

Structural Integration

An Open Universe

David Davis

Structural integration (SI) is the culmination of a body of work developed by Ida Pauline Rolf--a true Renaissance woman who changed the field of bodywork and the way we perceive ourselves, perhaps, forever.

Rolf looked at the human condition as it related to the environment and chose to look into the relationship of parts to the whole. Rather than working on symptoms, she evolved a series and sequence of manipulations to change how structure relates to the planet. The gravity of this decision led to developing a sequence of manipulative sessions known as the IO-series.

This series of IO sessions organizes the body in the field of gravity. Fascia, the collagenous protein matrix of

In Alignment with Gravity

The primacy of gravity plays an essential role in how we age, collapse, and compensate the hologram of structure from the macro to the cellular level. We grow up under the electromagnetic pressure of the planet. All living things and beings are subject to magnetic compression and its exaggerating influence upon structural patterns. But only humans have the potential to evolve in vertical intention. We receive support by organizing around a central vertical axis. Understanding this line of intention is central to Rolf's work.

The line refers to the gravitational influence moving from above one's head, down beyond one's feet, to the center of Earth. It does not stop at one's



Structural integration aligns the body to its natural balance.

connective tissue, is the medium of manipulation in this sequence and series. SI is a process of organization, bringing order to the connective tissue through structural alignment with Earth's gravitational field. Establishing this proper relationship, the energy of the client is reinforced by this field and gravity becomes the therapist.

head or at the feet, but implies larger spatial relationships and polarized energies at the ends of the spine. From the ground up, the line passes through the floor of the pelvis, rising anterior to the spine, up through major body segments, passing through bone only at the crown of the head.

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*Everything you
do can be done
better from a
place of
relaxation.*

-Stephen C. Paul

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Alignment in the gravitational field integrates the human structure with the planet by being upright at a right angle to Earth. Earth is the horizontal plane, and we can unify in the vertical. "Verticality" is its own virtue in balance of form. The segmented nature of the human body and its joint system renders us vulnerable to falling out of balance. Joints need to work like horizontal surfaces, but none of them are horizontal or flat. The narrow aperture of the ankle acts like a ball bearing distributing weight laterally, medially, anteriorly, or posteriorly.

That base of support may be quite different relative to the structure above and from one leg to the other, depending on rotations and weight distribution right to left. Imbalance in the base strains segments above, requiring fibrous knitting to splint, hold, and stabilize unstable relationships. Tilting or tipping of joint surfaces accompanies rotation at the joint and counter-rotation in the joint above and below. Rotation and strain are reflected throughout the joint system. Holding transmits up and around the spine, transferring into the ribs and myofascia, stabilizing the pattern through the thorax up into the cervical spine and cranium.

Rolf recognized that a body is organized in concentric layers, and that body function can be understood only by realizing the interrelationship of these layers. By addressing layers, the series has a cumulative effect greater than the impact of one session or another. Each session generates a wave of change to the fascial network, affecting all systems of the body simultaneously. In sequence, each session predicts the need for the next, inviting random disorder to surface, unwinding years of habituated compensation that has become painfully normal and all too familiar. Every session addresses the necessity of bringing the pelvis into a horizontal state by organizing, stabilizing, and mobilizing that most central of segments.

Three Powerful Allies

After the basic series, reinforcements arrive in the form of time, space, and gravity. These three allies continue curing what has been initiated. Posture through alignment continues to improve for a year or more.

One of the gifts of this series is an

expanded sense of acceptable experience, awareness, and relation to what is happening inside as feelings of health and well-being move to vitality. The basic series is a profound excursion integrating and balancing structure with the electromagnetic ocean all around us. Structural integrity overcomes postural insecurity during a journey from the inside out. We begin to have a glimmer of becoming the center of the cyclone. The series is a profound personal educational experience, orienteering and aligning with nature. We walk toward new opportunities and choices, embracing movement through life.

David Davis is a native Coloradan who was transformed by the work in 1973, trained at the Rolf Institute in 1976-1977, and received advanced training in 1985. He is a founding member of the Guild for Structural Integration.



The segmented nature of the human body renders us vulnerable to falling out of balance.

Pre-Session Yoga Moves for Calm

Mary Beth Braun

It's one of those mornings. Your alarm didn't go off and you have an appointment in an hour. How can you quickly collect and calm yourself enough to be fully present for the day ahead? Breath and yoga.

BREATH

Take this time to center and calm yourself. Start by channeling your yoga instructor or massage therapist and begin with breath (pranayama): inhaling to the count of three and exhaling to the count of six. Do this three times and move on to do a few yoga poses (asanas).

YOGA

You remember a few basic yoga poses from class, right? Try these two: simple seated twist and standing half moon.

SIMPLE SEATED TWIST

Continuing to use your breath, sit on the floor in an easy, cross-legged pose and begin simple seated twist. Raise the crown of your head to the ceiling, elongating your neck and spine. Inhale

and exhale, then twist to the left. Exhaling, move through center, and repeat on the right, continuing to inhale and exhale.

STANDING HALF MOON, BIKRAM STYLE

From there, step your right foot forward, followed by your left foot, and slowly roll up one vertebrae at a time until you are standing upright with your feet firmly grounded into the earth.

Feeling your feet firmly grounded, raise your hands overhead, taking the wrinkles out of your neck and elongating your spine. Inhale, exhale, and side bend to the right. Once there, exhale and feel your side body open up as you press your foot into the earth to enhance the stretch. Inhaling through center, exhale and bend to the left. Return to your center and take one more deep breath in and out.

You feel better, right? Now, let go of that harried morning and begin your day fully present and centered.

Mary Beth Braun is a certified massage therapist based in Indianapolis, Indiana.



Channel your inner yoga instructor.

Boost Your Immune System

Lymphatic Drainage Therapy Fights Infection

Does your immune system work overtime? If so, you might want to give it a boost by seeing a massage therapist or bodyworker trained in lymphatic drainage therapy. This technique can boost your immunity by increasing the production of antibodies, stimulating circulation, moving congestion out of the body, and reducing swelling, especially after surgery.

The lymphatic system supports our body's immune function and involves several organs, glands, and tissues, hundreds of lymph nodes, and a network of vessels. A clear lymph fluid flows through these vessels and carries the metabolic waste (bacteria, dead cells, fats, fluids, proteins, and viruses) to the lymph nodes, where it is filtered. These nodes often swell when we are sick.

The lymphatic drainage techniques used by massage therapists and bodyworkers gently stimulate lymph nodes, help correct swelling and stagnation in those nodes, reduce local fluid retention, boost the overall immune system, and provide relaxation. As an essential tool in the treatment of lymphedema (excess lymphatic fluid), this therapy is often applied postoperatively and can be especially beneficial for breast cancer patients.

Administering this treatment requires advanced training and is performed with gentle, massage-like strokes. There should be no discomfort involved; in fact, you may feel you are hardly being worked on at all.

Aftercare

After your lymphatic drainage

treatment, it's possible you could feel some mild, flu-like symptoms, depending on how much strain your body has been under prior to treatment. This strain may be due to environmental pollutants, medication, and diet. Most people leave a session simply feeling relaxed, but if you don't feel at the top of your game, drink plenty of water, limit your salt intake, and stay physically active.

Lymphatic drainage is one way to give your wellness a boost in a busy world that makes many demands on your immune system.

*Those who bring
sunshine into the
lives of others,
cannot keep it
from themselves.*

-James M. Barrie

WHY MASSAGE THERAPY?

For centuries massage therapy has been around helping people with minor aches & pains. Massage has been a popular remedy to wellness in the mid-east and other countries abroad. In Hispanic countries massage and herbs have been ancient remedies for health especially in poor regions where more traditional forms of medicine were not affordable. Today, more and more people are denying traditional medical treatment and seeking holistic alternatives to medicine. Many people are seeking alternative medicine such as natropathy, acupuncture and massage therapy as a much safer remedy for the body to recover.

Massage is beneficial in numerous ways. It reduces the risk of muscle injury, reduces stress and relieves trigger points within the body. The nervous system gets set up in a positive feedback loop to where the nerves are telling the muscles to continually contract and tighten. Massage breaks the loop by sending a different signal along the nervous system. This is why massage is vital in preventing chronic problems and muscle injury.

Healing Through Massage

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