

# Cranial Osteopathy

The maintenance of good mechanical function is essential to good health. Problems in the framework of the body can disturb the circulatory system or nerves to any part of the body, and affect any aspect of health. Thus mechanical problems can lead not only to aches and pains in joints and muscles, but also to disturbances in the internal organs and the way they work. Osteopaths work to restore the musculoskeletal system of the body to a state of balance and harmony.

Health is not simply the absence of disease or pain. It is a state of balance and harmony between the body and mind of a person. In health, a person should be able to respond to events such as accidents, infections or emotional stress, deal with these events and restore itself to optimum health afterwards. The majority of people are not in full health, but are carrying an accumulation of the effects of different traumatic events that have happened to them during their life.

## What is Cranial osteopathy?

Cranial osteopathy is a refined and subtle type of osteopathic treatment that uses very gentle manipulative pressure to encourage the release of stresses throughout the body, including the head. It is extremely effective in treating a wide range of conditions in people of all ages, from birth to old age.

## 'Involuntary motion in the body'

Cranial osteopaths are trained to feel a very subtle, rhythmical shape change that is present in all body tissues. This is called involuntary motion. The skull is made up of 26 bones which are intricately jointed in such a way that during the rhythmical cycle of involuntary motion, the skull can actually change shape very slightly to accommodate the normal involuntary motion of the brain inside. Impacts to the head can block or disrupt this movement. This can cause a very wide variety of problems both in the head and elsewhere in the body. Using involuntary motion in the tissues, osteopaths can feel whether a person is in an optimum state of health, or whether there is something preventing healthy movement of the tissues from occurring.

Accumulation of stress and strain in the body

Most of us have been exposed to physical trauma at some stage in our life. The body may have been able to absorb the effects of an accident at that time, but a lasting strain often remains. Illnesses and emotional trauma can also leave a lasting physical effect. Gradually the body may find it more and more difficult to cope with accumulated stresses, and symptoms may start to show.

## Case study

When he was 6, James has a heavy fall out of a tree onto his bottom. He is bruised and sore for a few days, but soon forgets about it. Unknown to him, he still carries with him compressive strain in his sacrum and lumbar spine, and in the base of his skull.

At age 20, James then has a car accident in which he sustains a mild whiplash. All car accidents put enormous strain throughout the whole spine, and this adds to the existing strain from his fall as a child.

At age 30, when James is now also subjected to stress at work, he began to develop headaches and a bit of backache. He decided to consult an osteopath who discovers that the top of the neck and base of the skull are compressed and immobile from the effects of the childhood fall and the car accident.

Treatment to release these retained strains restores the harmony of the body tissues, James is relieved of his headaches and backache, and also discovers that he has more energy, is sleeping better and coping better with the stress at work.