

The Craniosacral Rhythm

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A central part of learning CranioSacral Therapy (CST) is to learn to palpate the craniosacral rhythm (CSR) and to distinguish the CSR from other rhythms, mainly the rhythm of the respiratory system. The CSR was named so by Dr. Upledger in his work, creating a foundation for what we know worldwide as CST.

In CST and osteopathy in the cranial field, different rhythms have been associated with the cranial field and theorized to be involved in human health from a wide range of perspectives. Many rhythms are studied today and are known to be fundamental to life and health. Rhythms are a rich source of palpatory information in facilitating a CST treatment. How is this knowledge integrated into understanding the relationship between what happens in a CST treatment and our understanding of human health

The CSR is a rhythm in the range of 4-8 cycles/minute (cpm), slightly slower than the respiratory rhythm, generally observed in the 9-20 cpm. However, these rhythms may overlap at their upper (CSR) and lower range (respiratory). Rhythms slower than the respiratory rhythm in the 4-8 cpm have been identified in research in different fields and given other names (see below). The main thing is that the 4-8 cpm rhythm has been firmly documented to be part of the array of rhythms expressed by the human body and that the CSR is a palpable rhythm. For more theory of rhythms and CSR, see below.

Rhythms in Life and Health

On many levels, myriads of rhythmic processes occur at any time in the human body. Rhythms are a central part of life for the single cell and the unified human body. A rhythm is a movement in time, and we can have movements without life, but we cannot have life without movement. From conception to the last movement in our body, rhythms set the stage for our development, daily life, and health.

The human body exhibits a complex pattern of many rhythms that are the basis of life and interact in ways that, to a large extent, are unknown to science. New rhythms involved in our life processes and health are continuously being discovered.

We can imagine the spectrum of rhythms in the human body as a symphony that is being played, with each instrument playing its unique tones. Other instruments play their tones, and one instrument may lead while others follow, all creating harmonies in a landscape of different tones (rhythms), together creating a beautiful symphony. As we learn to palpate the respiratory rhythm, cardiac pulse, and CSR here in this class, we learn to tune in to some of the instruments played in the human body and get information about the instrument and how it is playing. The symphony played by the rhythms of life may be some of the most creative and beautiful music we can listen to.