

# Ep #178: Power Of Pure Movement: Helping Your Psoas Heal Part 1



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Susi Hately**

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**Male Announcer:** You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

Welcome and welcome back to *From Pain to Possibility*, a podcast that helps you reduce and eradicate pain for yourself and your clients. I'm your host, Susi Hately. I'm so happy you're here today because I am coming back to a conversation about the psoas.

I first spoke about the psoas in episode 14, which was all about the sacred and subtle and powerful aspects of the psoas. And also in episode 62 about integrating psoas release from a bodyworker and what you can do to have that super yummy release that can happen from a bodyworker last for longer. Because those releases, as yummy as they are, don't last for very long typically.

Much like the QL, which I've recently spoken about, the psoas is also a very strong compensatory muscle swooping in to support in areas that it isn't designed for. And like the QL, when you improve your connection, your own sensitivity as well as the connection between ribs and pelvis, you can make a lot of gains in how your psoas functions and feels.

So over the next couple of podcasts I want to talk about really supporting your psoas and your client's psoas from the perspective of what I like to call the seven R's: rest, symptom relief, renewing inner awareness, retraining neuromuscular patterns, rekindling brain/body connection, refining new patterns and growing resiliency.

We'll begin with the first five R's with this episode: rest, symptom relief, renewing inner awareness, retraining neuromuscular patterns, and rekindling brain/body connection. And then the last two on my next episode. So basically what will happen with today's episode is I'll explain, first, briefly why I love the seven R's. I'll share some pertinent structure

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information regarding the psoas, as well as a story of a client who I helped with her psoas using the first five R's.

And I'll also walk you through a practice. So be sure to have a chair as well as either a buckled strap or one of my spinal strips, or just any tie, something you can hold between your hands. Have those two things handy if you want to practice along.

And then at the end of the episode I will also invite you into Power of Pure Movement: Grounded and Light Psoas, which is my two hour psoas program that I'm running on July the 11th. And I would love, love, love you to join me for that program if what I'm talking about today really resonates with you and you want support applying the concepts that I'm teaching and or you want some help really taking this on with your clientele.

Okay, you ready to go? Let's go. So first off, what I love about the seven R's as they relate to the psoas. This actually really builds upon the episode I recently did on the QL, which was about connection and why so many people who are struggling with the QL and helping it get better for good, what their issue really is, at a glance, is a connection issue. They're doing all the things. They're doing a lot of the right things. But it's how they're doing them as opposed to what they're doing.

And this is not dissimilar with the psoas. Now, as it relates here though, which is really interesting because the other thing I find that is so kind of miraculous and awe-inspiring and just so curious and interesting is that while the seven R's apply to many areas of the body, the result of what people experience is very different in different areas of the body. And that's going to be an episode down the road.

But right now as it relates to the psoas, what I find really fascinating is as my clients are able to integrate the seven R's, and for today's episode the five R's, is they begin to experience an internal suppleness and a very quiet feeling of inner power. So like a quiet inner power and then also this internal suppleness more on the tissue level.

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And I realize that might sound very kooky and super strange to some people listening, especially when it's used to describe a recovery process. And yet over the years, it's just what I have seen happen with my clients. It's really, really deeply and profoundly powerful and true. There's a transformative process that comes with healing because at its essence you're embarking on change.

If you want to really make sustainable gains, you are embarking on change. That in and of itself is transformative. This process is one of beyond like no pain, right? Because when we are talking about having no pain or wanting to get rid of pain, we're still orienting around that word of pain.

And to enable true change, the orientation needs to shift, right? And that shift doesn't happen just because you're saying it. And it doesn't happen because you're forcing it to. Rather, it shifts because how you're orienting with your body changes.

And time and time again what I see with people who are experiencing better function and overall gains in their psoas is there's this clear pattern of inner quiet. And it's a depth of inner quiet that emerges, more so with any other body part, right? And then as a result of that inner quiet there's a real groundedness, but also lightness that emerges. I will also add that with this inner quiet there's a soft and suppleness to it. There's a solidity, if that's a word, or a solidness that's responsive and strong.

Do you notice how there is no pain when I talk that way? Because what happens is as we help someone improve function and as they reduce compensatory strategies, how they are bearing load shifts and changes, and then what they feel shifts and changes. How they orient between the sky and the earth changes. And often how their breath changes and how their nervous system response changes. Everything changes.

And while I don't love the word transformation, I think it's a little overused, the more I talk with my clients, they really do say this is a transformative

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process because there's change that's fundamentally happening. So interesting.

So let's go next into the structure of the psoas, that's kind of fascinating. When you look at the structure of the psoas there's an attachment point at T12, so the bottom of the thoracic spine. Then along each of the lumbar vertebrae and then on to the femur, right? It's the only muscle that attaches in this way, how it crosses the body. It's the only one that connects the thorax or the area of the thorax to the femur, right?

It passes a really big area of the body from the spine, the T12, through the lumbar, crossing the pelvis, connecting to the femur. And this diagonal orientation also crosses quite a bit of viscera, right? There's a close connection with the diaphragm. In some cases it actually interweaves with the diaphragm. It really snugs up to the crura of the diaphragm and there's a close connection to the adrenals.

So what's also interesting too, and I've made mention of this before, but with the attachment points at each of the vertebrae and then onto the femur, when the femur is still or fixed when you pull on that psoas it will pull the vertebrae in a different orientation depending on the angle of pull. So in some cases there's some anatomist who will actually say the psoas is not one muscle at all. It's several muscles attaching to each of those points on the spine.

So it becomes really interesting and it brings to light how the psoas can get kind of messed up. And also how we can help when it's a little bit messed up, right? Like the psoas can take on such a major role of compensation, I like to call it the queen of compensation.

And so what can we do to help it not to do that? How can we help it become something more functional? How can we help it when it's not unwinding, not settling down and feeling tighter than tight? How can we help improve our connection and improve our sensitivity meter to tune into what's really contributing to why it's in a compensatory strategy.

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As I've mentioned in previous episodes, and those are numbers 14 and 62, and various times on social media, we need to remember that the psoas, like other muscles, responds to forces at play. It's responsive. It didn't wake up one day, although it sometimes feels this way, it didn't wake up one day and say I'm going to just be a pain today. That's not the way it operates.

So what we want to be able to support here is to enable it to not take on the compensatory role. And so in order to do that, we need to in part retrain the other factors that are leading to it compensating. All right, so then how do we do this? Because so often the compensatory patterning is happening under our level of awareness, so we're not even sure what's contributing to it.

So that is part of what makes it tricky. So to give an example of this, and to also walk you through a bit of a practice to help you highlight it for yourself, let me share a story of a client who had a straining and symptomatic psoas that she was told by a bodyworker that was twisted. When we started to work, what we focused on initially was that first R, it was the rest to support relief. To give her the opportunity to see that relief was possible.

And then as she was gaining relief, we could also begin retraining. And through that retraining and the relief, like really through the rest, relief and retraining phases she was able to cultivate greater and greater and greater inner awareness. So she could renew her inner awareness, which then also rekindled this really great connection between her body and her brain.

Because as the relief came, then she could see what was possible. She could see that she was doing this to herself, right? Her body was demonstrating what was possible. Her brain could then believe it, and then that would just give more fuel to, ooh, this is possible, which would continue to support the relief, which would then continue to support the momentum of retraining, which would continue to renew her inner awareness.

Then what started to occur is a greater and greater sense of inner stillness, which only helped perpetuate more stillness in her practice. And then I

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continued to focus the direction of where I wanted her attention to go so she could really tune in and continue to hone that ability to be sensitive to her inner world. Because when we can be sensitive to our inner world, that's when we start to notice, all right, what are the whispers that are leading to the screams?

So say the pain and the spasming and the straining is the red light or the scream. And then you start to get some relief. So you start to realize, okay, I can have no straining, I can have no spasming, I can have no pain. I can actually reduce this screaming thing. But you're still operating in this no world, right? This not pain, this not spasming.

So then the next step is, okay, what's contributing to this phase of it? And that's when you start to get into more of the whispers. And as you retrain there, and now you start to retrain, start to get some more stamina, some more endurance, some more bandwidth around having more and more time, without having the pain. And so this is what I was doing with my client.

So she had this psoas which she was told was a bit twisted. It was creating a bunch of pain and strain in her body. She had some hip issues as well, there was a little bit of jaw issue going on. And there was some thought that there was a relationship between each of these things going on. And what I noticed was her breathing was also quite limited. And there was just a way that she was holding herself that had a little bit of rigidity to it.

Now, whether that was specifically related to the psoas, I don't know because I didn't know her before she came to see me with the symptomatic psoas. So it may have been something she brought into the session with her. She obviously brought it into the session with her, but did her psoas issue evolve how she was holding herself or did the way she was holding herself evolve out of the psoas? That is something I can't answer.

But what happened as we started to work through our process together, is all of that started to settle out because of what she was starting to gain on

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the inside and how she was able to connect from the center of her body out to the periphery, and the periphery back to the center.

So with this, let me walk you through a sample practice. And what I'll also do is provide this as a YouTube link so you can actually watch me do this as well. Sometimes, as I explain in this audio, the cueing can be very helpful for some people on audio, and then other people need to see. So you'll have both, so be sure to look at the show notes for the YouTube video, okay?

As we set ourselves up to move through this experience, just remember that it's an experience. The aim here is to help you connect. To help you become a bit sensitive to what's going on in your body, of taking pause. And it's meant to bring you inward. To be still and to direct your awareness.

And so you could think about what I am teaching you here as a list of exercises, but truly in the heart of hearts I hope you don't. Because if you take this on as a list of exercises, it's likely not going to work. If you can utilize these as a vehicle inward to your body to explore and be curious about, now we've got a shot at having this work in a podcast format when I can't see you and you're following along.

Okay, so bring yourself to the floor and have your chair handy and a strap of sorts, whether it's a tie, or a scarf, or one of my spinal strips or a buckled strap. Something that you can hold between your hands that's not heavy. So I wouldn't use a block, like a yoga block. Even though they're not heavy, it's just a little bit of extra weight that's not needed.

And place your legs on the chair so that your hips are kind of sort of about 90 degrees, and you can work with that so that you're super comfortable. The aim here is to let your legs be totally supported by the chair. And then let your legs begin to sink into your pelvis. It's almost as if your pelvis receives your legs. I also like the cueing of thinking of your pelvis like mud and your legs like wooden telephone poles. And the wooden telephone poles are sinking into the mud.

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And then from that place, bring your hands to your belly so the middle fingers are touching, like just the tips, somewhere around your navel area. And this doesn't have to be exact. The idea with your hands on the belly is that they provide feedback to how you are breathing and that you are breathing.

It's not so much about pushing your belly out. It's just letting your hands rest there to tune into the movement of your inhale and exhale. And you can even then slide them up to the side of your ribs and just tune in again to how your body is taking in the air and how that air is then leaving with the exhale.

So let those legs settle into the pelvis. Let yourself just breathe as easily as you can. This is the place of rest. And if you could be five or 10% more comfortable, what would you then choose to enable that to happen? Maybe something underneath your head. Maybe something more under your legs. Anything really, right?

Okay, we'll move into the next movement here, which is bringing the arms overhead. So this is where you bring the strap between your hands and take the hands up to the sky. So the sky is toward the ceiling, and then your movement will come overhead, furthest you'll go is to the ears, and likely not quite that far.

What I want you to tune into is as you move those arms in the shoulder sockets. What happens elsewhere in your body? Do your ribs lift? Does your back extend? Does your pelvis move? Do you hold your ribs in your abdomen? Do you weave the ribs into your upper abdomen? Do you hold your breath? Do you grip your jaw? Do you hold your eyes? Notice what you're doing as you move the arms.

And then only move them as far as you don't do any of the above. Keep everything as it was and move only in that range. The aim here is not to get to the ears, the aim is to move within a state of ease so you're still

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cultivating that relaxation and rest space. Just do this maybe three or four times.

And then come back, letting the hands come down, hands back onto the ribs or onto your belly and back to your breathing. Back to tuning into your legs settling into the pelvis. And now notice what you're experiencing here.

And then bring the arms back to the sky and let's do another round of arms overhead. The aim is not to increase the range, although it might. The aim is to tune in and to feel the arms moving in your sockets, noticing what's happening with the ribs and your breath and your abdomen and your pelvis. And, of course, the area of your psoas, your jaw.

What are you noticing now? What's the data that's being shown to you as you move in terms of what's nice and soft and easy? What's adding tension? And just move in the range that is tension free, pain is not increasing. Again, only three or four is fine. And then bring your hands back. Feel your breath. Feel the movement of your body.

All right, now let your legs come off of the chair and rest your feet on the floor. Now notice what you're feeling. And from here, feel where your right leg is, and we're going to move the right leg out to the side. So you're going to rotate the leg bone in the hip socket out to the side. So the right leg rotating to the right.

Now sometimes when this happens, people like to slide that right foot towards the midline. Try not to do that. You're just coming out onto the outside edge of the foot and then you're bringing it back in. Now the other piece of this, which becomes interesting, is to notice if your whole pelvis wants to move with the leg. Now that's a movement, but for today can you move the leg only as far as your pelvis doesn't move? And, this is fun that your hip flexors don't engage anymore.

This is a movement through rotation. So its gravity is taking the leg down, and then your inner leg is bringing it back. Maybe do two or three of those.

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Just again, notice what's going on through your body as you do this. Okay, great. And then bring that back. Now to the other side and notice if there's anything distinct between the two sides, bringing that leg into rotation, coming onto the outside edge of that foot and the hip flexors are quiet.

Yes, they're in flexion, I realize that. But as you begin to move into his rotation aspect, we don't need them engaging anymore. So only go as far as they don't really engage. And sometimes people are amazed at how little their movement is, which is totally normal. Totally normal.

Awesome, and then bring that back up. And now do it with both legs at the same time. And then bring them back to the knees facing up to the sky and come back to your breath. And notice what you are experiencing.

So the aim here with this practice is to help start some settling, to help start some resting, to start to tune into your body and movement. Where are you moving? And where are you compensating? What's being involved in the movement that doesn't need to be involved? And can you move in the range where you are not compensating, or at least compensating less?

It seems small and it seems super simple, but it also can be really challenging to do especially when you're used to big movements. And out of this process, just notice what you notice. What data has become available to you in terms of recognizing how you move, what you think about how you move? What are you tuning into more?

All right, so if this is resonating with you and if it's making a lot of sense in your own body that this is like, "Yes, this is what I want to do for my psoas, this is how I want to teach my clientele," I invite you to join me on July the 11th when we get into Power of Pure Movement: Grounded and Light Psoas. And you can learn more at [learn.functionalsynergy.com/psoas](http://learn.functionalsynergy.com/psoas). It would be so much fun to work with you, especially if you're really resonating with what I'm sharing here.

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And if you can't make that time, but you do want the content, then do register because you'll receive the recording which you will have for life. And in the meantime, come back and join me for my next episode where I dig into these R's more specifically, as well as spending time with a practice for those last two.

So that's what I've got for you this week and I will see you on the next episode. Happy exploring.