

# CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY

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## Craniosacral Therapy

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Craniosacral therapy is a gentle form of bodywork based on releasing restrictions in the CranioSacral system to help people achieve their highest levels of physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It was developed over a twenty-year period by Dr. William Sutherland, an osteopathic physician intrigued by the movement of different bones in the skull. He discovered that by exerting gentle pressure on selected areas of the skull or the rest of the body, a Craniosacral therapist can effectively treat chronic pain, lowered vitality, recurring infections, and dysfunctions affecting the head, spine, and whole body.

## **Origins of Craniosacral Therapy**

Craniosacral therapy developed from cranial osteopathy, the origin of which dates back to the 1890s, when Dr. Andrew Still founded the osteopathic profession. Distraught by the death of his wife and two children from meningitis and not knowing whether the disease or the mercury used to treat them was responsible, Dr. Still began an intensive study of anatomy and non-drug-based healing ways. He realized everything in nature was ordered: that the body functions as a unified whole; structure and function are interrelated; the body has an inherent self-corrective mechanism; and that drugs can be harmful. Based upon these principles, Dr. Still founded the first osteopathic college.

Dr. Still's star student was William Sutherland. Dr. Sutherland was intrigued by the idea that the bones of the skull were structured to allow for movement. For more than twenty years he explored this concept, eventually developing a system of treatment...

In 1970 osteopathic physician John E. Upledger observed the rhythmic movement of the CranioSacral system during surgery. Dr. Upledger and his colleagues could not find an explanation for this mysterious movement.

After studying the work of Dr. Sutherland, Dr. Upledger worked to scientifically confirm the mobility of the cranial bones and the subsequent existence of the CranioSacral system. From 1975 to 1983, he served as clinical researcher and a professor of biomechanics at Michigan State University. There he supervised a high-level team of anatomists, physiologists, biophysicists, and bioengineers to test and document the

influence of therapy on the CranioSacral system.

This team developed the theoretical PressureStat Model to describe how the CranioSacral system functions. Dr. Upledger's continued work in the field resulted in the further development of CranioSacral therapy, including a ten-step protocol used to alleviate a range of conditions.

## **Insights Through Touch**

The CranioSacral system consists of the central nervous system, brain, and spinal cord, as well as the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds and protects the cord. The central nervous system interconnects with the connective tissue that surrounds it, which in turn interconnects with all other bodily structures. Functionally there is one uninterrupted tissue sheath from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. Therefore, CranioSacral therapists are highly trained in sensing through touch a restriction in your system and determining how it affects other areas in your body. For instance, practitioners believe a restriction in your leg might have a profound effect on your lower back, shoulder, neck, or even head. CranioSacral therapists are highly trained in sensing through touch to track, identify and release root restrictions affecting....

How does CranioSacral therapy work? First, as cerebrospinal fluid filters into the CranioSacral system, pressure builds. As the amount of fluid increases, the increased pressure forces the fluid to travel down the spinal cord. As the fluid moves, the membranes surrounding the fluid and the interconnected fascial tissue of the entire body pulse in a rhythmic fashion, normally at a rate of six to twelve cycles per minute. It is this rhythm that the therapist monitors when evaluating and performing a CranioSacral therapy session.

One unique feature of CranioSacral therapy is its emphasis on very delicate palpation. Therapists are taught to use, appreciate, and develop profound insights through applying a very light, gentle touch—generally the pressure is equal to the weight of a nickel. It is believed that this light touch allows the therapist to receive as much information as possible from the patient's body, and to interact in a respectful, highly therapeutic manner.

Another distinction of CranioSacral therapy relates to its facilitation of the body's self-corrective ability. CranioSacral therapists believe engaging body restrictions with a

gentle touch can break down tissue, emotional, and energetic blocks to self-release. CranioSacral therapy is not a manipulative therapeutic modality in which therapists impose what they think should happen on their patients. Rather, therapists are trained to follow their patients' bodies to facilitate their own healing process.

CranioSacral therapy aims to be very direct yet highly respectful of the patient. A gentle touch directed toward a patient's primary restrictions is believed to provide profound access to the very fabric of an individual's being. This respect for the patient's own healing abilities reflected through touch creates a safe environment for people to frequently access deep, non-conscious parts of themselves they may have blocked or simply couldn't access by themselves.

The training of a therapist's touch by the CranioSacral therapy technique is recognized as a profound foundation for advancement in manual therapies, massage, and therapeutic bodywork.

### **Practicing CranioSacral Therapy**

A typical session of CranioSacral therapy lasts forty-five minutes to an hour. The client is fully clothed and lies on a comfortable, padded table. In a very gentle manner, the therapist evaluates the patient by testing for CranioSacral motion in various parts of the patient's body. Experienced practitioners are able to feel the CranioSacral rhythm anywhere on a patient's body. They

can quickly gain valuable information by palpating the CranioSacral motion for rate, amplitude, symmetry, and quality.

Lack of CranioSacral rhythm or an asymmetrical CranioSacral rhythm is used to locate problems throughout the body. The problem may be any type that causes loss of natural physiological responses, pain, trauma, adhesions, neurological and orthopedic disorders, systemic disease processes, and others. The therapist's job is to restore the symmetrical CranioSacral motion to problem areas. As the asymmetry is eliminated and normal physiological motion is restored, the problem is being or has been alleviated.

### **Benefits of CranioSacral Therapy**

Craniosacral therapy has been used to improve the functioning of the brain and spinal cord, to alleviate pain and the effects of stress, and to enhance general health as well as resistance to illness and disease. It has been especially effective for conditions such as migraines, hyperactivity, chronic neck and back pain, TMJ pain and dysfunction, chronic fatigue, eye difficulties, stress and tension-related problems, scoliosis, emotional difficulties, motor-coordination impairments, central nervous system disorders, learning disabilities, childhood developmental disabilities, and many others.

### **The following is a list of some of the common conditions addressed:**

Arthritis	Digestive Problems	Lethargy	Spinal Curvatures
Asthma	Drug Withdrawal	Menstrual Pain, PMS	Sports Injuries
Autism	Dyslexia	Migraine	Stress Related Illnesses
Back Pain	Exhaustion	Post-Operative	Tinnitus and Middle Ear
Birth Trauma	Fall or Injury	Problems During and After	Problems
Bronchitis	Frozen Shoulder	Pregnancy	TMJ(jaw) Disorders
Cancer	Hormonal Imbalances	Reintegration After	Visual Disturbances
Cerebral Palsy	Hyperactivity	Accidents	Whiplash Injuries
Colic	Immune System Disorders	Sciatica	
Depression	Insomnia	Sinusitis	

For More Information about whether Craniosacral Therapy can help you,  
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