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# ASTON-PATTERNING FOR CHRONIC AND ACUTE PAIN

SPECIAL TO NURSE'S TOUCH BY MARCIA MICHAEL, RN

Along with my private practice, I work with a pain management clinic in Long Beach, CA. This physician-directed program employs a variety of modalities including allopathic medicine, biofeedback, acupuncture and psychological counseling. I use Aston-Patterning exclusively as I have found it to be particularly effective in helping patients with chronic and acute pain. The therapy itself doesn't create discomfort, which is especially important to people in pain.

Aston-Patterning was developed by Judith Aston, a nationally recognized authority in movement education, bodywork and ergonomics. I met her 27 years ago when I was a dancer. Recognizing her extraordinary ability to teach, I began to study with her in 1975.

Aston-Patterning considers the body an interconnected unit that must be treated in its entirety. Aston's techniques include analyzing the body in movement and developing skills to teach clients movement lessons such as gait training, sitting, standing, reaching and bending, as well as specialized activities athletics.

Through my study of Aston's work, I see the body's asymmetry and teach the individual to negotiate these asymmetries more comfortably and efficiently in their activities of daily living. I use palpation and manipulative skills unique to Aston's system, to identify and address the tension and holding patterns in the tissues. I also provide the client specific exercises and ergonomic consultation that reflect Aston concepts to maintain physical improvements. For myself, I now use my body more efficiently and sustain my own physical stamina by using the biomechanical concepts of Aston-Patterning.

Aston, who holds a master's degree in dance, developed her techniques through years of teaching experience with actors, athletes, physical education students, musicians, Roling patients and people with neuro-musculoskeletal problems. She teaches healthcare professionals workshops called Aston Movement.

In my first appointment with a new client, I explain that he or she will be an active participant in the sessions. I evaluate the client, observing and recording how his or her body parts relate to one another standing and while in motion. Then, I palpate the body to find out what parts are under-working, overworking or have lost the ability to respond. Clients usually leave their first session with a sense that they can be helped. Also, they feel empowered because they will be participating in the sessions to help themselves. My role is more of a facilitator or teacher than a therapist.

One of my clients over the past two and a half years was a hairdresser injured in a motor vehicle accident. For six years, she suffered from chronic pain because other treatments had failed to provide lasting relief. Not only were we successful in alleviating her pain, but she was particularly pleased that she had learned ways to accomplish her daily activities without placing additional strain on her back. This dynamic educational component of Aston-Patterning is also very effective for the conditions we see in the clinic such as myofascial pain syndrome, chronic headache, TMJ and postsurgical patients.

*(Marcia Michael, RN, is a certified massage technician who holds a bachelor's degree in dance and psychology. A registered nurse, she has worked with high-risk mothers in a hospital delivery department before opening her private practice.*

*For more information about Aston Movement workshops, please call The Upledger Institute toll-free at 1-800-233-5880, extension 9228.)*

## FROM YOUR MANAGING EDITOR...

BY CAROL CLARK

I am honored to have been hired to design, edit and ensure your magazine is as perfect as it can be before going to the printer and being mailed out to you, the NANMT members.



Both the NANMT and NT have come a long way. Launching the first issue of your new magazine was an exhilarating experience. Enough advance advertising was sold for the first issue so that only a minimal investment from the NANMT treasury was

needed to take the finished product to press.

To take an organization from the comfort and safety of a traditional newsletter layout to the threshold of a professional magazine layout is both a challenge and a privilege. The challenge is ongoing. Obtaining and maintaining advertisers who support and are loyal to our organization's goals are of great importance in the production of **Nurse's Touch**. The need for a continual stream of new and renewing advertisers is paramount for the successful run of any magazine.

With this second issue, we come to the end of 1995, and the beginning of a new year as a genuine magazine. We are supported by a large group of visionary advertisers who see the NANMT as an ideal marketing target. I respectfully ask all the NANMT members to loyally support these advertisers by purchasing and utilizing their products, services and educational resources. When you do, please let them know where you heard about them and thank them for supporting the NANMT and **Nurse's Touch**. They need to know their advertising dollars are well-spent.

If you, as a member, feel it would be worthwhile to advertise in **NT**, consider doing so. It will be both an investment in your business and in your organization. If you know a manufacturer, dealer or business who would benefit from marketing exposure to the NANMT membership, let them know about our new magazine. Send their name and address to me and I will be happy to forward them an issue of **NT** and our advertising contract.

We continue to solicit articles. We are looking for well-written, technical and personal manuscripts about the field of nurse massage therapy in its many forms from the NANMT membership. **NT** Writer's Guidelines are available upon request. Thank you to the members who have already contributed articles and photos for our photo contest.

Best wishes for a healthy and happy holiday season. I believe the new year will be a year the NANMT will long remember!

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