

What's All the Fuss About the Tailbone? (Part 2)

Phil (Krishna) Milgrom, 2019

In Part 1, the focus was on the structural significance of the tailbone. Why does Svaroopa® yoga begin with releasing the tailbone first and then follow with the rest of the spine, from bottom up? The tailbone is not just an inconsequential (“vestigial”) appendage, as it has often been considered. As noted, it’s the anchor for many of the muscles of the pelvic floor. These muscles act as a support system for the sacrum, pelvis, and so forth. As stated in Part 1, “The tailbone provides support and stability when you sit, and affects how you stand. In other words, the tailbone – the base of your spine – is a crucial part of your foundation.”

Misalignment of the tailbone can lead to a wide array of physical complications, such as knee problems, neck pain, migraines, carpal tunnel syndrome and incontinence. When you feel threatened, you typically pull your tailbone forward, like a dog tucking its tail forward between its legs. When a dog is frightened, he tucks his tail under as a submissive posture. He’s probably trying to make himself look smaller, maybe even trying to disappear, so as not to provoke whatever is frightening him.

When your tailbone is tucked forward, your spine rounds over and your shoulders are thrown forward. Ultimately, you are being thrust into a fetal position. Dr. Devorah Feinbloom, a renowned chiropractor in the Boston area who took Svaroopa® yoga training, writes:

“The tailbone is intimately associated with the root chakra, the chakra that is associated with our right to exist, to belong and to be here. The tailbone acts like an emergency brake when something challenges our survival.”¹

¹ “Honor Thy Tailbone – Getting rid of neck pain by releasing the tailbone,” by Dr. Devorah Feinbloom, <http://marbleheadnaturalhealing.com/>

So when the tailbone muscles tighten up, your emergency brake locks on. Your forward motion in life comes to a crawl. You feel small. You don't feel that you belong or that you have the right to exist.

What happens when your tailbone and spine are aligned properly? What happens when you release spinal tension? The remainder of this article addresses these questions.

The answer in a nutshell is you feel a greater sense of ease, inner stability and wellbeing. You have more power and vitality. You are completely here, and you feel absolutely good about that.

In contrast, consider the effects of improper alignment. Notice what happens when you slouch or slump in your chair. Your breathing becomes shallow; in other words, your breathing becomes *depressed*. Slumping over also depresses the function of your heart and digestion. And then you begin to feel depressed. Your breath being short, you also feel anxious.

According to a study published in the journal *NeuroRegulation*, when you slump, your brain takes almost twice as long, and has to work significantly harder, to access positive memories than when you sit upright. You can feel the difference for yourself: Good posture puts you into a better state of mind. You feel more confident. Good posture even improves your memory because it boosts blood and oxygen flow to the brain – by up to 40 percent, according to one estimate.

But good posture is more than just standing straight. Good posture requires spinal release – spinal release that allows the vertebrae to align properly. Then, you can sit or stand properly, with greater ease. And when your spine is aligned and freed of tension – that is, when you get core opening – you are setting the stage for a profound awakening on multiple levels of your being. Not only does blood and oxygen flow more freely to the brain, but your vital energy (what yogis call *prana*) flows more freely to your brain. This energy also flows more freely through your whole body. You are enlivened.

Let me explain: Your vital energy or prana flows through tiny channels called **nadis**. These nadis branch out from the main channels along your spine.

A **great** amount of energy lies dormant at the base of your spine. The poet Rumi said: “You have the energy of the sun within you, but it’s all locked up at the base of your spine.” That energy at the base of your spine is called **kundalini**. With core opening and substantial opening at your tailbone, that energy is allowed to flow more freely. It is freed up, or awakened as the yogis say. It flows freely and directly up your spine through all your energy centers (the **chakras**) and into your brain.

You feel more alive and present. Your eyes become brighter. Your mind sharper. Your mood is elevated. You feel “up” – you feel up to all the challenges of life. Your heart is opened and uplifted. You have more compassion. You laugh more. You become more like your Self. You are unified with your Self. You become Self-Realized. You realize who you really are.

You have not only aligned your spine, you have aligned with Grace.

Swami says: “Svaroopā® yoga is the yoga of Grace... When you use Svaroopā® yoga to align your spine, you place yourself in that flow of Grace.”²

When you sit in an easy upright position to meditate, you place yourself in that flow of Grace. The energy at the base of your spine begins rising up. That’s why we sit upright when we meditate. When you lie down, you feel the energy of sleep. When you sit up, you feel the energy of awakening. You become fully conscious of your Self as Consciousness itself. You recognize all that you can be as all that you are. Aligned with Grace.

² “Alignment with Grace,” January 2013 Contemplation Theme by Swami Nirmalananda

