

Working with Sinkers

We are speaking here of the big boys, those large, heavy men who form a substantial portion of our clientele. Properly floated, they are not difficult to hold up, but it will still be hard to a) move them laterally, b) reach from the head to their knees, and c) fold them together. Here are some tips:

1. **Use flotation devices.** “Why can’t a man float more like a woman?” we ponder. The floats of choice are made of neoprene (wetsuit material) with Velcro strips and can be cut to different widths. They wrap around the thighs, calves, ankles or even the neck and waist to fine tune partner’s buoyancy. The “noodle”, in vogue in pools everywhere, can serve as a “Third Arm” supporting under one or both knees. With either kind of float, the sensory nerves adapt in a few minutes and the receiver is no longer aware of their presence. They allow us to completely relinquish support and stroll down to the feet to massage them, for instance.
2. **Move slowly** so as not to strain your back.
3. **Keep it simple:** we don’t tire ourselves, moving out of uncomfortable positions sooner rather than later.
4. As the arm supporting the pelvis in 1st Position tires, **shift it to under the knees**, drawing the legs closer in, compacting the body’s mass and allowing the hips to drop comfortably down.
5. When in the folded up Accordion position described above, **shift the entire body sideways** so partner’s hips are in front of our navel instead of off to the side.
6. **Hold the body snug** whenever possible.
7. In Stillness and Undulating Spine, **brace the elbow** of the arm supporting the hips against your side to more directly and powerfully transmit the force from your trunk to partner..
8. **Drape partner’s legs over your own legs** as in the Open Saddle or Side Saddle. Easier on the back.
9. In rotations and weight shifts **generate the force from your legs.**

10. ***Cut short rotations*** a bit, so that in the difficult moment of direction change partner's mass does not continue further than expected and put you in a position with your spine twisted.
11. ***Travel partner quickly*** through the water in transitions if possible. This keeps sinker legs off the bottom and sustains the lower back within an acceptable range of extension.
12. Don't hesitate to ***use your own thigh*** in transitions to provide support.

Working with Motion Sensitivity

A significant proportion of the people who come to us, perhaps one in ten, is sensitive to movement. These are the ones who become dizzy or nauseous in boats, cars, Ferris wheels, and aquatic sessions. Asking about this tendency must be part of every pre-session intake. Here is how we deal with it:

- 1) Offer ginger tea without sugar just before the session.
- 2) Recommend for use during the session those Shiatsu wrist bands that press a plastic knob onto Pericardium 6, two body inches proximal to the wrist crease.
- 3) Request that partner let you know immediately in the event of dizziness or nausea.
- 4) Keep the pool quiet and dim the lights.
- 5) Suggest that partner keep the eyes open initially.
- 6) Work upright initially, then gradually lay partner out in the water horizontally.
- 7) Watch for sudden flushing or paleness of the skin, and any sudden change in respiration.
- 8) Use a firm hold.
- 9) Keep movements small and slow.
- 10) Move linearly; avoid curved movements.
- 11) Roll the head from side to side? No, no, no.
- 12) If the person reports they feel uncomfortable and are about to throw up, quickly do the following in this order: a) bring them upright; b) tell them to open the eyes and breathe deeply; c) bring them to the side of the pool where you keep a bucket; d) put the feet on the ground; e) press Governing Vessel 20 (that indentation just behind the crown), Pericardium 6 and 8, and Stomach 36.

Some receivers report that they become so relaxed in a Watsu that their sensitivity doesn't surface, so wait and see what happens. In general, though, plan on giving a session with very little movement, emphasizing nurture and bodywork, instead. If your receiver should vomit, it isn't necessarily a bad thing. The gag reflex may activate as part of an emotional process, rejecting what was "swallowed" unwillingly in the past.