

The connected body: Born to walk and dance. Bipedalism to artistic expression through the lens of Anatomy trains®

Laurice D Nemetz and James Earls

Department of Health and Wellness, Lienhard School of Nursing, Pace University Pleasantville, New York, United States and Anatomy trains®, Walpole Maine, United States and United Kingdom

Correspondence: lnemetz@pace.edu

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The body is a connected system working in relationship to gravity and the surrounding environment. When humans became bipedal, the need to stand functionally on one leg demanded a new importance on balance. Accordingly, causal morphogenesis dictated a change in skeletal and muscular development of humans. The fascial system responded as well, allowing graceful movement when working in balanced myofascial tensegrity. Dance developed as a means to practice, in exaggerated form, the movements needed for life. Alan Lomax and Irmgard Bartenieff are among the ethnographers that studied the relationship of environment to the development of dance. Coordination of the myofascia is an important feature in dance and cultural preferences for certain movements also show a value placed on combinations of qualities of movement and spatial use. Dance/movement therapy and like-minded fields from somatic psychotherapy and physical therapy to fitness training can all contribute more global ideas about how we move. The new concept of spatial medicine should include awareness of the spaces we live in and the spaces we create. Whether we are walking or dancing, myofascial connections give us a means to understand our continued evolution in movement.

Objective: To show the importance of connection in gait and dance.

Methods: By utilizing the work of Thomas Myers' Anatomy Trains®, we have a framework of connected myofascia which looks at the body through continuous lines of relationship, instead of individual muscles.

Results: Anatomy Trains® allows a view of connection which provides long elastic chains that can absorb kinetic energy and allow for energy efficiency through elastic recoil. Anatomy Trains® also provides a psychology framework for connection in the body. For example, the Lateral Line (from fibulari muscles to sternocleidomastoid and splenius) has a relationship to socialization, seen in the connected circle dances of Europe and the Balkans in which dancers are linked via the side body.

Conclusions: As bipedal gait evolved over the last four million years, we gained efficiency in our stride. Dancing, likewise developed as a means to practice fascial efficiency as well as a means to serve as artistic expression and elevate the events of life.

Oral presentation