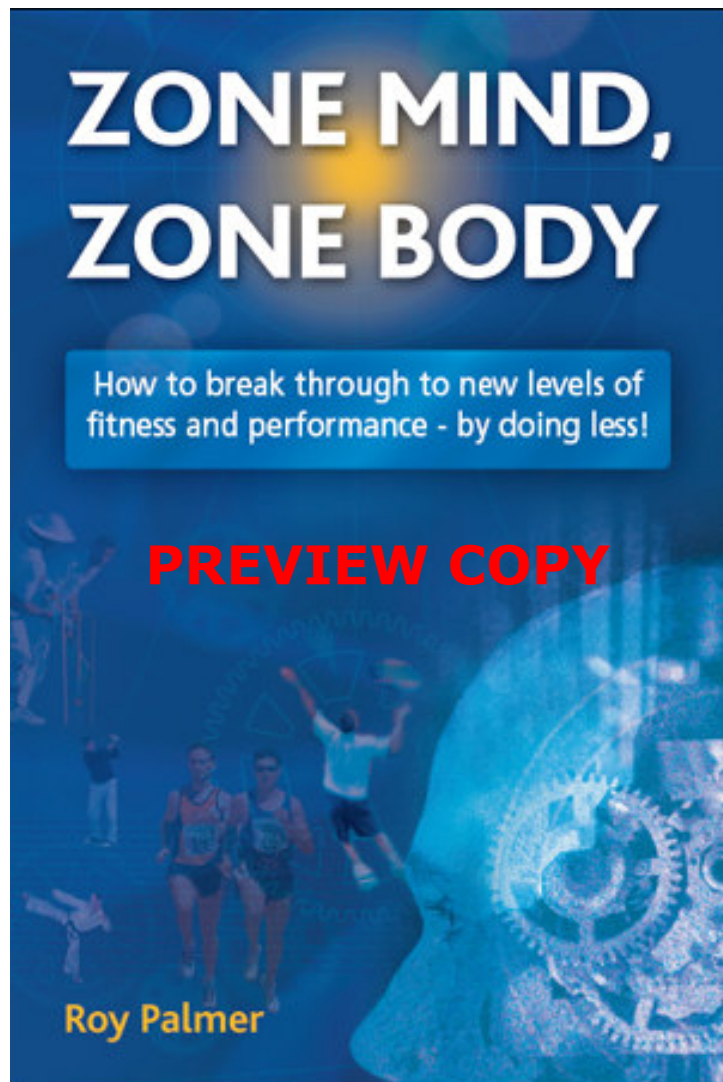


ZONE MIND, ZONE BODY



ZONE MIND, ZONE BODY

How to breakthrough to new levels of fitness and performance - by doing less!

Roy Palmer

ZONE MIND, ZONE BODY

Author: Roy Palmer MSTAT

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A Word From The Author



Thank you for downloading this preview copy of my book. I would like to stress at this point that this is not your usual fitness, or even sports psychology book. It is about improving performance and fitness but not in the conventional way. I have to admit to being a little apprehensive about how such a radical book would be accepted, as I do not hold back in what I think about many of the popular training methods. But so far the response has been very encouraging with people from all sports and abilities contacting me to say how much they appreciate the refreshing and different approach of the techniques in this book.

On reflection I perhaps should have chosen a different sub-title because ‘how to breakthrough to new levels of fitness and performance by doing less’ could be interpreted that I want you to sit down in front of the TV and do nothing! Of course this is not what you want to do because you will enjoy your training and it’s certainly not my intention. The ‘doing less’ bit relates to removing all of the unnecessary, injury-inducing, performance limiting ‘muscle habits’ that most adults have unknowingly developed. You are probably familiar with the term ‘less is more’ - well this is the principle I apply in my book. In other words train efficiently and you will train for longer and get far better results from your efforts.

I hope, after reading this preview copy, you choose to buy the book. **I would like you to experience the same thrilling sensation that I got when I found a way to take the brake off and just let my movement flow.** My sport took on a whole new meaning ten years ago and I continue to experience the pure joy of movement every day! [Read my interview with Norm Goldman](#)

Roy Palmer

What You Will Get From Reading This Book

You're about to learn how to achieve an unprecedented leap in sports performance - with less physical effort than you've known before...

- Are you frustrated by an apparent ceiling on your performance in sport?
- Do recurring injuries leave you feeling disillusioned and about to give up?
- Have you changed one sport because of injury, only to develop new injuries in the next?

There's a big problem with fitness training.

The more you train, the more you reinforce your habits. The more you reinforce your habits, the more you stay at one level. The more you stay at that level, the more frustrated you get.

And if your unconscious habits are causing you injury, the more you'll repeat the same injury over and over again.

So you work harder to overcome the injury.

And you train harder to improve your performance.

And time after time you come up against the same limits in performance.

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continued on next page.....

Zone Mind, Zone Body outlines practical techniques to help you:

- protect yourself against injury for good
- let go of the unconscious habits that hold you back
- overcome the perception that poor performance is about age or lack of fitness

Have you ever achieved the performance of your life while experiencing the feeling that it was effortless? And can you repeat that peak performance whenever you want?

If not, what's holding you back?

In *Zone Mind, Zone Body* Roy Palmer shares his first-hand experience of conventional sports training and repetitive injury, and takes the reader on a journey beyond those limits. He shows how to break through to a place of previously unattainable levels of performance - achieved at will - by being 'in the moment' or 'in the zone'. He outlines how the same techniques can transform not only your sport, but your well-being in every other area of your life, too.

The results are instant

Zone Mind, Zone Body explores an experience of movement that allows you to rediscover 'the zone' *whenever* you choose. It's the most powerful addition to any sportsperson's toolkit. It highlights how to:

- release tension and reduce effort
- improve your form and take your sport to a higher level
- discover greater achievement with relative ease

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- observe and think *before* you act

It's not about putting in more effort by consciously running faster, batting harder or teeing off with more determination. It's about a subtle, gentle shift in your *thinking* - one that empowers you to really notice what you're doing, and then to let go of the brake.

Roy Palmer turns scientific research into practical, easy steps to help you achieve an astounding and radical shift in performance. And the only disconcerting thing you'll feel is how you can make such remarkable strides in performance with such little effort.



“This book took me 17,500ft up to Everest Base Camp, when previously my knees had been too painful for even half an hour’s gentle hill-walking.”

Angela Sherman at Base Camp

Foreword

Frederick Matthias Alexander discovered the link between thought and tension in the body. By changing the way he thought while carrying out certain actions he was able to improve his performance and, subsequently, the performance of those whom he taught.

Roy Palmer in his book Zone Mind, Zone Body explains in a straightforward and entertaining manner how anyone can improve their performance by understanding that their intention and their thought processes can either hinder or help their performance.

Zone Mind, Zone Body will show the professional athlete, or the weekend warrior, that working harder is not necessarily the best solution to any problem. By changing the thought process and the understanding of what constitutes efficient movement, performance can be improved almost instantaneously.

This book will be a very useful addition to the tool kit of any coach or performer.

Greg Chappell MBE - Former Australian Cricket Captain and current Indian National Cricket Coach

Introduction

Have you ever achieved the performance of your life while experiencing the feeling that it was effortless? That everything you tried worked to perfection? If you have experienced this, you were in The Zone.

The Zone has achieved mystical status in the world of sport and it is not surprising to see why. It's a paradox. How can a peak performance be achieved with such little perceived effort? Surely if we are working at the very limits of our ability it should be hard work and not feel like a stroll in the park?

This book looks at what may be happening when we are in The Zone, and why experiencing it remains both a rare and unpredictable occurrence - and for many, completely unobtainable. Accounts from athletes, combined with studies conducted on the subject, not only give us vital clues to what this mysterious state is; but more importantly, they may show us how to get there more often.

The procedures in this book will give you a totally different sensation of movement and show you how to take control of previously hidden factors influencing your performance. The methods I use are based on The Alexander Technique, the world-renowned system for developing what I call *intelligence in action*. My hope is that by creating a subtle shift in your thinking, you will be able to recognise aspects of your training that may be keeping you *out* of The Zone.

This book is the result of ten years of experimenting, observing and applying the Alexander principles to my own sports of martial arts and running and also working with sports people in other fields. One surprising fact I have observed during this time is that, regardless of ability or experience, many people use their bodies in a way that interferes with their natural coordination. The procedures here will help you identify whether or not this is true for you. I am

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not going to use exercises in the usual accepted sense, because I believe they serve only to encourage the sort of habits that cause this and ultimately keep you out of The Zone. Besides, how many more types of exercise do we need to learn? Do we really benefit from doing all these actions that have little in common with those of our sport, or, for that matter everyday *natural* movements?

In addition to identifying habits that may be holding you back, my procedures can also help you to understand what it is that makes you good at what you do. You may have a 'natural talent' for your sport but if you are not consciously aware of which attributes give you this ability, what happens if injury intervenes? It is common for athletes to struggle to recover form after injury because if they don't know what enabled them to achieve that form in the first place. How do they get it back?

I believe conventional methods of sports training and exercise, in which we have placed our trust entirely, could be preventing the essential balanced state necessary for entering The Zone. I propose it is time to move on from the view that performance can be improved by simply trying harder or spending a high proportion of valuable training time on exercise drills. Instead, we need to develop a more creative, mindful approach to our training. Ask most athletes how they entered The Zone and you will get a shrug of the shoulders. Is this not evidence that, even at the top level, there is still an element of the unknown in relation to human activity?

Perhaps the way to The Zone lies in developing our skills of self-awareness above and beyond our current ability. A departure from current ideas may allow us to discover new areas of previously untapped resources that would give us more control over our performance, leaving less to chance or circumstances beyond our current understanding. The skills you can learn from this book can be applied to any activity - adding a vital new resource to your existing abilities.

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If you are used to vigorous forms of training then at first this way may seem a little pedestrian. However, if you can suspend judgment for the duration of this book you may find that this subtle, yet powerful approach is one of the best ways to focus and enhance your performance.

Marc Salem, Professor of Psychology, offers some very useful advice to all of us: **“Minds are like parachutes; they only work when they are open”**.

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"This book will be a very useful addition to the tool kit of any coach or performer."

Greg Chappell MBE, Former Australian Cricket Captain and current Indian National Cricket Coach

No doubt you've experienced times in your sport when you feel 'in the moment' or 'in the Zone'. Achieving peak performance seems easy. But when we lose that state we once again find ourselves putting in a lot of effort for little gain. This book shows us how we can rediscovers the elusive Zone whenever we choose – by using our mind as well as our body.

We build up bad habits based on what feels 'right' to us, even if we're not consciously aware of it. But it is these habits that hold us back and lead to inconsistent performance and repetitive injury. By pausing to notice what we're doing, *before* we do it, we can enter the Zone at will, achieving previously unattainable levels of performance.

Roy Palmer takes us into the unknown, past what has always felt comfortable for us. He helps us define the Zone, examines what stops us reaching it and describes techniques for turning things around when they go 'wrong'. He then translates the latest scientific research into practical and easy steps for overcoming poor performance, frustration and disillusionment.

Sharing his first-hand experiences, he shows how we can leave injury behind for good, develop greater self-awareness and focus, and apply the same techniques in many other areas of our lives, too.

"In this terrific book Roy Palmer succeeds where many have failed: namely to talk about 'the zone' coherently, elegantly and best of all practically."

Malcom Balk, author of Master The Art of Running



Roy is a qualified teacher of the Alexander Technique. He is also a runner, cricket coach and martial artist, and currently lives in Bedfordshire, UK, with his wife and two young children.



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Got A Question?



I appreciate that my views on fitness and training may differ from the conventional approach. If there is anything in this book that you would like me to clarify or you strongly disagree with, please do not hesitate to [email me](#) with your question or point of view.

(Feature available with the ebook version)

Reviews and feedback

"This book will be a very useful addition to the tool kit of any coach or performer." **Greg Chappell MBE, Former Australian Cricket Captain and current Indian National Team Coach**

"In this terrific book Roy Palmer succeeds where many have failed: namely to talk about 'the zone' coherently, elegantly and best of all practically."
Malcolm Balk, author of Master The Art of Running

[Read Norm Goldman's in depth review here](#)

★★★★★ **Great book for runners.. or any other sport!**

If you have been in the Zone you will know just how satisfying it is - nothing else matters because you feel great! This book not only explains what the zone is, but more importantly for any sports person, it has some very easy techniques to use to get there. I read the whole book in two sessions as I could not put it down!

Tim Poulter, veteran runner.

★★★★★ **A book for anyone serious about their sport.**

"I have just finished your book and had to give you feedback. I thought it was excellent. I don't think anyone could fail to get something out of it. It belongs on the shelf beside any book, sporting or medical/philosophical that has the intelligence to recognise the mind-body connection in full. How much better we would all do if we applied it to the whole of our lives. It makes such perfect sense." **Wendy Goodman, rower and acupuncturist, UK**

★★★★★ **Thank you so much for your insightful ideas!**

I am particularly interested in the evolutionary origins of this phenomenon, and I think your remark that this phenomenon has to do with the survival strategy of our ancestors is very promising. Thank you very much again for your excellent book and insightful ideas!

Joseph Jordania, The University of Melbourne

★★★★★ **A fascinating account...**

"A fascinating account of how to enter The Zone through by consciously harnessing the resources and wisdom of the bodymind. This is a very useful book for all people who are committed to total health and sports performance."

Dr Mark Atkinson, Integrated Medical Doctor

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About The Author



Runner, cricket coach, martial artist and published author, Roy Palmer has over 25 years experience in competitive sport and has spent the last 10 studying performance enhancement. Like many of us, he often had annoying injury problems, coupled with backache and fatigue, but thought they were just 'normal'. Until, that is, he realised he was actually causing them himself. Conventional therapies would work temporarily but only as long as it took for him to repeat the same injury-causing habit.

After developing better movement through the Alexander Technique, he began to enjoy sport again and gave up a career in telecommunications to complete his three-year full-time training to teach the Technique. He now achieves greater performance in his own sports than he did 10 years ago!

Roy works with people in many different sports and activities. He is an active contributor to regular sports forums around the world, including Greg Chappell's Cricket Academy. He also applies his knowledge to help children with learning difficulties, challenges with handwriting and co-ordination, behavioural problems and dyslexia.

Roy is available for one-to-one sessions, group workshops and bespoke corporate programmes.

My experience of The Alexander Technique

One of my ambitions in my late teens was to run a marathon and for many months my life revolved around achieving it, to the extent of overlooking one vital aspect that seemed so obvious with hindsight. I followed a strict diet and training timetable but made one big mistake - I neglected to assess my running technique because in common with most people I assumed I knew how to run.

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Each day on returning from work I would put on my running kit, warm-up and head off for my run. I eventually achieved my ambition by finishing a marathon in 1984 but not before aggravating a condition that would frustrate me for the next ten years. Shortly after the marathon I began to experience back pain whilst running which became gradually worse until I felt some level of discomfort in most of my activities.

At the time I blamed running so I promptly gave up and moved onto martial arts to satisfy my need for physical activity and competitive sport. I consulted a fitness coach and took advice on exercises to improve my condition. For a while this seemed to help but as I progressed in karate I began to experience difficulties again. The decision to change sport turned out to be misguided as the culprit was not the running itself, but how I ran. This problem was waiting to happen and existed before I began training. The build up to the marathon accelerated the condition due to more vigorous activity, changing my sport was not going to solve this problem as this time it was how I applied myself to karate.

For my back pain I received treatment from an osteopath on a weekly basis for about six months. The benefits would last for several days before the aches and pains returned. I went on to consult a physical therapist and chiropractor with much the same result. Thanks to the treatment I received from these therapists I gained a welcome relief from my symptoms but the cause of my problem was a little closer to home - it was me! As soon as I left the treatment room I began to undo the results achieved by the therapist as I resorted to my usual harmful habits. I also had been using these habits to do the exercises as advised by my fitness coach - serving only to re-enforce the poor habits.

After a number of years of this cycle I had reached the point of being prepared to try anything and this is how I came to hear about The Alexander Technique. I read an article in a newspaper and was intrigued by what it had to say. I promptly found a teacher in my area and booked a course of lessons. Soon after

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starting I began to appreciate the different approach required to address my predicament: instead of complaining of my back hurting me I began to ask ‘what am I doing with myself to cause this pain?’ Later I came to realise that the back pain itself was just a symptom of a more fundamental problem - I had lost the ability of natural movement partly due to, paradoxically, my preoccupation with exercise and sport. Whilst I had thrown myself into every new sport with enthusiasm and vigour I had not considered whether I knew how to ‘use’ my body well enough to be able to do this. This had not been assessed by my fitness coach who could only assess whether I performed the exercises correctly but not how I moved generally. Participation in a new sport put additional stress onto my body as I continued to use myself badly whilst attempting different or more complex techniques.

An added complication was that the more I used myself in this way, the worse my condition became, as my movement deteriorated through repetition of poorly executed moves. Each training session helped only to consolidate the habits that were at the route of the problem. In short I became more proficient at moving badly and was totally oblivious to the degradation until the pain began.

Through Alexander lessons I began to unlearn bad habits and eventually returned to running and started again. I began to appreciate my teacher as an expert fitness coach able to assess my performance and make changes at the most fundamental level.

For the last ten years I have continued to experiment with The Alexander Technique and fitness and found just how much can be achieved by first learning how to do less and not more. It has opened up a whole new perspective to how I approach my training and fulfil my role as a fitness coach by adding some much needed intelligence!