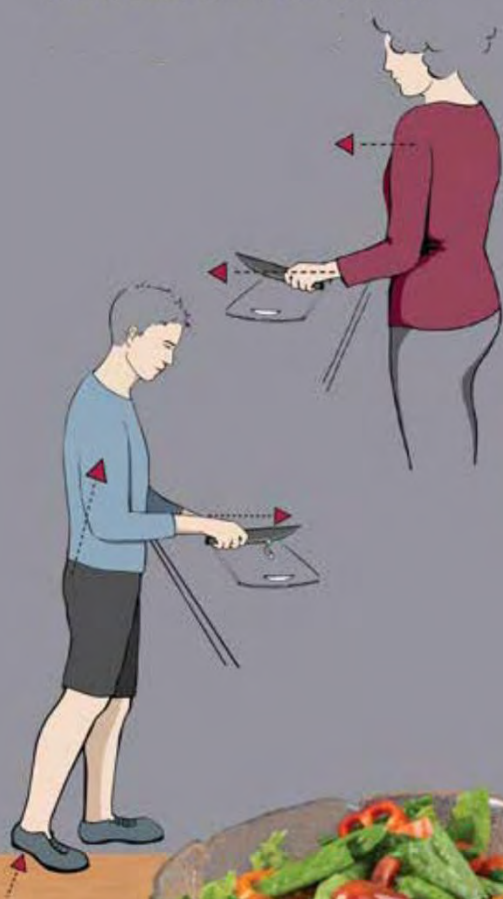


# Leyla Josef

# Cook

# & Move

RECIPES  
and  
SMART MOVEMENTS  
for JOYFUL COOKING



# Cook & Move

Leyla Josef

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# Introduction

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Ever since I can remember, I have always been ready to try, smell and taste almost every type of food. Food is woven into every cell of my body. For my academic studies, I chose Food Engineering, which became my profession for many years. I worked in various food industries, primarily as a new product developer. Developing innovative products and ideas was part of my professional output.

At the same time, I cooked at home for family members and friends. My cooking is influenced by the South American environment where I grew up, the Middle Eastern cuisine that surrounds me daily, my parents' heritage (Switzerland and Austria), and other global culinary influences that are easily accessible nowadays. I have tried many recipes, adapting some of them to each family member's taste and creating new recipes in the process. Some of those attempts ended up in the trash, while others became great successes.

Over the years my body began complaining about assorted ailments. To feel better, I enrolled in different classes such as Yoga, Pilates, "Organic Movement", "Movement Intelligence", Qi gong, Paula Method and more. Years of practice helped me, but I felt that something was missing. Therefore, I began delving into the theory. I read books, studied movements, and became an "Organic Movement" and "Movement Intelligence" teacher. During those years, I learned how body awareness could improve my daily activities and make them easier to carry out. I realized how important it is to take intentional breaks to re-examine how I perform a certain activity and then find ways to do it more easily and efficiently. I discovered simple series of movements that helped me keep doing what I want to do.

I suggest you explore one of the most important principles right now: paying attention.

**Please pay attention to the way you are holding your book:**

- Is the way you hold your book comfortable for you?
- How is your breathing?
- Is your mouth open, slightly closed or contracted?

Did these questions lead you to hold your book differently? Change the way you breathe, or make you smile?

One day, while I was studying one of the "Movement Intelligence" segments, I watched a cooking TV program in which an Italian woman was preparing artisan, handmade pasta. I noticed that not only did her hands and fingers move, but her whole body participated in the kneading. She was dancing with the dough! The following day, I found myself analyzing how I was cutting. Could I hold the knife differently? Could I help the hand by including other parts of my body? Could my legs and feet also help me cut?

These questions were the seeds that led me to cook in a different way. From these seeds, many ideas sprouted about how to feel better while cooking.

Usually, during cooking, we gather ingredients, bring out the best tools and gadgets, and then begin to cut, cook or bake. However, we do not pay attention to who coordinates the whole process: our body. Naturally, we use it, but do we use it wisely, efficiently, and with care?

We are sensitive to a missing smidge of salt in a dish, but are we sensitive enough to feel the beginning of a backache or some other body discomfort? And when we feel it, what do we tend to do then? Do we ignore it and continue with the chores? Do we cook until we drop?

For years, I chose, created and collected short “exercises” which I named “movement explorations” as they are not traditional workouts. The aim of these explorations is to make us pay attention to the way we move, try different options and choose whichever one is most suitable at any given moment.

These explorations have become so rewarding that nowadays, I can’t cook any other way. While preparing the meals, I take short breaks to do some “movement explorations”, improve or simplify an activity, or just pay attention to a particular part of my body. Even when friends arrive for dinner and time is pressing, I slow down to check how I am using my body while cooking, trying different ways to cut, stir or stand.

As this approach helped me so much, I started sharing my experience with friends. Now, with this book, you will also be able to enjoy your cooking much more. I am offering you the best of my own experience. I weighed every ingredient and moved every bone in my body. I chose the juiciest apples for the recipes and the freshest herbs for the movement explorations.

With this book, you will build your own personal and practical toolbox, filled with movements that you can draw upon to best support the activity you want to perform.

I invite you to cook in a different and innovative way. I encourage you to integrate a new element into your cooking, to add a fresh spice to your kitchen: sensitivity towards yourself, enhancing the use of your body while cooking.

## **What will you find in this book?**

The book has 101 recipes and 101 movement explorations grouped into 20 chapters. Each chapter begins with an introduction and continues with recipes for a particular type of dish (salads, soups, cakes, etc.). For each recipe, you will find a movement exploration on a specific topic (cutting, breathing, chest, standing, etc.).

In each introduction, you will find a commentary on the movement explorations, a description of the recipes and a personal story or historical background.

The recipes are varied and include dishes from different cuisines (Mediterranean region, Europe, Venezuela and more). Each recipe is accompanied by a movement exploration, and at the end of each exploration, you will find an enriching sentence that summarizes the main idea behind the proposed exploration or a recommendation.

The movement explorations cover a variety of topics:

- Activities done during preparation: such as kneading, cutting, rolling, mixing and more.
- Actions performed in the kitchen, but also in daily life: such as bending, getting up from a chair, breathing, reaching out and more.
- Attention to different areas of the body: such as chest, pelvis, hands and more. These movement explorations will increase your familiarity with your body, making those parts more available for performing various activities.
- Special explorations: such as conscious eating, games for brain flexibility, and even suggestions for refining your smile.

Most movement explorations contain illustrations. Please take note of the following points:

- The illustrations are for clarification and are not intended for imitation.
- When the image faces you, your right side is the left side of the image, and your left side is the right side of the image. When the image is shown from the back, your right and left sides align with the image's sides.
- The gender of the images was chosen arbitrarily. Everyone is invited to try any of the movement explorations.

***Pick a recipe and taste a movement exploration.***

***Enjoy every dish and every movement delicacy.***

# Cooking Guidelines

## Safety

---

In the kitchen there are hazards and risks that you must be aware of and act accordingly to avoid damage or injury.

Some risks related to the work environment: slippery floor, fire, hot utensils, hot food, sharp knives.

Some risks related to food: contaminated or spoiled foods or ingredients, presence of foreign bodies.

Some health-related risks: ingredients you are allergic to or are not suitable for you for various reasons. If you have any doubts, consult a doctor.

## What can be done?

---

If there are ingredients in a recipe that you do not like, or are not suitable for your health, or any other reason, replace them or prepare another recipe.

## Planning

---

To work efficiently, it is recommended to read the recipe first, make sure that all the ingredients and tools are available, and prepare some of the ingredients in advance (weighing, cutting, etc.) The professional culinary term for this organization is *Mise en place*.

## How much? For how long?

---

How much salt, black pepper, hot pepper, spices, or lemon should you add?

Add according to your personal preference or that of your guests.

To achieve the best results, it is recommended to taste the dish several times during its preparation. If you are concerned about tasting uncooked meat, you can cook or fry a small amount and taste it. For tasting uncooked eggs, you could use pasteurized eggs or cook or fry a small amount first.

How long to cook or bake?

The cooking and baking times in the book are recommendations and should be adjusted to the heat intensity of your stove, your type of pot or pan, and your specific oven.

The recipes in this book were prepared using the turbo function for baking (convection oven / oven with fan), unless otherwise stated.

## Creativity

---

Once you have become familiar with a particular recipe or with one of the suggested variations, you are invited to make changes to add your personal touch.

## Joy

---

Do not forget! The goal is to enjoy the cooking process, and of course, enjoy the food.

# Movement Exploration Guidelines

## Safety

---

Be attentive and gentle with yourself.

Perform the movements gradually and be careful not to reach the limit of your ability.

Do not make movements that cause pain or discomfort.

If you have any doubts, consult a doctor.

## What can be done

---

If you experience any difficulty, try to make smaller movements, perform them slowly, visualize the movements, or choose another movement exploration.

## Planning

---

Before you start, have any necessary accessories ready.

When trying a new movement exploration, read all the steps first.

Imagine the movements, and once they are clear in your mind, you can perform them.

## How many times?

---

How many times should you perform a certain movement?

The way you perform a movement is more significant than the number of repetitions. Therefore, you can repeat a movement as much as you want, even when it is not indicated to repeat it or do it back and forth. Do each repetition with attention, not automatically. Remember to avoid any discomfort. Between repetitions, take a breath and start each movement as if it is the first time you are doing it.

When should you pause between movements?

When you pay attention to your body, it will signal when it needs a pause.

How many times can you do a movement exploration?

As many as you want. When you listen to your body while performing the movements, you may discover new nuances and refine the movements even further.

## Creativity

---

Once a movement exploration is clear, you can come up with other movements that will support the activities you want to perform.

Any discovery can turn the movements into a beneficial experience.

## Joy

---

Find joy in exploring your body's abilities and in discovering easier ways to move and cook.

# SALADS



# Salads

---

The first chapter is dedicated to movement explorations related to vegetable preparation.

In this chapter, I suggest exploring different ways to hold a knife, learning how to connect with your breath when an action becomes difficult, and experimenting with different parts of the body to make cutting and preparing vegetables easier.

Once you learn to notice how your body can perform an activity efficiently, you will be able to apply those insights even in situations where the conditions are not ideal, such as when you do not have the proper knife. The purpose is to perform daily activities with less effort and more enjoyment.

This way you can create your own personal toolbox filled with diverse movements that you can draw upon at any necessary moment.



**While practicing these movement explorations, it is important to pay attention to the safety instructions to avoid injury. Be aware of both hands, not just the one holding the knife. Think of the hands of musicians, whose coordinated movements create beautiful music.**

For this chapter, I have collected several recipes that combine vegetables, leaves, herbs, fruits, and meat.

Each salad has a unique combination of ingredients, making it suitable as a first course, a side dish, or a main dish.

The last recipe is an invitation to encourage children to eat vegetables by playing with shapes and colors. You are invited, together with your children, to use the imagination to stimulate the appetite.

A brief history of the salad:

The salad's journey began when prehistoric humans gathered green leaves for food. Later, after humans began living in permanent settlements, they cultivated vegetables and improved their flavor by adding ingredients such as oil, vinegar and salt. The small ingredient is actually the source of the word "salad." The Latin word for salt is "sal," and the word salad derives from it, making it a contribution of the Romans.

Over the years, the salad has evolved. Today, with the addition of diverse ingredients and toppings, the possibilities for preparing salads are endless.

## Tips

- Adjust the amount of each ingredient and the dressing according to your own preference.
- Sometimes the movement exploration can be adapted to a seated position. Do this if you usually sit while preparing food.

# Roasted Eggplant Salad with Orange Juice

---

*Roasted eggplant cubes absorb the citrus dressing beautifully, creating a fresh and flavorful salad. It is best to prepare it a day in advance.*

## Baking utensil

Rimmed baking sheet,  
10 × 15-inch

## Ingredients (2–3 servings)

### For the eggplant:

1 large eggplant (about 1 lb / 450 g), cut into ¾-inch cubes

½ tsp salt

2 tbsp olive oil

**Before and during chopping explore “How the Torso Can Help Us Cut.”**

### For the dressing

¼ cup orange juice

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed

½ tbsp olive oil

Salt and black pepper, to taste

### Topping

1 tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

## Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Line the baking sheet with parchment paper. Toss the eggplant with the olive oil and salt, spread in an even layer, and bake for 20 minutes. Stir and bake for 10–15 minutes more, until golden brown. Transfer to a bowl.
2. Whisk together all the dressing ingredients. Pour over the warm eggplant and toss to coat.
3. Cover and refrigerate for 10–12 hours, or overnight, stirring once or twice. Garnish with parsley and serve cold or at room temperature.

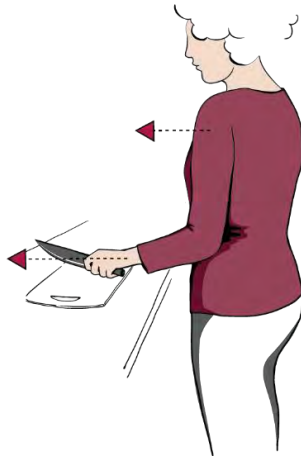
## Variations

- ▶ Use 1 small eggplant and 1 medium zucchini.
- ▶ Replace parsley with other herbs, such as cilantro, basil, thyme or Moroccan mint.

## How the Torso Can Help Us Cut

The torso includes the shoulder girdle, chest, abdomen, pelvis, back and spine.

*If your dominant hand is your right hand, reverse the hands and sides in the instructions below.*



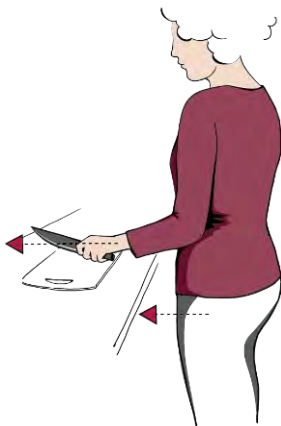
- Stand at the counter and make a few cutting motions with the knife on the cutting board, without any food.
- Rest your left elbow and upper arm (the knife-holding side) against the ribs on your left side.
  - Make several cutting movements without losing contact between the elbow and the ribs.
  - Make long strokes, as if cutting an eggplant lengthwise.

**Notice:** Which parts of the body move, besides the hand? The shoulders? The chest? The pelvis?

- Keeping contact between the elbow and the ribs, let your left shoulder lead the hand forward as the knife moves, then return to start. Repeat several times.

**Notice:** In which direction does the chest move?

- Keeping contact between the elbow and the ribs, let the left side of the pelvis lead the hand forward. Move the pelvis closer to the counter, then return to start. Repeat several times.



- Release the arm and cut a few more times, letting shoulder, chest and pelvis lead the hand together.
- Set down the knife, step away from the counter, and take a few steps. Then return and cut the eggplant.

**Notice:** Do you feel any movement in your torso while cutting? Has any lightness been added to the cutting itself?

**When the torso moves together with the cutting movement, the hand may become less tired and the cutting may become**

# PASTA



## Pasta

---

### What is the best way to stir?

Which parts of the body can lead the stirring? The fingers? The hand? The elbows?

Is it possible to include the chest? The feet as well?

Be curious and explore all the options presented in this chapter.

In the last movement exploration, you will dance with water. The intention is to simulate the lightness and smoothness of gently flowing water within your chest. Try to feel this lightness in your chest while performing various activities, such as washing dishes.

### Pasta with vegetables? With or without cream? With meat?

It is easy to combine pasta with a wide variety of ingredients. In this chapter, you will find pasta recipes with a variety of sauces and vegetables. The last recipe is a convenient one-pot meal consisting of pasta with meatballs in tomato sauce.

### Where did pasta originate? Italy? China? The Middle East?

It depends on how we define the term pasta. Is it any food made by mixing flour with water or eggs? Does the type of flour matter? Does the method of preparation define what pasta is? Is pasta only boiled, or can it also be baked or cooked on a hot surface?

Sometimes questions awaken curiosity and encourage us to explore, learn, enrich knowledge, and enjoy the process of discovery.

There was a time when people believed that Marco Polo brought pasta to Europe after his travels in the Far East, but today we know this is inaccurate. Findings prove that the Greeks and Etruscans made very similar products long before the birth of Marco Polo, who probably brought noodles made from rice.

### Tip

- In every activity you perform, your attention can be directed to different parts of your body. This may enrich the way you move and help you perform tasks with less effort. If you add playfulness, you may also find greater enjoyment.

# Pasta with Roasted Vegetables and Cream

---

*A colorful pasta dish with roasted vegetables in a creamy herb sauce.*

## Baking utensil

Rimmed baking sheet,  
10 × 15-inch

## Ingredients (2–3 servings)

### Roasted vegetables

1–2 sweet potatoes, (about  
1 lb / 450 g), peeled and cut  
into ½-inch cubes

2–3 zucchini (about 1 lb /  
450 g), cut into ½-inch cubes  
2 tbsp olive oil

¼ tsp salt

8 oz (250 g) ribbon pasta  
(e.g. tagliatelle)

### Sauce

½ tbsp butter

2–3 garlic cloves, finely  
chopped

½ cup heavy cream

½ cup dry white wine

1 tsp fresh thyme (or ⅓ tsp  
dried)

½ tsp salt

## Preparation

1. Roasted vegetables: Preheat oven to 400°F. Line the baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the vegetables on the baking sheet, drizzle with the olive oil, sprinkle with the salt, and toss to coat. Spread the vegetables in a single layer and bake for 25–30 minutes, until tender but not overly soft. Remove any vegetables that cook faster than the rest.

2. Cook the pasta according to package instructions.

*Before and during cooking, explore “The Elbow Leads the Stirring.”*

3. The dish: Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, about 30 seconds. Add cream, wine, thyme, and salt; stir, cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, 5 minutes.

4. Add the pasta and roasted vegetables to the skillet and toss to combine. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, 1–2 minutes. Adjust seasoning and serve.

## Serving suggestion

- Sprinkle with grated hard cheese, such as Parmesan, before serving.

## The Elbow Leads the Stirring

*If your dominant hand is your left hand, reverse the hands in the instructions below.*



- Pour lukewarm water into the cooking pot and imagine there is pasta inside.

- Stir with a large spoon, as you would to keep pasta from sticking.

- Gently hold your right forearm with your left hand, near your right wrist, underneath the forearm.

- Make several stirring movements without letting the forearm move.

**Notice:** the movements in your wrist and hand.



- Gently hold your right forearm with your left hand, with your left hand close to your right elbow and resting on top of the forearm.

- Make several stirring movements while letting your left hand lead the movement of the right forearm.

**Notice:** Does the elbow move through space? What other parts of the body can help the right arm and hand to move? The shoulders? The shoulder blades? The torso?

- Lower your left hand and stir with the sensation that your right elbow is leading the movement. Repeat several times.

- Stir naturally, then bring the water to a boil and cook the pasta.

**Notice:** Did the stirring become easier?

- Bring the water to a boil and cook the pasta.

**You can vary a movement  
by changing the body area that leads it.**

# JAMS



## Jams.

---

When we were kids, we used to travel to visit my paternal grandmother in Switzerland. She was a great cook, and one of the treats was her delicious homemade jams. To choose one of the many jams she had prepared, we had to go down into the building's basement, where her storage space was on the lowest shelves. My brother and I would argue over which jar would be opened that day. Since her shelves were the lowest ones, we spent quite some time sitting on the floor until we agreed on a choice.

In tribute to those searches among the low shelves, I have dedicated this chapter to different ways of organizing the body to reach low shelves or drawers. There are many ways you can try, including the use of props that allow you to perform this task more easily. It is worth exploring the many options presented in this chapter and choosing a different position each time. If you need to stay in one position for a long time, remember to vary it.

While classic jams contain equal amounts of fruit and sugar, I prefer to use less sugar and keep them stored in the refrigerator. I usually cook small batches, which allows me to have a greater variety of them.

I have chosen three jams from my personal collection for this chapter:

“Mango Jam with Scented Geranium”: Mango originated in Asia, while scented geranium originated in Africa before becoming common in Europe. Thanks to its availability and its rose-like fragrance, scented geranium has become popular in many cuisines. I grow scented geraniums on my balcony, so they are available all year round.

“Grilled Apricot Jam”: Although the apricot season is short, it is well worth waiting until the fruit reaches its peak aroma.

“Disguised Pineapple Jam”: This is a rich brown jam with little gems of pineapple pieces tucked inside. To keep the jam from becoming too dark, part of the sugar is white sugar.

## Tips

- Use ripe and high-quality fruit.
- Use a heavy pot with a thick bottom so the heat is distributed evenly, and the jam does not burn easily. If you decide to cook larger quantities, choose a wide pot for even cooking and faster evaporation.
- Add a little oil to reduce the amount of foam created during cooking.
- It is best to sterilize the jars, but if not possible, fill them with boiling water and empty them before adding the jam (this approach is outlined in the recipes).

# Mango Jam with Scented Geranium

---

*Rose-scented geranium gives this mango jam a delicate floral aroma.*

## Ingredients (makes 2–3 jars, 8 oz each)

3 medium mangoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes, or 1½ lb (650 g) frozen mango, thawed and cut into ½-inch cubes

1 strip orange peel, 4 inches long

½ cup orange juice

1¾ cups (12 oz / 350 g) sugar

1 tsp vegetable oil

6–8 rose-scented geranium leaves

## Preparation

1. Place a small plate in the freezer. Combine mango, orange peel, orange juice, sugar and oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot. Stir well. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a gentle bubbling. Cook uncovered, stirring occasionally (or as needed to prevent scorching) for 20–30 minutes, until the jam starts to thicken. Remove the orange peel and add the geranium leaves.
2. When thickened, remove the pot from the heat and check whether the jam is ready (see below).
3. When the jam is ready, remove the geranium leaves. Fill pasteurized jars with the hot jam, leaving a ½-inch headspace. Wipe the rims clean, tighten the lids, and invert the jars.

## Explore “Accessing the Lower Cabinets.”

Cool to room temperature, then store in the refrigerator.

## How to check if the jam is ready

Spoon a little jam onto the cold plate. After a few seconds, when the jam has cooled, run a finger through the center of the jam to create a gap. If the gap stays open, the jam is ready. If the jam runs and fills the gap, cook 3–5 minutes and test again.

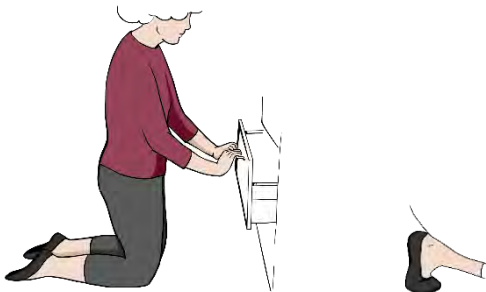
## How to pasteurize jars

Fill the jars completely with boiling water and pour boiling water over the lids. Let stand 20 minutes. Empty the jars and place them upside down on a wire rack to dry.

## Accessing the Lower Cabinets



Do not try the suggested positions if you experience discomfort in your knees or other parts of your body.



### Standing on two knees

Bend at your hips, knees and ankles to come closer to the floor. Lower one knee to the floor, then the other. Rest on both knees with your shins on the floor.

In this position explore more options:

- Place the tops of the feet on the floor.
- Curl the toes under.



### Standing on one knee

Kneel on your right knee and place your left foot on the floor. Lower the back of your right thigh toward your right calf, to the point where it feels comfortable.

- Switch between the legs: Place your left shin on the floor and stand your right foot.



### Sitting on the shins

Place your shins on the floor and stand on your knees. Slowly lower your buttocks toward your heels, to the point where it feels comfortable.

In this position explore more options:

- Place the tops of the feet on the floor.
- Curl the toes under.
- Vary the distance between your knees.



### Squatting

Stand and bend your hips, knees and ankles to come closer to the floor. Lower your pelvis so that your buttocks get closer to the floor. Let the pelvis tilt slightly forward while the back stays long.

In this position explore more options:

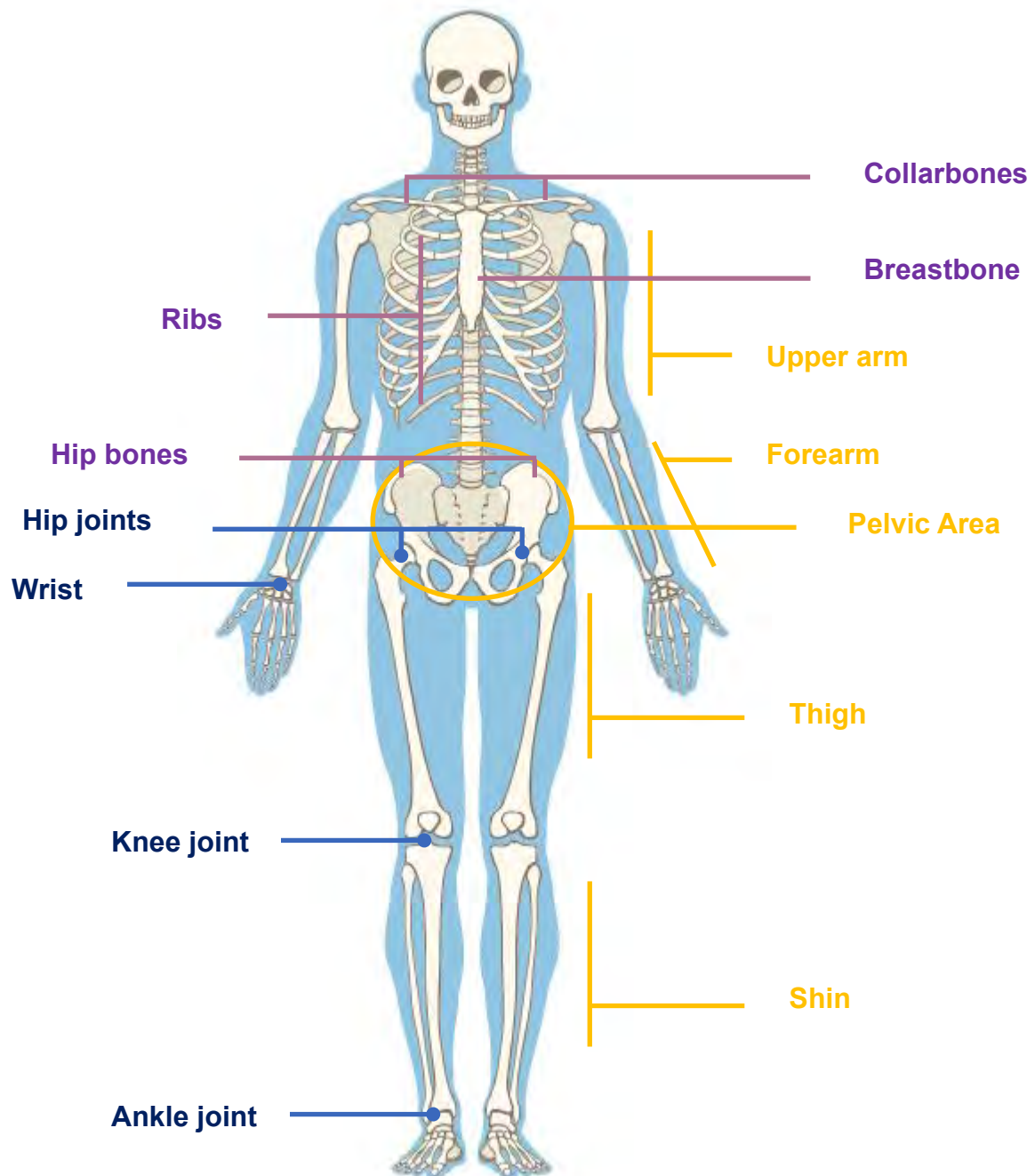
- Vary the distance between your knees.
- Vary the distance between your feet.

***Diversity is the spice of movement.***

# Anatomical Terminology

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## Skeleton – Front View



### Color Key

Purple: Bones

Blue: Joints

Yellow: Body Areas

## The book that will change the way you cook!

*Did you know that when your body's center moves along with your cutting motions, your hand tires less easily, making the task much smoother?*

*We are used to following recipe guidelines or drawing inspiration from them, savoring the development of flavors and textures. But do we ever pay attention to the main character: our own body?*

"Cook and Move" connects body and food even before the very first bite.

While preparing food, such as when cutting vegetables, we can observe and explore our posture. We can notice how our hands find support from the shoulders and pelvis, and experience a sense of lightness when even our feet participate in the movement. All this comes from simply paying a little attention, each time, to a different part of the body.

In this book, you will find 101 unique and surprising recipes to enrich your kitchen's repertoire, ranging from a savory tahini spread with orange and roasted pistachios to a refreshing mojito flan.

Facing each recipe, you will find an invitation to explore movements that make cooking easier and more enjoyable. Most of these movement explorations are accompanied by clear illustrations, making them easy and intuitive to follow.

With this book, you will build your own practical and personal toolbox of movements, ready to draw upon whenever you need to support your next action.



Leyla Josef is a food engineer, a teacher of "Organic Movement" and "Movement Intelligence".



Throughout her career as a new product developer, she created several highly successful food products that became household favorites. Her life journey through different countries enriched her experiences and deepened her appreciation of diverse cuisines. At the same time, Leyla spent years studying and deepening her knowledge in a variety of movement methods.

All of these experiences have come together into this unique book, where her two loves, movement and cooking, meet.