

What is CranioSacral Therapy?

Terri Ehlert, MiddleEarth Wellness Center

Phone: (780)418-8346; Website: MiddleEarthWellness.com

CranioSacral Therapy (CST) is a gentle hands-on treatment which improves health through enhancement of the craniosacral system by treating and addressing connective tissue restrictions. It is a soothing and gentle method that encourages your own healing mechanisms to release the negative effects of stress on your central nervous system, providing benefits of improved health and well-being, and resistance to disease.

Pioneered and developed by osteopaths Dr. William Sutherland and Dr. John E. Upledger, CST is supported by extensive scientific research as well as decades of success in clinical therapeutic settings. As a result, CST has gained widespread acceptance in both the medical and lay communities as an effective therapeutic method.

The craniosacral system consists of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid which surround the brain and spinal cord. It extends from the skull to the tailbone area. The cerebrospinal fluid has its own rhythm and pulse and is referred to as the craniosacral rhythm. Anyone can learn to feel their own rhythm, which has a slow and deep pulse, and is often compared to the ocean and its tides. When you suffer physical or emotional trauma, the flow of the cerebrospinal fluid may get out of rhythm. Problems can arise when there are imbalances in the craniosacral rhythm, or restrictions in the membranes, both of which can have adverse effects on the nervous system.

So how does CST work? By paying close attention to the intelligence of the craniosacral rhythm, the practitioner can evaluate where there are restrictions in the body's tissues. This includes the structures of the craniosacral system as well as the connective tissues, muscles, joints and organs throughout the body. Then, while still following the intelligence of the rhythm, the practitioner uses a light pressure to carefully release the restrictions, while at the same time assisting the craniosacral rhythm to resume its natural movement through the area so healthy functioning can be restored.

Our body has an inherent self-correcting and self-healing ability, sometimes referred to as the "inner physician". Stress is a part of life. If we become stressed as a result of any number of causes, our self-healing/correcting ability can become overworked and eventually may break down. CST strengthens and revitalizes the "inner physician" by removing deep levels of stress in the body, allowing the natural capacity for self-healing to be restored.

Craniosacral treatments are received fully clothed on a massage table. During the treatment, Terri uses her hands to feel the symmetry, quality, amplitude and rate of the craniosacral rhythm and then follows a protocol to work with the person's system to allow for gentle releases and corrections. Some experiences the client may have during a session may include sensations of heat being released, gentle movements of the head or body, energy moving, or sometimes an area may begin to gently pulse. When tissues release long held tension patterns, sometimes there is a noticeable "unlocking" or

“unwinding” sensation. The general feeling of a CST session for most people is one of deep rest, relaxation and renewal.

Part of CST is a therapeutic effect called the “still point” where your body is able to slow down and release accumulated stress. This is part of every CST session. The good news is you can also learn to have a still point on your own using a very simple technique which takes about 15 minutes. This can be an invaluable tool for releasing day to day stress from your body and mind. You can order a Still Point Inducer from the Upledger Institute in Florida (email: upledger@upledger.com) or make your own following these instructions from the Upledger Institute.

The Device

To make your own Still Point Inducer 2 tennis balls are fastened together so that they are touching one another. The 2 balls can be placed in the toe of a sock which is then knotted tightly. In order to ensure that the balls stay in contact with each other, place the sock inside another sock and tie tightly.

Instructions

Recline on your back, on the floor or upon a sofa or bed. Place the device under your head so that the entire weight of your head rests on the two balls. They should be placed evenly with respect to the midline of your head about 1/3 the way “up” the back of the head near the top of the occipital bone (below the lambdoid suture). This is in a slight horizontal depression in the skull just above the attachment of the main neck muscles. The level is slightly above that of the ear openings. Allow the weight of your head to rest comfortably upon the device. You may shift position slightly in order to maintain comfort, but do so gently and gradually. Repeat daily.

Because the state of the Craniosacral system affects the health of your entire body, CST can benefit people with a wide variety of complaints. The following are just some of the problems that have been shown to improve as a result of CST:

- *chronic pain*
- *stress and tension-related problems*
- *chronic fatigue*
- *migraine and tension headaches*
- *fibromyalgia*
- *neck and back pain*
- *emotional difficulties*
- *nervous system disorders*
- *many other conditions*

CranioSacral Therapy strengthens your body’s ability to do what it does best ... take care of you. Soothe your body and mind with a gentle, renewing CST treatment. You’re worth it. Terri received her training from the Upledger Institute. To book an appointment call her at: 418-8346.