



MINDFUL MOVEMENT AND PROPRIOCEPTIVE AWARENESS IN OLDER THAI ADULTS: A BUDDHIST-INFORMED STUDY OF EMBODIED CONFIDENCE

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: Older adults often demonstrate slower movement patterns, hesitate to stand up, or experience difficulties with balance, which frequently indicate aging in daily life. The ability to perceive body position, movement, and muscular effort gradually deteriorates as a result of these experiences, which can affect mobility, self-confidence, and independence. Proprioception senses and controls body position and movement through receptors in muscles, joints, and skin. Although movement-based interventions provide physical benefits, little is known about how older adults' proprioceptive awareness changes as a lived, embodied process, particularly in relation to their overall physical and mental well-being. This study aimed to explore how older Thai adults experience changes in body awareness through mindful movement, to interpret these experiences through the Buddhадhamma lens, and to understand how awareness contributes to embodied confidence in daily life.

Methodology: A qualitative phenomenology study was employed to gain insight into the participants' lived bodily experiences. Eight older Thai adults, aged 61 to 67, were included in an eight-week training program focused on gentle, mindful movement and effort regulation. After completion of all the sessions, participants participated in in-depth, semi-structured interviews lasting 60 to 90 minutes. Thematic analysis was used for analyzing the data, focusing on three key areas: Awareness of posture, calm and controlled movement, and the ability to adjust effort gently and kindly.

Main Results: Participants reported greater awareness of posture, resulting in enhanced alignment and balance; More consistent and stable movement accompanied by a sensation of calmness; And a better capacity to regulate muscular effort with precision. Consistent with the first objective, these changes reflected proprioceptive awareness as a progressive lived process, generally described as "Feeling the Body More Clearly," with greater sensitivity to subtle shifts in weight, tension, and balance. These changes implemented across into daily activities, where participants found it easier to move around, were less fearful of falling, and felt more confident in their own abilities when standing and walking. Addressing the second objective, these experiences reflected mindful awareness (Sammā-sati), balanced and non-forcing effort (Sammā-vāyāma), and stable, continuous concentration (Sammā-samādhi) from a Buddhадhamma perspective. Participants also



expressed a relationship with their bodies through patience and loving-kindness (Mettā), corresponding to a transition from exertive control to gentle, mindful awareness. In line with the third objective, these bodily changes were experienced as increased ease, stability, and trust, contributing to the development of embodied confidence in daily life.

Involvement to Buddhadhamma: This study explored Buddhadhamma principles through applied practice in mindful movement, focusing on the development of mindfulness (Sammā-sati), concentration (Sammā-samādhi), right effort (Sammā-vāyāma), and loving-kindness (Mettā). These characteristics emerged from lived experience rather than doctrines, turning a bodily awareness into practical understanding and self-monitoring. The findings suggest how contemplative principles can be applied to movement-based practice, linking traditional Buddhist concepts with contemporary health promotion.

Conclusions: The findings suggest that mindful movement informed by Buddhadhamma may support proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence in older adults. Participants' experiences indicate that incorporating mindful attention, balanced effort, and sustained concentration into movement practice might cultivate a more attentive, calm, and compassionate relationship with the body. These changes extended beyond physical improvement, contributing to greater ease, stability, and trust in everyday movement over time. Although based on a modest qualitative sample and not intended for extensive generalization, the findings spotlight the potential benefits of integrating contemplative principles with movement-based practices to promote active and mindful aging.

Keywords: Proprioceptive Awareness, Embodied Confidence, Mindful Movement

Introduction

The ability to feel where, how, and how well the body operates is defined as proprioception. This sensory system aspect keeps individuals balanced, stable, and coordinated (Proske & Gandevia, 2012). Proprioceptive output assists persons in balancing, shifting posture, and performing everyday activities confidently. This internal mechanism works all the time, and it is important to understand how the body interacts with its environment. Decreased proprioceptive perception in older adults is associated with poor coordination, joint position sensing, and delayed motor responses (Goble et al., 2009). Because older adults' joints, muscles, and skin sensory receptors grow less sensitive, they feel unsteady, less confident, and more likely to fall. These changes in daily life can be experienced as things like physical limitations or periods of uncertainty, such as needing to stop before standing, walking on uneven ground, or needing more support. These challenges may also cause uncertainty or limitations, such as needing support, to stop before standing or walking on uneven ground. Such subtle but cumulative experiences may eventually erode confidence and independence, making proprioceptive degradation more psychologically and socially significant than professional descriptions suggest.

Reviews show that age-related sensory and balance impairments increase the risk of mobility limitations and injury, emphasizing the need for early detection, effective intervention, and comprehensive management to maintain functional independence and quality of life in aging



populations (Wang et al., 2025). Low back discomfort and ligament injuries, increased fall risk, and neuromuscular illness gait issues are linked to proprioceptive dysfunction. These findings indicate that proprioception refers to a dynamic system involving brain-body interaction. Enhancing proprioceptive functioning is a part of physical rehabilitation, psychological empowerment, and proactive aging (World Health Organization, 2015). Global health policy frameworks emphasize functional ability, autonomy, and psychological well-being as key goals of healthy aging. Older adults who feel more confident with their bodies are more emotionally stable, less scared of falling, and more involved in their daily lives. Proprioceptive awareness affects psychological well-being and self-confidence beyond physical stability.

Mindful activities like yoga with slow, attentive movement promote proprioceptive and interoceptive awareness by harmonizing breath, posture, and focused attention (Schmalzl et al., 2015). Yoga focuses on body awareness and careful effort regulation, while regular physical activity emphasizes repetition and muscle strength. This method supports individuals in connecting breath with movement and observing subtle movement, balance, and muscular function changes. The process eventually increases awareness of internal body signals and movement quality control. From a theoretical perspective, this process can be understood through embodied cognition, which suggests that perception and understanding arise through sensorimotor experience (Varela et al., 1991) and self-efficacy theory, which explains how confidence develops through repeated experiences of successful action and control (Bandura, 1977). These frameworks highlight how bodily awareness changes can impact psychological outcomes like confidence and emotional regulation. Although previous studies have demonstrated relationships between proprioception, balance, mobility, and executive functioning in older adults (Gothe et al., 2014); (Goble et al., 2009); (Riemann & Lephart, 2002), limited research has specifically examined how proprioceptive awareness contributes to cognitive flexibility, a core component of executive function, as a lived and embodied psychological process. Evidence also suggests that proprioceptive function can be disrupted under altered physiological conditions, such as pain, which further affects postural control and sensorimotor integration (Efstathiou et al., 2022). In addition, mindfulness, and yoga-based interventions have shown benefits for psychological well-being and perceived stress, potentially through mechanisms involving attentional regulation and self-compassion (Gard et al., 2012). However, existing studies have primarily focused on physical outcomes or cognitive performance measures, with less attention given to how sensing, adjusting, and regulating bodily states may support attentional shifting, adaptive response, and embodied confidence in daily life.

From a Buddhist perspective, this practice promotes mindfulness (*Sati*) and clear comprehension (*Sampajañña*) by gently and accurately focusing on current body experiences. The concept of proper effort (*Sammā-vāyāma*) is applied through moment-to-moment awareness. Participants detect unskillful behaviors like tension, holding their breath, forcing movement, and anger, and eventually let them go. They also purposefully cultivate skills like peaceful breathing, regulated muscular engagement, patient pacing, and a loving, non-judgmental attitude toward their body's boundaries. The Noble Eightfold Path emphasizes practicing right effort (*Sammā-vāyāma*),



right mindfulness (Sammā-sati), and right concentration (Sammā-samādhi) in every position. By focusing on tension, balance, and movement flow, practitioners develop loving-kindness (Mettā) and respect for their bodies, encouraging physical and emotional harmony (Wallace, 2011). Mindful movement combines attentional, regulatory, and ethical aspects of experience with physical practice to promote awareness and self-improvement.

Emerging Research demonstrates that yoga and mindfulness can support older adults. Yoga increases mobility, postural stability, balance, and stress reduction (Youkhana et al., 2016); (Gothe et al., 2014). Quantitative research highlights both psychological and physical benefits, but little is known about how they experience mindful movement-induced proprioceptive transformation subjectively. How alignment, posture, and muscular effort become mindful from body experience is uncertain because proprioception, or bodily awareness, is a lived sense; It depicts individuals' relationship with their body and surroundings (Calsius et al., 2016).

This gap is particularly significant in the Thai context, where health beliefs and aging practices emphasize mindfulness and balanced effort, yet existing research has not examined how these principles shape older Thai adults' lived experiences of bodily awareness. Research shows that Thai yoga can promote elderly health and function (Noradechanunt et al., 2017). Recent research also demonstrates that mindfulness-based therapies can increase older adults' sleep and mental health (Makkabphalanon et al., 2025). Moreover, movement management, balance, falling, and confidence have been studied with more validated instruments. The Thai Falls Efficacy Scale-International (FES-I) measures fear of falling and movement-related confidence with high reliability, while the Thai Updated Perceived Control Over Falling Scale (UP-COF) shows that perceived control is a key psychological factor in fall risk and functional outcomes (Tantrongphak et al., 2025). Even though more and more data are being collected, most research has focused on quantitative measurement or intervention effects, overlooking how real bodily experience builds confidence. The development of posture, movement, and effort awareness, the essential elements of proprioceptive awareness, through practical application or how Buddhist-informed concepts transcend abstract teachings to influence the body's sensing, adjusting, and regulating processes in the moment, is still unknown. Most studies focus on physical and psychological aspects, leaving embodied practice's sensory, cognitive, and experiential elements unexplored. This gap must be closed to understand aging contextually and phenomenologically. The study should illustrate how Thai older adults gain awareness, balance, and confidence via movement and meaning.

This study explores how mindful movement enhances proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence to gain an understanding of bodily awareness in aging. It views effort, posture, and movement as living processes that foster confidence. To achieve its goals, the study examines elderly Thai older adults' bodily awareness in a gentle movement program. Through theme analysis, it examines how postural awareness, regulated movement, and effort modulation support embodied confidence, mental stability, and mindful aging in Thai culture.



Objectives

This study aimed to explore how older Thai adults experience changes in body awareness through mindful movement, to interpret these experiences through the Buddhadhamma lens, and to understand how awareness contributes to embodied confidence in daily life.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological method to explore proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence in older Thai adults during an eight-week program of gentle, mindful movement. Proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence formed the analytic focus of a secondary qualitative analysis of interview data from the author's dissertation. The original analysis primarily focused on cognitive flexibility, with emotion regulation as a secondary area of interpretation. Nevertheless, participants' narratives also revealed meaningful experiential dimensions related to bodily awareness, movement sensitivity, and effort regulation that were not examined in the original analysis.

A secondary qualitative analysis was considered appropriate because the original dissertation primarily examined cognitive flexibility, which involved attentional shifting, adaptive response, and the restoration of internal control. These psychological processes were closely related to proprioceptive awareness, which involved perceiving, adjusting, and regulating bodily states during movement. Participants' narratives showed that bodily awareness, movement sensitivity, and effort regulation were closely intertwined with experiences of cognitive flexibility, although these dimensions were not examined as a primary focus in the original analysis. Reanalyzing the existing dataset, therefore, allowed a more focused exploration of proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence through a new conceptual lens while maintaining methodological rigor and ethical integrity. This approach was frequently used in health and psychological research when existing qualitative data contained multiple layers of meaning beyond the original analytic purpose. It enabled this study to examine proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence as significant experiential dimensions that emerged from the dataset.

Since the ability to observe, modify, and control physical states reflected the psychological ability to shift attention, manage reactions, and restore internal control, proprioceptive awareness supported cognitive flexibility and embodied confidence. It served as the sensory foundation through which cognitive flexibility was enacted, as perceiving, adjusting, and regulating bodily states paralleled the psychological capacity to shift attention, modulate responses, and regain internal control, thereby fostering embodied confidence.

Phenomenology was used to capture participants' lived experiences and subjective meanings related to changes in daily posture, movement, and bodily effort. An interpretive lens inspired by Buddhadhamma, notably mindfulness of the body, balanced effort, and loving awareness, directed the program context and the researcher's methodological sensibility. The gentle yoga practice incorporated slow, deliberate movement, body scanning, and mindful breathing to



enhance attentional concentration and physical sensitivity. Data were collected via 60-90-minute in-depth, semi-structured interviews after participants finished all sessions. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns of meaning in participants' proprioceptive experiences across three interrelated psychological dimensions: Attentional awareness of posture (Joint Position Sense), regulated movement and emotional calm (Movement Sense), and effort modulation and self-compassion. A culturally grounded lens characterized mindfulness as an experiential process of awareness, balance, and ethical bodily care. This design revealed how mindful movement benefited participants' physiological control, mental stability, and embodied confidence in active and mindful aging.

Participants and Setting

Participants were included from a quantitative investigation on cognitive flexibility and emotion regulation in older Thai adults. This study's reanalysis of the author's dissertation's qualitative dataset focused on proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence. Selection followed initial quantitative phase inclusion criteria. This phenomenological study used case purposive sampling to select four subjects with the highest and lowest Cognitive Flexibility Inventory scores for rich comparative insight. Participants with contrasting cognitive flexibility levels were selected to provide variation in experiences of attentional regulation, adaptive response, and internal control, which were considered relevant to the exploration of proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence.

The study included eight Thai participants aged 61 - 67: Two male and six female. Most of Thailand's elderly were "Young-old" (60 - 69 Years Old). The participants had never experienced yoga. Participants completed 16 - 60 - minute gentle yoga sessions over eight weeks. The program's progressive framework allowed gradual change. Basic body awareness was taught in weeks 1 - 2 through guided attention to somatic sensations, breath awareness, and postures. The intermediate phase (Weeks 3 - 6) focused on repetitive, gradual breath-movement coordination to improve balance, alignment, and continuity. Participants in weeks 7 - 8 (Final Phase) were taught to change muscular engagement to improve mobility, steadiness, and effort regulation. All courses encouraged participants to avoid overexertion, respect physical limitations with care, and be patient with body experience. Each session included relaxation, breath awareness, mild postures, and a brief seated meditation to promote calm and mindfulness. Some participants reported mild musculoskeletal discomfort, including leg stiffness, hip pain, or back pain, but overall health was good (As Shown in Table 1). Eight participants were considered sufficient for a phenomenological study, which prioritized experience depth above breadth. Data saturation occurred when experiences were similar. Moreover, purposive sampling selected participants with high and low cognitive flexibility to add contrast to the dataset. This permitted comparison across experiential perspectives to improve the interpretation of findings.

Table 1 Participants Utilized in the Study

Variable	Category	Number (%)	Age Range (Years)
Gender	Male	2 (25.00%)	61 - 62
	Female	6 (75.00%)	61 - 67
Employment Status	Retired	4 (50.00%)	61 - 67
	Part-time	4 (50.00%)	61 - 64
Health Condition	Musculoskeletal conditions*	4 (50.00%)	61 - 67
	Stroke survivor	1 (12.50%)	62
	Physically healthy	3 (37.50%)	63 - 66

From Table 1, participants were 61 - 67 years old. Most (75.00%) were female and worked part-time or were retired. One had survived a stroke, three were healthy, and four had musculoskeletal concerns*, including leg problems, herniated discs, severe back pain, and hip injuries. Body-mind integration was expected to enhance posture, flexibility, balance, relaxation, and mindfulness among participants.

Research Instruments

Research Domain specialists evaluated three validated tools for methodological rigor and content validity: 1) Demographic questionnaire: Age, gender, and physical limitation, and 2) Gentle yoga program: Created by applied psychology, yoga, mindfulness, and gerontology professionals. To develop attention, adequate effort, and focus, the curriculum focused on progressive growth, safety, and physiological cues. IOC 0.94 indicated content validity. Pilot testing with Thai older adults ensured practicality and cultural appropriateness, and three applied psychology specialists confirmed the Semi-structured Interview Guide (IOC = 0.81). The practice's effects on bodies, emotions, and cognition were assessed. Member verification, triangulation (Interviews, Observations, Reflexive Notes), and peer debriefing ensured reliability. Participants checked their interview summaries. Through observational notes, researcher reflection, and interview data, triangulation was established. Reflexive journaling throughout the research process promoted interpretive transparency and researcher bias awareness. Peer debriefing bolstered analysis credibility. Combining these tactics guaranteed findings accurately reflected participants' experiences. Srinakharinwirot University approved this study (Protocol Code: SWUEC-672541), and participants supplied informed consent before data collection.

Data Collection

After program completion, participants participated in 60 - 90-minute semi-structured interviews. They described confidence, everyday function, physical feelings, and movement awareness in response to guided questions. Participants were also asked about views of muscular effort, balance, and posture. Yoga session observational notes recorded participants' posture, breathing, and affective engagement, whereas reflexive journaling enhanced researcher mindfulness and reduced bias.



Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process: Familiarization, coding, topic generation, review, definition, and interpretation. Methodical approach ensured transparency and analytical rigor. Interviews were transcribed verbatim to familiarize with the facts. Second, preliminary codes captured important effort, mobility, and body awareness characteristics. Third, these codes were organized into themes that reflected participant experiences. Fourth, themes were checked for coherence and consistency with the dataset. Fifth, themes were identified and designated to reflect proprioceptive awareness dimensions. The themes were then interpreted and presented in relation to objectives and the conceptual framework.

The analysis was guided by concepts of proprioceptive awareness, mindfulness, and Buddhadhamma. Inductive and interpretive coding focused on three interrelated domains of proprioceptive awareness conceptualized as psychological dimensions: 1) Attentional awareness of posture (Joint Position Sense), which included body and limb position, posture, and balance; 2) Regulated movement and emotional calm (Movement Sense), which included kinaesthetic awareness, coordination, continuity of motion, and calm during movement; and 3) Effort modulation (Force Sense).

Themes were interpreted by Buddhist concepts: Mindfulness, concentration, right effort, and loving-kindness, which provided an ethical-experimental view for participants' stories. Psychological perspectives of self-efficacy and embodied cognition were employed to understand how bodily awareness affected perception, meaning, confidence, and self-regulation. In this framework, participants' stories showed how enhanced physical sensing increased confidence, trust in movement, and stability in emotion. The diversity and complexity of lived experience and how balanced effort, attentive attention, and compassionate awareness converted proprioceptive experience into a holistic well-being practice were shown in participant quotations.

Results and Discussion

Results showed how participants' lived experiences addressed the three research objectives. The findings supported an understanding of older Thai adults' proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence. Under a phenomenological approach centered on lived bodily experience, participants described posture, movement, and effort through three interwoven psychological processes: Joint position sense, movement sense, and force sense. They demonstrated how participants perceived, adjusted, and regulated their bodies in real time. The findings addressed all three research objectives by showing that older Thai adults experienced proprioceptive awareness as a progressive and lived process, reflected in greater sensitivity to posture, balance, movement, and muscular effort. These experiences also aligned with Buddhadhamma principles of mindfulness (Sammā-sati), balanced effort (Sammā-vāyāma), concentration (Sammā-samādhi), and loving-kindness (Mettā), as participants described greater patience, self-awareness, and compassionate self-regulation. Together, these physical and psychological changes contributed

to embodied confidence, expressed as increased trust, calmness, and self-assurance in daily movement and functioning (As Shown in Figure 1).

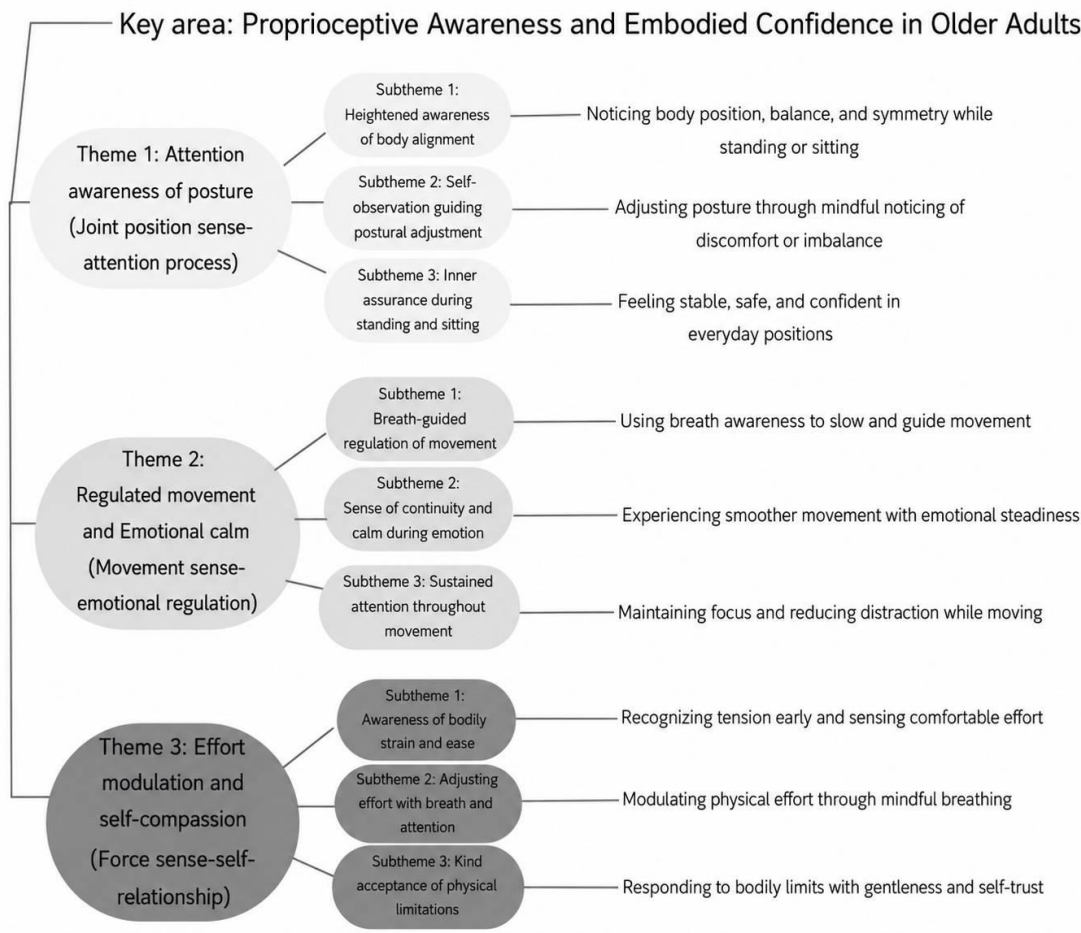


Figure 1 Thematic Map

From Figure 1, Participants' experiences linked proprioceptive awareness, mindful movement, and embodied confidence. The model in Figure 1 emphasized three key elements: Attentional awareness of posture, where participants became more aware of body alignment, weight distribution, and balance; Regulated movement and emotional calm, where breathing and movement coordination supported smoother, more continuous movement and reduced psychological tension; And effort modulation and self-compassion. These interconnected processes improved participants' real-time perception, modification, and trust in their movements. Paying attention to posture, movement, and breath developed body awareness, emotional calm, and daily self-confidence. Dynamically interacting elements highlighted how bodily awareness supported emotional management and strengthened confidence in daily functioning and movement.

Integration of body and mind through self-compassion, moderation, and awareness encouraged psychological stability and graceful aging in the physical, cognitive, and emotional realms beyond physical enhancement. Participants experienced these shifts as bodily changes from tension and doubt to comfort, awareness, and trust, not technical improvements.



Table 2 Participant-Reported Changes in Proprioceptive Awareness, Movement Experience, and Embodied Confidence:

Participant	Health Condition	Proprioception & Movement-Related Changes Reported	Experiential (Cognitive-Emotional) Responses	Interpretive Proprioceptive Insight
Nu	Leg issue	Greater single-leg stance, expanded movement range, smoother transitions, and less perceived bodily strain	Increased sense of calm, focus, and increased confidence in managing bodily movement	Heightened/refined postural awareness and coordinated control
T	Former stroke survivor	Improved sense of movement continuity, clearer perception of asymmetry between sides of the body	Reduced tension and greater confidence when engaging in daily activities	Enhanced awareness of symmetrical balance and alignment
P	Herniated disc	Increased precise awareness of limb positioning and improved lower-body stability	Reduced bodily tension and a growing sense of ease in movement	More accurate sensing of joint position and balance
N	Severe back pain	Improved alignment in the lower-body and more controlled transitions between movements	Heightened awareness of breathing and greater emotional steadiness	Increased sensitivity to subtle changes during movement
S	Physically healthy	Enhanced sitting posture and overall alignment	Greater awareness of the breath-movement connection and reduced mental strain	Improved perception of pose and balance in stillness and movement
LY	Physically healthy	Improved posture control and spatial orientation	Increased body awareness and calmness during fatigue	Strengthened kinesthetic awareness, movement confidence
Th	Physically healthy	Gradual improvement in limb positioning and fluid movement	Greater relaxation and emotional regulation	Enhanced postural stability & proprioceptive control
J	Leg and hip accident	Increased awareness of safe limb engagement and effort	Reduced stress and improved mobility confidence	Improved joint position awareness, effort regulation, self-confidence

Note: The original data had been used to assess participant characteristics, but descriptions and interpretations were altered to emphasize lived bodily experience and proprioceptive awareness.

From Table 2, all participants improved proprioceptive awareness, including balance, alignment, coordination, and effort regulation, through mindful movement. Along with these changes, attentional stability, relaxation, and daily task confidence improved. These findings demonstrated that proprioceptive awareness was seen as a developing, embodied process, supporting Objective 1 and emphasizing its role in embodied confidence in daily life.

Table 3 Thematic Coding and Interpretation

Theme	Core Insight	Mindfulness Reflected	Illustrative Codes & Quotes
Theme 1: Attention Awareness of Posture (Joint Position Sense)	Re-sensing body position and alignment gradually through sustained, attentive awareness	Mindful awareness and present-centered attention	Improved posture/ more stable upright posture and balanced standing ("Now I can Stand Up by Myself." - LY); Awareness of uneven shoulders ("I Noticed My Shoulders weren't Level." - T); Weight shifting to prevent fatigue ("I know I Need to Shift Weight." - S); Secure sitting and standing ("I can Sit and Stand Without Holding On." - Nu)
Theme 2: Regulated Movement and Emotional Calm (Movement Sense)	Coordination movement with attention and breath, allowing motion to become more continuous and at ease	Focused attention and steady concentration	Coordinating breath with movement ("Breathing with Movement Makes Me Calm." - N); Smoother transitions; More fluid transitions between movements ("I can Stretch More Easily Now." - Th); Unhurried continuity ("I Feel Unhurried." - N); Sustained awareness during movement ("No Distraction." - J)
Theme 3: Effort Modulation and Self-Compassion (Force Sense)	Regulating effort through breath-guided awareness, fostering balanced and non-straining engagement	Balanced effort and compassionate self-regulation	Noticing tension and ease ("Effort Just Right." - LY); Reducing strain ("Stretch without Tension." - S); Breath-guided effort regulation ("Breathing Slowly Helps Regulate Effort." - LY); Accepting limits ("I don't Force Myself Anymore." - P)

Note: Themes and illustrative passages were derived from the original dataset; However, the coding, categorization, and interpretation reflect the present study's focus on proprioceptive awareness and embodied experience.

Key Area: Proprioceptive Awareness and Embodied Confidence through Mindful Movement

From Table 3, three related themes emerged regarding the development of proprioceptive awareness and embodied confidence, which corresponded to objective 1. Though not preset, these themes showed the intervention's sequential framework from postural awareness to movement coordination to effort modulation. These areas emerged inductively from participant experiences. The first theme, Attentional Awareness of Posture, emphasized weight distribution and body alignment to improve postural stability and daily independence. The second theme, breath and movement,



was combined in regulated movement and emotional calm to improve coordination and emotional stability. The third theme, Effort Modulation and Self-Compassion, emphasized how breath awareness improved muscular effort regulation, reduced tension, and promoted balanced, gentle physical involvement.

Participants discussed slowly re-sensing their bodies through sustained, focused observation, modulating muscular effort through moment-to-moment bodily awareness, and synchronizing breath with movement for more effortless movement. The dataset was then examined for lived physical experience and proprioceptive awareness, yielding the following interpretations. The changes were noticeable in daily life. T found and fixed unequal shoulder alignment, S shifted weight to avoid fatigue while standing, and LY stood alone without assistance. These findings supported Proske & Gandevia (2012), who claimed that proprioceptive feedback improves postural control and movement coordination. This study showed that participants became aware of these changes in real time, whereas previous research mostly described them as physiological adjustments. Youkhana et al. (2016) found yoga improved older adults' balance and mobility. These current findings supported previous evidence and showed how individuals internalized these benefits as more ease, lower worry, and improved movement control.

This phenomenological insight suggests that performance and how safe, at ease, and confident individuals feel during daily tasks are used to measure improvement. In objective 2: Interpretation through the Buddhadhamma framework is shown in calm posture observation, breath-guided movement, and compassionate effort regulation, reflecting participants' accounts in mindfulness, right effort, and concentration. Further, as shown in Table 3, each proprioceptive awareness domain matches a mindfulness principle. Participants described these experiences as mindfulness, patience, and compassion for their bodies, not exercise. Observing tension without reacting, changing effort without force, and maintaining focus without strain reflect mindfulness in lived bodily practice. These regular movements and physical attentiveness demonstrate mindful awareness. A study showed that posture-breath awareness caused neuroplastic changes that regulated emotional and cognitive regulation, according to contemplative movement programs like Training for Awareness, Resilience, and Action (Blom et al., 2014). This process, like Buddhist meditative clarity, involves self-reflection based on sensory awareness and clear experience perception, according to Hagen & Bhavanani (2025). These processes are experiential, relational, and cognitive or neurological, according to this study. Participants reported being more patient, less self-critical, and more accepting of their physical limits.

In objective 3: Embodied awareness and confidence in daily life, participants consistently connected better posture, smooth mobility, and moderate effort with emotional calmness, less fear of falling, and enhanced confidence. As shown in Table 2, these findings also reflected the physical, cognitive, and emotional changes reported by participants. Nu reported improved self-efficacy and single-leg balance. Former stroke survivor T experienced increased symmetrical awareness and movement confidence. Others described feeling more stable, calm, and comfortable with daily activities. These results showed that confidence developed gradually through repeated experiences of safe,



controlled, and attentive movement. These results supported the Active Aging framework, which underscores psychological well-being, functional independence, and fall prevention. This current study supports explaining how confidence manifests in real-world situations: Participants reported feeling less fear when standing, walking, or changing posture; Moving with less hesitation; And trusting their bodies more. According to Buddhadhamma, participants achieved emotional and physical steadiness through patience and loving-kindness. Integrated body awareness, emotional control, and compassionate self-care help build confidence along with physical strength. Together, these findings suggest that mindful movement not only improves function, but it also changes individuals' body relationships. Instead of uncertain engagement, participants were more grounded, peaceful, and trusting in their bodies. This study suggests that mindful movement redefines proprioceptive awareness for emotional stability, attentional control, and aging body confidence. This shift may help older adults improve their mobility to live more comfortably, dignifiedly, and confidently in their everyday lives.

Originality and Body of Knowledge

This study demonstrates that proprioceptive awareness is a lived and trainable process that develops attention, effort regulation, and emotional stability, advancing multidisciplinary understanding. This study is novel because it shows that proprioception can be understood as a bodily-psychological process rather than a physical improvement. Contrary to the traditional approaches that view proprioception as natural and physiological, mindful movement is able to consciously develop this mechanism and transform how individuals interact with their bodies. Three interconnected contributions clarify this novelty.

First, the conceptual integration contribution clarifies the transition from physical perception to self-confidence. This study links posture, movement, and effort to mindful awareness, balanced effort, and emotional regulation, in contrast to prior research that has often examined proprioceptive components separately. By combining sensory processes with attentional and affective control via a coherent, experience-based pathway, this model provides conceptual integration and practical interpretability. Second, the empirical contribution highlights lived change experience, while earlier research focused on mobility and equilibrium. In addition to enhanced function, participants reported feeling more aware, less tense, and more trusting of their bodies due to proprioceptive development. Thus, lived experience is emphasized alongside performance outcomes. Third, the study contributes a transferable practical pathway for application, conceptualizing proprioceptive development as a progressive sequence: Breathing and posture awareness, movement awareness, effort regulation, and embodied confidence. Instead of separate or technique-specific effects, this sequence is novel since it can be trained and transferred to real-world health and rehabilitation situations. This progression shows proprioceptive training as a continuous process rather than a collection of isolated methods. As illustrated in Figure 2, this pathway operates as a dynamic, repetitive process with reinforcing feedback loops rather than a linear sequence. Posture, movement, and effort shape the development and maintenance of attentive awareness (*Sammā-sati*).



Focusing on posture and breathing increases body and movement awareness, which helps regulate gentle effort and boosts confidence. Importantly, this growth displays a trusting relationship with the body as well as physical improvement. Embodied confidence reinforces mindfulness (Sammā-sati) and bodily awareness, creating a dynamic, iterative feedback loop in the model, as shown by the dashed line. In this study, embodied confidence refers to a lived sense of trust, calmness, and self-assurance emerging through heightened bodily awareness and regulated movement. It represents the experiential outcome of this iterative process, in which posture, movement, and effort are progressively refined through mindful attention. This model reframes aging as a developmental process rather than inevitable decline, in which awareness, balance, and confidence can be cultivated through sustained attentive movement, fostering self-trust and ease in daily life.

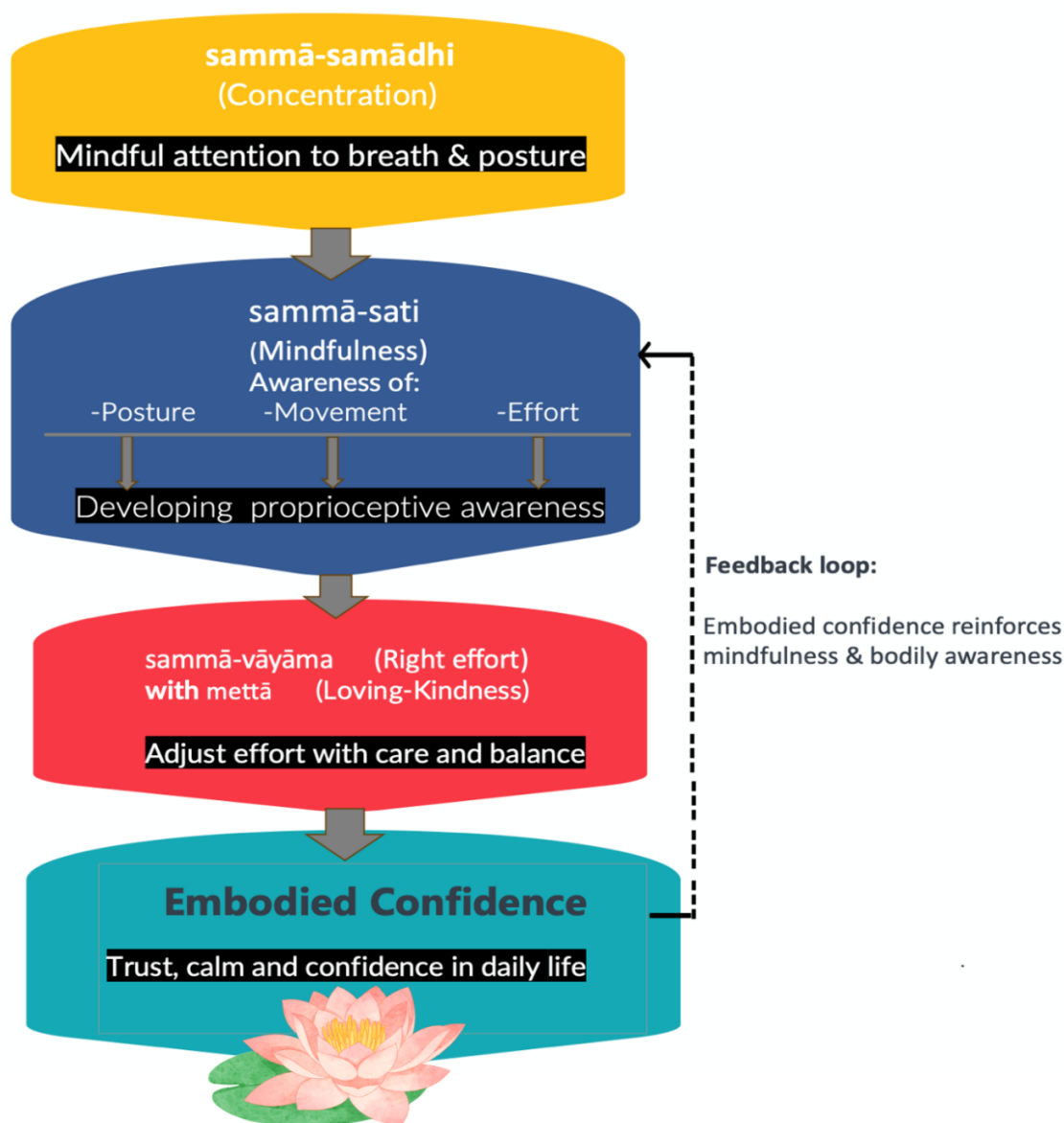


Figure 2 Buddhaddhamma Pathway to Embodied Confidence



Conclusions and Recommendations

This study finds that older adults perceive proprioceptive development as three interrelated processes: Postural awareness, regulated and calm movement, and careful effort modulation. Increasing mental stability and also body trust, which show physical and lived experienced changes. Specifically, this embodied awareness helps participants get up, walk, and balance with less hesitation, fear of falling, and control. Thus, confidence is a perceived sense of stability and ease in daily movement, which appears at behavioral (Increased Willingness to Participate in Daily Activities Independently), psychological (Reduced Anxiety and Increased Self-efficacy), and physical (Improved Balance and Coordination) levels. In practical terms, the findings recommend mindful movement techniques that emphasize posture and body alignment, slow, breath-coordinated movement, and gentle effort regulation without strain in health promotion and rehabilitation programs. Brief, structured sessions (30-60 Minutes, 2-3 Times Per Week) that emphasize directed awareness over physical performance can be used in community or clinical settings. Trainers who guide older adults to recognize and modify their bodily experience rather than focus on performance may help them gain confidence by gradually exposing them to terrifying movement situations. Future research should examine how attention, awareness, and effort management affect balance, fall risk, and functional independence. In particular, to examine how bodily awareness shifts increase confidence, fear reduction, attentional control, and self-efficacy. More diverse and larger samples are needed to evaluate this technique across cultural and health contexts. Longitudinal and mixed-methods designs explain how embodied confidence develops, how it can be sustained, and whether it leads to long-term behavioral change and improved quality of life.

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