

CranioSacral Therapy

Following the Body's Cues

by Becky Peeling, APR

temporomandibular joint syndrome (TMJ), learning disabilities, stress and tension-related problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, orthopedic problems and other health challenges.

Tension Released

In a typical session the client, dressed in loose clothes, lies on a table and relaxes while the practitioner evaluates the cranioSacral system using very light pressure. The techniques are so subtle it may appear at times that the therapist isn't moving at all. Clients may simply feel tensions and restrictions release during the session, which generally lasts 30 to 60 minutes.

The effects of CranioSacral Therapy can occur during the session or hours, even days, later. Most clients report feeling relaxed after the treatment, while some may notice that old discomforts surface as the body self-corrects.

Practitioner Training

CranioSacral Therapy has gained rapid recognition and is now one of the fastest growing and most widely appreciated complementary therapies available. Most practitioners are health care workers who study the technique as post-graduate continuing education. They include massage therapists, physical and occupational therapists, osteopaths, physicians, acupuncturists, chiropractors, psychiatrists, psychologists, dentists and nurses.

CranioSacral Therapy is often incorporated with other therapies. Practitioner training is offered across North America. There are six levels of training, each involving four or five days of academic work and hands-on supervised practice.

Further Information

Your Inner Physician and You, by John E. Upledger, DO, OMM, describes CranioSacral Therapy in greater detail and offers numerous case histories. The book is available in stores or through The Upledger Institute.

To locate a practitioner of CranioSacral Therapy, Upledger's International Association of Healthcare Practitioners publishes a directory listing clinicians by province, area code, licence and level of training. Contact The Upledger Institute at 800-233-5880 or go to www.upledger.com

Spa Life

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By enhancing the body's self-healing abilities, CranioSacral Therapy has been shown to help alleviate a wide range of conditions. They include headaches and migraines, chronic neck and back pain, brain and spinal cord injuries, chronic fatigue, motor co-ordination impairments, scoliosis, central nervous system disorders, emotional difficulties,

Practitioners of CranioSacral Therapy essentially facilitate the resolution of obstacles that the body's normal, self-correcting forces have been unable to overcome. Rather than deciding how the correction should be made, the therapist follows cues from the body. This gentle approach is extremely safe and effective in most situations.

Benefits of CranioSacral Therapy

Dr. Upledger formed The Upledger Institute in 1985 to educate the public and health care practitioners about the benefits of CranioSacral Therapy. Widely available in Canada and the United States, the therapy is growing in acceptance worldwide.

Dr. Upledger's curiosity led him to the work of Dr. Sutherland, and to develop his own scientific studies to confirm the existence of the cranioSacral system. This work went on from 1975 to 1983, while he served as a clinical researcher and professor of biomechanics at Michigan State University. The findings of the research team he supervised there first established the scientific basis for the cranioSacral system.

Another osteopath, John E. Upledger, is credited with developing CranioSacral Therapy. While assisting during a surgery in 1970, he observed a rhythmic movement of the dura mater, the membrane that encompasses the brain and spinal cord, that neither his colleagues nor medical texts could explain.

The original concepts for what is now known as the cranioSacral system were put forth by osteopathic physician William Sutherland in the early 20th century. Dr. Sutherland's studies culminated into a system of treatment known as cranial osteopathy.

CranioSacral Therapy is a gentle, hands-on technique that helps identify the causes of pain and dysfunction and encourages the body to self-correct. The therapy involves the cranioSacral system, which includes the membranes and fluids that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. The system extends from bones of the skull, face and mouth, which make up the cranium, down to the sacrum or tailbone area.

