

Easing Pain & Unlocking Movement: A Simple & Novel Approach for All Ages

Total Motion Release (“TMR”), a physical therapy and rehabilitation treatment method, has gained attention for its ability to help people improve mobility and alleviate pain. Unlike traditional rehabilitation approaches that often focus on addressing the painful or dysfunctional part of the body, TMR takes a holistic approach to restore balance and symmetry throughout the entire body. This treatment method uses the pain-free movements on one side or area of the body to address pain and tightness on another part of the body. Depending on your fitness and medical history, this simple and effective technique may produce fast results in diminishing pain and movement restrictions throughout your body.

UNDERSTANDING TMR*

TMR operates on the principle of addressing the body as a whole, rather than isolated parts to restore balance and symmetry throughout the body. Injuries, muscular imbalances, and poor biomechanics cause certain areas of our bodies to overcompensate for the weak or painful opposing side, leading to tightness or pain. Conventional approaches typically treat the “affected side” (the painful or restricted side) while TMR focuses on the “non-affected side” (the area of the body that is less painful and more mobile).

HOW TMR WORKS

TMR aims to influence our neuromuscular control (the interaction between our nervous system and our muscles) through several mechanisms such as:

- **Cross education** - training one limb can result in improvements in strength or skill in the opposite limb, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the nervous system.
- **Neural coupling** - when one neural pathway is activated, it can make it easier for other pathways to become activated as well because different parts of the nervous system work together to coordinate movements.
- **Biotensegrity** - the



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interconnectedness between muscle, connective tissue and bones that provides stability throughout the body from both tensional and compressive forces.

- **Common core hypothesis** - the central neural control mechanisms that are used during rhythmic motor patterns (such as walking and running), are the same control systems used to enable coordinated and smooth movement in other activities.

USING TMR IN YOUR DAILY LIFE TO UNLOCK A PAINFUL JOINT

Performing the exercises below with 3-5 “assessment” repetitions. These first few trials are to gauge how freely the joints are moving. Do 3 sets of 15 to the unaffected side and then reassess the affected side. Continue this process until you see both sides are moving equally and pain-free. Do not push through pain and only move through the pain free range of motion. If both sides are painful or if pain gets progressively worse, stop the exercises. If you experience pain from the exercises that does not dissipate shortly after, or you do not get equal movements from both sides, contact your physical therapist or physician.

1. **Head and Trunk Rotations:** Sit with a straight posture on the edge of a chair, legs shoulder width apart and feet flat on the ground.

Cross arms over your chest. Twist your trunk and head to one side as far as you comfortably can. Note how far you are rotating your body and head by picking the furthest object behind you that you can see to gauge movement progress and how each side compares to the other.

2. **Shoulder Reaches:** Sit as stated under #1.

Arms straight next to your body. Keeping one arm straight and raise it up as close to your ear as possible. Note how high each arm can be raised, as well as how close the arm can get to the ear to gauge movement progress and to compare each side.

3. **Leg Raises with Reach:** Sit as stated in #1.

Keeping one foot on the ground,

straighten the other leg and raise it as high as you comfortably can, keeping knee straight. Reach with your arms towards your raised foot. Note how close your fingers reach towards your foot to gauge movement to compare each side.

4. **Heel Taps:** Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Bend one knee and keep the other leg straight out in front of you, tapping the ground with your foot. The knee that is bent will bear all your weight. Note how far you can tap the ground in front without losing balance to gauge movement progress and to compare each side.

5. **Single Leg Sit to Stand:** Sit as stated under #1. Reach both arms straight in front of you and stand up on one leg. If you are unable to do a sit to stand on one leg, practice doing a sit to stand with both legs until you can manage with a single leg.

IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS

The beauty of the TMR movement exercise protocol is that you can perform it anywhere, anytime and is a great daily dose of movement medicine to help gain or maintain mobility throughout your body. Depending on your fitness and medical history, we recommend consulting with a physical therapist for a personalized TMR movement protocol.

For further information on TMR approach, see the following links:

- 1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6878872/>; and 2) https://journals.lww.com/acsm-essr/fulltext/2005/01000/Neural_Control_of_Rhythmic_Human_Movement__The.10.aspx

Lize Lubbe is the owner of Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy with its main practice located at 892 Route 35 in Cross River and a PT Studio in the premises of Apex Fitness (where her team focus on the rehabilitation of sports-related injuries). Learn more by calling 914-875-9430, emailing contact@lizeclubbept.com or visiting www.lizeclubbept.com.



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