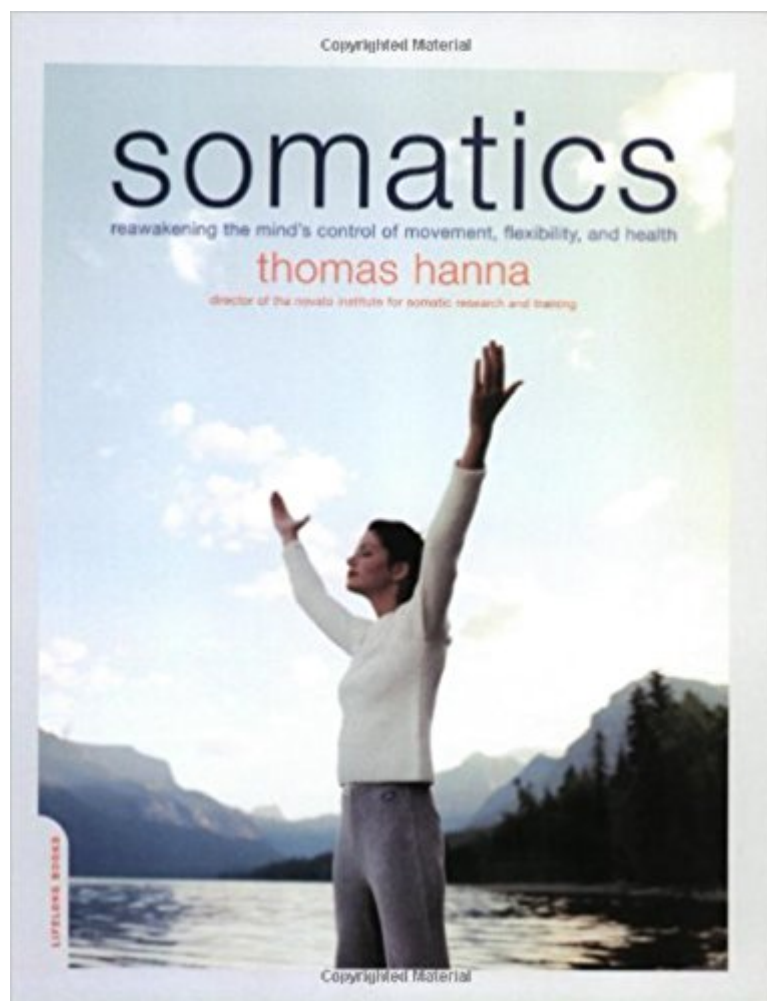


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# Somatics: Reawakening The Mind's Control Of Movement, Flexibility, And Health



## Synopsis

In the revolutionary *Somatics*, Thomas Hanna demonstrates that so many problems we accept as inevitable over time—chronic stiffness, bad back, chronic pain, fatigue, and even high blood pressure—need never occur if we maintain conscious control of nerve and muscle, a state which Hanna calls sensory-motor awareness. This gentle, lifelong program can help almost anyone maintain the pleasures of a supple, healthy body indefinitely, with only a five-minute routine once a day.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

San Fernando Valley Sun, 1/28/10 "A favorite body scanning bible."

Thomas Hanna, Ph.D., founder of the field of Somatics, is director of the Novato Institute for Somatic Research and Training in Novato, California. He is also editor of *Somatics Magazine-Journal of the Mind/Body Arts and Sciences*.

In his book *Somatics*, Thomas Hanna, Ph.D. tackles the medical assumption that pain and degeneration are the inevitable result of the aging process. Not only that, he offers a simple plan to recover lost flexibility, balance, and posture. His exercises, he assures us, will bring us back into connection with our lost mobility while reducing pain and discomfort. It almost sounds too good to be true. But is it? Most people suffer from pain and discomfort at some point in their lives. When this follows an injury, it is easy to watch the play of cause and effect. This can allow us some feeling of

control during our healing process as we regain lost function and strength. When we don't know why we hurt, we can feel like victims of our own bodies. When we ask our doctors for help, they offer drugs for pain, and tell us to buck up and accept our lot. We are growing older, after all. What else should we expect? Everyone knows that bodies wear out eventually. Hanna challenges this idea. He points out that although this is true for many people today, there are also many circumstances in which people maintain function and vitality right up to the very end. Gerontologists call this "successful aging." Rather than dismiss such cases as oddities, Hanna thinks we should embrace them as possibilities, and learn how to make our own lives turn out like theirs. Five case studies are reviewed in the course of the book. In each case, through guided movements, flexibility is restored and pain is alleviated. Several of the cases are quite extraordinary; one woman regained the use of her frozen shoulder after just one treatment, despite almost two unsuccessful years of conventional treatment. Another case involved a man who had not been able to straighten his knee for almost two years. He rediscovered how to control what he had once given up as lost. Although Somatics is full of information for the professional, it is very accessible to the lay reader as well. He uses clear language that anyone can understand. After describing commonly seen habits of movement, he gives us the keys to unlock our own blockages through simple exercises that almost anyone can do. These slow movements rebalance our structure by bringing awareness to the way we actually move our bodies, and teach us how to develop more balanced ways of moving. The final chapter includes his basic movement explorations. His exercises are simple, mild, and brief. He offers a series of lessons, in which the reader may explore different areas of the body. By encouraging the reader to reacquaint themselves with their movements, he invites us to take our own steps on this healing path. And if my brief explorations with this work are any guide, change really is possible. I would recommend this book to anyone who is looking to find a new sense of vitality, movement, and freedom in their body. And really, who isn't? see more of my reviews and shop on at [...]

Okay, I have to admit I don't exercise and I have an 8 hour a day desk job. Periodically my right hip got so stiff I could hardly get moving when I got up. My dr flipantly said I had arthritis and sent me to get x-rays. I went to my chiropractor instead. He took x-rays and said there were no signs of arthritis which I was sure would be the outcome. But why was I so stiff? He worked on my back which I'm certain was out of whack, (my job is stressful) but my hip still didn't get much better. I do a lot of net research and reading of other folks input. I'm not sure what brought me to this, but YES, it does make a difference. I struggle getting through the exercises and have not made it through to #8 yet, only to #5. I recorded the sessions and put my tape player on pause whilst I complete the

repetitions. (It makes it easier than holding a book and keeping your place.) I did the exercises for a while and quit and haven't had any problems and shame on me, how much better I could feel if I continued on (never seems to be enough time for everything I need to do!) This doctor is right. Our brains get trained in certain movements, postures, and we don't revert back to healthy conditions like when we were children. Our stress lives in our bodies and our brains just become accustomed to it. So, this is brain and muscle retraining and it has done very well for me. Two years of periodic stiffness that I couldn't see a reason why... I just forgot how to relax and use my muscles properly. It makes a big difference! Kind of like how the hearing impaired people need to have hearing therapy when they get new aids. The brain forgets how to listen. For our muscles, the brain forgets how to let them relax.

A friend recommended this to me after I had been incapacitated by back pain. I just woke up crippled by back pain one morning - the first time in my life. After weeks of doctors and little relief, I read the book and tried out the exercises. I immediately felt the benefits. The book is organized as first, a series of case studies, which the author uses to illustrate his theory of muscle amnesia, followed by a series of illustrated exercises with detailed instructions. Anyone reading this book should first read the case studies before doing the exercises. The author's objective is to help you reacquaint you with parts of your body that you have lost touch with - and therefore lost control of. He believes that much back and body pain is due to involuntary actions of muscle groups that we have forgotten how to control. By doing exercises and focusing on how they feel, we can regain sensation and control of our muscles. We can replace painful involuntary muscle actions with graceful voluntary ones. All I can say is, the exercises - and theory - helped me, and I do the short version of the exercises most days. The exercises are not strenuous or painful - they are pleasurable and relaxing, leaving you feeling invigorated.

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