

## CRANIAL SEA

The Cranial Sea is the Yin fluid aspect of the Sea of Marrow. It is palpable all throughout and around the body, as well as on all levels; physical, mental, emotional, psychological, psychic, astral, etheric ... The Cranial Sea is one of our connections to our deepest selves and to the entire universe. On a physical level, the Cranial Sea is the bones of the skull, the brain, the cerebrospinal fluid, and the dural tube, which surrounds the spinal nerves and the meninges. Hydrodynamically, the Cranial Sea is our whole body as the ebb and flow of our Cranial Rhythm. Electromagnetically, the Cranial Sea extends out of the edge of our electromagnetic field (measured to be up to hundreds of feet out from the body). Energetically, the Cranial Sea is the warp and woof of our universe.

“If the Sea of Marrow is abundant, vitality is good. The body feels light and agile and the span of life will be long. If it is deficient, there will be dizziness, tinnitus, blurred vision, fatigue and a great desire to be down.” Neijung, *Miraculous Pivot* - Chapter 33 (“The brain is the Sea of Marrow \_\_GV 20-GV16\_\_\_\_\_”)

As therapists, we have the ability to enhance the Sea of Marrow and keep it abundant. On a more profound level, we can enhance the Cranial Sea and be in harmony with the Tao. With our Qi, our intentions (Yi), our needles and our hands, we can listen to the Cranial Sea and balance one’s entire being (which is a reflection of the Shen, Hun, Zhi, Yi and Po). Communicate with this Sea to help balance and tonify one’s entire being.

The Su Wen said: “Without resonance, healing can not occur.” As acupuncturists and healers, our most direct connection to the Cranial Sea is with our hands. After we insert the needles in constitutional facial acupuncture, we have balanced the energies of the body and are in a perfect place to put our hands on our client’s cranium and resonate with the Cranial Sea to enhance their harmony with the Tao.

The Cranial Sea is a semi-closed hydraulic system with dura mater on the outside of the brain and spinal cord. Within this system, cerebral spinal fluid is produced in the choroid plexus, arachnoid villi and the central nervous system blood, capillaries and lymph. Cerebral spinal fluid circulates and is reabsorbed within this system. The Cranial Sacral System connects at Cervical 2 and 3 and blends with the periosteum of the sacrum.

CranioSacral Therapy utilizes the hydraulic system of the cerebrospinal fluid in the dural tube, which surrounds the brain and the spinal nerves. The cranial system has an 8 to 10 cycles per minute rhythm, which remains constant in a healthy individual. This is referred to as the Cranial Rhythm. The Cranial Rhythm can be influenced with light pressure of 3 to 5 grams. The craniosacral system reflects the physical, mental and emotional well-being of our being.

As one palpates the Cranial Rhythm, variations in the rhythm can be observed. These changes can have therapeutic value. The three most common changes in the Cranial Rhythm are:

1. Still Point – where the rhythm slowly stops

*Benefits of a Still Point:*

- Relaxes all the connective tissues of the body.
- Increases amplitude and symmetry of the Cranial Rhythm.
- Relaxes the sympathetic nervous system.
- Restores autonomy and flexibility of the sympathetic nervous system.

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## **Horse Stance and Body Rhythms**

- Stand in horse stance, feet shoulder width apart, knees bent, sacrum vertical, tongue on the roof of your mouth, shoulders relaxed, arms up with the second through fifth fingers aimed at each other at mid-chest level, thumbs pointed up, elbows down, relaxed breathing.
- Relax the body, mind and Shen.
- Next, put your hand on the sides of your chest. Feel the movement of your breath, the respiratory rhythm. Feel the beating of your heart, the cardiac rhythm.
- Then on a more subtle level, feel the Cranial Rhythm of three seconds expanding and three seconds contracting as if your whole body was arching backwards for three seconds and then coming inwards for three seconds as if there were a gentle wave pulsating up and down or in and out within your body.
- If you do not feel the Cranial Rhythm, lessen your contact. More than five grams of pressure will override the rhythm so it will disappear (eight or nine Serin J-Type individually packaged needles weigh about five grams).
- Let your hands learn without the mind. Put your brain in your Tan Tien.

## **History of CranioSacral Therapy**

- Cranial work started with Andrew Taylor Still, M.D., D.O. (1828-1917), the founder of Osteopathy. Dr. Still founded the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville, MO in 1892.
- The Four Concepts of Osteopathic Medicine are:
  1. The body is one whole.
  2. Structure and function are connected.
  3. Bodies can heal themselves.
  4. Drugs can be dangerous (Hg, AL, Ars, formaldehyde...)

- William G. Sutherland, D.O. (1873-1954) furthered Cranial Osteopathy. He was one of the first to work the movement of the cranial bones and the idea of sutural restrictions. He helped ones that others could not.
- Some of Sutherland's students who furthered his work were: Beryl Arbuckle, D.O.; Robert Fulford, D.O.; Viola M. Fryman, D.O.
- "I place my hands on the head; I feel the membranes wind up until they bust themselves loose. Sometimes it is so strong it knocks my hands clean off the head," Robert Fulford, D.O., Cranial Academy in 1995.
- John E. Upledger, D.O. became interested in cranial work when he noticed that the dural tube moved in a rhythmic motion while assisting in a surgery. Upledger created Cranial Sacral Therapy, which integrated the cranial movement with the whole body. CST has now been taught to over 110,000 students of the healing arts and in many new and divergent directions (Upledger Institute 1985 - over 500 seminars, in over 60 countries)

## **Benefits of CranioSacral Therapy**

- Relaxes all the connective tissue of the body.
- Increases the amplitude and symmetry of the Cranial Rhythm.
- Increases Cranial Sea fluid wave movement.
- Relaxes the Sympathetic Nervous System.
- Restores autonomy and flexibility.
- Parasympathetic Nervous System carries up to react to and balance the Sympathetic Nervous System.
- Reduces fevers 3° → 4° within an hour.
- Balances the Cranial Sea.
- Removes lesser restrictions.
- Reduces accumulated stress.
- Relaxes the Autonomic Nervous System.
- Benefits Hyperautonomic Conditions (i.e. blood pressure, peptic ulcers).
- Benefits Blood, Qi and Lymph flow.
- Lowers swelling/congestion and infections.

Addresses conditions such as:

- Dizziness
- Tinnitus
- Ear infections (temple bones out of sync)
- Headaches
- Sinusitis
- Low back pain
- Migraines
- O.C.D.
- Scoliotic eye motion problems
- Mild personality changes
- Depression
- Pain syndromes
- Learning disorders
- Eye motor coordination

- Chronic pain
- Lack of direction in life Hun Men
- Dyslexia (right temple, internal rotation and jammed occiput mastoid suture, check tender points on posterior medial malleolus, Kidney 6)
- Dyscalculia (left temple restriction)

## **Counterindications of CranioSacral Therapy**

- Stroke
- Intracranial bleeding
- Aneurysm
- Any condition where cerebral spinal fluid pressure changes, could be detrimental.
- Beware of carotid stenosis or plaque, thrombosis (i.e. coronary thrombosis), phlebitis, hemorrhage, pregnancy.

## **Anatomy of CranioSacral Therapy**

The bones that are directly involved with the CranioSacral System are:

- Frontal Bone or forehead
- Occiput (at the base of the skull)
- Temples
- Sphenoid (butterfly shaped bone behind the eyes and interior to the temples)
- Ethmoid Bone (anterior to the sphenoid)
- Vomer (below the ethmoid and above the maxilla or upper jaw)
- Mandible or lower jaw
- Hyoid (above the thyroid cartilage in the throat)
- Spinal bones
- Sacrum and Coccyx

The Dural Tube is the membrane that bounds the Cerebrospinal Fluid in the Cranial Sea. It is inside the vertebral canal and attaches at C2, C3 and merges with the Periosteum of the Sacrum.

The Falx Cerebri is the ventricle dura mater between the hemispheres of the cerebellum. The Tentorium Cerebelli is the dura mater between the two hemispheres of the cerebrum and cerebellum supporting the occipital lobes.

Cerebrospinal Fluid surrounds the brain and spinal nerves. The entire Cerebrospinal Fluid is interstitial fluid within the Choroid Plexus, Arachnoid Villi, Central Nervous System blood, capillaries and lymph in a functional unit. The Cerebrospinal Fluid is between the Arachnoid Mater and the Pia Mater and the ventricles around the brain and spinal cord. The Cerebrospinal Fluid moves in channels that reside next to the brain vessels to clear waste.

Cerebrospinal Fluid feeds and bathes the brain. It also removes waste and cushions the brain. Most Cerebrospinal Fluid is reabsorbed into the Sagittal Suture into the third ventricle. Dr. Upledger theorized that the Sagittal Suture has stretch and pressure receptors.

# CRANIAL TECHNIQUES

## Compression of the Fourth Ventricle CV4

From W.G. Sutherland, D.O.

- One palm on top of the other, thumbs touch around C2, C3.
- Thenar Eminence under Occipital Squama, medial to the suture of the Occipitomastoid Suture.
- Follow the Cranial Rhythm in and gently (3–5 grams pressure) hold in flexion. Follow in expansion and follow in to keep compression.
- The Cranial Rhythm will gently slow and come to a stop, the Still Point. The body will relax, the breath will deepen. Stay in this position until the Cranial Rhythm resumes and allow it to move. This can be done anywhere on the client's body.
- A V-spread can be used to send energy through any restriction. Make a V with the second and third fingers on one side of a restriction, block, pain, etc. With the other hand or any body part, send energy through as the fingers gently spread the V.
- Uses: vitality, blood pressure, balance, pain, rheumatoid arthritis, aids removal of metabolic waste.
- Contraindications: stroke, skull fracture, aneurysm, cerebrospinal leaks.

## Three Burner and Heavenly Pillar Diaphragm Releases

### Lower Burner

- One hand under the sacrum and lower lumbar, other hand over the pubes and lower abdomen - Lower hand is stabilized by the client's weight.
- Gently compress with the top hand 3→5 grams.
- Follow the movement of the Lower Burner (Coccygeus, Levator Ani, Urogenital Diaphragm) with the same gentle pressure until feeling a widening of the pelvis.
- Uses: cramps, dysmenorrhea, low back pain, endometriosis, pre and post surgery, ovarian imbalances.

### Middle Burner or Respiratory Diaphragm

- One hand under the base of ribs and low back, top hand half on rib cage and half on abdomen.
- Same gentle pressure and allow to soften and widen.
- Uses: respiratory, digestion, mid back problems.

### Upper Burner

- One hand at the top of the chest anterior and the other hand posterior.
- Same gentle pressure and allow to soften and widen.
- Uses: respiratory, breasts, thoracic outlet syndrome (violinists), neck and shoulders.

### Hyoid Stomach 9

- The Hyoid bone is below the chin at the top of the thyroid cartilage, anterior to C3.
- Gently suspend the Hyoid and feel for the surrounding tissues to soften and relax.
- Uses: TMJ, esophagus, speech, singing, neck, throat and thyroid.

### Heavenly Pillar

- Using the second through fifth fingers of each hand next to each other, little fingers touching, all eight fingers bent at the second knuckle 90° to form the Heavenly Pillar at the base of the Occiput.
- Fingertips touch the Occiput and palms cradle the Cranium.
- Let the neck muscles soften on your fingers and the Atlas bone will relax onto your fingers.

- Allow the Atlas to float above your fingers and separate from the Occiput.
- When the head and neck are apart, give gentle 3→5 gram traction to lengthen the Dural Tube. This releases the cranial base and tissue around the Jugular Foramen. The jugular veins will help release intercranial congestion.
- Relates to cranial nerves 1X, X, X1
  - 1X glossopharyngeal nerve, tongue, taste speech
  - X vagus motor and sensory
  - X1 spinal accessory, motor, neck, sternocleidomastoid, trapezius, throat
- Uses: neck, shoulders, headaches, sinus and clarity.

### Frontal Release to Open the Forehead

- Fingers gently contact the frontal bone, your thumbs and second fingers touch each other. Spread the other fingers across the forehead.
- 3→5 grams traction sustained in an anterior direction or towards the ceiling with the client lying on their back.
- Uses: headaches, migraines, sinus, frontal accidents, depression

### Parietals

- Thumbs on the sagittal suture, second through fifth fingers posterior to the ears. If you feel the temporalis muscle when the client closes their mouth, you are on the temple bones, go cephalad.
- Gently compress with 3–5 grams pressure to free the parietals so they can float.
- Come off the skull one inch for 10-60 seconds to allow the parietals to find their place.
- Gently distract superiorly in cephalad direction to further loosen the parietals.
- Uses: headaches, blackouts, strokes, short term memory.
- To lift Qi: Thumbs in neural notch and third fingers elevate the parietals.

### Sphenoid

- The Sphenoid is the butterfly shaped bone behind the eyes.
- Thumbs on the greater wings of the Sphenoid (.5 posterior to Gall Bladder1), third fingers on the Mastoid (anterior and superior to Gall Bladder 12).
- Gently compress with 3→5 grams pressure until the Sphenoid floats.
- Pause to let the Sphenoid find its place.
- Gently decompress until the Sphenoid loosens.
- Uses: headaches, eyes (CN III Oculomotor - looking in planes, CN IV Trochlear - looking up and down, CN VI Abducens - looking side to side), low back, depression, neck pain, pituitary, sinuses, endocrine system, ADD ... Autism.
- Contraindication: Skip the sphenoid if client recently had surgery to correct strabismus (lazy eye).

### Temples

#### Roll Temples

- 3rd fingers in ears, no pressure.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> fingers anterior to ears on Zygoma (cheek bone), no pressure.
- 4<sup>th</sup> fingers posterior to ears on the Mastoid, no pressure.

- Feel the motion and gently move hands in opposite directions to loosen each temple bone. Continue until the temples come back into sync.
- Get off the position with bones in the middle of their motion.

### Rock Temples

- Thumbs posterior to the ears and fingers cradle the Occiput.
- Feel the movement with no pressure.
- Gently rock both hands to one side then the other for 3 seconds each way to destabilize the temples.
- Follow the motion and allow the temples to come back to balance.

### Ear Pulls

- Thumbs in ears, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> fingers behind, posterior to the ears on the back of the ears.
- Gentle traction of 3→5 grams in a posterior and lateral 45° angle from both.
- Follow the ear motion and allow to balance.
- Next, traction one ear and stabilize the Occiput. Allow it to unwind.
- Same traction on the other ear and then both together.
- Uses: headaches; tinnitus; dyslexia (right temporal); dyscalculia - math illiteracy (left temporal); hearing; cranial nerves 3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11; dizziness; ear infections; TMJ; epilepsy; seizure disorders.

### TMJ

- Thumbs on Sphenoid, 3<sup>rd</sup> fingers under jaw.
- Give slight compression 3→5 grams, until the Cranial Rhythm balances.
- Pause to allow bones and membranes to balance.
- Decompress from the thumbs at the Sphenoids to the 3<sup>rd</sup> finger at the jaw angle around the Ramus.
- 3→5 grams distraction until you feel a balance in the Cranial Rhythm.
- Uses: jaw trauma, posture, stress, dental, braces, fascial restrictions anywhere in the body.