

BONES, BONES, BONES

Halloween provides us with the opportunity to integrate celebration with skeletal awareness---Bones, bones, and more bones. As a Feldenkrais practitioner® I have a life-long interest in skeletons...particularly human skeletons and how they have evolved to provide us with a structure that gives humans the stability **and** mobility to access such great dynamic and functionally profound actions as walking upright with two free hands.

And what a perfect time of year to explore and learn more about our own bones than while skeletons are out and about everywhere for Halloween. In the auditorium where we have our classes, I drew a huge skeleton, Seymour, on the rug out of masking tape. We play lots of games with and around the theme of the skeleton.

Sonja says: “Put your hands on your ribs”.

Sonja says: “Put your humerus on your femur”.

Sonja says: “Put your patellas on Seymour’s skull”.

Sonja says: “Wiggle your phalanges”. To this request, some wiggle their toes, others their fingers and yet others wiggle a combination of the above.

We spent a whole class exploring fingers and toes and how we can use them. We interlaced our fingers, interlaced our toes, interlaced our fingers and our toes... made designs in the air with our fingers and then with our toes. Isn’t it interesting that our fingers and our toes both have the same skeletal name--phalanges? Some people who cannot use their hands and fingers learn to use their feet and toes instead. They can eat, write, draw, pick up things all with their toes just like we learn to do this with our hands and fingers. In class we explore how we can use our toes and fingers to reach things, to draw, to articulate—to create language as with sign language. We explore walking on our toes, our feet, our hands and knees, our hands and feet, and our hands.

Another class we spent exploring Seymour’s spine and then investigating how we can move our own spines. How do these movements of our spine effect our arms and legs? And visa versa? Yet another class focussed on the bones in our arms and legs. Isn’t it curious how the skeletal structure of our limbs resemble eachother? We explored these similarities functionally. Such basic awareness could benefit so many who struggle with repetitive stress and computer use related injuries. And as our children grow up in a computer age, a growing musculoskeletal awareness will be essential for their future development. It’s time to befriend our skeletons!!! Happy Halloween...

Sonja H. Sutherland