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The true Walk

From heeling to healing

The dynamic Yoga GODO

Prevent Backaches and Postural Defects &
Things to know about Natural Walking

Translated from German
by Ruth Bleakley-Thiessen

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I dedicate this book to

Mic Dodge
THE BAREFOOT SENSEI
my brother in the wilderhood

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Introduction

Your first steps ... do you still remember them?

Or ... do you feel them within you?

Think about it!

It was the unique getting up and going out into the world ...

out ... up and run.

A ME opening itself to the world,

just rapturously traipsing out of yourself ...

weightless, completely indulged, saying, "Yees, yeess!" –

and then the first flops onto the floor, letting yourself be drawn up
again,

having become centred, out of and into everything that comes ...

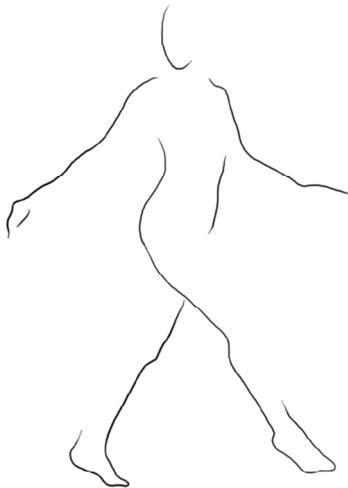
stays ... is,

and having vibrant willingness

for ever new ecstasies.



From heeling ...



... to healing.

Having founded the “Institute for applied Humane Morphology” in 1979 and the “GODO Walking School”, which is connected to it, I held countless workshops and lectures and trained seventy GODOLOGISTS, who are authorised to spread the message about GODO in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Italy, in the USA and most recently in Venezuela and Paraguay as well. My television appearance in 2001 in Germany with Alfred Biolek certainly whet the appetite of several million people within a short time for a new feeling of life.

Now this book has been published in the fifth edition in Germany. In 1974 I discovered that the human being is genetically a forefoot-walker: therefore, walking on the forefoot, the ball-gait, is our natural way of walking and not the commonly practised treading on the heel, which is held for normal.

From the medical side there has been no such awareness of this fact before, not to mention a name for it. The international medical field only knows the descriptions and terms of walking disorders. Therefore I had to give my discovery of the natural forefoot-gait an internationally valid name: GODO.

GODO has meanwhile become the topic of many holistic-thinking doctors and physiotherapists – and is even recognised as further education for medical doctors.

The source of GODO is neatly quoted in the physio-therapeutic dissertation of Mathias Hofbauer and in the GODO Training Manual from Dirk Beckmann as “simple ball-gait – natural gait”. As a fascia therapist, the latter applies the ball-gait to help people in pain to a better, more erect body structure. As he says, it is “the

more intelligent of these contemporaries”. Free-runners, retro-runners and barefoot-walkers also discovered the ball-gait with GODO and joyfully describe their reanimated body intelligence and agility.

In contrast, you can find clips about forefoot-runners, such as Professor Daniel E. Lieberman, practising barefoot-jogging through New York. He explains the gentle, physiologically efficient, softly cushioned step used exclusively for running/jogging. Doctrinally committed medical professionals like him weren't able to comprehend the logical conclusion up until now, that the ball-gait is our natural, inherent bipedal program for movement. This explains many injuries runners always get when they change over to forefoot running, being poorly trained without walking/striding on the forefoot.

By the way, in the German language, the meaning of “walking” (as in *gehen*) and “walking” (as in *laufen*) is continuously mixed-up in different areas. This book should finally clear the problem about the meaning of the term, and will take the proverbial “bandages off the eyes” of the dogmatically biased orthodox medical practitioners on the issue of the heel-walk. The program heel-walk, which we unfortunately seem to have installed into our heads, shoots consistent interfering patterns into our extra-pyramidal, genetically designed, natural motional patterns in walking or running. Perhaps even reflexively into our thoughts and the verbal expression thereof, which manifest as an imbalance of context. That could be the deeper reason that forefoot-runners, such as Dr Ulrich Strunz, Dr Matthias Marquardt, Dr Thomas Wessinghage or Professor Daniel Lieberman, still always mistreat themselves with the heel-walk.

My unreserved recognition is found only in whoever entirely stands his claim to GODO, for GODO isn't just a ball-gait. Whoever talks or writes about the ball-gait without mentioning the term GODO, or when a person doesn't quote my name together with GODO, withholds large parts of the scientific meaning of GODO and makes an unauthorised simplification of it, as well as being guilty of plagiarism in an exemption of the meaning of it. You find a lot of such imitators on the internet, who advertise themselves as therapists and amongst other things, selling shoes, and can be found under search-words like "forefoot-walking", "natural gait", "ball-walk" or "barefoot-walk".

Thankfully, a lot has changed since I first outed myself in public as the first discoverer of the scientifically proven fact that human beings are genetically inherent ball-gaiters. In the meantime I am pleased about the approval the ball-gait now experiences. Today reports of progress come in daily from forefoot-gaiters, who have encountered my message. They are happy about the disappearance of varicose veins; they report that they have never twisted their ankle again; after they discovered GODO, they suffered less from slipped discs and a lot of pain in the knee, hip and feet disappeared. All of them feel enriched and share their good experiences with others.

This book is the result of a consequent, interdisciplinary research, in which I followed my longing for an absolute body consciousness and the wish to understand my feet. At first I thought I had to use a lot of persuasion and sneer at the heel-walkers in order to startle them so that they would understand me. Now I know that we only need a small impulse to remember that we are ball-gaiters from the time of birth. So I have "polished" my book and expanded it with

various testimonies.

If you like, I'll take you on a journey with me, on which you can get to know your natural way of walking. You will remember your wholeness by striding naturally over the balls of the feet, which is common to all human beings. Perhaps you will get a new feeling for yourself, as so many GODO supporters have done. It is an exciting experience, an exciting journey – also to yourself. I cordially invite you to go on this journey. I wish you lots of joy and insights in reading this book, and naturally with GODO!

My Journey with GODO

*“Anybody who walks consciously and alertly,
not only discovers an exterior world,
but himself at the same time.”*

Markus Dederich:

In the order of the Body (In den Ordnungen des Leibes)

Let me take you on a journey of letting go an unnecessary, absurd practice of walking. Ever since we learnt to walk by imitation, we have wearily been practising it all over the whole world. It's about a silent revolt, overcoming a way of walking we have become accustomed to everywhere, it's about letting go in the ankle joint, which in German is called the “*Fessel*”, and can be translated as the “chain”. So it's all about breaking free from your chains, and liberating yourself.

By way of introduction here's a story I have for you:

I recently walked through a park and overtook, despite my unhurried pace, an approximately seventy-year-old woman who was walking arduously. She looked around several times, so that our eyes met dead on as I was level with her. I sensed that she wanted to smile back at me, but pain held her features captive, and in the same moment she was on the verge of falling over a small stone. Reflexively, I caught her upper arm, and both of us came to a halt. It sputtered out of her: “Thanks!” Her face relaxed. “Yes, I can still stand without pain, but you know, I have a heel spur and since getting the new hip I have the old sciatic pain now and again that everything started with. I've just come from physiotherapy and have to learn to properly roll off from the heel of my foot, and it's exactly

that which is extremely painful.”

I asked her if she walked at home without shoes.

“Yes, it’s all different there! I take tiny little steps, and then it’s okay. But I can’t walk about like that. What would it look like?!”

Now I had my cue. She already knew the solution! I didn’t need to recommend a new way of walking to her, instead I asked her just to walk as she did at home.

She looked around to see that no one was watching. We were alone – she scuttled on. I was hardly able to keep up with her, her movement was so in flow, and she began to giggle. “You see, but what does it look like?!” She had stopped herself already, and her features once again fell into pain.

“Become like a small child!” I heard a voice inside of me. And I began to tell her about GODO, the healthy gait of human beings.

Meanwhile we had reached the lawn beside the path. We had taken off our shoes and enjoyed the cool grass. We rolled off from the top of the foot (toes and ball) onto the heel – she had no pain any more. Her walk was like that of a queen again, and if you believe it or not: she looked twenty years younger!

If you also long for such a wonderful experience, then read on. I’m taking you on a journey to the source of your natural health and vitality.

Do you remember the first scuttling steps of your child? It ran quite easily over the balls of its feet to you. With its little arms upraised, it seemed to want to take off like an airplane. And do you also remember your fear watching your child losing balance and falling? You ran towards it or after it, quickly took it into your arms, and in doing so – unknowing of course and acting for its own best – unsettled it in its spontaneous, inbred, healthy, natural walk over the

balls of its feet, for small children live in the emotional protective shield of the mother and feel her uncertainty.

Seemingly effortlessly the little ones balance their large head on a stretched spine. We were born with a stretched spine. Up until the first steps walking on the heels it is bolt upright and for this reason maximally flexible in all of its joints. The small body achieved all movements skilfully and without effort. This is only possible because of an efficient genetic program of movement. It is born as a ball-gaiter. But from the first year of life, together with the acquisition of speech, it mutates by imitation to a heel-walker!

In fact we are all ball-gaiters. What we were never really conscious of, will be made conscious to us for the first time here in this book. It is the memory of an ancient right of birth, that has been forgotten for the last five million years.

The practical success of GODO lies in comprehensive rehabilitation and health care. In the process, GODO not only leads to superficial wellness and fitness, rather it goes as far as the depths of inner and outer ecology. GODO could enable us to let the world become a paradise again, simply by admitting to ourselves what we actually are, namely ball-gaiters.

Today ninety-nine per cent of all people walk through life on their heels. We have become accustomed to imitating walking the wrong way. We march with a thrust of the heel onto the earth. We abuse our feet and all of our joints with an inefficient landing on the heel, and suffer the consequences of this self-abuse with bad posture and pain.

What we do to ourselves with every step on the heel not only has an impact on the body, mind and soul, but also on our social reality. Love your neighbour as you love yourself. The quality of the love you have for yourself is the level on which you are able to love others. The heel-walk is a lie of movement, the effects of which are more alarming and worldwide important than we can sense. Kicking our ass in every step is desensitising ourselves to a degree we had better become conscious of, before we can begin to realise the effects of it. Currently we are confronted with xenophobia (racism and hatred of foreigners), which could also be generalised as the fascism in each of us. Who's kicking me in the behind? In French it's called: I'm madly annoyed = *je suis faché*. In German it can be translated as: I am sour. Are not all heel-walkers necessarily tending to be *faché* in the depth of their unconsciousness?

For me, this book is about more than just criticism on the shoe industry, which wants to sell us wellness-barefoot-walking with capping (cages in front of the feet), heels (shots), pads and cushions for the heels, arch supports, and since 1996, rolling, round shoes. In reality we are buying “artificial limbs” for ourselves and then we ask ourselves why we get postural deformities, back pain, circulation problems, vein complaints and the foot complaints already mentioned. All that is being *faché*, is like feeling sick. But as every one of us is harming himself the same way with the heel-walk, we are all living in a mad house, where the doctor has lost the key.

Prostheses are only needed when we have to restore a lost function. Every application of prostheses on a healthy body leads to the suppression and the loss of functions. So, what are we doing to ourselves here?!

As a doctor and a humane morphologist (human gestalt investigator), during many years of experience in my practice, I watched and researched the walking performance of my patients. The practice of walking on the heel creates jolting which reaches up into the skull.

FIRST SCIENTIFIC PROOF:

An impressive phrasing of that which we require as scientific proof is provided by Jutta Voss in her book “*Das Schwarzmond-Tabu*” (The Black Moon Taboo):

“I owe everything to “looking”, which in Buddhism is an essential exercise of meditation, that also includes the empirical aspect of the repeatable. [...] Looking is the foundation of knowledge. The knowledge of wisdom is impossible without looking at inquiry. All knowledge has its origin in looking at reality, how it is and how it essentially is.”

With a practical exercise, you can easily become aware of what the heel-walk does to you: put your fingers into your ears and walk ten to twenty steps quickly in your normal manner. In doing so, listen inside yourself! Did you hear it, this tock-tock-tock? You have herewith given yourself scientific proof, repeatable at any time (see the chapter on “The Gestures of the Heel-walk”).

I came to the conclusion that in the way people walk – that is to say: upright-walking, we should first of all bring the forefoot to the ground with each step, in order to then sink the heel down. In this

way we touch the earth feather-light and save ourselves from the shock in our spine up into our head. So it's exactly the opposite of all the orthopaedic recommendations!

Eighty-five per cent of our fellow citizens suffer from complaints of poor posture. That's no wonder, because already eighty-five per cent of preschool children (!) show severe postural deformities.

Frequent illnesses resulting from these postural deformities are common to a large extent, with pain in the bones, joints and muscles. How many of us haven't at some time already had hollow feet, splayfeet, flatfeet or abducted feet pointed out by a doctor, if we complained about some pain in the feet, knees, hips or back? Many were prescribed insoles or were at least recommended them. How often were they of no help, or provided only temporary relief? Usually you were simply encouraged to believe that you brought an inherited disposition with you when you came into the world, which could get worse over the years.

Due to foot-beds and insoles, that the shoe industry promotes as "supporting, carrying, or holding" the foot, we are spoon-fed out of our shoes and on top of it debilitated with shoes which are too narrow and too firm. On the other hand, as the saying goes: bullied around. In comparison to this GODO, or the art of the ball-gait, treading, is the ideal way to get strong, "awakened" feet. This has been demonstrated to us up until now by many people practising GODO.

The muscles in our forefoot send signals to the brain and after that on to the whole body, about how it can straighten up in perfect, self-regulating balance. All of our intrinsic muscles, which lie close

around the spine, cater for an elastic straightening and a self-confident, self-assured stance. The muscles in our forefoot signal the state of the ground to us when stepping sensitively. The “awakened” feet make us attentive to ourselves, so that we can avoid and counterbalance possible poor postures as early as the origin of the root cause.

When we humans are happy, when we express pleasure, don't we lift ourselves all on our own up onto the forefoot – or as we call it: the balls of the feet? As in dancing, we feel light, and a feeling of well-being flows through us. With the ball-gait, the whole body stretches itself. We breathe more freely; we have the feeling of breathing with the whole body, and our feeling of healthy self-worth becomes considerably stronger.

We all suspect that there is something going “wrong” with us, and everyone asks: “How's it going?” To make matters worse, the doctors recommend the so-called “proper rolling off” to us. This rolling off is probably the most dangerous medical dogma. It commits us all to heel-walking. (A dogma is an unproven accepted claim, a belief with the demand of implicit importance. With Jutta Voss it sounds like this: “[...] unquestionable and specified as the only valid truth since the beginning of the world [...]. It is imperative to believe in it, no matter if experience and knowledge show the opposite.”)

Having found a name that can be understood globally for the retrieved fact that we are genetically set up as ball-gaiters, I came upon the pun GODO. It consists of the syllables GO and DO. GO is the name of the oldest game in the world; it comes from Japan and means “**through playing to awareness**”. DO as in “Aikido” or

“Judo” means “the road”. In English “go, do” is the request: “Go and do! Move and act!”

With that we mean: **“Walk the road consciously!”**

In Italian “godo” means: “I enjoy”. As in “*mi godo la vita*” – “I enjoy life”.

And since Samuel Beckett’s play *Waiting for Godot*(t) are we not all waiting? There, in similar form, it’s repeatedly called:

Estragon: *Allons-nous-en. Come, we’re going.*

Vladimir: *On ne peut pas. We can’t.*

Estragon: *Pourquoi? Why?*

Vladimir: *On attend Godot. We’re waiting on Godot.*

Or somewhat further into the play:

Estragon: *Et s’il vient? And if he comes?*

Vladimir: *Nous serons sauvés. Then we are saved.*

It’s an interesting visionary statement which Beckett made there in the second half of the year 1945, when he wrote that piece.

GODO teaches us how we can properly walk upright over the balls of the feet. In doing so, a harmonic sequence of motion is developed, which produces these following gestures:

resting

wanting

thanking/thinking

feeling

coming to rest