

CRAYONS ON CRANIUMS

CranioSacral Therapy

A world-class diver with vertigo recovers from this disorienting condition and goes on to win an Olympic bronze medal. A famous actress with stress-related temporomandibular joint (TMJ) syndrome successfully manages the pain and discomfort in her upper jaw. A woman with a history of miscarriage and having a hard time conceiving attributes her recent successful pregnancy to a series of weekly treatments. A young boy suffering from recurring night terrors sleeps soundly for weeks straight after a single session. What are all these people experiencing to help them recover from these conditions? CranioSacral Therapy (CST).

What is CranioSacral Therapy?

CST is a gentle osteopathic technique for evaluating and enhancing the function of your body's craniosacral system—the system comprising the membranes and fluid that protects your brain and spinal cord. CST bolsters your body's natural healing processes to improve the operation of the central nervous system, dissipate the negative effects of stress, enhance health and well-being, and strengthen resistance to disease.

CST helps detect and correct imbalances that can cause sensory, physical, motor, or intellectual dysfunctions, such as:

Chronic fatigue syndrome; Chronic neck and back pain; Eye problems; Fibromyalgia; Migraines and headaches; Scoliosis; Stress and tension-related problems; TMJ; Traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries.

In newborns, infants, and children, it has been found to be effective against such disorders as:

ADD/ADHD; Autism; Birth traumas; Colic; Developmental delays; Ear and hearing dysfunctions; Floppy baby syndrome; Misshapen heads; Motor coordination problems; Palsies and spasticity; Seizures; Sensory integration disorders.

Because of the gentle nature of this work, CST is ideal for babies, small children, the elderly, and adults in fragile or acutely painful conditions.

How CST Works

Injuries, traumatic events (including

birthing), muscle strain, and every-day stress can cause irregularities in the craniosacral pulse, which in turn blocks the free flow of fluid in and out of the brain's membrane system. Such blockages can occur throughout the body via the connective tissue network, resulting in physical aches and pains, acute and chronic disease, and emotional or psychological disturbances.

Today, CST is practiced by a wide variety of healthcare practitioners, including osteopaths, medical doctors, chiropractors, acupuncturists, physical and occupational therapists, bodyworkers and massage therapists. Unlike chiropractic or physical therapy, CST utilizes a very soft touch, generally



no greater than the weight of a nickel. Unlike osteopathy, CST focuses on the membrane system as opposed to the sutures in the skull. Using the bones of the skull as handles to access the membranes below, practitioners are able to release restrictions and positively affect the craniosacral and central nervous systems.

Other CST techniques include tissue unwinding, dialoging, and SomatoEmotional Release. As a result, this unique form of bodywork can be profoundly relaxing, exhilarating, deeply moving, or involve the resolution of old issues. It can effect not only profound structural change within the body, but also mental and emotional change.

Take the case of Onar Bargior, as reported in the Spring 1996 *Massage Therapy*

Journal. Onar suffered severe cerebral circulation impairment, intracranial hemorrhage, and encephalopathy. At age 1, he was diagnosed with infantile cerebral paralysis, spastic diplegia, and hypertension-hydrocephalic syndrome. He could neither stand nor sit without assistance. Doctors deemed him unsuitable for corrective surgery and rehabilitative care because of his severe spasticity and psychomotor delays.

When he was four years old, Onar began a 10-day intensive CST therapy program at the Upledger Institute in Palm Beach Gardens, FL. After the first day of treatment, his mother reported that he had slept well throughout the night—a rarity. As therapy progressed, she noted an increased appetite, decreased spasticity, awakening without crying each morning, and increased range of movement in all joints. On the tenth day, Onar could open and reach with his right hand, sit cross-legged, and put himself into kneeling positions. The decreased spasticity enabled him to eat and speak easier. He continued receiving craniosacral therapy on an outpatient basis, making even more progress. He was able to sit for longer periods of time and crawl with reciprocal movement. Further, he displayed clarity of emotion and obvious projections of love, something not seen before the therapy.

The difference between a conventional approach and using CST in the treatment of health disorders lies in the goal of therapy. Conventional treatment focuses on managing or often masking the symptoms. The goals of CST are to uncover the root causes of the affliction, lessen or remove them, and encourage the body's natural healing process to take over.

CST has been featured in *Time* magazine, *The Oprah Magazine*, *USA Today*, on CNN, and in countless healthcare journals. The power of the work has been confirmed by research studies and clinical work for over 20 years, namely through the efforts of Dr. John Upledger, founder of the Upledger Institute. Articles and case studies featuring Upledger's work, including Onar's writeup, can be found at www.upledger.com.

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