising in that position does not serve nature's design of the spine. We are designed to have our knees bent when we move but we try to make ourselves flexible by bending over with our legs straight. Your body is miraculously and exquisitely designed to be pain free and flexible well into old age. Yet most people in the Western world over 50 have little suppleness to their spine or freedom in their breathing process. Years of staying in unnatural positions lead to toughened fascia lines, compressed spinal vertebrae, and pain all over. Our spine, limbs and trunk are cylindrical. Yoga poses and exercise are more beneficial if the focus is on keeping the form and awareness of the curving and spiraling of our bodies.

**What's holding you up?**

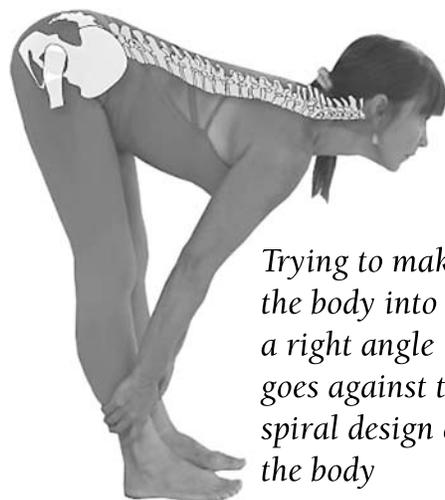
Linear ideas about shape and anatomy confuse us about what really supports us. So we invest time and energy into making our belly muscles really strong, believing that a tight outer belly means a strong core. Culture places heavy focus on our outer belly – our "six pack." But toning just the outer belly makes the abs shorter and tighter, over-training the belly in flexion. We shorten the front of our trunk, and expect our outer superficial structure to hold us up. This affects the full capability of the diaphragm and the rib cage to move. Two simple

imperative in the daily movements in which we "live" in our bodies. When alignment is not balanced, the whole body suffers from pain, tension and eventually the deterioration of the joints. It is not what you do as much as how you are aligned and breathing when you do it.

Michaelle Edwards  
creator of YogAlign



*Allowing natural  
curve and shape  
to the spine*



*Trying to make  
the body into  
a right angle  
goes against the  
spiral design of  
the body*

tests determine whether a pose serves the human design: it should allow the spine to have its natural curves; it should not cause restricted breathing.

**Alignment begins with  
freeing the breathing process**

Alignment is important in yoga poses if done with a focus on a natural curving spine and a toned but relaxed belly. However alignment is even more

**Fascia defines our  
movements and feelings**

We are like a tent, and our spine is the center pole. All the tent lines are adjusted to hold the tent in a balanced upright position. If the center pole is out of alignment, or the lines are shorter on one side and longer on the other, then the tent does not look balanced. Poor posture and repressed emotions can contribute to hardened tough fascia that affects ease of movement and overall balance and flexible movement. Fascia that is flexible and supple contributes to an ease that cushions and supports all of our movements.

**The psoas muscles  
are another key**

The body/mind connection becomes evident as worries, stresses, unexpressed tensions and injuries lead to constriction of movement throughout the body. The key muscle group that becomes a bridge between feelings and the breathing process -- and thus impacts movement -- is the psoas group. Without a functional psoas, the rest of the body develops compensatory movement patterning which lacks fluidity and efficiency. Breathing affects the psoas and the psoas affects breathing.

**Getting that "kid" body**

How we control movement is determined by our brain's messages, and effective exercising for functional movement must occur at the brain level. Movement patterning can be shifted through the breathing process as we learn to rewire what the brain is telling

muscles to do. To learn more about making more space in your body, go to [www.manayoga.com](http://www.manayoga.com) and learn more about freeing the fascia and doing yoga that won't hurt your body. 🌱