

WHAT IS CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY?

by Michael Kern, DO., R.C.S.T., M.I.Cr.A., N.D.

Life and motion.

Life expresses itself as motion. At a fundamental level of our physiological functioning all healthy, living tissues subtly "breathe" with the motion of life - a phenomenon that produces rhythmic impulses which can be palpated by sensitive hands.

The presence of a subtle rhythmic motion in the body was discovered by osteopath Dr William Garner Sutherland about 100 years ago, after he had a remarkable insight while examining the sutures of disarticulated cranial bones. Contrary to popular belief, Dr Sutherland realised that cranial sutures were, in fact, designed for movement. He undertook many years of research during which he demonstrated the existence of this motion, and concluded that it is produced by the body's inherent life force, which he called the *Breath of Life*. Furthermore, Dr Sutherland realised the motion of cranial bones is closely connected to an integrated network of tissues and fluids at the core of the body that includes the motion of cerebrospinal fluid, the brain and spinal cord, the membranes surrounding the central nervous system and the sacrum.

Essential ordering forces.

The Breath of Life produces a series of rhythms in the body that make up a subtle physiological system, called the *primary respiratory system*. The ability of tissues to express their natural rhythmic motion is a critical factor in determining their state of health, due to the fact that the primary respiratory system carries the essential forces which maintain our physiological balance and order. These forces act as a fundamental blueprint for health which can be seen in operation as far back as the time of our early embryological development. As long as this *original intention* is able to find expression, health will result.

Inertial patterning.

However, the body becomes patterned according to how our intrinsic resources of health are able to deal with any stresses that we may experience. Any unresolved tensions, strains and traumas create sites of inertia in the body which may accumulate over time. These sites affect the natural expression of primary respiratory motion and so hinder our ability to function. Common causes of inertia are physical injuries, emotional and psychological stresses, birth trauma and toxicity. The body thus becomes a unique expression of our health, history and conditioning. As a result of unresolved inertia, events are imprinted in the tissues like video tape which may keep replaying whenever stimulated.

Through the development of subtle palpatory skills, the craniosacral practitioner can read the story of the body by sensing the patterns and qualities of primary respiratory motion.

The intention in craniosacral therapy is to help free any areas of inertia so that the ordering forces of the Breath of Life find expression in the tissues. When this happens, it is marked by the restoration of balance and symmetry in primary respiratory motion and a return to normal functioning.

A gentle facilitation.

Craniosacral therapy is a hands-on approach that involves "listening with the fingers" to the body's subtle rhythms and any patterns of inertia and congestion. The emphasis of treatment is to encourage and enhance the body's own self-healing and self-regulating capabilities, even in the most acute resistances and pathologies.

The work is very gentle and non-invasive. Subtle suggestions are introduced through the practitioner's hands to help restore balance in areas that have been affected by inertia. With this skilful touch the practitioner can assist the body to resolve patterns of disorder, thereby encouraging a revitalisation of tissues with the healing forces of the Breath of Life. Furthermore, the quality of therapeutic presence of the practitioner can become a reflective mirror for the patient and their potential for change.

A holistic approach.

Craniosacral therapy takes a whole-person approach to healing. The inter-connections of mind, body and spirit are acknowledged, as well as how the body reflects experiences and retains the memory of trauma. It is an effective form of treatment for a wide range of illnesses, helping to create the optimal conditions for health, encouraging vitality and facilitating a sense of well-being. Craniosacral therapy is suitable for people of all ages, including babies, children and the elderly, and can be effective in acute or chronic cases.

Some conditions that commonly respond well to treatment include:

Asthma	Emotional problems	Learning difficulties
Back and neck pain	Facial pain	Menstrual pain
Birth trauma	Frozen shoulder	Muscular aches and pains
Chronic fatigue	Headaches and migraines	Sciatica
Colic	Hearing problems/tinnitus	Sinusitis
Depression	Hormonal imbalances	Spinal curvatures
Digestive problems	Hyperactivity	Stress-related conditions
Dizziness	Infertility	TMJ/jaw disorders
Dyslexia	Insomnia	Visual disturbances

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BENEFITS OF CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY

- Reduces pain and stress in your body.
- It allows the muscular and skeletal systems to relax.
- Relieves tension of the mind.
- Relieves aches and pains from overuse injuries.
- Improve your immune system
- Increase in vitality

CONDITIONS CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY ADDRESSES

- Migraine headaches
- Stress and tension related problems
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Infantile disorders
- Traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries
- Chronic fatigue
- Motor co-ordination impairment
- Vertigo
- Chronic neck and back pain
- Central nervous system disorders
- Overuse injuries/Sports injuries
- Orthopedic problems
- Scoliosis
- Emotional difficulties
- Temporomandibular joint syndrome (TMJ)
- Learning disabilities

- Post traumatic stress disorder
- ADD/ADHD
- Autism
- Depression
- Tortocolis (wry neck)
- Ear, nose, throat and eye problems
- Vision disturbances
- Abuse - physical, mental, sexual, alcohol

PURPOSE

The purpose of Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy is to restore Health and well being to both the therapist and their clients. This is a spiritually based therapy that has the capacity to find the cause of somatic dysfunction and to shift one's perspective towards wholeness. Soma – as we refer to it here – is the totality of lived experience in the body.

The Biodynamic approach focuses on orienting to the forces of Health that are preexisting within the body's own fluid physiology. This was perhaps Dr. Sutherland's greatest contribution: his observation that the effect of the Breath of Life as a Primary Respiration has the capacity to correct dysfunctions in the fluid body and soma. A therapist who has the ability to be respectful, open-hearted, gentle and loving with both their touch and their whole being facilitates this kind of healing. While the therapist is freed from needing to fix or repair the client, improvements in specific conditions may occur as a natural effect of the treatment.

This body of knowledge is able to relate with most dysfunctions in the soma if the therapist and client are willing to be still and sense the potency of Primary Respiration moving through them. In this model, illness is viewed as a loss of sensory contact with the Divine and natural worlds. Thus, the therapist skillfully acknowledges the client's dilemma while listening for the Health that centers the disturbance. The therapist who has seeing, thinking, knowing hands and a big heart can experience this.

(Michael Shea)

Migraines & Headaches
Chronic Neck & Back Pain

Motor-Coordination Impairments
Stress & Tension-Related Problems
Infantile Disorders
Traumatic Brain & Spinal Cord Injuries
Chronic Fatigue
Scoliosis
Fibromyalgia
Central Nervous System Disorders
Emotional Difficulties (not a substitute for psych care)
TMJ Dysfunction (TemporoMandibular Joint)
[Autism](#) (click on link)
Learning Disabilities
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Orthopedic Problems
And Many Other Conditions (including arm & leg injuries)

An Etiologic Model for Autism

The following model was first formulated based upon hands-on experience with autistic children, historical information gained from their parents, observations of the children's behaviors, their responses to treatments, and our laboratory results.

During the normal, physical growth period of the child's brain and cranium, it is necessary that the meningeal membranes that line the cranial vault and cover the surface of the brain grow and expand in synchrony with the growth of these structures in order to accommodate the natural maturation process. For some reason the meningeal membranes, especially the dura mater, lose their accommodative growth abilities, thereby disrupting the normal expansion of brain and cranial vault. This loss of accommodative quality of the dura mater is most likely due to biochemical changes in its make-up. These biochemical changes may be the result of febrile stressor episodes for any reason, such as viral infections, vaccine reactions and so on.

The manual stretching of the restrictive dura mater by the use of CranioSacral Therapy techniques has provided impressive improvement in autism. The therapy must be continued until the child has reached full growth, because once the dura mater has lost its accommodative ability, it must be physically stretched by a therapist. CranioSacral Therapy accomplishes this task non-invasively by using the various related bones to which the dura mater attaches as handles to stretch the membranes.