

The Al & Malka Green Artists' Health Centre



UHN Toronto General
Toronto Western
Princess Margaret
Toronto Rehab
Michener Institute

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Check out our **NEW** services!

- **Alexander Technique**
 - Schedule your **FREE** 15-minute consultation!
- **Lymphatic Drainage Massage**
 - Covered through RMT

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NEW SERVICES

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This Issue's Contributors:

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The Centre expanded OHIP-covered psychotherapy offered by a family doctor.

Stay tuned for details of individual and group therapy sessions starting in Fall 2024!

WE ARE OFFERING NEW SERVICES!

The Alexander Technique can...

- Help improve postural habits and ease of movement.
- Increase awareness of excess tension, equipping you to reverse bodily imbalances.
- Empower you to address neck and back pain, prevent and recover from injury, improve breathing and vocal issues, and enhance coordination and balance.
- People who practice the Alexander Technique often report improved mood, greater confidence, and an increased sense of well-being and resilience.



Lymphatic Drainage Massage can...

- Encourage the drainage of lymph nodes and the movement of lymph fluids around the body.
- Relieve fluid buildup in tissues, which can be caused by genetic disorders, infection, injury, surgery, and cancer treatments.
- Target the lymphatic system under your skin to move trapped lymph to blood reabsorption sites to maintain bodily balance and defend against infections.
- Potentially help with weight loss and detoxification.



The Centre is offering Lymphatic Drainage Massage as an insured service through RMT!

MEET OUR NEW PSYCHOTHERAPISTS!

Dr. Yu Fei Xia



Dr. Yu Fei Xia (she/her) is a GP psychotherapist who is excited to join the AHC team to provide OHIP covered psychotherapy for artists. Her counselling is based on creating a safe space of mindfulness and self-compassion, and she uses modalities including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, and Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy to inform her work. She is accepting new patients for short-term individual counselling sessions starting fall 2024!



Ezra Braves



Ezra Braves is a Registered Psychotherapist in practice since 2017 and works with individuals, couples, and provides clinical supervision. Since his training at the Toronto Institute for Relational Psychotherapy (TIRP), Ezra has completed certifications in dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT) and in treating complex trauma. Ezra has deep respect and admiration for the creative spirit and is fascinated and humbled how the unconscious and emotion represent in all forms of art and expression.

SPOTLIGHT PRACTITIONER

Tanya Bénard



Tanya is an ATC-Certified teacher of the Alexander Technique. Since 2005, she has taught the Technique at The Royal Conservatory in various capacities – most notably, developing and teaching a popular and longstanding Alexander Technique program for The Glenn Gould School. Tanya is also a contributor to ARCT pedagogy materials for Royal Conservatory Examinations, on establishing a physical foundation for making music.

Can you share a bit about your background and how you became involved with the Alexander Technique?

I first came to the Technique as a musician - initially because of an injury, which hadn't responded well to anything else, but healed quickly after starting Alexander lessons. That first contact was very brief, but it really changed the way I related to my body and my instrument for the better. I returned to lessons years later, when in spite of having success with my playing, I felt increasingly tense and stressed. Again, I was amazed by how quickly things shifted – increasing my awareness, and my capacity to get my body to respond in helpful ways.

What inspired you to specialize in working with artists?

Because of my background, I naturally gravitated to working with artists. Artists are already very sensitive to nuance, quality and flow in what they are creating, so the ways that we are paying attention to and working with that in the Alexander Technique tend to make intuitive sense. The work often resonates for them – probably because it has such a strong sense of process and practice, and because of the creativity involved in applying it in everyday life.

For those who might not be familiar, how would you explain the Alexander Technique?

Over time, most of us accumulate habits. Essentially, our habit pattern can become like pedaling a bicycle while accidentally holding down the brakes a bit – it's possible, but it creates drag on the system, and over time will wear things out more quickly. The Alexander Technique gives us a framework for becoming more aware of and undoing the ways we may be accidentally holding down the brakes – which can be amazingly freeing and helpful.

Can you describe a memorable case where the Alexander Technique helped an artist overcome a problem?

People often share stories of how the work we're doing is helping them not just reach the next level with their craft, but also make their way through challenging performances, rehearsals, or creative projects feeling more relaxed and empowered. They're often surprised and relieved that all of that can happen in tandem!

It's also incredible when someone starts to make discoveries on their own – catching tension in the moment and being able to bring about a shift.

How does the Alexander Technique benefit artists of all disciplines?

Life as an artist can be very demanding – on a fundamental level, your body is your instrument, and it's with you 24 hours a day. The Alexander Technique offers a framework for checking in with yourself and working with what you notice that can be tremendously helpful and liberating.

There is also a fascinating relationship between finding more ease in the mind/body system, and the expressive possibilities of a performance or creative project. When we free things up on that level, there is often more immediacy and richness of expression. Things also tend to become more enjoyable and engaging for both artist and audience – not just in the moment of performance, but through the whole creative process.

What common issues or challenges do artists typically bring to you?

I work with a lot of people who have pain and/or injury – the Alexander Technique has a lot to offer there. I'm also often approached by people who say "I think I want to try this, but I don't have an actual problem. Is that ok?" – which also makes a lot of sense! Becoming more aware of our bodies, and undoing some of the drag on the system doesn't just help prevent injuries; it tends to help people take their skills to the next level, and open up creative possibilities – as well as helping people feel better overall.

Often people come because of physical problems, and are pleasantly surprised by psychological benefits like feeling calmer, more resilient and more empowered.

What advice would you give to artists who are considering the Alexander Technique?

The process has helped so many artists over the years – if you're curious, consider giving it a try! Even one session will often give you a better sense of what it's like, and how it might help.

FREE 15-minute consultation!

To find out more about how the Technique might address your interests and/or concerns, reach out to the Centre to schedule a free consultation !



The Alexander Technique is especially well-positioned to help with greater moment-to-moment awareness of when unhelpful habits are creeping in – and a sense of how to begin to undo what isn't helping.



ARTIST HEALTH TIPS

Overcoming Creative Slumps

- Identify triggers that put you in an artistic slump (e.g. external pressures).
- When you understand the causes of creative block, it is easier to develop an action plan to mitigate them.
- Having a positive attitude can help you explore your needs and increase resilience.
- When in need of inspiration, engage in nature-based activities, explore other artistic mediums, collaborate with other artists, and review past work.



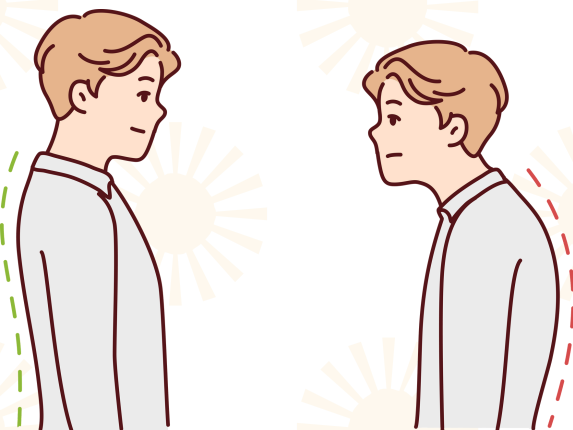
How to Relieve Overworked Hands

- Take breaks: Use a timer for a set working period and when it goes over, relax your hands.
- Massage your hands and warm them to stretch your hand muscles and increase circulation.
- To reduce pain, you can make a fist with your hand and then open your palm and spread your fingers as much as possible a couple times.



Reduce Upper Body Pain

- Notice your posture, setup, position, and the lighting when you start to feel strain in your neck and upper back.
- Do proper stretches and give yourself a break!



ARTIST RESOURCES



Mental Health First Aid

Many people suffer from mental health crises and may need help working through them. This Mental Health Commission of Canada course allows you to learn mental health first aid to understand signs/symptoms and how to help someone in this scenario.

Eligibility: Limited spots are available for **October and November 2024**. Registration required at least two weeks in advance.

[Sign up HERE](#)

FREE Video Production Workshop

Want to learn how to make short videos for your website, social media, and more? Attend this online workshop by Canadian Artists Network. EVERYONE WELCOME!



Date and Time: September 12, 2024 at 1 pm

[Sign up HERE](#)



REset Point Art Exhibition

Listen to new, immigrant artists reflect on their careers by incorporating their life experiences and cultural traditions into their work.

DEADLINE: August 10th 2 PM to 4 PM EST

[Sign up HERE](#)



For more more information, visit these resources!

Alexander Technique

1. Home. American Society for the Alexander Technique. <https://alexandertechniqueusa.org/>
2. National Health Services. (2021, September 6). Alexander technique. NHS choices. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alexander-technique/>
3. Dsouza, R., & Kirenga Bamurange, L. (Eds.). (2024). Alexander Technique. Physiopedia. https://www.physio-pedia.com/Alexander_Technique
4. Selhub, E. (2015, November 23). The alexander technique can help you (literally) unwind. Harvard Health. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-alexander-technique-can-help-you-literally-unwind-201511238652>

Lymphatic Drainage Massage

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3. Eske, J. (2023, November 6). Lymphatic drainage massage: Benefits and how to perform. Medical News Today. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324518>

How to counteract creative blocks

1. Down, L. (2024, January 31). Tips and tricks for beating creative block as an artist. Arts, Artists, Artwork - Arts, Artists, Artwork. <https://artsartistsartwork.com/tips-and-tricks-for-beating-creative-block-as-an-artist/>

Ways to relieve overworked hands

1. Orthopaedic Hospital of Wisconsin. (2024a, June 13). Overworked hands? 5 tips to care for your hands as an artist or crafter - orthopaedic hospital of wisconsin. Orthopaedic Hospital of Wisconsin - An uncommon focus on you. <https://www.ohow.com/2024/03/26/overworked-hands-5-tips-to-care-for-your-hands-as-an-artist-or-crafter/>

How to reduce back and neck pain

1. CraftOptics. (2022, July 28). Artists: Four ways to reduce back & neck pain. <https://crafoptics.com/artists-four-ways-to-reduce-back-neck-pain/#:~:text=Sit%20up%20straight,the%20stress%20on%20your%20shoulders>