

**The Nine Essentials of  
ABM & NeuroMovement®**

*Daily Tools to Overcome Pain  
and Increase Your Flexibility,  
Strength, Creativity, and Vitality*

[www.anatbanielmethod.com](http://www.anatbanielmethod.com)



*Movement is the language of the brain. —Anat Baniel*

## What Is NeuroMovement?

NeuroMovement® is a holistic approach to human functioning and action, based in the understanding that movement is the language of the brain. Movement provides information the brain needs to grow and organize itself. And, in return, the brain organizes all movement, thought, feelings, and action.

Movement includes not only movement of the body in space—the movement of the skeleton and muscles—but also the movement of thinking, emotion, and feelings. All action involves movement in all aspects of the self.

## The Brain Is a Self-Organizing Information System

In NeuroMovement, the brain is understood to be a self-organizing information system with mind and body integrated at all times. It gets formed and apprenticed holistically through its experiences of all aspects of movement.

Children are born to be amazing learning machines—their brains growing and forming at a staggering rate of 1,800,000 new connections per second.

In early infancy, movements are random and involuntary for the most part, yet these experiences feed the brain with information it uses to form recognizable patterns and to organize and control all dimensions of movement.

The science of brain plasticity shows how, under the right conditions, the adult brain can also restructure itself in remarkable ways. Even the birth of new brain cells can occur in adults, as well as children, something believed impossible not too long ago.

**The human brain is incredibly plastic—it changes itself extremely rapidly through its experiences of movement throughout life.**

## The Nine Essentials of the Anat Baniel Method (ABM) Transform Your Life through NeuroMovement®

### 1 – Movement with Attention

**Bring attention** to what you *feel* as you **move**. Your brain will immediately start building billions of new neurological connections to help you change, learn, and transform.

### 2 – Slow

**Slow way down** to learn new skills and overcome limitations. Fast you can only do what you already know. Slow stimulates the formation of rich new neural patterns.

### 3 – Variation

**Introduce variation and playfulness** into everything you do. Your brain will get the information it needs to create new possibilities in movements, thoughts, and actions.

### 4 – Subtlety

**Reduce the force** with which you move, think, and act. Developing greater sensitivity will enhance your brain's ability to perceive the finest of differences.

### 5 – Enthusiasm

**Practice enthusiasm** in your daily life. Enthusiasm tells your brain what is important to you, amplifying whatever that is and infusing it with energy to grow more.

### 6 – Flexible Goals

Know your goals and **embrace all the unexpected steps, mis-steps, and re-routes** along the way. These are a rich source of valuable information for your brain.

### 7 – The Learning Switch

For the brain to properly do its job, the learning switch needs to be turned ON. **Expect that you will do, think, or learn something new** in each situation, even familiar ones.

### 8 – Imagination & Dreams

**Imagine how** to carry out your tasks and **dream up as many possibilities** as you can. Imagination & dreams guide your brain to continue growing and developing.

### 9 – Awareness

**Become aware** of what you are doing, sensing, thinking, and experiencing **at any given moment**. When you are *awaring*, your brain is working at its highest level.

## The Nine Essentials Wake Up Your Brain

The Nine Essentials form the core of the [NeuroMovement® approach of the Anat Baniel Method®](#).

Each of the Nine Essentials describes one of the brain's requirements for waking up and doing its job well. Each Essential helps the brain create new connections to overcome pain and limitation, thus reaching new levels of physical, emotional, and cognitive performance.

**The Nine Essentials offer you concrete, effective, and immediate ways to easily tap into your brain's enormous potential.**

## The Nine Essentials Are Validated by Neuroscience

The Nine Essentials are validated by modern science's latest discoveries in the area of [brain plasticity](#)—the brain's ability to change and grow new neurological pathways and connections throughout life.

View the [research that supports the NeuroMovement principles of the Nine Essentials](#) of the Anat Baniel Method.



*With the Essentials, the brain becomes a brilliant problem solver, leading to breakthroughs in movement, pain relief, and performance.*

—Anat Baniel

## Essential 1 – Movement with Attention

Movement is Life. Movement helps the brain grow and form. The brain is organized through movement. In turn, it is the brain that organizes all movement: the movement of your body, your thinking, your feelings, and your emotions.

But movement alone is not enough. Automatic movement—movement done without attention—only grooves in the already existing patterns.

When you bring attention to what you *feel* as you move, the brain immediately starts building billions of new neurological connections that usher in changes, learning, and transformation.

NeuroMovement Tip  
1st Essential  
Movement With Attention:  
So what do you pay attention to?

**NeuroMovement Tip – Movement with Attention:**

No matter what movement you do, your spine is always a part of this movement. So, begin by paying attention to what you feel is moving or not moving in your spine.

As you notice more and get better at being able to feel your spine as you move, you can also guide your movement with your intention. Guide different parts of your spine to wake up and become a part of your movement.

By focusing on your spine, as you move with attention, you will most likely feel an immediate improvement in the movement of your arms and legs, as well as improvement in your breathing.

Try this tip on a daily basis and feel the changes in how you move!



*Movement is life; without movement life is unthinkable.*

—Dr. Moshé Feldenkrais

## Essential 2 – Slow

To learn and master new skills and overcome limitation, the first thing to do is slow way down. Slow actually gets the brain's attention and stimulates the formation of rich new neural patterns.

Slow gets you out of the automatic mode in your movements, speech, thoughts, and social interactions.

**SLOW lets you feel and experience life at a deeper, more profound level.**



### NeuroMovement Tip – Slow:

Did you know that by going fast, you can only do what you already know? Your brain has no choice but to go on automatic and use the most deeply ingrained existing patterns.

A powerful way to wake up your brain is to take a few minutes a day, a few times a day, to SLOW down whatever it is that you are doing.

For example, when doing the dishes, move your hand very slowly as you rinse a plate, feel the water running on your hand, feel how your shoulders and back are moving as your arm moves. Place the plate in the dishwasher very slowly. Then, go back to rinsing the dishes as you normally do.

Feel whether anything feels different, lighter, if certain tensions have left your body. Perhaps you are breathing easier. This is how quickly and powerfully the brain changes when you feel your own movements and actions.

You can slow down any activity. SLOW amplifies your experiences and intensifies what you feel. SLOW gets the brain's attention, increasing its activity and forming new patterns.



*Fast, we can only do what we already know. —Anat Baniel*

### Essential 3 – Variation

Variation is everywhere, and is more than just the spice of life. It's a necessity for optimum health.

Variation provides your brain with the richness of information it needs to create new possibilities in your movements, feelings, thoughts, and actions. It helps increase your awareness and lifts you out of rigidity and being stuck.

**By introducing variation and playfulness into everything you do, you awaken all your senses.  
New ideas occur and new possibilities emerge in your life.**

NeuroMovement Tip

3rd Essential

Variation:

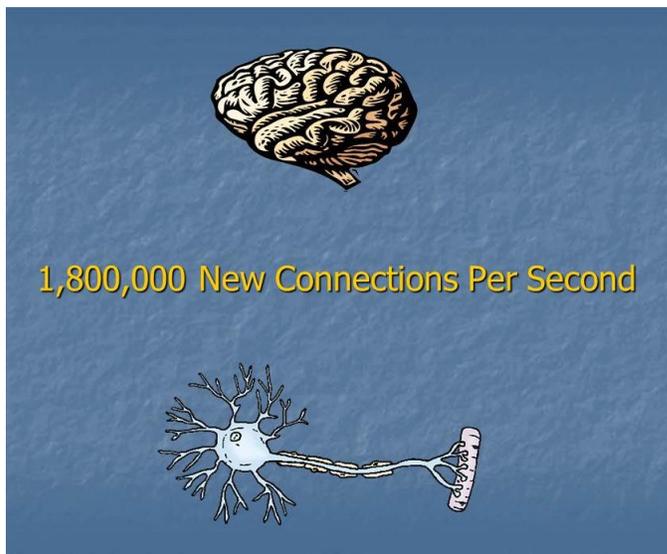
*It is the spice of life!*

### NeuroMovement Tip – Variation:

Brain research has shown that variation increases synapses in the brain. Variation is essential for you to continue to improve, for your brain to grow, and for you to be fully alive.

One of the best and easiest ways to integrate the Variation Essential is to take your daily habits and do them just a bit differently. If you always get up on the left side of the bed, get up on the right side. If you normally put your sock on the left foot first, put it on the right one first. Brush your teeth with your other hand. And, vary the order of how you brush. Chew your food on the opposite side from the side you most often chew on.

You can add this kind of variation to almost everything you do. When you do these variations, it will feel awkward, perhaps even peculiar, at first. This is good, because it means that you are waking up your brain, and creating new patterns and connections. Try it and see what happens!



### DID YOU KNOW?

Children are born to be amazing learning machines. Their brains grow at the staggering rate of 1,800,000 new connections per second.

### Essential 4 – Subtlety

We have all heard the expressions “no pain, no gain” and “try harder.” However, in order to overcome pain and limitation and thrive, the brain needs the exact opposite—*less force*.

For the brain to receive new information, it needs to perceive differences.

**By reducing the force with which you move and think, you increase your sensitivity.**

With the resulting increased sensitivity, you greatly enhance your brain's ability to perceive the finest of differences. These perceptions give the brain the new information it needs to organize successful action and become more alive and vital in both body and mind.

NeuroMovement Tip  
4th Essential  
Subtlety:  
Experience the power of gentleness.

**NeuroMovement Tip – Subtlety:**

The Subtlety Essential is easy to practice anywhere. The next time you pick up a knife to cut your food, notice whether or not you can reduce the force with which you hold the knife. Then try using a lot of force, a little force, and then the correct amount of force as you cut your food. Determine the most efficient amount of force for you. By simply using no more force than what is needed, your body will relax and you will have more energy left over at the end of the day.

You can do this same type of exercise when you are vacuuming, holding the steering wheel as you drive, or exercising in the gym. You will gain the ability to feel subtler and subtler differences.

As you reduce your force, you will experience the power of gentleness. You will reduce your aches and pains, become attuned to what you are doing in the moment, and awaken your vitality.



*The brain generates new information through the perception of differences.*

—Anat Baniel

## Essential 5 – Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is self-generated; it is a skill you can develop, choose to do and become good at.

Enthusiasm tells your brain what is important to you, amplifying whatever that is, making it stand out, infusing it with energy to grow more. It is a powerful energy that lifts you up and inspires you and others.

Enthusiasm lights up your brain, helping to usher in changes, transforming the most mundane situation or task, adding meaning and generating delight.

**Enthusiasm helps make the impossible possible.**



### NeuroMovement Tip – Enthusiasm:

Did you know that enthusiasm is an action that you can perform intentionally? Enthusiasm is not just a feel-good technique, but also a skill to be developed. Enthusiasm tells your brain that this is important and gives your brain the message to make sure to create and deepen these connections.

Find three things in your daily life today to be enthusiastic about! Find little things, such as the rich flavors of your food, the cashier that was quick to help you check out, or the beautiful weather on your walk.

In adulthood, enthusiasm is a choice. Like the other Essentials, it is also a learned skill, one that gets better the more you practice it. Enthusiasm is a way to make the impossible possible. With enthusiasm, experience yourself coming to life, full of energy and vitality!

## Essential 6 – Flexible Goals

“Keeping your eyes on the prize” is a great way for most people to fail. Freeing yourself from the compulsion to achieve a goal in a certain way and at a certain time keeps you open-minded. You are available to recognize opportunities you might never have noticed had you been fixed on a too rigidly set course.

There is no way to know in advance the path that will lead you to achieving your goal.

Know your goal and embrace all the unexpected steps, mis-steps, and re-routes. They are a rich source of valuable information for your brain to lead you to your goal.

**Flexible goals will reduce your anxiety and increase your creativity,  
resulting in greater success, vitality, and joy.**

NeuroMovement Tip

6th Essential

Flexible Goals:

*Our greatest accomplishments  
often arise unexpectedly.*

### NeuroMovement Tip – Flexible Goals:

Loss of vitality, being stuck, or aging can often be traced to the way you approach your goals. So what can you do?

Having flexible goals is the key. Let go of the outcome and focus on the process, embracing your “mistakes” along the way. By learning to hold goals loosely, you give your brain opportunities for discovering new ways to fulfill your fondest dreams.

Choose a simple goal that you care about but you don’t feel the world is going to stop if you don’t achieve it. Playfully think of at least three different ways you might accomplish this goal.

Let's say you are trying to teach something to your child, student, or co-worker. Look for ways to be playful. Make deliberate mistakes that they will catch. Focus on the learning process while holding the goal lightly. Be creative and experiment to see what happens.

Do this exercise with as many small goals that you can think of. Experience the freedom and joy that comes with approaching your goals this way!



*Play leads to discovery, feeding our brains with information  
to create new and unexpected possibilities.*

—Anat Baniel

## Essential 7 – The Learning Switch

The brain is either in a learning mode—the learning switch is on—or not. Healthy young children have their learning switch on and the dial turned on “high.” Their eyes are bright, their movement lithe, and they are full of energy. Repetition, drill, and everyday stresses, as well as habitual patterns of thought, exercise, and emotions, all tend to turn the learning switch off. The same happens when a child has special challenges, or a person has suffered trauma or injury.

**For the brain to properly do its job, the *learning switch* needs to be on.**

Once on, at any age, life becomes a wonderful new adventure, filled with movement, creativity, and new possibilities.

NeuroMovement Tip  
7th Essential  
The Learning Switch:  
How do you bring in the new?



*One of the first signs that our brains are rigidly using  
the same, existing patterns is boredom.*

—Anat Baniel

### **NeuroMovement Tip – The Learning Switch:**

*How do you turn your learning switch on?*

First, let go of anything you think you know and any attachments you might have with a desire to do something about what you are taking in. Just hold your intention with curiosity, interest, and no judgment. The more you practice this process, the more you will begin to see changes in yourself, letting go of routines and habits, and ultimately experiencing greater vitality.

When bringing this process to a relationship, hold the intention that you will be seeking new information out of which will come a fresh new way of relating to that person. You may feel excited by perceiving something new that you had not previously noticed about this person. You may feel you are discovering a whole new side of him or her, and at the same time you might discover new sides to you.

You might also bring this process with you during a walk. As you notice the trees or flowers, perhaps their color will seem brighter or their scent stronger. You might notice shapes that you have never seen before. The air might seem more fragrant, and its movement on your skin more pleasurable. All of these are signs of your learning switch turning on!

### **Essential 8 – Imagination & Dreams**

Through imagination your brain figures out new possibilities before actually having to perform. When imagining, the brain grows new neural connections. Your dreams call upon you from your future. They give you your unique life path to follow and guide your brain to continue growing and developing.

**Your imagination and dreams give you the ability to create something  
that has never been there before, transcending your current limitations  
and leading you to develop your authentic life path.**



*Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions.*  
—Albert Einstein

## NeuroMovement Tip

### 8th Essential

## Imagination & Dreams:

### Create your life!

#### **NeuroMovement Tip – Imagination & Dreams:**

Imagine that the movements you do during your daily tasks—carrying your groceries, taking your laundry downstairs, making the bed, pushing the stroller, walking to another office, climbing the stairs—as great exercise, and bring attention to your movements from time to time throughout the day. Think of these tasks as your fitness regime, so you can use the movements to wake up your brain and engage it with ways that increase your fitness with what you are already doing.

By doing this, you will increase your flexibility, your strength, your general fitness level, and you will become more vital and alert.\*

You can also use your imagination and dreams to practice the previous seven NeuroMovement Essentials. You will create new pathways in your brain, and invent new and refined ways of moving, thinking, and feeling.

When you infuse any of your activities with your imagination and when you let yourself be inspired by your dreams, your brain creates millions of new connections and possibilities for you that will greatly enhance your vitality.

*\*Research has shown that using your imagination can make a significant difference in your health and fitness level. See more at [www.anatbanielmethod.com/tips-for-easy-ways-to-become-more-fit](http://www.anatbanielmethod.com/tips-for-easy-ways-to-become-more-fit).*

## Essential 9 – Awareness

*Awaring*—the action of generating awareness—is to be knowledgeable about what you are doing, sensing, thinking, and experiencing at any given moment. Awaring is the opposite of automaticity and compulsion. It is a unique human capacity that can catapult us to remarkable heights.

**When you are aware, you are fully alive and present.**

Your brain is working at its highest level, noticing subtle nuances of what is going on around and within you, revealing options and potentials, greatly accelerating learning. You are enlivened and joyful, contributing to others, becoming more enlightened, and fulfilling more and more of your human destiny.



### NeuroMovement Tip – Awareness:

Think of a situation in which you've noticed that you often have the same behaviors and experiences, ones that you don't like and wish to change. It could be a small matter, such as feeling irritated when finding that your partner left the cap off the toothpaste, or the tension you feel in your shoulders when you work at the computer, or what you experience when discussing politics with a friend.

The next time this situation comes up, slow down, pay attention, and become aware of your thoughts, feelings, and physical movements and of the reactions and feelings of people around you.

Notice that as you become increasingly aware, an opening is created for you to say, feel, think, or do something differently. Often, this is something you couldn't have anticipated ahead of time, something that works better for you than whatever you were doing before.

Continue to bring your awareness to the same situation until your experience is transformed and you are no longer a slave to your automatic responses. Experience the sense of freedom and empowerment that comes with it!



*Vitality is within your grasp no matter what your age or life circumstances.*

—Anat Baniel

## **Anat Baniel Method**

### **The Nine Essentials of NeuroMovement®**

**Movement with Attention**

**Slow**

**Variation**

**Subtlety**

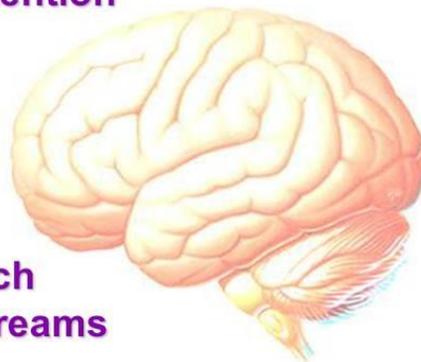
**Enthusiasm**

**Flexible Goals**

**The Learning Switch**

**Imagination and Dreams**

**Awareness**



*Achieve enhanced health & vitality!*  
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