

A Primer on Manual Therapy

Manual therapy is a multi-faceted treatment modality that can be used to enhance just about any therapeutic treatment program. But what is manual therapy - besides performing a hands-on treatment? The problem is that it means different things to different people and includes a myriad of techniques. As a result, a wide range of practitioners declare themselves to be manual therapists. This primer is an attempt to explain how BayGrass Institute views manual therapy and how a variety of diverse and physiologically powerful techniques can be used to improve most medical conditions.

Manual Therapy Perspectives

There are some important concepts to keep in mind in order to use manual therapy most effectively. These include:

- Good manual therapists can successfully treat more things than they think they can.
- Good manual therapists can successfully treat more things than others think they can.
- “To be successful as a manual therapist, you need to be able to treat at the cellular level” - Loren “Bear” Rex, D.O., our mentor. It took us many years to fully understand what this statement really means, but now we are excited to share these insights with others.
- Manual therapy *can* successfully treat somatic dysfunctions in any tissue layer, which are causing aberrant physiology.
- Using manual therapy as part of the treatment protocol often leads to more successful outcomes in patients that are not progressing as expected with treatments that do not include it. The reason is the other treatment methods may not restore the aberrant physiology first so the body cannot fully benefit from the techniques being used or the exercises being prescribed.
- Manual therapy *cannot* treat pathological conditions - such as disease, fractures, or soft tissue tears.
- Manual therapy *can* be used to help to improve the aberrant physiology that is present within pathological conditions, but never fully normalize it. However, it can promote recovery to the greatest extent possible.

BayGrass Institute 3 Primary Pillars

Manual therapy can be used to successfully treat many diverse types of medical conditions if 3 key principles are used:

- 1. See the Big Picture:** Performing a thorough, whole-body exam is necessary and allows the therapist to see the big picture of what is happening, find what specific types of somatic dysfunctions are present and where they are located, and design an appropriate treatment program that includes the most effective treatment sequence. We follow a multi-step evaluation process that incorporates the principles of:

Listen-Think-Feel-Treat

- 2. Understanding Physiology:** Treatment effectiveness improves greatly if you understand how the somatic dysfunctions that are present are contributing to the aberrant physiology in the area or body system being treated. Manual therapy can be used to produce better outcomes by restoring normal physiology of the circulatory, lymphatic, autonomic, immune, musculoskeletal, neurological, and visceral systems.
- 3. Layer Palpation:** Being able to perform a good layer palpation is essential in order to localize which specific tissues are dysfunctional, see if the fascial restrictions are localized or widespread, and determine how they are contributing to the patient's complaints.

Manual Therapy Treatment Overview

- When treating patients, a good understanding of what is happening is vital as it allows the therapist to decide the most appropriate treatment techniques to perform and the best sequence to use them. This combination is especially important when treating complex patients.
- Our classes will teach you how to perform a variety of treatment techniques so you will be able to address the patient's condition in multiple ways. These techniques include: Muscle Energy, Functional Technique, Fascial Release, Cranial, Visceral Manipulation, Autonomic Nervous System Balancing, and Chapman's Neurolymphatic Reflexes.

Goals of Manual Therapy Treatments

Using the various manual therapy techniques described above can achieve important treatment goals in just about any patient:

- 1. Remove joint dysfunctions:** Joint dysfunctions can contribute to pain, inappropriate movement patterns, and/or aberrant physiology in any or all of the systems in the body.
- 2. Remove myofascial restrictions:** Myofascial restrictions may be primary or secondary to the joint dysfunctions present. These restrictions can extend throughout the body, including the cranium, which allows symptoms to be present in areas that would not seem to be connected. As with joint dysfunctions, these myofascial restrictions can contribute to pain, inappropriate movement patterns, and/or aberrant physiology in any or all of the systems in the body.
- 3. Release visceral restrictions:** Visceral restrictions can alter physiology within an organ system, restrict movement in the musculoskeletal system, and/or cause pain.
- 4. Promote good lymphatic drainage:** Good lymphatic drainage helps clear the area of debris and inflammatory products and optimizes immune function, all of which promote tissue healing.
- 5. Restore circulation:** Good venous drainage enables the arterial system to provide the healing tissues the full supply of oxygen and nutrients that are needed.
- 6. Prevent tissue hypoxia that leads to improper cellular function:** Correcting any of the types of somatic dysfunctions listed above ensures enhanced oxygen delivery to the recovering tissues enabling the cells to produce all of the energy needed for optimal cellular function leading to faster healing times.
- 7. Restore Autonomic Nervous System Balance:** Restoring a proper balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems promotes better function in all of the organ systems and provides a greater arterial supply to the specific local tissues that need healing.

Come Join Us!

Listening
with
Both Hands

