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Energy healing and Manual Osteopathy

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Introduction

Basic tenets of osteopathy as expressed by its founder Andrew Taylor Still in 1899 indicates that when the body structure is in alignment then the body systems can function as they were meant to and once aligned, it is capable of self-healing. Still wrote “Nature is the great physician, and her healing power is inherent in the human body. It is the osteopath’s mission to remove the obstructions to this healing power and thus allow the body to restore itself to health”¹ At the same time energy healing practices are similarly rooted in the concept that ‘you are your own healer’ and once you resolve your inner issues energy can flow and re-distribute in the body system and you will find balance and be healed. The two are mutually reinforcing, with points of intersection and overlap that cannot be ignored by the mindful clinician in the service of supporting a client's return to health, and hopefully for the long term.

In this paper we will consider the basic tenets of osteopathy and the difference in manual osteopathic and osteopathic disciplines. We will look at energy healing practices across a spectrum of healing traditions and modalities. We will note the points of convergence and overlap. We will examine 2 case studies where energy healing combined with manual osteopathic techniques have had a positive effect.

We need to consider the role of Manual osteopathic treatment and holistic therapies in self-healing and disease and ill-ness prevention. There is an area of clear overlap where both manual osteopathic treatments and holistic therapies facilitate the re-distribution of lymphatic fluid, opens the way for gut healing and rebalancing the gut biome, supports the rebalancing of blood sugar and all these support the immune system in optimal functioning² thus leading to illness prevention. Self-healing is also promoted by both manual therapies and energy healing, it

¹Still A.T., (1899) Philosophy of Osteopathy. Kirksville, Mo

² Ajimsha MS, Al-Mudahka NR, Al-Madzhar JA. Efficacy of manual lymphatic drainage and intermittent pneumatic compression pump use in the treatment of lymphedema after mastectomy: a randomized controlled trial. Oncol Res Treat. 2015;38(6):304-10.

is important for both patient and clinician to believe in the capacity of the person to heal themselves. The clinician is not the healer, however they are the person with the tools, they are the facilitators who guide the person to wellness or works to prevent the person falling into illness. The clinician may even through their own energetic field prompt, support or promote the client/patients positive approach that leads to healing; the client/patient remains the healer³. We may conclude from our exploration that therapies provided by manual osteopaths complement those energy healing practices relevant to the healing process of the patient, and are essential to get to the source of the problem so that the patient becomes well without returning to their pain.

It is noted that the western medical model has difficulty accepting the validity of holistic healing modalities for a number of reasons, few of which are themselves particularly valid primarily because of the symptom management approach to western medicine⁴ and thus the penchant to decry any modality despite statistical historical and anecdotal evidence that proves them out. In his foundational book 'Vibrational Healing' Richard Gerber expresses succinctly that 'they [western medical doctors] see the physical body as the only dimension of human existence' In reference to the idea that the biological body is controlled by the brain that has a consciousness he says 'That conscious entity which uses this biomechanics of the brain and body is the human spirit or soul. That which we refer to as the spiritual domain is part of a series of higher dimensional energy systems which feed directly into the computer hardware we call the brain and body'⁵.

The structures created to support the western model do not support a trend towards energy practices, rather they make it harder for people to see someone using another approach. Insurance is the main culprit where manual osteopathic treatments (as with many non-allopathic treatments) are not covered by insurance companies and so people tend to go and see their doctor. Manual osteopaths trend away from what has been called 'vitality osteopathy'⁶ or the integration of energy work with manual therapies, in order to please the insurance regulators and support a viable business for the clinician to the detriment of their client/patient. The intense lobby and promotion and profit margins offered by pharmaceutical companies and the resulting ethos to 'drug away the problem' also undermines notions of self-healing and preventative approaches. To maintain integrity and differentiate their manual osteopathic practice from manual therapy practices like chiropractic, physiotherapy or massage the manual osteopathic

³ Gronowicz, G. A., Jhaveri, A., Clarke, L. W., Aronow, M. S., & Smith, T. H. (2015). Therapeutic touch stimulates the proliferation of human cells in culture. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 21(1), 42-48:

⁴ Epstein RM. The rise of "sickness" medicine. *JAMA*. 2016;316(18):1835-1836.

⁵ Gerber, Richard MD, *Vibrational Healing*, 1988 Bear & Company, pp 32-24

⁶ Pourgol, Shaheen, Business Management Course, Doctorate of Manual Osteopathy, National University of Medical Sciences Madrid, Spain Lecture 141 - 'Vitality-based Osteopathy vs Mechanical Osteopathy'

clinician must approach the client holistically with the intention of supporting their long term healing by getting to source, not only addressing symptoms.

What is Manual Osteopathy?

Manual Osteopathy uses manual therapies that realign the musculo-skeletal system to remove barriers that may prevent the person from self-healing⁷. Interventions provided by manual osteopaths are more easily accessible to students when they are taught technically. When used in a technical fashion, without taking a holistic approach, they often resolve symptoms though they may not get to the source of the problem (which may be more 'energetic'). They may successfully provide relief of pain albeit this may be temporary. At the same time it is hard to see how a person can become well only using energy work if they clearly have a structural misalignment like a displaced vertebrae and so an osteopathic technique may be indicated to support realignment.

There are a number of Manual Osteopathic techniques that facilitate healing⁸:

- 1) Cranial Osteopathy: This hands-on approach focuses on cranial bones and the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It resets the pulse of the cerebrospinal fluid that bathes and nourishes the central nervous system. The technique aims to promote relaxation, balance and natural healing so that the structures of the skeletal support system can return to their rightful place that optimises function.
- 2) Visceral Osteopathy: This technique focuses on internal organs, their function and their relationship with the musculoskeletal system. Using gentle manipulations and palpation to identify and treat restrictions and imbalances that impede the natural function of the organs and surrounding supportive membranes and tissues.
- 3) Myofascial Release: These techniques aim to release the connective fascia that covers muscles and organs. They release tension in the fascia and help to improve mobility, flexibility and reduce pain.
- 4) Muscle Energy Technique: This involves the client actively contracting and relaxing specific muscles while the clinician applies resistance. The aim is to correct musculoskeletal imbalances and restore joint motion.
- 5) Strain-Counterstrain: A technique involving the positioning of the body in a position of comfort to relieve pain and tension in affected areas. The clinician finds the sensitive

⁷ Still; Ibid

⁸ American Academy of Osteopathy. (n.d.). What is Osteopathic Cranial Manipulative Medicine? Retrieved from <https://www.osteopathic.org/what-is-osteopathic-medicine/benefits-of-osteopathic-medicine/cranial-manipulative-medicine>.

location (trigger point) then using gentle pressure and mobilisation to support the muscle or joint into a more comfortable position.

- 6) Facilitated Positional Release: Similar to strain-counterstrain except the clinician uses a pulsing movement over the sensitive area with the muscles as relaxed as possible in order to get it to release. In both techniques the understanding is that once released there is more mobility and flow through the affected area.
- 7) Still Technique: an inclusive technique of exaggerating a distortion in the body, the strain pattern and then guiding it back in the opposite direction.
- 8) High Velocity/Low Amplitude (HVLA) Thrust: Not used
- 9) Lymphatic Drainage: Using light stroking movements to promote movement of the lymphatic fluid, usually in the direction of the heart and encouraging the body's natural healing ability.

Osteopathy as a manual therapy addresses structural issues with the musculoskeletal system to improve the function of the body. Manual osteopathy and osteopathy are used interchangeably by many, however there are important differences in the scope of the two therapies; Osteopathy often encompasses Manual Osteopathy but not the other way around.

The principles of Osteopathy are expressed by the founder of Osteopathy Andrew Taylor Still⁹:

1. The body is a unit; mind, body, and spirit connect to make the whole person.
2. The body is capable of self-regulation, self-healing, and health maintenance.
3. Structure and function are reciprocally interrelated.
4. Rational treatment is based upon the understanding of these basic principles.

Manual osteopathy is a form of osteopathic therapy that uses manual techniques, such as stretching, massage and mobilisation of the structure, to treat musculoskeletal issues. Manual osteopaths believe that the body has the innate ability to heal itself and that by removing barriers to healing, the musculoskeletal structure can align and the body can function optimally. This is quite in line with the thinking of Still, however without the notion that the removing of barriers is what enables the healing power of nature.

Osteopathy is a broader term. In addition to manual techniques, osteopathy may also involve the use of other modalities such as acupuncture, ultrasound, and exercise therapy. Osteopathy also places a strong emphasis on the relationship between structure and function, and how dysfunction in one area of the body can affect other areas. It is more broadly holistic and osteopathic doctors are concerned with getting to the root basis of a problem and supporting a person's return to full health and preventing dis-ease more aligned with Still's philosophy.

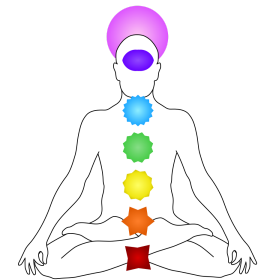
What is Energy Healing?

Energy healing is a holistic approach to wellness, it understands that everything in the universe, including all living things is made up of energy entities vibrating (at the atomic level) on

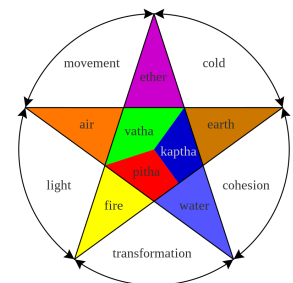
⁹ Still: Ibid

different frequencies. To put this in simple terms solids vibrate at lower frequencies than liquids, that vibrate at lower frequencies than gases, and in nature, in all living things there are a multitude of vibrations occurring simultaneously sometimes in harmony and sometimes not. In the human experience disharmony in frequencies shows up as an imbalance in the body systems, causing us to vary in our emotional, physical or spiritual condition and in the complex inter-relationships of these such disharmony may manifest as pain, discomfort, illness, mental health issues, etc. It is evident that left unattended an imbalance that is left unattended can become chronic and more difficult to deal with. In many healing traditions , including the sciences of Yoga, Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the relationship between our human existence and our place in the universe is based on what we can call ‘natural law’ where we are a microcosm of the macrocosm (from TCM)¹⁰ with the frequencies of the 5 elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Spirit (from Ayurveda and Yoga) requiring harmony both for the body systems to function properly.

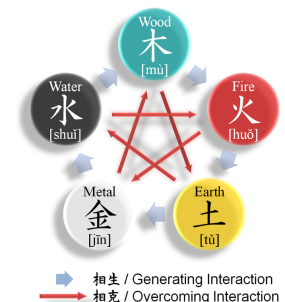
This concept of harmony can be expressed as balance vs imbalance as described in Yoga through the Bhagavad Gita, and Patanjali’s 8 limbs of Yoga sutra, prescribing the need to balance the chakras to find wellness, (indeed to find happiness) where each of the first 5 chakras lines up with the 5 elements and where imbalance in one often causes imbalance in others¹¹ (see the section ‘Finding Balance’)



Similarly from the Ayurvedic texts; the Sushutra and Charaka Samhitas and the Ashtanga Hridaya we learn that it is imbalance in the doshas that causes illness and disease. The doshas, pitta, vata and kapha are 5 element based typographies for categorising people’s dispositions¹².



In TCM similarly in the ancient texts of the Yellow House Emperor it is an imbalance of the 5 Elements that restrains the flow of vital life force energy called Qi that cause illness and disease¹³.



¹⁰ Li, J., Li, J., & Wang, Y. (2019). A review on traditional Chinese medicine syndromes and treatment of ischemic stroke. *Complementary therapies in medicine*, 47, 102201. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2019.102201>

¹¹ Sengupta, P. (2012). Health impacts of yoga and pranayama: A state-of-the-art review. *International journal of preventive medicine*, 3(7), 444-458.

¹² Singh, R. H., Bawari, S., & Singh, G. (2019). Ayurveda, the Science of Life: A review. *Journal of Complementary and Integrative Medicine*, 16(2), 1-12.

¹³ Xu, J., Chen, J., & Li, X. (2019). Traditional Chinese Medicine in the Prevention and Treatment of COVID-19 and Other Viral Diseases: Efficacy, Mechanisms, and Implications. *Frontiers in Medicine*, 6, 249.

Alongside these are modalities like Reiki channelling healing energy from ancestral teachers, RIFE that conducts into the body electromagnetic frequencies appropriate to harmonize what ails the physical and emotional body, healing on the quantum field that works with wave and particle movement through time and an array of modalities using vibration either directly or through plants. Among other ‘alternatives’ in healing are acupuncture, massage and therapeutic touch, aromatherapy, nutrition therapy, homoeopathy, hypnotherapy, naturopathy, crystal therapy and kinesiology to mention a few.

If we talk in terms of commonalities, at the basis of much ancestral and alternative healing¹⁴ noting, we find a reference to and a reverence for nature (and here we find alignment with the philosophy of Osteopathy discussed below). If we agree that we are essentially microcosms of the macrocosm, an integral part of the cosmos (key concepts in TCM and indigenous cultures around the world) we find in nature the metaphors to describe our condition and an understanding of these prescribes our way forward.

Scepticism in these traditions is quite easily dispelled when we witness yogis able to perform incredible feats of human endurance, or the knowledge that Ayurvedic nutritional care can cure disease, including some cancers and the abilities of Qi Gong masters to move matter with their minds. Not to mention our understanding of the power of prayer, or the law of attraction to affect outcomes, or the capacity of breathwork and meditation to regulate blood pressure, cholesterol and hormone levels and thus alleviate stress. We are also aware through psychology of the power of positive thinking and a positive disposition facilitates healing¹⁵. It is becoming more widely understood that the power of intention supports healing where setting an intention or positive goal for the outcome of treatment leads to that outcome¹⁶. It is curious then why western (allopathic medicine) doesn’t leave room for appreciating different approaches to healing nor the ideas of self-healing, prevention and going to the source to cure a problem (rather than addressing symptoms).

Self-healing

The concept of self-healing is foreign to many people despite the knowledge and experience that the moment we cut ourselves we start to heal, blood coagulates and the cut starts to close or when we break a bone or stretch a ligament, the body reacts to protect and promote healing at the injury site and systemically. Research into the mechanisms of stem cell activation and

¹⁴ Calling all non-Western medicine traditions alternative is a misnomer and far from correct when many modalities existed milenia before Antonie von Leewanehoek and the discovery of the microscope in the 1800’s that heralded in modern medicine. They can be called indigenous or traditional medicines when they have roots in indigenous cultures or traditions. When therapies are not exactly subscribed to by western medicine nor are they rooted in a cultural tradition, they can be called complementary or integrative.

¹⁵https://edition.cnn.com/2011/12/05/health/positive-thinking-deepak-chopra/index.html?hpt=hp_t2

¹⁶ <https://innovativemedicine.com/the-power-of-setting-healing-intentions-the-first-step-in-the-healing-process/>

differentiation prove this out ‘These stem cells may remain quiescent (non-dividing) for long periods of time until they are activated by a normal need for more cells to maintain and repair tissues.’¹⁷like at the time of an injury.

Similarly with psychological or emotional traumas big or small, the propensity of the being is to become well, we innately want to be happy and balanced. However we are not taught how to facilitate this kind of healing, we are not trained in listening to our bodies for the signs of damage done when such types of traumas occur. In many such cases social conditioning, family situation, lack of awareness and education as to how to identify and facilitate that healing may cause us to become blocked. Or, and more importantly, even though the body wants to heal, sometimes the person’s lifestyle is an obstacle to this healing. And this is where the eastern understanding that it is essential to ‘listen to your body’ kicks into play; that your body will tell you all you need to know and what you need to heal in order to regain health or regain balance. (See section Finding Balance). Of course we are distant from this idea of an innate potential to heal in our modern day ethos of reacting to illness rather than preventing ill-ness and not always, but often treating symptoms rather than addressing the root cause of an ailment, and creating the space for self-healing. This is itself a dissertation that we will not get to in this discourse.

Connected to self-healing we also know that the placebo effect is real. Multiple experiments over years starting in the 1700’s with John Haygarth who proved the placebo effect by disproving the efficacy of a metal rod to draw pain from the body by making identical rods from wood and showing that just by believing it would work, it did. What is this potential that most certainly resides in the human mind that allows for this? This same potential is why science uses double-blind experiments to avoid the influence of humans on the outcome? And we know that being positive and optimistic in how you approach a problem most often leads to a better result. The case for our capacity or potential to self-heal is indisputable and this will be discussed in the section ‘Finding Balance’ below.

If we look at the science of self-healing we know that electromagnetic fields can be detected and measured¹⁸. There is evidence that electromagnetic fields play a role in regulating cellular activity and communication in the body¹⁹. We can delve into quantum physics and neuroscience, widely considered to be together at the root of this potential. In quantum physics, quantum coherence or the degree to which particles in a system are correlated or connected is essential. Without this connection the integrity and stability of biological systems including the human body is disrupted. Molecular coherence is absolutely necessary for a balanced healthy being and is dictated by quantum entanglement. The idea slated for more research is that if two particles are entangled and one becomes damaged then how does the healthy one know to help with the

¹⁷ <https://stemcells.nih.gov/info/basics/stc-basics/>

¹⁸ Rubik, B. (2002). The biofield hypothesis: Its biophysical basis and role in medicine. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 8(6), 703-717.

¹⁹ Oschman, J. L. (2000). *Energy medicine: The scientific basis*. Churchill Livingstone.

repair? We see this in stem cell work where stem cells are injected into a damaged joint and intelligently recognize the tissue requiring repair and set to work regenerating that tissue.

The activation of self-healing depends on the person though there is also evidence that energy may be transferred from the practitioner or that there is a harmonising of energies between the two²⁰. This can also support triggering or facilitating the self-healing mechanism. Deepak Chopra believes that intention to heal and focused attention on positive outcomes triggers self-healing²¹ and this is discussed below in the section 'Finding Balance'.

Prevention of illness

Preventative health care is based on the notion of healthy living. In most societies we are taught from an early age to eat healthy foods and get fresh air, sunlight, reduce stress and exercise. Unfortunately that is where the good advice often ends and people are left to their own resources not knowing] for their age, for their life situation, or for whatever ails them what is the right food, the right kind of exercise, how to reduce stress or how much sunlight.

Nature provides the metaphors for balanced healthy living. With a trend towards global urbanisation the human species, though a part of the natural world, have become more and more distanced from it. We live in concrete jungles in many cities with green space being a destination not a part of daily life. We no longer grow our own food not knowing whether a potato grows off a vine or in the ground and we eat processed foods that haven't seen a farm in months, or at all. Our connection with the land, where once we grew our own food has devolved to the place where for the sake of convenience we no longer even cook our own food instead buying packaged pre-cooked food that only needs 'nuking' in a microwave, itself a process that changes the molecular structure of food.

An understanding of the interplay and balance of the 5 Elements we are composed of and that compose everything in the Universe Earth - Water - Fire - Air - Spirit lies at the foundation of the science behind Ayurvedic Medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine and most traditional medicine practices as well as alternative healing modalities. And indeed it is the harmonious vibration of these that sees abundance and prosperity in nature; when the mother earth gets enough water and sunlight and clean air she can support plant and animal life. Similarly when these elements are balanced in the human system we find wellness.

When it comes to the food we eat, gut health is probably the most important area of our existence to tend to in preventing illness. The gut biome is not well considered in medical science and talking about eating healthy foods barely scratches the surface of how the gut supports our well-being and is directly related to both our immune system and brain function.

²⁰ Gronowicz, G. A., Jhaveri, A., Clarke, L. W., Aronow, M. S., & Smith, T. H. (2015). Therapeutic touch stimulates the proliferation of human cells in culture. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 21(1), 42-48:

Mulloney SS, Wells-Federman C. Therapeutic touch: a healing modality. *J Cardiovasc Nurs*. 1996 Apr;10(3):27-49. doi: 10.1097/00005082-199604000-00004. PMID: 8820318.

²¹ <https://chopra.com/articles/why-mental-health-is-at-the-center-of-our-well-being>

A healthy gut is essential for optimal nutrient absorption. The digestive system breaks down food and absorbs nutrients into the bloodstream which in turn supports the immune system, and is linked to your mood and brain function²². The gut-brain axis is understated, research shows that the gut microbiome influences the production and regulation of neurotransmitters that transmit signals to the brain²³. A healthy gut biome is associated with psychiatric symptoms and disease including depression, anxiety and stress-related disorders.²⁴ Dr. David Perlmutter, a neurologist summarises his research saying “the more diverse our gut bacteria, the better our cognitive function.”²⁵

A gut that isn't healthy where the gut microbiota is out of balance called dysbiosis can contribute to chronic inflammation and is associated with a range of diseases from cardiovascular disease to diabetes, arthritis and autoimmune conditions. Dr. Alessio Fasano writes “When the intestinal barrier is compromised, increased gut permeability occurs leading to the release of pro-inflammatory molecules into the bloodstream.”²⁶ This is related to short-chain fatty acids produced through the fermentation of dietary fibre in the gut, butyrate is one of these and has anti-inflammatory effect: “Butyrate... acts as an energy source for colonocytes and possesses anti-inflammatory properties.”²⁷ Arthritis is another disease that can be relieved by returning to a healthy gut biome. According to Dr. Abdollahi-Roodsaz, a rheumatologist, dysbiosis can lead to immune dysregulation and inflammation which in turn potentially contributes to the development or progression of arthritis.²⁸

Stress is another key element to illness manifestation. When there has been no insult or injury to the body and yet people are suffering mystery pains, we must look to the stressors in life. While much science-based evidence can be found linking stress with illness, we will only note here the broad consensus that stress can affect our physical health²⁹, mental health³⁰, our immune system

²² Roizen MF. Gut health: the gateway to wellness. *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine*. 2020 Apr;87(4):195-6

²³ Dinan TG, et al. Psychobiotics: a novel class of psychotropic. *Biological Psychiatry*. 2013 Nov;74(10):720-6.

²⁴ Tillisch K. The effects of gut microbiota on CNS function in humans. *Gut Microbes*. 2014 Mar;5(3):404-10.

²⁵ Perlmutter D, et al. The role of the microbiome in cognitive health and the prevention of dementia. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2019 Dec;322(17):1701-2.

²⁶ Fasano A. Leaky gut and autoimmune diseases. *Clinical Reviews in Allergy & Immunology*. 2012 Feb;42(1):71-8

²⁷ Hall JA, et al. The role of short chain fatty acids in health and disease. *Advances in Immunology*. 2014;121:91-119.

²⁸ Abdollahi-Roodsaz S, et al. Microbiota-driven regulation of splenic B cell responses to inflammatory arthritis. *Nature Communications*. 2017 Jun;8(1):1-13.

²⁹ Rabin BS. Stress, Immune Function, and Health: The Connection. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Systems Biology and Medicine*. 2019 Mar;11(2):e1468.

³⁰ Nemeroff CB. Paradise Lost: The Neurobiological and Clinical Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect. *Neuron*. 2016 Feb;89(5):892-909

integrity³¹, our cardiovascular health³² and our sleep³³. We can conclude that reducing stress then is clearly in the interest of disease prevention and in the maintenance of good health.

Similarly evidence can be found easily to support the need for exercise. What isn't evident is what kind of exercise should an individual get. Cardiovascular fitness? Muscular strength? Flexibility? All of the above? These are dependent on the age of a person, and their understanding of what kind of exercise they need as well as what is acceptable and accessible in their living situation. The millennial old practices of tai chi, qi gong and yoga have gained growing popularity since the late 20th century as if a consensus on this has coalesced without any grand promotional campaign. Practices which were once the purview of a very few, and normally used in meditative practice or ascribed by a teacher to their student or a traditional healer to their patient are now shared in large groups of people with recognized value for their stress-relieving aspects and overall health improvements.

The three areas outlined above, gut health, stress relief and exercise are intertwined and evolving in the body system. A client/patient is going part-way if they only improve their nutrition and don't also alleviate stress and get the right exercise; preventative approaches are integrative and need to be inclusive of all aspects of a wellness strategy. In addition what we are aware of is that ageing plays a role where our metabolism changes in our advancing years, where stress can accumulate and become chronic if not attended to and where our capacity to exercise shifts as our bodies become more fragile with age. We know as well that life's circumstances may require us to change up what we need to be eating or doing, our lifestyle needs to adjust. During particularly challenging times certain foods may be better, different exercise practices may be indicated, etc.

Finding balance

An axiom that is often used in the vibrational or energy healing realm is the key to successfully determining how to balance your body systems for optimum wellness. We often hear, 'listen to your body' it will tell you all you need to know. In modern societies this is not well understood. How do you listen to your body? What are you listening for and how do you know what to do when you 'hear' it? We know when we 'feel' tired we need to sleep but how do we improve our sleep quality, how do we know how much sleep we need. When hungry we need to eat, but what do we need to eat? Fiber? Protein? Carbs? One way to figure this out is to learn a method on which to 'hang' what it is we are feeling in our bodies.

At the basis of Ayurvedic, TCM and Yogic science is the 5 Element framework, useful when it comes to 'listening to the body' self-regulation and self-healing. In the 5 Element framework we note the embodied characteristics of each element. There is an organ pairing system that coincides in Ayurvedic and TCM and it is understood that engaging these organs through

³¹ Dhabhar FS. Effects of stress on immune function: the good, the bad, and the beautiful. *Immunologic Research*. 2014 Dec;58(2-3):193-210.

³² Bigger Jr JT. Stress and Cardiovascular Disease: A Review of the Recent Literature. *Stress and Health*. 2019 Feb;35(1):5-10.

³³ Kushida CA, et al. Strategies for Reducing Sleepiness and Improving Sleep. *Chest*. 2017 Apr;151(4):945-53.

movement to activate the meridians or nadis or directly engaging the organ itself will bring balance to the Element. Meditation, nutrition and action can all be correlated to the organ.

For example, Earth according to Yogic science is at the level of the root chakra, at the base of the spine. The stomach and spleen are the organs associated with Earth. Survival, security, stability are key characteristics of Earth and it follows that when Earth is balanced as when Mother Earth is in balance with adequate water, oxygen, dynamic gas exchange and sunlight that supports growth she is able to share her abundance generously, and without judgement. When people are balanced in their Earth element, when they feel safe and secure, at 'home' they too are able to share more generously, and tend to be less judgemental. If the stomach is upset, or in poor condition we don't feel this sense of stability. This is where gut health comes into play, and with the Fire element where the intestines are one of the organs involved. Fire is the element of creativity, spontaneity, passion and most of all transformation. When out of balance we feel anger, frustration, anxiety, stress none of which serve to support immune system integrity. Fire is fueled by an imbalance in earth and it is the products of earth that fuel Fire, wood and fossil fuels, if we eat fiery foods at this time we may get gastrointestinal inflammation leading to ulcers and gut issues. All is interconnected.

Conclusion: Convergence and complementarity

In conclusion it is evident that both manual osteopathy and energy healing modalities have much to offer client/patients in addressing their health concerns. Used in tandem they are complementary and there are a number of areas where they converge to ensure they reach a sustainable place, pain free and without a return to illness. Below are discussed several areas where manual therapies and energy healing converge:

Connection to Natural Laws

Where manual osteopathy and energy therapies converge lies in the concept espoused by Andrew T. Stills the father of osteopathic philosophy and practice. In his autobiography 'Autobiography of Andrew Taylor Still with a History of the Discovery and Development of the Science of Osteopathy.' he writes:

"That science which consists of such exact, exhaustive, and verifiable knowledge of the structure and function of the human mechanism, anatomical, physiological and psychological, including the chemistry and physics of its known elements, as has made discoverable certain organic laws and remedial resources, within the body itself, by which nature under the scientific treatment peculiar to osteopathic practice, apart from all ordinary methods of extraneous, artificial, or medicinal stimulation, and in harmonious accord with its own mechanical principles, molecular activities, and metabolic processes, may recover from displacements, disorganizations, derangements, and consequent disease, and regained its normal equilibrium of form and function in health and strength."³⁴

Put more succinctly, osteopathic techniques remove obstacles so the being can access the healing power of nature, harmonise with these within the being and thus self-heal. Energy therapies

³⁴ Still, A.T., Autobiography of Andrew Taylor Still with a History of the Discovery and Development of the Science of Osteopathy. 1897, Kirksville. Mo.

come in to fertilise that ground opening the access to healing by aligning the being with the vibrations found in nature.

My recent experience with this was with polymyalgic arthritis, where the medical diagnosis was for a ‘permanent’ disability, treated with low-dose steroidal medication and a life in and out of pain and discomfort and a gradual deterioration something as essential as bone integrity due to the leaching effect of long-term steroid use. Instead, accessing the ‘inner work’ that needed to be done to calm the fire and friction within, reconciled a number of issues. Therapies like heart-centred therapy³⁵, ‘Fit for Love’ therapy³⁶ and hypnotherapy were employed to remove this friction. With these I engaged in conscious movement practices using Qi gong and yoga therapy, RIFE therapy, infra-red treatments, cranial sacral mobilisation, as well as significantly attending to and changing my diet. While I managed as my own guide it became clear that a facilitator with a broad knowledge of what therapy cocktail might be best and in what order, a positive mind-set and open understanding would have benefited and likely sped up my healing. After a year, these led me to a complete recovery.³⁷

Vital Energy Flow

Energy healing modalities like Reiki or Pranic healing focus on optimising the flow of vital energy also known as prana, Qi in TCM or Kundalini energy in yogic science. Practices like Qi Gong and Yoga work to free and move this vital energy. Manual therapies emphasise the importance of correct alignment and unrestricted movement of the musculoskeletal system, allowing for efficient energy flow.

Stress Reduction

Energy healing and manual osteopathic techniques both alleviate stress and induce relaxation. Energy healing practices like meditation, conscious movement and hypnosis induce deep states of relaxation. The relaxation of the sympathetic nervous system (flight, fight or freeze) is relaxed. Manual osteopathic techniques such as soft tissue manipulation (myofascial release) and joint mobilisation release tension. Craniosacral relaxation and visceral massage all help to release tension, promote relaxation and restore balance within the body. In energy therapy work it is understood that when the body is relaxed energy flows where it is needed.

Immune System support

Restoring vital energy flow and reducing stress both serve to support immune system function and integrity. Manual osteopathic techniques can improve the movement of lymphatic fluid, enhance circulation and optimize structural alignment all of which support the immune system.

Pain Management

Energy healing rebalances the body’s energy systems and promote self-healing. As described in the previous section movement and nutrition, acupuncture and somatic movement, work to

³⁵ <https://chiklyinstitute.com/HCT/Discover>

³⁶ <https://www.drteshna.com/>

³⁷ <https://elementalwellness.life/a-year-of-healing-in-ecuador-part-1-the-perfect-storm/>

balance the elements and in that way can alleviate the cause of physical, emotional and energetic pain. Manual therapies using hands on techniques like strain/counter strain, facilitated positional release, Still technique and muscle energy technique address musculoskeletal pain, restoring function.

Overarching consideration

Key in this concept of accessing healing power is in the power of the mind, if the person is not attuned and in accordance with this possibility then self-healing will not come easily. There is an increasing awareness of this when applied to our work as therapists, that it is in the mind of the person where the greatest capacity for healing lies. Deepak Chopra and now Joe Dispenza and platforms like Mindvalley are forging ahead with this idea and it is imperative that manual osteopaths not to get left behind. Deepak Chopra draws from quantum physics, neuroscience and spirituality to explore the interconnectedness of mind-body and spirit. He determines that mindfulness practices along with stress reduction and a positive attitude are activated by cultivating an intention and paying focused attention on the issue at hand be it physical or psychological, will lead to well-being and good health³⁸. This correlates with what Still's says about the dynamic interconnected system of body-mind-spirit, in fact they use much the same language. Gabriela Wright frames osteopathic philosophy from the Buddhist perspective in her blog on Chopra's site, saying "Our potential is infinite as we start nurturing the pathway to self-awareness. And in that sense mental well-being is essential to all aspects of our daily lives, a closer mental hygiene is key for our physical and social wellbeing, our careers and life purposes, our financial, and community relationships."³⁹

The very idea of an innate healing sense or a natural power is often derided as quackery, promulgated by the allopathic medical machine and corporate pharmaceutical or insurance interests saying without evidence-based results proving the efficacy of therapies, how can they be credible. However, the immense number of known experiences and as we discussed in reference to the power of positive thinking above, the personal experience of many people defies this bias. Mantak Chia who is a living guru, founder of the Universal Healing Daoist tradition living in NE Thailand is making great strides in connecting western science with 'eastern' healing concepts. In his book, 'The Inner Smile: Increasing Chi through the cultivation of Joy' he notes that "[modern medical scientific] research has shown that meridians are pathways that conduct electromagnetic energy through the body...the meridian system can affect the nervous system, the immune system and the hormonal system."⁴⁰ Indeed more and more western medical trained physicians are prescribing acupuncture, yoga and meditation.

Case Studies

Case studies are the best way to demonstrate the efficacy of an integrated healing approach. We present 2 case studies from the author as the practitioner.

³⁸ <https://chopra.com/articles/why-mental-health-is-at-the-center-of-our-well-being>

³⁹ Chopra, Ibid

⁴⁰ Chia, M. (2008). The Inner Smile: Increasing Chi through the Cultivation of Joy. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co.p.22

CASE STUDY 1

Subject: Male, 32yrs old

Symptoms: Stiffness and pain in the lower lumbar spine and sacro-iliac joint mostly affecting the right side

Diagnosis: Clinical diagnosis by rheumatologist - Ankylosing Spondylitis



Circumstances: Living in Yangon, Myanmar as an expat employee of a humanitarian organisation with his dependents, his wife and 2 young children. He has a job he loves with an expiring contract and no sense of whether it will be renewed or and no future prospects applied for. He is the sole breadwinner in the family a role he has been playing for some time

A diagnosis of Ankylosing Spondylitis is considered to be an incurable autoimmune disease that causes inflammation in the joints. Usual treatment is with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs accompanied by exercises to alleviate the pain and to support a lifestyle which will be limited by both the pain, the lack of mobility and the fear for the future in terms of life/work prospects.

Assessment:

Client was assessed against an Intake Form (Appendix 1) that considers history, diet, activity, lifestyle and the 5 elements framework that harnesses the wisdom of Ayurveda and TCM in the clients self-determination of where they have imbalances in the body system.

In general his physical condition was reasonable for a man his age he was not over-weight and had been quite fit in his 20's and was a long distance runner. He was suffering from being less mobile due to his debility over the past 8 months. He was depressed partly due to the pain and because of his dependence on pharmaceutical meds (NSAIDS) that left him feeling empty and weak and that he could not run which he said was his stress-relief go-to activity. His rheumatologist was recommending low dose steroid prednisone for life which he was innately resistant to taking due to the deleterious effect this would have on his bone integrity over the long-term.

The 5 elements framework is a process of self-identification of wherein lies the source of the problem allows for reflection of the life-circumstance of the person and the opportunity and invitation to make changes. In this case, worry and fear were primary and were affecting the

well-being of the individual. According to TCM, worry affects our stomach and small intestine, fear we store in our kidneys. The client had ample doses of both of these, he was very worried he would lose his job, and fearful of not being able to provide for his family. Further inquiry revealed that it was a traditional family trait where the male figure in the family was expected to provide for the family so it was quite deep-rooted this idea that he was obliged to provide. Interestingly his paternal grand-father (also the sole breadwinner of a large family) had been debilitated by a similar ailment which had been labelled 'lumbago' and this supported the idea that there was a genetic component to his illness.

Adding to this the client had a typical northern European diet (see below) that did not support his overall well-being, he also believed he suffered from gluten-intolerance. Living in Myanmar his wife sought to provide the same kind of foods that they had in Europe, foods which were not customary neither were they seasonal nor in consideration of the much hotter climate.

The client's wife was becoming more distant emotionally from him since she was having to provide more than her share of caring for the children. Their sexual intimacy was absent because of the pain he was in, and he was becoming more and more frustrated with this, particularly attributing some of his lack of libido to his medication.

Treatment:

The client's GP had referred his patient for this kind of treatment and knew that he was under the care of a craniosacral therapist/manual osteopath (the practitioner), and that part of the objective was to taper down dependency on pharmaceutical medications. The doctor had no objections, not convinced of the clinical diagnosis nor the prognosis given by the rheumatologist. In Myanmar diagnostic testing did not extend to further laboratory work.

5 Elements Framework:

In the first session the practitioner unpackaged the 5 Element framework which provides an explanation of the embodied characteristics of the elements Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Spirit. This is done through enquiry so that with guidance the client self-identifies these characteristics and then determines on their own wherein lie their imbalances. This client identified Air as the causal imbalance, with Water out of balance as well. With both Air and Water turbulent Fire is fanned so also out of balance. The elements in both Ayurveda and TCM are associated with an organ pairing system, Air with lungs and large intestine, Water with kidneys and urinary bladder, Fire with liver and the pericardium (triple burner). These help guide the practitioner to prescribe

Nutrition:

The therapist suggested a cooling anti-inflammatory diet to help reduce the inflammation and sense of bloating and eliminate the likelihood that a bacterial or viral infection was the cause of the inflammation. This is a 5 week programme that also detoxifies the tissues, and cleanses the colon, liver and gallbladder, as well as supporting the kidneys. This was quite a radical change as the client drank alcohol 5-10 units/week, ate red-meat 4/7 days a week, drank milk and ate cheese, had a very sugar-laden diet and overeat carbohydrates. He had made no connection with his current condition and his nutrition. His condition (depression, the meds) was driving further poor eating habits like bingeing carbs late at night. The diet period began slowly so as not to

shock the system ended with a liver/gall-bladder cleanse as a process of ‘resetting’ the body and then a segue back in adding in food groups with the intention of rebuilding the gut biome.

Manual Osteopathic techniques:

An initial craniosacral osteopathic session to reset the cerebrospinal fluid pulse and support a rebalancing of the csf (energetic) flow and to bring his body into a place of total relaxation. This is repeated in subsequent sessions if the client felt anxious or overwhelmed.

An initial visceral osteopathic session to eliminate the chance of an organ misalignment and relax the organs.

Mobilization massage of the lumbar and sacral spine, moving the facet joints and encouraging torsion movement of the spine, thus bringing back circulation and nervous connection to the parts of the spine that were becoming immobile due to the pain and stiffness experience.

Application of heat including deep heat through massage oils performed on him by his wife.

Acupuncture:

Out-sourced to a local chinese medicine clinic to support kidneys, liver, gall-bladder and to reduce pain.

Meditation:

The client was asked to sit (or lie) with his body in stillness 20 mins a day and do a body scan, so that he could monitor changes as he went through the diet and movement changes prescribed.

He was asked to visualize himself back to his usual pain free and mobile existence, having made a concrete and conscious decision that this was not ‘incurable’ nor was it in any way a permanent illness. That the changes he was making to his diet, the movement practices and meditation were going to work.

He was asked to journal what he experienced daily, or when anything came up including in his sense of depression-happiness, etc.

Breathwork:

Given a technique that can be done standing or whatever position is most comfortable breathes in positivity and coolness into his joints, and exhales heat, toxicity and negativity.

Movement:

The client preferred qi gong to yoga practice, and had already had some exposure to both.

Qi Gong focused on imbalances Wood (Air) and Water. Wood movements such as Dragon Stretches its Claws promote extension of tendons and ligaments, Water movements such as Swimming Dragon promote fluidity in the undulating movements of arms, hips and the backs.

Movements such as Spinal Cord breathing which is a whole body wave like movement promote back flexibility connected to the breath,

The protocol given creates a whole being relaxation when done consciously feeling into the possibilities of movement and freeing the sympathetic nervous system control over the body.

Result:

Within 2 weeks of daily practices and diet adjustments the client was feeling less restricted in his movement, within 4 weeks he was happier and reporting less pain. His GP started to taper the dose of NSAIDs. After the final cleanse (5 weeks) the client reported his first pain free day in 8 months. Within 2 months he reported he was nearly back to normal, he had tapered off the NSAIDs slowly under the care of his physician finally finishing the NSAIDs after 3 months. He continued with weekly visits to the practitioner for 2.5 months.

Notable to add, his contract was renewed after 4 weeks of diet change and practices which allayed the worry and fear he had been experiencing which provided the fertile psychic ground for healing. The pain and stiffness had already been diminishing by the time he got this news and we felt the news accelerated the healing. His wife also felt more connected to him, and their sexual intimacy had returned.

A follow-up conversation 1yr later revealed that not only had he had no return of the symptoms he had stayed with a low carb, no dairy, no sugar diet his whole family had switched over to eating healthier and he felt fitter than ever and had returned to his passion of distance running. They now had a family of 3. Further the client was very doubtful now that the condition was actually Ankylosing Spondylitis or that there was any genetic connection, rather lifestyle, a propensity to worry and nutrition that did not support wellness were the main causes of his condition.

CASE STUDY 2

Subject: Male, 41 yrs

Symptoms: Shoulder with 30% abduction ROM, 3 months and minimal change

Diagnosis: Frozen shoulder (adhesive capsulitis)

Prognosis: A diagnosis of ‘frozen shoulder’ also known as adhesive capsulitis is a painful inflammation of the shoulder capsule, that thickens and becomes stiff though not as painful. Prognosis of 6-12 months before starting to soften and loosen though with commensurate muscle weakening and atrophy around the joint.⁴¹

Circumstance: Highly active individual, much travel in tropical third world environment, work involves paddling, snorkelling, diving, swimming. Feels it started due to an excessive outing with a difficult self-rescue in rough seas which stressed his shoulders. Family is wanting to move

⁴¹<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/frozen-shoulder/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20372690>

back to Italy from Myanmar though he loves his work and wants to stay. Without use of his shoulder he is desk-bound and not enjoying it.

Assessment: Client was assessed against an Intake Form (Appendix 1) that considers history, diet, activity, lifestyle and the 5 elements framework that harnesses the wisdom of Ayurveda and TCM in the clients self-determination of where they have imbalances in the body system.

Client was in considerable distress given his shoulder mobility was closely connected to a job he loved and that was threatened if he was unable to perform. He was also the director of the local branch of the organisation so would have to make the decision himself to leave the work.

Adding to the stress of the discontent of his family and a disconnection that was emerging with his wife, the shoulder issue was not getting his full attention. His nutrition was very good and he was a fit 41 yrs old normally with a very positive disposition. He continued to work on the muscles of his arm and as much as he could his shoulder.

He had been on NSAIDs but at the time he saw me he had gone off them and noticed a little bit more pain and so occasionally took pain killers if it affected his sleep.

Client had made no connection between his physical condition and his mental state of distress over his family's concerns. He admitted he felt betrayed which is located in the Air element, at the level of the heart, and was heavy hearted about that and that he might have to leave his work.

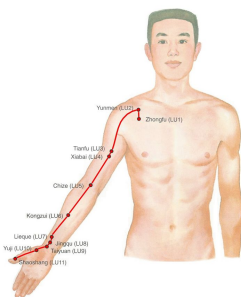
Treatment:

Five Element framework:

The Air element has the lungs and large intestine as the two indicated organs. And so movement of the upper thoracic cavity and shoulders and to move his lower body, such as inverted cycling of the legs and lengthening of the sacrum and lower lumbar to create room for the colon. In yogic science it is understood that hold grief in our lungs and stimulation of the respiratory system is essential to engaging the Air element.

Acupressure/acupuncture:

The lung meridian runs inside the length of the ventral side of each arm stimulation of each of these points encourages circulation and nerve conduction through the shoulder and encourages mobility. In addition stimulation of various points for large intestine, stomach and small intestine are also performed to ease shoulder pain. This was out-sourced to a local TCM clinic.



Manual Osteopathic techniques:

An initial craniosacral relaxation strain-counterstrain and facilitated positional release on identified trigger points were used to begin loosening up the shoulder.

Facet-joint mobilisation was engaged at the C4 to T1 level to ensure no impingement on nerves had evolved in the 3 months of immobility and to encourage spinal mobility.

Daily massage with oregano oil to deep heat the joint, or the use of deep-heat menthol based products around the shoulder.

Visceral osteopathy: techniques for opening the gall bladder and to unblock large intestine flexures and valves, no other pains on palpation.

Meditation:

Visualisation of himself as a fully mobile and working person in the job he loved swimming and diving as he used to.

Breath work:

Breathing in fluidity, light, heat and freedom for all his joints, exhaling stiffness, negativity, restriction, constriction and limitations.

Movement:

Yoga:

Extension and flexion of the arms at the shoulders, to open and close the chest in various positions.

Arm raises to full extensions.

No practices where the shoulder joint is loaded or in any way impacted.

Torsional movement to the upper back.

Asana practices for lower intestines and to move any intestinal blockages and bring mobility to facilitate colonic movement.

Qi gong: Deer, Monkey paws, Crane and Serving Tea Cups.

Nutrition:

Foods to loosen up his digestive function; prunes and beets, and consulted an indigenous plant medicine doctor more familiar with what was available locally who made some recommendations for herbs that would help loosen his bowels. At the beginning he also took 3 coffee enemas to ease his constipation.

Result:

The initial craniosacral relaxation revealed that he had mobility in his shoulder more than he thought. The effect of this realisation gave him considerable hope that he could overcome the problem.

Also the idea that his family situation and his shoulder were connected resonated with him, and he then determined to ‘cure himself’ by working on his shoulder, and on the relationship with his family. The client accepted the notion that this was a very temporary condition and one that with the proper attitude adjustment and movement practice he could change his situation.

The client sought family counselling to ease the tensions, sessions gave him the awareness that he was not alone in his responsibilities towards the family, that he alone did not have to ‘bear the burden’ on his shoulders for their well-being. The family determined to go to Italy and he could continue his work in southern Myanmar.

Within 3 weeks of diligent mobility practices and 2 visits to the acupuncturists, and 6 further sessions with the practitioner, his range of motion had increased to 70% and within 6 weeks he was back to full range. We then moved to strengthening exercises, and he returned to swimming.

Intake Form

SAMPLE

CONFIDENTIALITY AND LIABILITY RELEASE

By completing this form I understand that the information contained will be held in confidentiality.

By completing this form I understand the intention of the treatments and therapies are to facilitate my journey towards Wellness and therefore I release [insert therapist name] (the therapist) of all liability or any damages that may result from unexpected consequences of treatments and therapies received.

Name:

Sex: F M Other

Date of Birth: M/DD/YYYY

Email:

Mobile Phone:

Website:

Health History

Accidents/Injuries:

Hospitalizations:

Medications:

Syndromes:

Have you ever experienced any of the following?

Anxiety
Asthma
Claustrophobia
Concussion
Depression
Heart Attack
Insomnia
Migraine
Panic Attack
Vertigo
Whiplash

Other unusual occurrences:

Do you use any substances or medications?

Recreational Drugs	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly
Pharmaceuticals	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly
Alcohol	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly
Tobacco	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly

Names of substances or medications:

Blood Pressure

Normal	Low	High
--------	-----	------

Diet

Carnivore	Vegetarian	Vegan	Raw
-----------	------------	-------	-----

Which Foods do you prefer

Sweet
Salty
Spicy
Bitter

Sour

Which foods do you crave:

Digestion

Regular

Irregular

Too slow

Too fast

Menstruation (if applicable)

Regular

Irregular

Painful

Missing periods

Strong

Weak

Sleep

Hours per night:

Normal sleeping/waking hour:

Other comments:

Dream Activity

Often Seldom Never

Describe your dreams if you can:

Exercise

Do you participate in?

Yoga	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly
Qi Gong	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly

Tai Chi	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly
Martial Arts	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly
Dance	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly
Pilates	Daily	Weekly	Irregularly

Other forms of exercise:

Are you currently or recently Pregnant? (if applicable)

Current symptoms or/ and imbalances:

Abdominal Pain
 Arthritis
 Back Ache
 Breathing problems
 Circulation
 Co-ordination
 Diarrhea
 Dismenohrea
 Diabetes
 Eye problems
 Fainting
 Headaches
 High Cholesterol
 Joint Pain
 Heart Palpitations
 Muscular pain
 Urinary problems

Other Conditions / Explanation

Please share here what you would like to focus on in the treatment? If you have any therapy goals please share them here.

Are there stressors in your life that you feel impact on your general well-being, family, relationships, life situation, work? Is there one that preoccupies or worries you. Please provide a brief description.

