



## Quick Guide to Nanba

Nanba is physical finesse to be creative in crisis. Nanba offers fascinating insights into traditional Japanese culture with surprising relevance for people today in any culture. Nanba can give you more energy, less fatigue. More enjoyment, less stress. It will change the way you understand and use your body, and improve your personal poise and presence. Read on and learn how Nanba Movement can help you.

### NANBA Movement in Japanese Culture

Until the end of the Edo Period (1603~1867), Japanese people dressed in Kimono and wore traditional Japanese footwear, wooden clogs (*geta*) and thick soled straw sandals (*zori*).

Traditional clothing imposed certain restraints on movement. The Kimono comes loose if a person moves in a careless manner, and the toe strap on clogs and sandals breaks more easily if you walk with heavy steps. People in all strata of society dressed in this manner, and developed ways of moving which adapted to these restraints and still enabled them to carry out their duties. Society was divided into well-defined classes in a hierarchical structure, each with different movement requirements.

*Samurai*—who required rapid strength in military arts

*Farmers*—who labored efficiently daylong at hard physical tasks

*Artisans*—who worked skillfully to make and create things

*Merchants*—who busily sold and distributed merchandise

Japanese in all walks of life learned how to move without losing form in their *kimono* or breaking the straps in their footwear. The type of movement which evolved from this is called *Nanba*, which can be considered as an outgrowth of the traditional Japanese lifestyle.

Nanba movement evolved without interruption for nearly 300 years during the Edo Period, during which time Japan sealed its borders to virtually all contact with foreign cultures and lifestyles.

It was in the Meiji Period (1868~1912) that foreign culture and goods flooded into Japan. Western culture was imported into Japan at an insatiable rate and volume, and Japanese today still have a strong liking for foreign culture. But it was during the Meiji Period that Japanese also adopted Western style military training and body movements. At the same time, they rapidly put aside traditional Japanese clothing and footwear in favor of Western clothing and shoes.





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As a result, along with Japanese traditional culture, Nanba movements also began to fade from Japanese life.

Our efforts to teach Nanba movements are not designed to return to the movements buried in Japanese history. Rather we seek to find applications for Nanba in contemporary daily life. It is not historical Nanba that we seek to revive, but rather to understand the essence of Nanba so that we can apply it in a wide range of areas relevant to our lives today.

### Analyzing the essence of Nanba movement

Human body movements are not hereditary or instinctual. A human baby raised by wolves will walk on all fours and eat without using its fingers. Unlike animals, which may be born already knowing how to walk, human movements must be learned, from how we take our first step to the most complicated movements by which we live.

Nanba movements are thought to have evolved as an adaptation to a lifestyle influenced by traditional Japanese clothing such as kimono and traditional footwear. It would not have been possible to remain active all day long if the body were restricted by pain or fatigue, and so people developed ways of moving the body to minimize such discomfort. Lacking the conveniences of a modern machine-driven lifestyle, people developed ways of moving the body in an efficient and natural way.

What were the characteristics of Nanba movement which allowed people to move this way in traditional Japanese clothing? To move in kimono without losing form and to wear traditional Japanese footwear without wearing it out, it was necessary to avoid twisting, waving, or bracing the body. We have found Nanba movement to be effective and efficient when applied to many movements in modern daily life.

*Do not twist*—means that seen from above, the shoulder line and hip line should remain aligned and parallel. In movement the foot and knee should point in the same direction.

*Do not wave*—avoid whip-like undulations in movement. Don't make wasteful movements.

*Do not brace*—Do not depend on leverage to hoist yourself. Change the way you feel your body movements.

When you practice Nanba, you discover how enjoyable movement can be. By moving your body, your life transforms from difficulty to enjoyment, and this changes your way of thinking. When you discover the joy of movement, this leads to new discoveries in many directions.

### Our approach to Nanba

In Japanese, the word *Nanba* means *difficult place* or *trouble*.

Sometimes you find yourself in trouble, or in a difficult situation. *Nanba* then is *physical finesse* to help you be creative in crisis, and find your way out of trouble. It is the mental and physical *knack* of staying or getting out of trouble. Therefore Nanba has applications that work in a wide range of fields and situations.

If you find yourself in a difficult place, you have to be inventive to find your way out, setting aside common sense and what you already know, so that you can discover a creative new solution. This not only helps you take on new challenges, but also to discover new enjoyments.

Our current Nanba programs, research, and applications include:

#### *Daily life*

- Body movements become more comfortable (less painful) and more enjoyable. Also contributing to weight loss.

## Did You Know?

Nanba movement is the key to understanding the movements in the Japanese martial and performing arts? That Nanba runners in the Edo Period ran up to 85 km and more a day as fleet footed messengers? That Nanba has been used by Japanese Olympic athletes and marathon runners, including a Gold Medal Champion? That Nanba has applications ranging from sports, to music, to health, and care giving, that can improve performance and enhance enjoyment?

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### *Sports*

- Improve the coordination of body movements, learning how to move stronger and faster.
- Learn how to move to prevent strain and injuries.
- Specific Nanba applications to Track & Field, Basketball, and Ballroom Dance competitions.

### *Work*

- Find creative ways to enjoy work.
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness at working tasks.
- Become more creative through physical fitness.

### *Music Performance*

- Effective use of the body in performing with musical instruments.
- Prevention of repetitive stress injuries.
- More freedom of expression and originality.

### *Self-defense*

- Ways to defend yourself that can even be applied by children.
- Learn to extract yourself from a dangerous situation and never get into a fight.

### *Traditional Japanese Arts*

- Traditional Japanese Arts
- Discover ways of moving the body which are the secret to performance of traditional Japanese arts.
- Express the Japanese aesthetic through body movement.

### *Rehabilitation*

- Discover how Nanba can facilitate recovery of body functions.
- Stimulate the body's own natural healing energy.

### *Care for the elderly (mental + physical)*

- Nanba approach to improving communication between care givers and receivers.
- Learn basic postures for facilitating elderly movements, and how to carry out this assistance without fatigue.

### *From physical to emotional counseling*

- How to approach and solve emotional problems using the body.
- How to combine counseling with

physical movements to facilitate change.

### *Education and Training*

- Moving the body develops increased sensitivity by stimulating the senses.
- Experience cultivates the process of moving from feeling to reason.

With developments in these and other fields already underway, Nanba is expected to expand even further.

### **Nanba movement**

Nanba movement is based on sensitivity to what feels right and what does not feel right in body movement. In a sense, it is thinking with the body as a barometer, while making efforts to avoid twisting, sinuating, or bracing the body.

- Focus on the movement of your bones, not your muscles (through such images as folding, and parallel edges).
- By focusing on the movement of the bones, there is no excessive movement in the muscles.
- By creating parallel edge movements in the rib cage and pelvic base, body movements become far more efficient.
- You become good at folding the joints.
- Focusing on the movement of the bones results in more accurate movements.
- Develop integration and coordination of body movements
- The ability to coordinate movements in the rib cage and pelvis.
- By moving the whole body, the strain is reduced on individual parts.
- Seeking natural and smooth body movement.
- No need to put excessive effort in movements (sense for movement).
- Emphasize the side of the body which is easiest and most comfortable to move.
- Avoid twisting the body.
- Letting go of forceful and wasteful movements.
- Avoiding wasteful sinuating movements.
- Remove the need for intensive and

strenuous practice.

- Develop skill and refinement in movement
- No strain felt in movement, uncovering problems that need addressing.
- Continuous improvement in efficiency of repeated movements.

The results of Nanba movement training include:

- Experience the effects of enjoying movement
- Create positive influence moving from body to mind
- Effectively use energy
- Move without pain
- Balance and align the body
- Develop surprising degrees of strength and speed
- Enjoy creative work
- Develop your imagination
- Learn how to think with your body
- Develop natural posture and movement

### **Nanba approach**

By applying the Nanba approach, you develop greater sensitivity to what feels right and what does not feel right in body movement. In this sense, you learn to think with your body.

In order to get out of difficult situations, you need to discover the right way of moving your body. You begin by exploring what kinds of movements feel right. This is where Nanba movement begins.

Nanba creativity, development, and applications all begin with this Nanba approach. Creativity coming from movement is far richer than that from sitting at thinking at a desk.

The Nanba approach also enables you to confront difficult situations directly without avoidance. For example, pain itself becomes your guide and coach,

leading you to correct movement. Mental and physical pain are a signal to move away from incorrect movement.

You understand that pain is not a signal of weakness, but of excessive load on that part of the body. Hence rather than trying to strengthen or train the area in pain, you find a way to

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move in such a way that pain is not generated.

Nanba helps you develop a sensitivity to what feels right mentally and physically. Feelings and emotions developed in this way lead to wisdom. Life is easier guided by this kind of sensitivity than by logic and reason alone.

### **Nanba programs currently available**

#### *Nanba Finesse Training*

Align and balance the body by learning which movements feel right.

Experience how to create parallel movements in your skeletal frame. Learn how your body functions in movement.

Direction and repetitions are determined by what feels right, rather than by rote symmetrical repetition.

Learn the basic movements for rehabilitation.

#### *Nanba Walking and Nanba Running*

Learn how to walk and run more efficiently by coordinating movements of the rib cage and pelvic base.

By discovering the pleasure of walking, your range of movement expands and becomes more positive.

Learn to adapt your style of walking to the ground surface and conditions.

Both walking and running become more enjoyable and faster.

#### *Nanba Body Awareness*

Review your current movements and find effective improvements.

Move in touch with your body.

Go beyond commonly held conceptions about movement.

Movement is no longer a burden, but rather a means for solving problems.

#### *Nanba Bics*

Learn a dance exercise based on Nanba movement.

Movements are enjoyable during and after the exercise, making it easy to continue.

Improve your body condition, with positive results in weight loss.

#### *Nanba Rhythmics*

Develop Nanba movement through rhythm.

Children to adults learn the fundamentals of body movement.

Learn to control body movements through rhythm.

Develop the fundamental skills to improve in sports or music.

#### *Nanba for Health*

Nanba movements enable you to exercise with pleasure and enjoyment.

Discover how to enjoy body movement.

Enjoy the process of accessing the mind through the body.

Feel better through movement, and lose weight.

#### *Nanba Games and Play*

Play using Nanba movements.

Children can also develop and grow through Nanba movement.

Experience the enjoyment of movement challenges, achievements, and activities with others.

Learn the fundamentals of body movement.

Help children who have fewer opportunities to play outside in nature, find ways to play and develop where they are.

#### *Nanba Coaching*

Mental and physical coaching which looks at the whole person.

Mental and physical control based on Mind-Body integration.

Leadership for a team or organization. Gain benefits derived from your efforts.

心身技術研究所

Mind-Body Performance Center  
<http://www.nanba-walk.net/>

Publications available by Yano Tatsuhiko (in Japanese)

*Training for Nanba Running (with DVD)*, from MC Press

*Nanba Approach to Enjoying Work*, from Mishima Ltd.

*Mind-Body Dialog*, from MC Press

*The Art of Nanba Enjoyment*, from Kadokawa One Theme Press

*Nanba Mind-Body Method*, from Kobunsha

*Nanba Running*, from Kobunsha

*Nanba Skeletal Exercise*, from Kobunsha

*Nanba Sports Stories*, from Sobun Kikaku

*Jogging for Pleasure*, from Runners, Ltd.

Further information available from  
<http://www.nanbanote.com>

and in Japanese from the Mind-Body Performance Institute (*ShinShin Gijutsu Kenkyujo*)  
<http://www.nanba-walk.net/>

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This introduction was written in Japanese by Yano Tatsuhiko, Director of the Mind-Body Performance Center, and translated by Nanba Instructor William Reed