

## Ep #224: Walking Program Part 2



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With Your Host

**Susi Hatelty**

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatelty

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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. With this episode, I continue a two-part series helping you or your clients to get back into walking, to a walking program with less or no pain. I have quite a few clients who, when they begin to experience those longer term results of being out of pain for longer and longer, they want to get back walking.

And yet for some of them, they've been in pain for so long and they're so thrilled to be even able to consider getting out for a fitness type of walk that has less or no pain that that exuberance can lead to them forgetting about listening to their body. So this past episode and this episode are guides to support you and if you have clients, to support them in getting back to walking for fitness with more ease, less pain, and much more fun.

And if you enjoy what you hear and you want some more support with this, I am leading a Power of Pure Movement walking program called From Zero to 30, and you can read all about it at [functionalsynergy.com/walking](http://functionalsynergy.com/walking).

Now, to give context to these two episodes, it's important for me to remind listeners that I work with a wide variety of clientele who have physical pain. Some have osteoarthritis in their hips or knees. Some are returning to walking post hip or knee surgery. Some have been overcoming plantar fasciitis or back, SI or other forms of pain that can impact their ability to walk.

And now that their pain has gone down and they feel good, they want to feel that fresh air on their skin, to breathe it in through their nose and to experience the freedom of just being able to walk for fitness again.

Last week's episode outlined how I guide my clients in their first couple of walks. And really two key points here were how to be with the desire to walk further on the first walk and how to grow their self-awareness and how

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to integrate listening to their body with the biomechanics of walking. So in these first two, they've been out on what I call reconnaissance walks, choosing something small, maybe about 5 or 10 minutes and simply noticing how their body moves and to be able to tune in and feel for the whispers, right?

This is really at its foundation. It's the fundamentals of the work that I do with them when I'm working with them one-on-one or in the group programs that I have, is tuning in and listening, growing that inner locus of control, of sensing and of trusting. And when they are able to feel those whispers, it will take them so far, particularly in these next 3 to 10 walks, but also beyond.

There are so many stories that I can share about people who have been walking who are concerned about their knees or they're concerned about their ankles or concerned about their back and they head out because they want to walk for whatever their reason is. Maybe it's about losing weight, maybe it's about increasing fitness, maybe it's just to get out and about or whether it's outside or on their treadmill and they just listen.

They listen closely to what their body is saying and they start to be able to recognize when sensations are letting them know they're about to do too much and when sensations are letting them know that they can push a little bit more.

It's so easy, and I'll speak more about this today, it's so easy just to get caught up in our head, to get caught up in numbers, especially if you're in a 30-day challenge to get caught up in the, "I've got to get my walk in for this particular challenge." It's very easy to work from the neck up and not pay attention. And the fundamentals of what I'm sharing here really are about tuning your self-awareness to your body, to what you're feeling and the sensations actually have meaning.

And you get to determine what that meaning is because sensations in and of themselves are subjective in nature. You can have something that you call burning and I have something that I might call burning and we might

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have two entirely different interpretations of that burning feeling. And it might not even be if we were to go in there like with, I don't know, smart little receptors or something of sorts, what you might be calling burning might be totally different than what I might be calling burning, right?

So we can't determine that. All we can say is the sensation that one is experiencing is a subjective experience. And only you can determine if that is a subjective experience that is something that you should heed and slow down or stop or turn around, or if it's something that you should heed as something to push you further and to add more miles or whichever.

Only you can determine that and it becomes a really great experiment and pathway of self-awareness to really get that information. And once you've got it, you've got it and you have such an understanding and great relationship with the sensations that are the messengers that are communicating to you, in this case, on the walk.

So we're going to be talking more about that on these next series of walks. And I'm thinking more about these next 3 to 10 because I find that once people have been out about 10 times and they're doing the work of paying attention, they're in their groove and now they trust their body. And their body, if I could put it this way, trusts them.

So there's more interaction between what they're feeling and how they're moving and what they're thinking and how they choose to follow whatever those messages are that their body is giving them. And that usually really gets a groove on between that 3 and 10 marker and continues into something that's more habitual.

So here are four key ideas to help you continue to step forward towards more regular and consistent walking. The first one is don't forget about the gains that you made in the first two sessions. Those reconnaissance sessions. And let's say you're up to seven or eight walks now, don't forget about the gains you made between walk number three and walk number seven or eight and the awareness that you now have.

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It's so easy when people have longer and longer periods of time without pain to just forget about it all and almost revert back to what they did. It's not unlike the process of losing weight and someone has changed up the way that they are looking at or thinking about or interacting with food and they get to where they want to get to and they revert back to many of the patterns or habits that they used to have.

That can also happen with people who have gotten out of pain. They feel so good and they go back to the way they did things. And then they wonder where did the pain come from? And a lot of this happens inadvertently and quite innocently, which is why I bring this up. It is important to not forget about the gains that you've already made.

Dan Sullivan, he is an executive coach, I learned from him and his team many, many years ago. And he had this idea in the business world that's very similar to this and he would say you're at point A and you want to get to point B. But then when you get to point B, you no longer think you're at point B going to point C, you're now at a new A, right?

So there can be this discrepancy in where you've come and where your brain thinks you've come. You're just going for the next thing. So when I'm in Calgary and I'm driving towards the west, towards Vancouver, I might get to a certain milestone and I'm no longer thinking about Calgary, I'm thinking about Vancouver. And my point here is to think about the gains you just made between Calgary and that point, right?

Those gains are so vital and that's what you build upon. That's where your consciousness can go to help you continue to refine and improve your movement patterns, your breathing patterns and your walking patterns.

Along with that comes number two and number two is use your body as a barometer, right? So you're continuing to become more and more familiar with which sensations express limitations and which sensations express that you're pushing too much or too hard and which ones are expressing the need for you to go harder or longer or faster or slower, right?

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The idea is, as I mentioned, number one is to experience the sensations in your body as messengers and really and truly to be curious. And some days you might find yourself needing to walk a little bit less than another day. This is not a linear process, which I sometimes find exists in the 30 day challenges, is that there's this consistent or continual progress that might be required.

The reality is, depending on what you're eating, or how your work is going, or your quality of sleep, or what's going on with your family or any of the number of other things that can be occurring in your day to day life, you might not be able to walk the same distance your fourth walk as you did your third walk. I mean, it could be that you've been doing other workouts and your muscles are sore or you're just feeling a bit depleted.

And it's not a bad thing. It's paying attention to what your energy levels are. So you might need to stop or move your body or do a small little stretch or roll out your shoulders or whatever. And just to recognize that that's just what's happening as opposed to it being something wrong.

Now, you might, as the time goes along, as you recognize more and more of your body as a barometer, you may recognize more and more patterns. And those patterns might suggest to you that you might need to intervene in some way. But again, we're looking at these as messengers as opposed to something being right or wrong, right? You're allowing your curiosity to guide you.

So then this builds into my point three and builds from points one and two, which is really allow yourself to stay in your body. Try not to operate from the neck up, right? Where you're only thinking about your goal and where you want to get to and you're pushing through no matter what.

And the reality is that we're taking that data, that information that we're gaining from point one and point two, that's information that exists in our body and we're thinking about it. So we are utilizing our head, but we're allowing the information to come from what our body is feeling and not dismissing it. Not thinking that it's not important, but that it actually is a

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significant piece. It's the fuel that helps us move forward and that information can be so helpful.

Number four is notice when you want to push. And can you tune into what's driving that desire to push? And if you can feel it, then just see what you do as you push and if more tension starts to increase when you push or if you feel really good and really tune into that.

There was an article I remember reading decades ago about a guy who was a very, very, very good swimmer at one time in his life. And then he had hurt himself and he was coming back into swimming and he was doing lengths in the pool. And as he was getting better and more fluid in his swimming, he decided he would start to add speed and he would do the speed run for the next lap.

But if he couldn't maintain awareness over all that he was aware of in the lap previous to that, then he would go back to the pacing of that previous lap. So then he would start to play. As he picked up his speed or as he picked up any other resistance he was utilizing, could he still maintain contact with his body and his mind? Could he still be present to the way that he was moving? And then he would then add another lap on top of that.

So it's the same thing here. You're noticing what's driving you and you're being able to tune in as you start to get up to, like maybe you're walking up a hill or you're choosing to go down a hill, which then might lead you to have to walk back up the hill later. Or maybe there's other obstacles that make your walking more challenging. Just notice what's driving you to take on that challenge. And just be clear on what that is.

I'm not saying you shouldn't challenge yourself. No, no, no, no, no, no. I simply want you to notice the fuel that's guiding you because if it's coming from sort of a whipping yourself into shape sort of space, there's likely going to be more tension that's in there, which is not great for infrastructure.



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And if it's more from curiosity, expansion, desire, curiosity, but from sort of that angle, then you take on the challenge just in a different way. The how that you're going about it is a bit different, which can be a real game changer.

There are times when you are out for your walk and you're noticing some yellow lights or some whispers to let you know that something is up. So maybe you start to feel something in the foot or in the hips or in the rib cage or with your breath. And what I want to offer next to you are a few ideas that you can do movement-wise, taking a break from walking. Maybe there's a park bench beside you or a tree or something like that, that you can work with.

And people might call these stretches, I simply call them movements to help you tune into the segments of your body that I mentioned in the last episode; your pelvis, your rib cage, your leg bone and your foot placement. And you can work with these to help create some relief that may have come from being out for the walk and some strain has maybe occurred, or maybe the yellow light went on longer and it's now more of an orange light and you just want to kind of free things up.

Some of the exercises or movements that I find to be really effective are movements that are in the frontal plane or side to side, like side bend. Or through the rotational or transverse plane, like twisting.

And so to do a side bend really, really simply is you could just be standing there, whether it's on the treadmill or on the sidewalk. And keeping the weight as even as possible through both feet, the three points of the feet that you're tuning into; center of the heel, ball of the foot and base of the pinky toe. And then gently move to the side.

Now, your weight will transfer more to the foot that you're leaning toward, but still maintain contact with the foot that you're leaning away from. So there's still some weight into that foot that you're leaning away from. And then feel what you feel on the side of your body. You don't want to feel this



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into your back or your SI, but notice what you feel. And then bring that to the other side.

You can also come over to the park bench or even the fire hydrant or any other so-called prop that's at a height and you can have a seat on that prop. You can also do this in standing and I'll walk you through the standing version of this. But you can just sit easily and comfortably with your sitting bones onto the bench or whichever you're sitting on and do a really gentle sitting twist.

And I like to start this with the middle fingers at the chin to kind of keep your awareness on that chin. So when you start to move, your head doesn't lead the way, but rather the engine of the movement comes between the ribs and the pelvis. So as you just easily breathe, allow yourself to rotate one direction and have that nose, your nose, stay in line with your breastbone. And your pelvis stays where it is too.

Keep it easy. Your hands are out of this. We're not tugging our arms around. We're utilizing the engine that is for twisting, which are the obliques that live between the ribs and the pelvis. And then come over to the other side.

You can also do this in a standing position where you place one foot up onto the bench or onto the fire hydrant, depending on what prop you've got here. And say it's your left foot that's up, and then you begin to twist to the left. The pelvis stays quiet again. So watch for this one because oftentimes the pelvis can start to move. And I like to have people move only as far as their rib cage moves with a quiet pelvis.

And I know that this is not as common in the yoga industry. The yoga industry often teaches people to move the pelvis along with the rib cage. And a big reason for that is in yoga when people do twists, they get their arms involved and that can lead to an over leveraging and an over pulling with the arms, which can then really whack out the lumbar or even thoracic spine, sometimes the ribs or even the SI joint.

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And so I just allow, and I'm teaching people initially to keep the arms out of it, to help really train up the mechanics between the ribs and the pelvis. And then you can do the same thing on the other side.

I find the side bending and the twisting really helpful for helping people to connect to their ribs and their pelvis again. And then moving into a high lunge. Some people might call this a runner's stretch, but I'd like you to think of it more like a high lunge and not try and go for the stretch, and stepping back into that lunge.

And usually in these contexts, I keep the knee right over top of the ankle. I know there's lots of people who might go knees over toes. And so the trajectory of the knee goes over the toes, which you can do. Just make sure that you've got the functionality to do that if that's something you practice.

And to keep it just at the very foundational basic level, I start with that knee being right above that ankle so that the shin is perpendicular to the ground. And if you wanted to, here you could add in the side bend towards like, say if it's the left leg forward, you can take a side bend to your left. And you can also twist the way I just shared a moment ago, you can twist to the left as well. Again, can you keep the pelvis quiet when you're doing that? And then moving to the other side.

And you don't need to take a lot of time to do these. You don't need to do all three of them. What I find is that as people get into the groove and start to recognize more and more the way that their body feels, they sort of choose for themselves what makes the most sense because they've grown that inner locus of control so effectively, they know what they need, right?

They've tuned their interoception. They've tuned their proprioceptive abilities. And they can recognize what those whispers are so they can really shift up the whole idea of screams, right? They can listen to the whispers so they don't have to hear the screams.

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That's ultimately the message with starting to build up a walking program that's very sustainable, is to simply listen to those whispers. When you operate at building something like a walking program into your life and you take the approach of being the turtle versus the hare, and you do this in a thoughtful, conscious and consistent way, the gains you make are really quite quick.

And you'll feel good. You won't feel depleted because you've pushed yourself too hard. You'll feel the sustainable feeling that comes from honoring your body and honoring your body's sensation.

So with that, happy, happy, happy walking. And if you would like more of my help, you can read more about the walking program Zero to 30 at [functionalsynergy.com/walking](http://functionalsynergy.com/walking). Take care and we'll see you next time.