



Dear Readers,

A lot of you are writing us about the horrible tsunami in Southeast Asia.

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The horrible tsunami late last year happened when an undersea earthquake (A) sent shockwaves through the oceans and the seabed. The quake happened when a tectonic plate moved. The plate is like a giant floating puzzle piece of our planet's crust.

Some geologists believe one plate slipped under another one by as much as 60 feet. That would make the planet a tiny bit smaller around. If so, that would speed up the rotation of the Earth by around 3 1/1,000,000ths of 1 second. This can also be said as 3 *microseconds* faster rotation per day – a shorter day, every day.

Tsunamis are planetary events, caused by the planet, affecting everyone on the planet in one way or another. We used to call them tidal waves, but these giant waves are not caused by tides. They are now called tsunamis, a name that began in Japan.

Undersea landslides or undersea earthquakes form a tsunami, and they can travel great distances at high speed. The Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami traveled 3,300 miles from Sumatra to the west coast of Africa in about 7 hours.

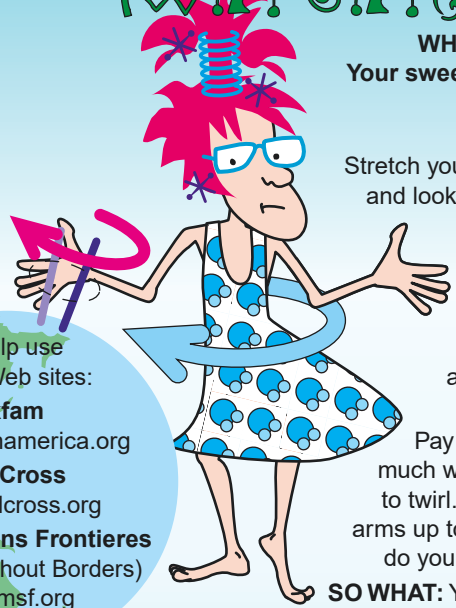
Jax Place
Jax Place

Another planetary change has to do with the tilt of the Earth's axis. As we travel around the sun every year, the North and South poles of the planet travel in a 33-foot-wide circle. This is called *wobble*. The earthquake that caused the tsunami made the circle of wobble about 33 feet, 1 inch, adding about an inch.

To help use these Web sites:

- Oxfam**
www.oxfamamerica.org
- Red Cross**
www.redcross.org
- Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders)**
www.msf.org

Twirl! Girl! (Guys, Too)



WHAT YOU NEED:
Your sweet self - room to groove

WHAT TO DO:
Stretch your arms out wide and look around to make sure you won't knock anything over.

With your arms *out wide* twirl around as fast as you can.

Pay attention to how much work you're doing to twirl. Then bring your arms up to your chest and do your fast twirl again.

SO WHAT: Your second twirl was a lot faster. That's what happened to the planet (on a much smaller scale) when the plates overlapped in the earthquake and the planet got a bit smaller and twirls a bit faster.

P.S. from Beakman: If there is one thing good that can come from the tsunami, we hope it's the reminder that all the things that live on this planet are connected to the planet and to each other.

