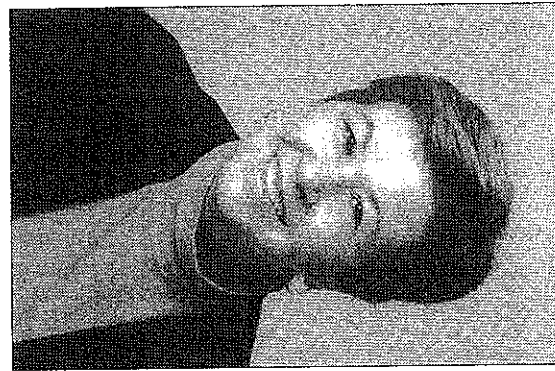


# The Hands of a Healer:

## CranioSacral Therapy

by Jill DeDominicis



**O**ur body is home to many complex systems and organic rhythms, each of which keeps our body functioning properly and efficiently. One of our body's major structures is the craniosacral system, an arrangement that consists of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surround and protect the spinal cord and brain. It is so dubbed because the system extends from the bones of the skull, face and mouth, or the cranium, down to the tailbone, or sacrum area. This system plays an imperative role in influencing the performance and development of the brain and spinal cord and maintains the environment in which the central nervous system functions. If an imbalance or restriction exists at any point in the system, motor, neurological, or sensory complications can ensue.

Some 25 years ago, osteopathic physician John E. Upledger witnessed the rhythmic movement of the craniosacral system during a spinal surgery. By combining this unexplained phenomenon with new findings that skull bones were not fused, but instead continued to shift throughout a person's life, Upledger and a team of physiologists, biophysicists, and bioengineers documented a form of therapy for this system, leading to what we call CranioSacral Therapy today.

It is similar to what one might imagine chiropractic to be without the cracking. CranioSacral Therapy uses light touch healing to detect and correct brain and spinal cord malfunctions. It is a very gentle and non-invasive technique, perfect for addressing scoliosis, chronic pain, motor impairments, and other health issues.

Mary Ann Kelley (HHP, CHI, and CST) of Triune Holistic Health Care is a San Diego practitioner who offers many bodywork treatments, with a specialization in CranioSacral Therapy. She is well informed about the processes and complexities of the body through her years of experience, and I was gracious when she began our session by explaining the basics of the craniosacral system and therapy, an introduction I find essential to a good bodywork session, as it heightens the patient's awareness.

Mary Ann explained that the body holds memory and that any kind of trauma, even a slight and unnoticed bump on the elbow, can leave its imprint on the body. By "listening" to the rhythm of the craniosacral system with her hands, Mary Ann can use this pulse to pinpoint any imprints or sources of stress. I was surprised at the lightness of her touch as she listened, which she said needs to be no more than a mere five grams (the weight of a nickel) for her to locate and assist the movement of the fluid and soft tissue. An obstruction can have its own emotional counterpart, and often times Mary Ann integrates SomaticEmotional Release Therapy. This, however, requires complete cooperation on the patient's part, and it is always their choice to decide if they are ready to enter that therapeutic territory.

The information Mary Ann "heard" from my system impressed me; she was able to note my slight scoliosis and resulting difference in the length of my legs, a tendency for headaches, and a slight ear irritation that had sent me twice to the doctor, only to leave frustrated with a bottle of antibiotics in hand.

CranioSacral Therapy can address a host of health problems, and is particularly effective in treating trauma from car or sports injuries, sensory disorders, and stress-related dysfunctions such as fatigue, insomnia, poor digestion, and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) ailments. The light touch also makes it a safe alternative for children and infants with early traumas. The results from the therapy can be a relief to many who experience real and significant pain, yet repeatedly leave the doctor's office after being told they are perfectly healthy.

I found my time with Mary Ann to be very relaxing, even more so than any massage I've experienced, and by the time I left, my neck had lost its tightness and gained new mobility, and my hips had been re-shifted so that my legs met equally. What I enjoyed most about this was the sensation that my body was performing the work and righting itself, rather than being forced into unnatural positions. Mary Ann explained that this is the foundation of CranioSacral therapy, saying, "I believe very strongly in the body's innate ability to heal itself, of everything, from headaches to serious illnesses like cancer. This is not to say I cure cancer—I don't—I simply allow the body the space it needs to heal itself." With Mary Ann's help, our bodies can undergo a natural healing process to restore its own optimum functioning level, and increase its health and resistance to disease.

To learn more about CranioSacral Therapy, or any of Mary Ann Kelley's other services, contact her at 619/200-3639.

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