

“Sophie’s knowledge about human anatomy and human nature helped me understand how one tension in the body can lead to another, and during the session she helped me experience how the body is able to retrieve its own balance.”

Regine Maligne-Lynch

Who Benefits from Anti-Gymnastique?

Sophie works with people that have been diagnosed with conditions that make it impossible for them to live a normal life, because they are limited by the chronic heavy pain they feel in their body, or are in some ways limited in their physical expression. These conditions have a strong negative impact on their quality of life. Some of her clients couldn’t work, walk, play tennis, golf, garden, play with their grandchildren, travel in a plane or drive their cars.

These physical conditions affected their emotional lives, their relationships and their social lives. Finally, they were convinced they have to put up with these negative conditions for the rest of their lives. A short-list of the pathologies that could create the above scenarios include: arthritis, back ache, TMJ, insomnia, tendonitis, sinusitis, migraines, anxiety, car accidents, post-surgical recovery (including mastectomy, and pelvic reconstruction), pregnancy, post-partum issues and others.

Despite their diagnoses or individual situations, Sophie creates a space, using different approaches and tools, both in groups and with individuals to help them reconnect to their health and their bodies and retrieve vitality and function.

Many people who have practiced Anti-Gymnastique can now go back to the sport they love, or can now approach it for the first time.



“Wonderful rebalancing, using gentle techniques... We re-learn to breathe and relate to our body the way we are supposed to, in freedom rather than survival mode, thereby letting go of hidden (and not-so-hidden) tensions that contribute to chronic stress and pain. Sophie works with integrity and intelligence. She helps us create new steps on our path to total wellness. This is remarkable work!”

--J.P. Demetry, Ph.D.

What is Anti-Gymnastique?

The word anti-gymnastique means the opposite of work-out.

The movements are very different from the ones we practice in traditional work-outs.

Imagine a room (or outside grassy area) with no more than 5 people, all dressed comfortably. At the facilitator's request, you lie down on a yoga mat. Then, she suggests you bring your attention to your body. In order to perceive every part of your body, the facilitator will name them, one by one. You are aware of how the different parts of your body are in contact (or not) with the floor. For example, you might discover that the right side of your body makes contact with the floor in a different way from the left. Perhaps your head is not aligned with your tailbone. Perhaps your left shoulder feels more flat on the floor than the right shoulder, and so on. Without judgment, you observe, you discover, you compare, the connection between the different parts of your body. You are suddenly aware that you had forgotten your breathing. “How do you breathe,” asks the facilitator? And “where do you feel the breathing in the body? Do you feel it in your upper chest? Do you feel it in your abdomen? Do you feel it in your throat? Do you feel it in your back?” And so on.



You lose completely the awareness of the group, the room you are in, the color of your clothes, only the voice of the facilitator had guided you deep, very deep, inside yourself. A quick glance to your watch, and already 20 minutes have passed. 20 minutes of exploration inside your body. You feel a sense of timelessness. The total opposite feeling can also be true. 5 minutes can seem like an eternity.

This first step distinguishes Anti-Gymnastique (anti-workout) from traditional gymnastique (workout). Until now your knowledge of your body has been reduced to awareness of pain, pleasure, rote exercise, movements and mechanical actions.

Through this gentle work, your brain becomes more consciously aware of the tension in every part of the body. Through this awareness, supported by the work, we allow the body to release this tension, and retrieve balance. The expression of retrieving balance will include the feeling of your breath opening, your blood and fluids flowing easily, your muscles lengthening, your joints being lubricated, and a feeling of being calm, energized, vital and whole.

Standing and Walking

This body awareness is also increased by practicing exercises standing up, barefoot on the floor. The facilitator asks you to walk, to walk simply, just as you'd walk down the street. The fact that you observe yourself walking, makes the walking process more challenging. The facilitator says "Just walk, peacefully, calmly, observe how your feet are connected to the ground. Observe how the weight of your body is distributed in your feet while you walk." As an example, you may suddenly understand why the external edge of your shoes is always worn down.

"Observe now the position of your head while walking. Has your head the tendency to go forward?... or go backward?" "What is your head's position during the walking?" You may notice you are walking with your chin up, or the opposite. "Now observe your hips while you are walking. Are they swinging from left to right? ... or from front to back?" You may notice, (with surprise) that they are completely rigid or immobile. From surprise to surprise, you discover everything you could observe from the walking action that you had never noticed before, and your brain is going on registering this new information. Slowly your posture reorganizes itself.

Before doing further exercises, we always start with both the floor perception and the walking perception exercises. We do this so we can compare our perceptions at the beginning and at the end of class, so that we can remind our brain of our body's changes and better integrate them.

This opening of awareness will continue for hours after the class. Your body goes on changing in subtle ways and your nervous system notices and assimilates these changes. The more your body releases its tension and rigidity, the deeper is the work, and the more the results will be long-term.

Simple, Powerful Tools

Unlike the machines and music in typical workouts, the tools used in Anti-Gymnastique look more like children's toys. For example, you'll see a basket filled with hard balls, soft balls, and foam balls. You'll also find sticks of all dimensions covered with foam, and pillows of all shapes, sizes and consistencies. The room will be a quiet and welcoming place, .. a place a child would feel welcome, but unusual for an adult. From the first movement, these simple tools become precious instruments to dissolve tension in your body and muscles. The hard balls help to massage under the action of the movement. They massage such strategic points such as gluteus muscles, trapezoids, the back extensors, the sacral iliac suture, and the muscles around the hips, the hamstrings, calves, and at last under the feet, all the muscles composing the arch under the foot. These muscles are strategic points, because it is there where most of the tension is installed and located. According to the degree of your muscle tension, the balls can become either tyrannical or angelic. You wouldn't expect a ball to be able to carry that range of intense emotions. The role of a hard ball is not only to massage, but to also penetrate, step by step, the different muscle layers of the body. When the first layer is releasing, the ball is penetrating one-by-one all the other ones. Thank God we have only three layers of muscle in the body!



The soft balls massage not only the muscles, but also the muscle envelope, called the fascia, or connective tissue. The action of the soft balls is much more subtle and soft, however, it often generates as powerful a result as was obtained using the hard balls.

The sticks also massage, however they are used for the long muscles in the body, especially for the extensors along the back and spine. Because of their length, the sticks unify the muscles from the shoulders to the lower back, or from the head to the hip, or from the shoulder to the gluteus.

Lastly, the little cylindrical pillows are used not only for supporting the neck, they also are used to massage the cranium, the vertebrae, and the hips. They are also used to prevent the compensation that often occurs in certain stretching movements. They create a comfortable feeling especially when the stretching movements are challenging.

All these tools help the brain concentrate on specific areas of the body (on the foot, along the spine, etc...) and therefore help release the tensions stored there. As a result, the brain is trained to release this tension naturally in daily life... even without the use of these tools.

Feedback from Italy, where Sophie had her practice for 15 years.



“At my request, Sophie Caballero directed two AntiGymnastique groups of 6 people each (age average 50 to 70). One was in Rome and the other was at my home where I also have my medical practice, in the country (Orte,Italy www.hortensiae.it an hour and half drive from Rome). The groups were facilitated either outside or inside depending on meteorological conditions.

It was really pleasant to discover our bodies as a group in such an unusual way, using balls, wooden sticks (covered with foam) or even imagination in unexpected modalities- in connection with our sensitive minds. We were asked to put words to our new perceptions, and of course to listen to the words of each other, which opened other fields of awareness.

We witnessed miraculous transformations. For example one individual experienced the realignment of a valgus knee, which had been present for more than 50 years. Another 70 year old woman, found unexpected, progressive, retrieval of flexibility of muscles throughout her body. There were many other examples of rebalancing of the posture.

We stopped our group because of Sophie’s moving to the U.S, and we are still missing her. But she left a beautiful consciousness of our wonderful physical reality, which until we experienced Sophie’s work, we had thought was full of limits!

As an MD, and general practitioner, I really regret not having anymore the possibility to organize activities for my patients with Sophie. The way she transmits her knowledge is through our experience with our body -which never lies-it is much better than any theoretical explanation.”

Elisabeth DeLaet Bertoni, M.D.

“My time with Sophie has helped me to understand the affects of stress on the nervous system, and to identify these effects and work to heal the stressed places in my body. Sophie has a deep passion for her work, takes time to explain the biology and chemistry behind her approach . Her work is an excellent complement to more "traditional" healing medical procedures for people who are experiencing chronic pain, stress, and other body ailments.”

Claire Hamilton, International Community School Teacher of the Year 2007

Who is Sophie Caballero?

Sophie has been trained in France and has been leading groups in Anti-Gymnastique in Europe (France, Italy and Spain) for the last 15 years. She has worked with the elderly, middle aged people, teenagers and children. The common denominator of all these groups is that they had tried numerous approaches to recover their health, but had not achieved results... until they began working with Sophie.

Sophie's experience is that no matter their current health challenges, all individuals can reconnect to their health and achieve greater functioning, health, and flexibility. Sophie is committed to create a space to allow a client's nervous system to rebalance and to restore itself.

Sophie also works with individuals who need deeper one-on-one attention using the Cranio-Sacral Balancing Osteopathic approach.

Sophie was born and raised in Paris, to a father from the Andalusia region of Spain and a mother of French and Russian origin. Sophie's maternal Great Grandfather was an Officer of Czar Nikolai, and the values of service excellence, high standards, integrity and dedication have been passed from generation to generation and are fully embodied in her work.

In addition to being fluent in French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Portuguese and English, Sophie speaks the language of the heart and the body. Through her speaking and listening skills, she enables others to access their body's inner language.



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