

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

CranioSacral Therapy

By Katherine Larter, CST

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Sometimes all the body needs to activate the healing process is a gentle touch by a skilled hand – one that can read the body's signals and perceive where an underlying restriction may be inhibiting proper functioning.



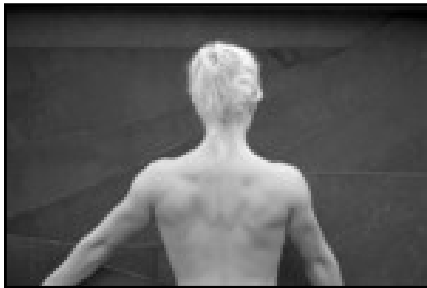
I have traveled a very long and diverse road in pursuit of better health. Challenged with environmental illness for most of my life, a cancer survivor and coping with anesthetics and surgery too many times left my nervous system on high alert for an exceedingly long time. Through CranioSacral Therapy I not only found the calm within but my immune system is stronger than it has been for years—I have never felt better. It has been truly life changing.



CranioSacral Therapy works by helping the body's natural healing mechanisms dissipate the negative effects of stress on the central nervous system. This is accomplished through utilizing a physiological body system called the craniosacral system, which maintains the environment in which the central nervous system functions. It consists of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord, extending from the bones of the skull, face and mouth (which make up the cranium) down to the tailbone area (or sacrum). The role of this system in the development and performance of the brain and spinal cord is so vital that an imbalance or dysfunction in it can cause sensory, motor and/or neurological disabilities.

Like the pulse of the cardiovascular system, the craniosacral system has a rhythm that can be felt throughout the body. Using a touch generally no heavier than the weight of a nickel, skilled practitioners can monitor this rhythm at key body points to pinpoint the source of an obstruction or stress. Once a source has been determined, they can assist the natural movement of the fluid and related soft tissue to help the body self correct. This simple action is often all it takes to remove a restriction.

Because of its influence on the functioning of the central nervous system, CranioSacral Therapy can benefit the body in a number of ways—from bolstering overall health and resistance to disease to alleviating a wide range of specific medical conditions.



Among CST's largest patient groups are those suffering chronic symptoms that haven't been aided by other approaches. In particular, CST is beneficial to those with head, neck or back injuries resulting from an accident—be it from a car, sports or work mishap or from a fall. The extremely light touch involved in the application of CST makes it a safe approach as well for children, infants and newborns with early traumas, including birth trauma. They especially can benefit from the timely identification

and release of restrictions in the craniosacral system, thereby preventing future difficulties such as learning disabilities or hyperactivity.



Another area of principal effectiveness is with stress related dysfunctions. Insomnia, fatigue, headaches, poor digestion, anxiety and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) dysfunction are just a few examples. CranioSacral Therapy works to reverse the debilitating effects of stress by providing the conditions in which the nervous system can rest and rejuvenate. In fact, it's this capacity to reduce stress that's leading an increasing number of people to include CST as part of their wellness programs.

Other conditions for which CranioSacral Therapy has shown to be effective are various sensory disorders. Among these are eye motor coordination problems, autism, dyslexia, loss of taste or smell, tinnitus, vertigo and neuralgias such as sciatica and tic douloureux.

There are certain situations where application of CST would not be recommended. These include conditions where a variation and/or slight increase in intracranial pressure would cause instability. Acute aneurysm, cerebral hemorrhage or other preexisting severe bleeding disorders are examples of conditions that could be affected by small intracranial pressure changes.

Response to CST varies from individual to individual and condition to condition. Your response is uniquely your own and can't be compared to anyone else's—even those cases that may appear to be similar to your own.

CranioSacral Therapy and SomatoEmotional Release are the most profound work I've experienced. SomatoEmotional Release, a component of CST works to release the emotional energy. Sometimes during a trauma the physical strain and stress is placed in the soft tissue and the emotions get placed there as well. Using the body to effect emotional release is exceptionally healing. This process is especially comforting to those who have or who are presently working to overcome the emotional and physical trauma of cancer.



CranioSacral Therapy primarily facilitates processes that enhance the body's innate abilities for natural healing. The therapy focuses on removing restrictive forces and obstacles related to the craniosacral system. Enhancing the mobility of the craniosacral system improves the circulation of both blood and CSF to the brain, spinal cord, pituitary gland, pineal gland and the cranial nerve systems, among other things.



Improving fluid motion and exchange specifically enhances the functions of the brain; spinal cord; autonomic control systems; visual, auditory, olfactory and gustatory sensory systems; motor and motor coordination systems; endocrine system; and the immune system. Less directly, it seems to affect all other body systems; therefore, it is exceptionally useful for most chronic conditions and as a preventive measure.

As I previously mentioned, CranioSacral Therapy was life changing for me. You see, not only has my health greatly improved—I am now the only certified CranioSacral Therapist in Nova Scotia. Not many people had heard of CST when I started my business Nova Vista CranioSacral Therapy three years ago in Fall River. However, today my practice is full time and I teach a CST ShareCare program at the Nova Scotia Environmental Health Centre. Life is good!

I feel privileged to work as a CranioSacral Therapist and to assist others in discovering better health.

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