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INTEGRATED KINETIC NEUROLOGY

## How our eyes may be holding us back from neck & back pain recovery

We are multisensory creatures, meaning that we don't just depend on our physical body to move through the world, but our movement is dependent on the quality of the information we take in through multiple systems. Typically, we try and improve movement by training someone to move better, or by "releasing" tight areas of the body to help us move more optimally. But what if our inability to move well is due to the lack of integration between these multiple systems that work together to deliver information to our brain?

Imagine you're walking down the street with your eyes closed. Do you think your movement would be as fluid than with your eyes open? Your eyes allow your brain to know where you are going and how safe you are, and so if there is an issue with how they are moving, then we may see compensations in our physical body. These compensations are our bodies protective responses to keep us safe, and may be expressed in the form of stiffness, weakness, and even pain. These compensations are normal, and again, are initially there to keep us safe. However, when they continue to express themselves over and over again, then we may be in a situation where we experience persistent stress, stiffness, and pain.

Our eyes are designed to work together in order to deliver symmetrical information so that we can generate optimal responses through movement and cognition. Any asymmetry in the information or poor movement of the eyes can cause an excessive compensation in our bodies to stabilise. Let's say for example, we are unable to keep our eyes on a target as we move our bodies. Then, we will perhaps have a tightening of the muscles around our neck and back to keep us balanced. This compensation is expressed to keep us orientated with our environment and happens on a very subtle level. Imagine if this is happening over and over again, then it may make sense as to why we might continue to experience that tightness and pain in our neck and lower back. The answer lies not in only addressing the muscles through manual therapy or physical exercises, but combining these approaches with higher order systems, like the visual system.

Bottom line: There's more to just training the physical body to move better. If we take a multisensory approach and treat the individual in front of us in a way that will help them move through the world more optimally, then we can facilitate greater change. Above all, make it simple so that our clients can reinforce the changes outside of the clinic or gym.