

## How is CranioSacral Therapy Performed?

CranioSacral Therapy is a gentle, non-invasive manipulative technique. Seldom does the therapist apply pressure in excess of five grams or the equivalent weight of a British 20p piece. Examination is done by testing for movement in various parts of the system. Often, when testing is completed, the restriction has been removed and the system is able to self-correct.

Trained therapists are able to palpate the motion of the craniosacral system anywhere on the body. It is most easy to palpate the craniosacral system via the bones of the skull, sacrum and coccyx because they attach to the membranes which actually enclose the cerebrospinal fluid. Palpation is also possible via all of the other bones of the spine and pelvis, and via the facial bones and temporomandibular joints but, because of their less direct connection with the hydraulic system, it is more difficult to detect the motion.

## How Does CranioSacral Therapy Help You?

Because each of us produces our own different reactions to trauma, stress and loss of healing capacity, we each present our own unique combination of ailments, pains and dysfunctions. And, because CranioSacral Therapy helps clear the way for our self-healing mechanisms to be more effective, its scope is very wide indeed.

Some more common difficulties that CranioSacral Therapy may help are chronic pain, reduced mobility - 'stiff joints', low energy, headaches and migraines, jaw (temporomandibular joint) problems, neuralgia (including trigeminal), learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, menstrual and menopausal problems, and clumsiness. In newborns, infants and

children colic, hyperactivity, feeding and sleeping problems, and faulty development are often helped by CranioSacral Therapy. Routine evaluation of newborns often reveals and permits the easy release of subtle strains and restrictions that may, if left, lead to chronic dysfunction later in life. This applies not only where birth has been difficult, but also with 'normal' deliveries

## How to Find Practitioners Skilled in CranioSacral Therapy.

At the U.K. Institute's office and clinic in Perth we maintain a growing list of practitioners who have completed our post-graduate courses and incorporate CranioSacral Therapy into their practice.

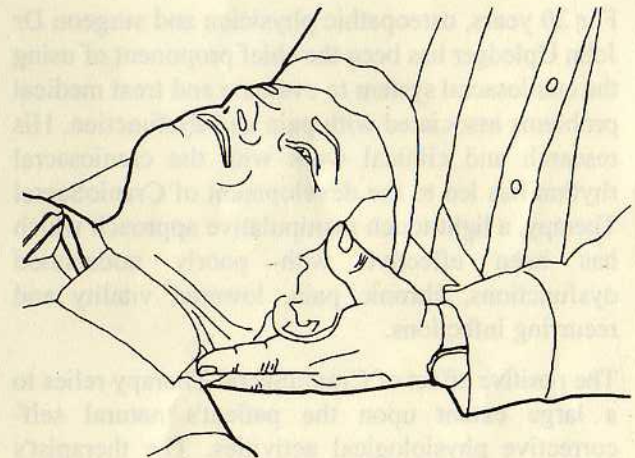
Where a period of very intensive therapy is sought, as for instance where progress towards health has plateaued, intensive therapy programmes are offered at The Upledger Institute's Brain and Spinal Cord Dysfunction Centre In Florida.

In Perth we provide support by way of advice to practitioners who train with the Institute and referral to our clinic of difficult-to-treat cases and others whose further progress would be helped by temporary intensification of their treatment programmes.

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# Discover CranioSacral Therapy



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## The Therapeutic Value of the Craniosacral System

We are all familiar with the cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Like them, the craniosacral system also influences many body functions. An imbalance in this system can adversely affect the brain and spinal cord which can result in sensory, motor and intellectual dysfunction.

The name craniosacral is derived from the system's associated bones. Included are those of the skull, face and mouth - which make up the cranium - and of the spinal column which extend down to the sacrum. Membranes enclosing a hydraulic system connect the craniosacral system.

For 20 years, osteopathic physician and surgeon Dr John Upledger has been the chief proponent of using the craniosacral system to evaluate and treat medical problems associated with pain and dysfunction. His research and clinical work with the craniosacral rhythm has led to the development of CranioSacral Therapy, a light-touch manipulative approach which has been effective with poorly understood dysfunctions, chronic pain, lowered vitality and recurring infections.

The positive effect of CranioSacral Therapy relies to a large extent upon the patient's natural self-corrective physiological activities. The therapist's light, hands-on approach assists the hydraulic forces inherent in the craniosacral system to improve the internal environment.

Because of its influence on many body functions, CranioSacral Therapy is used by a wide variety of healthcare professionals including osteopaths, medical doctors, physiotherapists, chiropractors, dentists, psychologists, psychotherapists, massage therapists and acupuncturists.

## What is the Origin of the Craniosacral System and its Therapy?

While the existence of the cardiovascular and respiratory rhythms is not disputed today, a debate concerning their reality raged in medical communities around the globe for centuries. Even today, treatment for afflictions associated with these systems remains diverse - especially in the area of health maintenance. The history of the craniosacral system's discovery is still recent.

In the early 1900s, as an osteopathic student in Kirksville, Missouri, Dr William G Sutherland was struck by an idea. He saw that the bones of the skull were designed to provide for movement in relationship to each other. For more than 20 years he pondered the prospect of movable bones in the adult skull. He performed experiments on himself with helmet-like devices designed to impose variable and controlled pressures on different parts of his head. His wife recorded personality changes he displayed in response to different pressure applications; he described head pains, problems with coordination, etc., related to the varied pressures. In the early 1930s, under a pseudonym in the *Minnesota Osteopathic Journal*, Dr Sutherland published his first article about his work.

Based on his experiments, he developed a system of examination and treatment for the bones of the skull. With some patient success, Dr Sutherland organised a small group of osteopaths who studied cranial work with him. His system became known as Cranial Osteopathy.

In 1970, during surgery on a patient's neck, Dr Upledger viewed the rhythmical movement of a membranous boundary of what appeared to be a hydraulic system. None of his colleagues nor any of the medical texts had an explanation for his observation that the dura mater, the outer layer of

meningeal membrane, in the neck visibly moved in and out at about 10 cycles per minute. He concluded that the pressure inside the membrane sac was fluctuating rhythmically.

Two years later Dr Upledger attended a seminar which explained Dr Sutherland's ideas and taught some of his evaluation and treatment techniques. Coupling his scientific background with a tactile sensitivity, Dr Upledger was quick to understand how a hydraulic system might function inside a membranous sac encased within the skull and the canal of the spinal column. He incorporated and refined Dr Sutherland's techniques with success.

In 1975 Dr Upledger was asked to join the Michigan State University Osteopathic College as a clinician-researcher and professor in the Department of Biomechanics. He led a multidisciplinary research team made up of anatomists, physiologists, biophysicists and bioengineers through the maze of research which first established the scientific basis for the existence of the craniosacral system.

The team was able to explain in scientific and practical terms the function of the craniosacral system. It also showed how this system could be used to evaluate and treat malfunctions involving the brain and spinal cord as well as a myriad of other health problems that previously were misunderstood.

In the two decades since his original research, Dr Upledger has written three text books: *CranioSacral Therapy*, *CranioSacral Therapy II Beyond the Dura* and *SomatoEmotional Release and Beyond* which explain the functioning of the craniosacral system in detail. He has also written a brief, helpful introductory volume, *Your Inner Physician and You*. In 1985 he established The Upledger Institute, a clinical and educational resource centre in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Since then thousands of healthcare professionals have studied the therapeutic value of the craniosacral system.