



Cranio-sacral Therapy

By Rajesh Alwa, Therapist

Cranio-sacral Therapy is the fine art and therapeutic practice of balancing the cranio-sacral system. This distinct physiological system is the physical container of the central nervous system. This is a newly discovered system whose existence was not validated by empirical methods until the mid-1970s. Since then, it is a practice which is rapidly growing in popularity, as the importance of this vital part of our body/mind is being realized.

The main anatomy which should be appreciated is that the cranium is made up of seven palpable bones, not one solid bone, as has been taught since the 1800s. This is incorrect knowledge.

The truth is that the cranial bones retain their individual identity throughout life. The sutures in the head are, in fact, joints. Like all the joints of the body, these too are made for movement. The movement which takes place here is the movement of the dural membrane, which is directly under and inside the bones of the cranium, back and tail bones. The membrane is in the head, goes through the hole at the base of the cranium (foramen magnum), and traverses down the spinal cord, forming a sheath to the spinal nerves as they come off the spinal cord. This membrane, the dura, goes all the way to the end of the tailbone. It is attached to bone at the second sacral segment, and then it is not attached to bone until it gets into the cranium. It is a continuous bag containing cerebral spinal fluid (CSF), which comes from the blood through filters which result in the bag filling with fluid until it reaches its capacity. The pump then shuts off

and the level of fluid in the bag is reduced. This coming and going of the CSF creates a pulse, not unlike the heart pulse and the lung pulse. The cranio-sacral rhythm (CSR) is the pulse created by the pumping of cerebral spinal fluid. In order to feel the CSR in a person, one needs to touch the body, particularly the cranium and the sacrum (because this is where the dura is attached to bone) in such a way that one does not elicit muscle resistance. To do this, one must touch at a pressure of five grams. This allows one to follow the movement without unduly affecting it. This way

of touching is called proprioception. The art of proprioceptive touch gives one a window into the functioning of the core system, the cranio-sacral system. The functioning of the cranio-sacral system determines the function of the autonomic nervous system, (ANS) which controls all our physiological functions. The tonality of the dura determines the tonality or the balance of the ANS. By balancing out the motion of the dura (which refers to its ease of motion, its symmetry and its synchronicity), one affects the functional efficacy of the sympathetic and parasympathetic parts of the ANS. This, of course, has enormous consequences to our health and development.

The cranio-sacral system can go out of balance due to various causes. Most common among these is trauma. There's the trauma of birth, the trauma of learning to walk, the traumas of accidents, surgeries and all those other traumas which we suffer, not really knowing or responding to the hidden effects they have on the cranio-sacral system.

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as headaches, back pain, malaise, immune suppression, allergies, behavioral problems like hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, neurological problems like cerebral palsy and spasticity and various subtle and difficult maladies.

The usual response, however, is to the symptom and not the cause. The cause is the functionality of the crano-sacral system. Since this is the physical container of the CNS and so intimately affects the ANS, it inevitably has an effect on mental functioning. The crano-sacral system is the container of the body/mind at the core. When we say body/mind we not saying body or mind, we are saying body/mind, as one unit. This is how we function, through our body/mind. The core of our body/mind, physically, is the crano-sacral system. Balancing this bio-structural part of our being gives us the unparalleled opportunity to balance out the subtler and more difficult part of the equation: the mind. By balancing out the physical core, it is

easier to balance the mind. Balance, physically and mentally, allows more emotional and spiritual freedom.

At the very core of us is a state of dynamic, powerful balance. We have a nervous system which responds to its environment by physically opening and closing. Structurally speaking, that refers to the external and internal rotation of the body as it responds to the pumping of CSF in the dura. It is the tonality and the general integrity of the dura which is the goal of Cranio-sacral Therapy. Cranio-sacral Therapy sessions last approximately one hour, during which time the person is able to fall into a deeply relaxed, meditative state, while gentle manipulations of the structure are done through the hydraulic action of the crano-sacral system. Four to six therapy sessions are usually enough for most people. After this, each person is evaluated and a treatment schedule is recommended accordingly.

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About the author

Rajesh Alwa is a holistic health care consultant practicing for more than 20 years. He utilizes Cranio-Sacral and Bio-oxidative therapy. Rajesh works to promote F.L.O.W.: Food, Love, Oxygen, Water in his work. By attending to the cellular dimension of these four elements, systemic healing can be promoted. He utilizes Aerobic Spa, to increase oxygen intake availability to the body, essential for optimum health, and Cranio-sacral Therapy to balance

the core structure of the body and nervous system.

Rajesh began studying yoga and meditation with Swami Rama of the Himalayan Institute in the 1970s and later studied Zen with Roshi Phillip Kapleau of the Zen Center, Rochester, N.Y. During the mid-80s he started studying Cranio-Sacral Therapy, which demonstrates the application, principle and practice of stillness. The cultivation of stillness and core balance through

crano-sacral therapy and meditation is a passion of his. He emphasizes eliminating any interference with cultivating stillness and for which meditation is a key practice. No matter what a person's beliefs one can derive benefits from the practices of stillness. His intention is to help people find the great reservoir of energy, inspiration and healing which is "in-dwelling" and accessible. Rajesh resides and practices in Racine, Wisc.