



# Moving with Physical Finesse

In Japanese, the word 'Nanba' means 'crisis': literally, rough wave or tough place. People in all walks of life experience crisis, but do not handle it equally well. Nanba movement was developed in traditional Japan, and has applications ranging from the martial arts to music and sports, as well as in daily life.

Nanba movement is compact, integrated, centred — Physical Finesse. With some variations, it was shared by people in all walks of life in Edo Era Japan (1603~1868). It naturally evolved into variations to make life and work easier, whether you were a Samurai drawing a sword, a farmer planting rice, a craftsman working with tools, a Kabuki actor on stage, or a merchant handling goods.

## Flying Legs

Fleet-footed delivery runners (*hikyaku*, or flying legs) ran relay services on foot to deliver packages between Edo (Tokyo) and Kyoto, approximately 500 km (310 miles). While ordinary service took 30 days, express services could be run in 10 days, and super express in just six days — over 83 km or 50 miles a day, and carrying a load! A modern delivery service, Sagawa Express uses the *hikyaku* image for their business logo.

One characteristic of Nanba movement is that the arms move in subtle vertical rhythm with the legs and remain close to the body. The body moves in an integrated way, without forcing, twisting, or getting bent out of shape. This style of movement runs all through the Japanese martial arts, Kabuki and Noh drama, use of craftsmen's tools, and of course, Samurai walking.

Nanba adapts itself quite well to such sports as tennis and skiing. Some athletes have a natural Nanba-style, such as Michael Jordan in basketball, or Ichiro in baseball. Rhythmical, fast and natural. High on energy. Professional athletes in Japan have achieved world-class results by deliberately applying Nanba-style movements in their running, coached by martial arts teachers to gain an extra edge. Marathon runner Takahashi Naoko used Nanba training and won a Gold Medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

## A New Lease on Exercise

John J. Ratey, MD teaches at Harvard Medical School, and is the author of *SPARK, The Revolutionary Science of Exercise and the Brain*. Dr Ratey says that in today's technology-driven world, we have nearly engineered movement out of our lives, and that the sedentary nature of modern life

poses one of the biggest threats to our survival. Inactivity and poor nutrition are detrimental to mind and body. Bruce Barton said, "If you want to know if your brain is flabby, feel your legs."

Exercise helps prevent the physical diseases and degeneration that stem from a sedentary lifestyle. It also releases neurochemicals and growth hormones that improve mood and enhance brain function.

## Getting Fit is Not Fun

The problem is that while being fit may be fine, getting fit is not much fun.

Many people give up on fitness not because they are lazy, but because they have not found fitness

programmes to be very motivational.

It is hard to be inspired by a philosophy such as 'no pain, no gain'.

Despite the vast number of health and fitness programmes available today,


if you have to drag yourself to get there, you are not likely to stick with it for long.

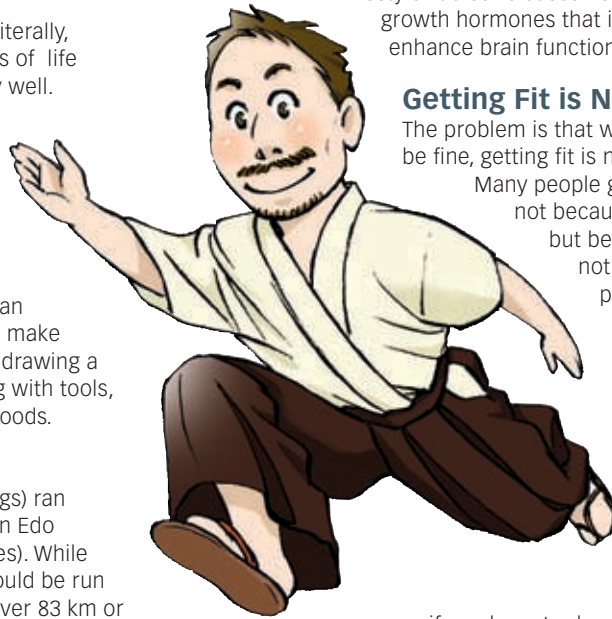
Your survival and well-being depends on your level of fitness, yet you don't want to go there? Nanba movement provides an intriguing new paradigm.

## Exercise Without Pain

What if you could exercise vigorously, without pain or effort? What if you could achieve a quantum leap in physical performance, simply by correctly integrating your body movements? Imagine being able to release tension and move with physical finesse? Stand without fatigue. Make a better impression. This is the promise of Nanba movement.

Flow is also found in communication, and its major aspect is authenticity. The often-quoted study of body language and credibility conducted by Professor Albert Mehrabian at UCLA in the 1960s demonstrated that only seven percent of our credibility comes from what we say, with 38 percent from how we say it, and 55 percent from our physical presence.

To be more credible, be more natural. In effect, Nanba movement enhances the integrity of your movements. Rather than speaking at people from your head, you learn to speak to people from your heart. 



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*William Reed has a 7th-degree black belt in the martial art of Aikido, and also teaches Nanba at the Toho Gakuen College of Music in Tokyo, where he is collaborating on DVD products, books, and training programs to apply Nanba movement to Creativity in Business and Physical Finesse. Contact William Reed by e-mail at [willreed@agili.jp](mailto:willreed@agili.jp). William Reed is a Nanba Movement Instructor, based in Tokyo, Japan for over 30 years. Visit his website at <http://agili.jp> to learn more about his unique solutions for Entrepreneurs.*

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ENTREPRENEUR'S EDGE