



CranioSacral Therapy Frequently Asked Questions

What Is CranioSacral Therapy?

CranioSacral Therapy (CST) is a gentle, hands-on, whole-body method of releasing restrictions around the brain and spinal cord to enhance central nervous system performance and allow the body to self-correct. It was developed by osteopathic physician John E. Upledger after eight years of clinical research and testing at Michigan State University. The Upledger Institute, established in 1985, has now trained more than 80,000 CranioSacral Therapists worldwide.

CranioSacral Therapy strengthens the body's natural healing processes to bolster resistance to disease and improve overall health. It has also proven effective in aiding individuals with a wide range of medical challenges associated with pain and dysfunction, including:

- Migraines
- Neck and Back Pain
- Fibromyalgia
- Chronic Fatigue
- TMJ Syndrome
- Motor-Coordination Impairments
- Autism
- Central Nervous System Disorders
- Colic
- Scoliosis
- Learning Disabilities
- Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries
- Emotional Difficulties
- Stress-Related Problems
- Neurovascular or Immune Disorders
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Post-Surgical Dysfunction
- And Many Other Conditions

Because of its gentle nature and positive effect on so many body functions, CranioSacral Therapy is practiced by a variety of healthcare professionals, from physicians to massage therapists.

What Can I Expect From A CranioSacral Therapy Session?

A typical CranioSacral Therapy session lasts from 45 minutes to an hour, and takes place in a quiet, private setting. As a client you remain fully clothed as you recline on a massage or treatment table. The practitioner will stand or sit positioned at various points of your head, torso or feet. At times your practitioner may also support your limbs and spine while helping your body release accumulated tension.

What you experience during a CST session is highly individual. Some people say they feel deeply relaxed, while others describe feeling unwinding sensations as the body releases tension. You may even recall circumstances surrounding a past trauma or injury that caused your body stress. While it doesn't occur in every session, this aspect of the process – called SomatoEmotional Release® – is perfectly normal, and helps the body reverse dysfunction and restore optimal levels of mobility.

Because each individual response to CST is unique, the number of sessions needed to resolve any particular condition varies widely. While one session may give you the relief you need, your situation may require more therapy before it's completely alleviated. Your therapist can best advise you in this area.

What Will I Experience After A Session?

Just as each individual experiences CST sessions differently, the results can be diverse as well. You may leave in such a relaxed state that you feel like sleeping for hours. Or you may leave full of boundless energy. You may feel a decrease in pain or an increase in function immediately after the session, or the effects may develop gradually over the next few days.

Since CST helps the body resume its natural healing processes, it's common for your improvements to continue weeks after the session. You may also experience a reorganization phase as your body releases previously held patterns and adapts to a new state of wellness.

How Does CranioSacral Therapy Work?

Few structures have as much influence over the body's ability to function properly as the brain and spinal cord that make up the central nervous system. And few systems have as much impact on the central nervous system as the craniosacral system — the membranes and fluid that surround, protect and nourish the brain and spinal cord.

Every day your body endures stresses and strains, and your structures work to compensate for them. Unfortunately, these changes often cause body tissues to tighten and distort the craniosacral system, which can then cause tension to form around the brain and spinal cord. The result is a barrier to the healthy performance of the central nervous system, and potentially every other system it interacts with.

Fortunately, such restrictions can be detected and corrected using simple methods of touch. Generally using about 5 grams of pressure — roughly the weight of a nickel — the CST practitioner uses his or her hands to evaluate the craniosacral system by gently feeling various locations of the body to test for the ease of motion and rhythm of the cerebrospinal fluid pulsing around the brain and spinal cord. Soft-touch techniques are then used to release restrictions in any tissues influencing the craniosacral system.

By normalizing the environment around the brain and spinal cord and enhancing the body's ability to self-correct, CranioSacral Therapy is able to alleviate a wide variety of dysfunctions, from chronic pain and sports injuries to stroke and neurological impairment.

Who Can Benefit From CranioSacral Therapy?

Because CranioSacral Therapy is so effective as a preventive health measure, almost anyone can benefit from a session. For more pressing concerns, CST has proven especially effective on puzzling cases that have not responded well to other approaches. It's particularly helpful to those with head, neck or back injuries resulting from an accident.

The extremely light touch also makes CranioSacral Therapy a safe approach for children and infants who have experienced early stress, including birth trauma. By releasing restrictions around the central nervous system early, you may help prevent future difficulties such as learning disabilities or hyperactivity.

Are There Any Conditions That Shouldn't Be Addressed With CranioSacral Therapy?

There are a few situations in which CST is not recommended. They include any condition in which slight variations in intracranial pressure would cause instability, such as acute aneurysm, recent skull fracture, and cerebral hemorrhage or other severe bleeding disorder. If you have any questions about whether these situations apply to you, seek the advice of your physician before receiving a CST session.

How Can I Find A CranioSacral Therapy Practitioner?

Visit www.upledger.com and click on "Find a Practitioner." For more information about CranioSacral Therapy training contact The Upledger Institute today.