

Understanding SAT

(Self Activation
Technique)

How simple use of breathing and pressure
points leads to better performance and
fewer injuries



With Dr. Tom Nelson



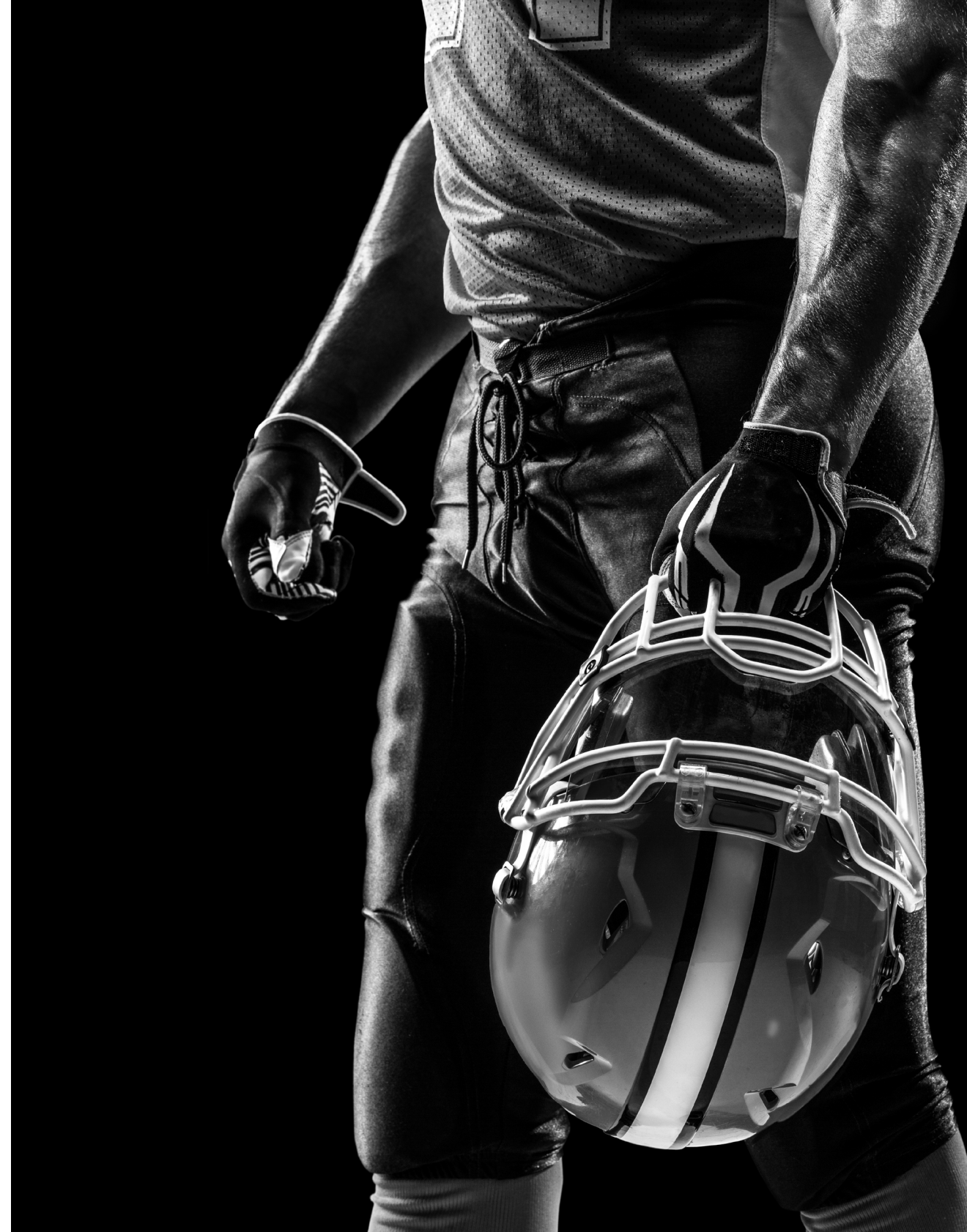
Priorities of the body

The body has two priorities: breathing and hip flexion. Inhaling and exhaling is how we get oxygen. Folding and unfolding at the center, across the hips, is how we walk, run and balance.

Intrinsically, the body will prioritize these two things over all else. You have to breathe. You have to move. And your body will do what it takes – compromising in other ways, if need be – to make sure you can.

This is especially true for athletes. If you're not breathing and moving right, your best result is an inferior performance. Your worst result is an injury.

Most adults aren't moving or breathing right. We're out of balance – in our muscular systems, and in our nervous systems. That's a problem for everyone. But especially for an athlete.



Muscular imbalance

*The body is built to do what it does – to breathe and to move – according to a particular mechanic. Everything starts in the core, an area we call **Zone 1**. Then it moves outward, first to **Zone 2** (the upper legs and abdominals) and finally to **Zone 3** (the lower legs, shoulders and neck).*

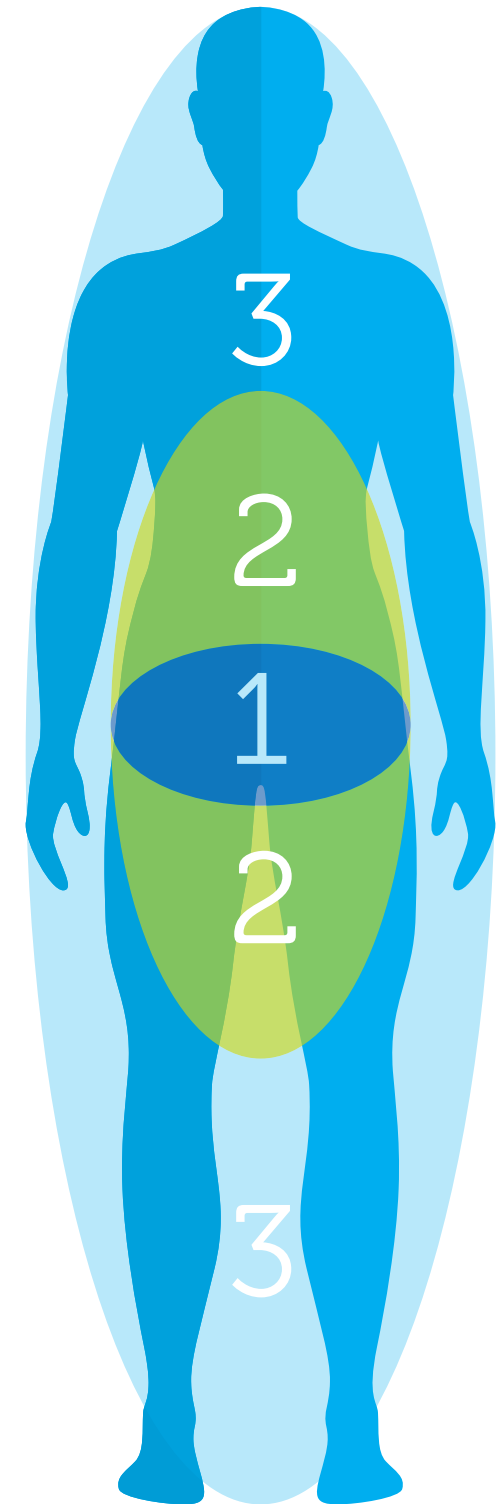
You're meant to move this way – powered by your core, with Zone 1 muscles firing first and Zones 2 and 3 following suit.

You're also meant to breathe this way – with the diaphragm and belly expanding first, then the chest and back, and finally the shoulders and neck.

Babies move and breathe this way. But chances are, you don't. As stress accumulates in the body, the core muscles tighten (think of the fetal position) and eventually shorten or become dormant altogether.

If you're still alive, your body will find a way to breathe and move anyway – it just won't be the right way. Muscles from Zones 2 or 3 will compensate for underperforming muscles in Zone 1. Parts of your body will carry more weight than they're meant to, playing roles they didn't develop to play.

That's a recipe for injury.



Nervous imbalance

Stress doesn't just affect the muscles – it affects the nervous system. The autonomic nervous system, or ANS, is the portion of the nervous system that communicates with glands and internal organs. ANS function is automatic and involuntary.

There are two sides to the ANS: the sympathetic division and the parasympathetic division. Sympathetic nerves are associated with arousal, or “fight or flight,” responses in the body. Parasympathetic nerves are associated with calming, or “rest and digest,” responses. The two work in complement. Like wings on an airplane, the sympathetic

and parasympathetic nervous functions should be in balance for you to perform well.

Most of us spend far too much time in “fight or flight” mode. From driving a car to getting a surprise text message, modern life is full of small emergencies that activate your ANS's sympathetic wing. Unless you compensate with parasympathetic activation, you'll spend most of your day out of balance.

Poor parasympathetic nervous function makes you less aware of your own body and of those around you. ANS-imbalanced athletes won't notice obstacles as well, won't be as in control of their own bodies and won't function well as a team unit. And they're more at risk of injury.



Self Activation Technique

As it turns out, there's a simple way to treat imbalance in the muscular and nervous systems. Self Activation Technique is built on two simple practices: breathing and acupressure.

By breathing deeply and consciously from the diaphragm, we flood the system with oxygen and stimulate the psoas, re-activating dormant core muscles and turning on the parasympathetic wing of the ANS.

By stimulating key pressure points with the fingers or with a SAT Stick, we stimulate and re-engage underactive muscles. Zone 1 muscles are the psoas and glutes, the two muscle groups that cross the center of the body. The psoas is activated through two key points in the abdomen, while the glutes are activated through pressure points in the back of the neck and behind the jaw.

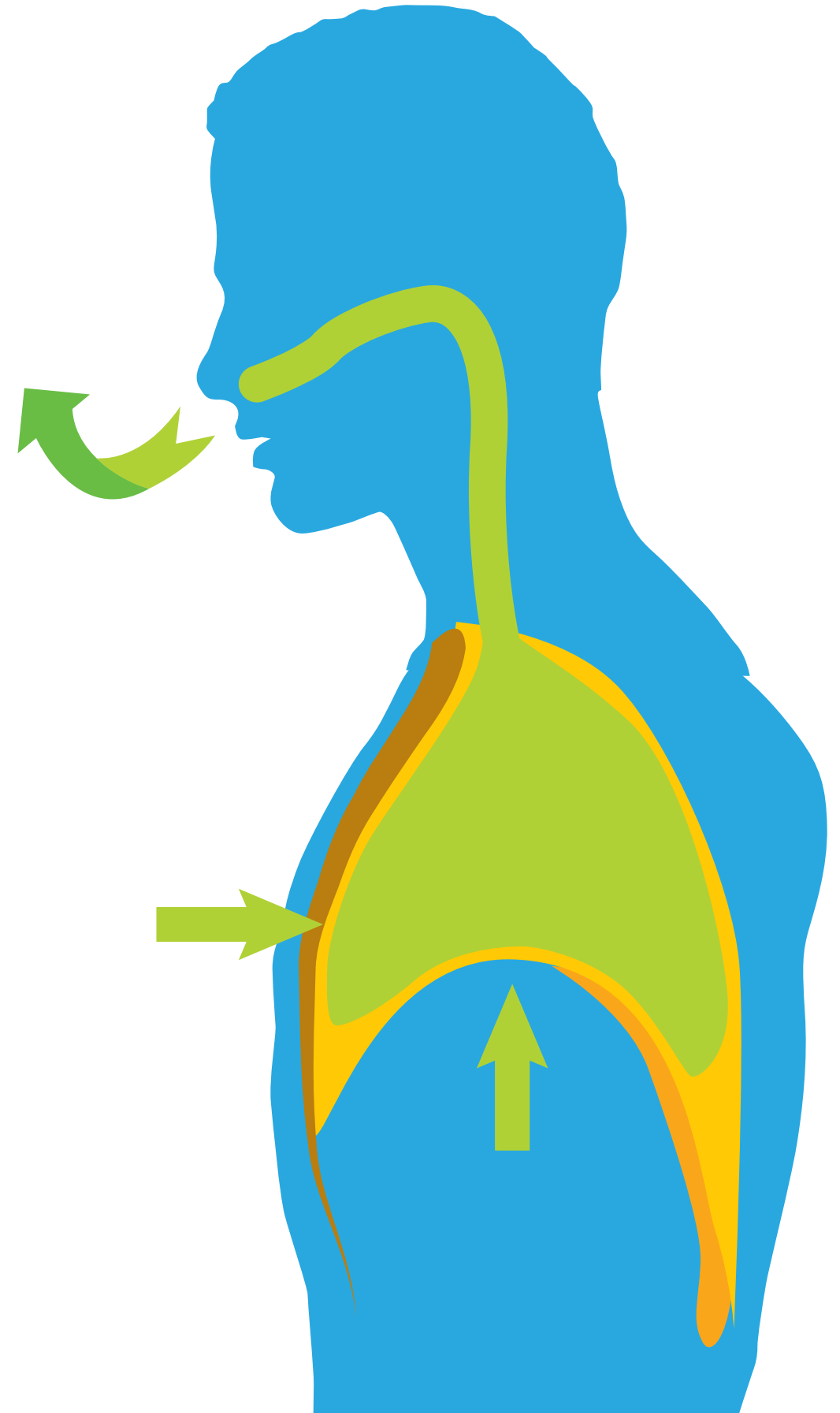
There's nothing intuitive about these pressure points! But activation works. **When done correctly, the results are immediate and measurable. You'll feel a difference.** And a trained activation specialist will be able to observe increased strength and flexibility. **It's instantaneous.**



Taken together, these two practices – breathing and acupres-
sure – help reset your body to its default state. We’re waking
up your core, allowing each muscle in the body to do its
proper job and redistributing the work more evenly. And we’re
cooling down your ANS, restoring better balance between the
“arousing” and “calming” functions of your nervous system.

The results of proper activation are immediate.
*And they’re profound: **Better balance. Clearer***
focus. Faster reflexes. Stronger team
communication.

When your body is engaged, you can begin to live up to
your own potential. That makes for great athletes.
And for incredible teams.



Team Activation

It's often most effective to be activated for the first time by doctor or practitioner who's been trained in proper activation at a "Be Activated" event. This will ensure you're using correct technique and prepare your body as well as possible for further activations.

But the power of Self Activation Technique is that you can do it yourself, without a therapist. This makes SAT ideal for teams. An entire group can activate together, quickly, as part of a simple daily warm-up.

The results of regular team activation are incredible. At Nazareth Academy in Westchester, Illinois, Dr. Tom Nelson gradually introduced team activation habits to the football team over a period of 3 years. **Injuries dropped by more than half by the third year of activation, and team performance improved dramatically.**

Nazareth players and coaches considered activation a key part of their state championship-winning strategy in 2014.



Making SAT a part of your athletics program

SAT is easy to understand by reading a guide like this one. But it's a hands-on technique, and it's best to learn in person, through experience. **If you'd like to begin activation with your team, the best first step is to attend a "Be Activated" seminar.**

Founder Douglas Heel offers these trainings twice a year in the United States, and they're the ideal place for an athletic trainer, strength coach or team doctor to learn the specific pressure points and practices necessary to activate players – and to teach entire teams to practice SAT all by themselves.

If you are interested in starting a self activation program sooner, Dr. Tom Nelson also does limited private consultations and team trainings. Dr. Nelson is one of the first people to apply Heel's activation techniques in an institutional team sports context, and knows the specific challenges of integrating SAT into a school or professional athletic environment.



Dr. Tom Nelson specializes in the use of Self Activation Technique in competitive sports contexts across the United States. As team doctor for the Nazareth Academy football team in LaGrange, Illinois, he helped implement Self Activation Technique over a 3-year period between 2012 and 2014. The team saw a 50% decrease in injuries during that time – and took home a state championship.

Dr. Nelson co-owns a family medical practice in Westchester, Illinois, where he teaches activation to his patients every day. He has more experience using and teaching Self Activation Technique than any other practitioner in the United States.

For notifications of upcoming
"Be Activated" training seminars,
join the e-mail list at
activateanddominate.com.

You'll receive free tips and online trainings from
Dr. Nelson just for joining the e-mail list.

For information on private
consultations and team trainings,
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