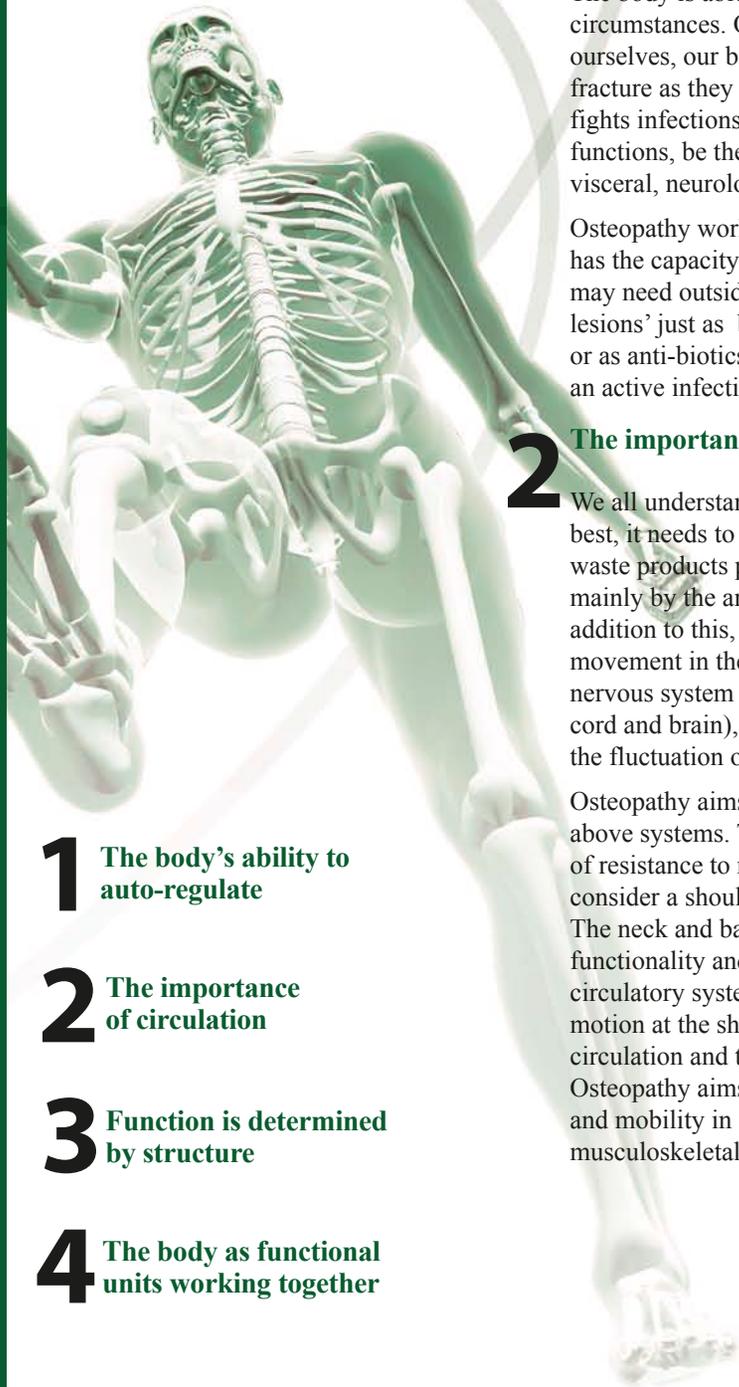




l'Équipe de Réadaptation à Domicile

DEPUIS 1989



1 The body's ability to auto-regulate

2 The importance of circulation

3 Function is determined by structure

4 The body as functional units working together

1 The body is able to auto-regulate

The body is able to heal itself in most circumstances. Our wounds heal when we cut ourselves, our bones become as strong after a fracture as they were before, our immune system fights infections. This applies to all body functions, be they neuromuscular, musculoskeletal, visceral, neurological, endocrine, etc.

Osteopathy works with the principle that the body has the capacity to heal itself and that at times it may need outside help to remove 'osteopathic lesions' just as bones need a cast during healing, or as anti-biotics may be needed to fight an active infection.

2 The importance of circulation

We all understand that for the body to work at its best, it needs to nourish its cells and to remove waste products produced by them. This is done mainly by the arterial and venous systems. In addition to this, we also have 'circulation' or movement in the lymphatic (immune) system, the nervous system (information to and from the spinal cord and brain), and more specific to osteopathy: the fluctuation of the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).

Osteopathy aims at an optimal flow in all of the above systems. This is attained by removing areas of resistance to movement. As an example, consider a shoulder that is limited in movement. The neck and back will compensate to maximize functionality and thereby create 'kinks' in the circulatory system. By regaining full range of motion at the shoulder we will allow for better circulation and thereby promote health. Osteopathy aims at proper alignment, position and mobility in all body structures be they musculoskeletal, visceral, or neurological.

3 Function is determined by structure

We can understand that proper function requires a sound structure. For example, if an elbow does not have its full ability to bend or to straighten, then reaching far from the body or behind the neck will be impossible. This is true for all structures in the human body.

Osteopathy aims at ensuring that each component will be able to have its full range of movement in the directions and sequences that are particular to that structure.

4 The body is made up of functional units

The body can be described as being composed of several systems: we have our musculoskeletal system (bones and muscles), cardiovascular (heart, veins and arteries), neurological (brain and nerves), respiratory (lungs), digestive (stomach, liver, intestines), endocrine (pancreas, thyroid), etc. For optimal health, each system must function optimally individually, but it must also be able to function with its partners. Each unit is a member of a team that is interdependent (the brain will not be able to function without nourishment and digestion of nutrients will be useless if the liver cannot transform our food to glycogen to be used by the brain).

In an osteopathic approach, once we have corrected a structure, we 'integrate' it with its neighbours locally (shoulder with scapula), regionally (shoulder with thoracic cage) and globally (shoulder and its role during walking)

How a typical osteo session is carried out

Being a holistic approach to health, osteopathy aims at having a global picture of the client before carrying out any osteopathic adjustment. The therapist will explain to the client what to expect from the meeting, that the client should give feedback during the session and that he/she can stop whenever he/she wishes. Once the client has accepted to proceed, then the session can begin.

A typical session may be composed of the following elements:

Verbal interview with the client to understand the reason he/she is consulting, what has been done to date and to establish the current level of general health. Questions will include medical history, associated conditions such as diabetes, heart disease etc, and a review of all systems from ORL (ears, nose and throat) to elimination and passing through the musculoskeletal.

Postural evaluation. At this point, the client will be asked to undress to his/her underclothes and the therapist will make a visual observation of the posture in both static (standing still) and dynamic (moving) conditions. Palpation being the therapist's greatest tool, he/she will place his/her hands on specific bony areas (vertebrae, pelvis, clavicles, etc) to better evaluate their movement.

Scans. Based on the results of the postural evaluation, general tests will be directed to the areas that need attention. He/she will place his/her hands on specific areas and keep them there while the client carries out a requested movement, breathes, or does nothing at all. At this point the therapist may close his/her eyes so as to eliminate visual information that may corrupt the tactile information.



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Specific tests. As the exam becomes more specific, certain structures will be evaluated and a list of osteopathic lesions will be formed. The client can expect that the therapist will place his/her hands on the sacrum (bone at the end of the vertebral column, at the pelvis), on the abdomen, on the thoracic cage, the back, the head, the jaw, fingers in the ears, etc. Before changing his/her hand placement, the therapist will inform the client of what to expect ('I am going to place my hand over your belly', 'I am going to push down on your ribs').

Treatment plan. The list of 'osteopathic lesions' will then be classified in order of priority and a treatment plan will be elaborated and proposed to the client, including a description of the treatment to be carried out. The client is always in a position to accept or to refuse the treatment plan.

Re-evaluation. As the treatment is being executed, the therapist will re-evaluate to verify the efficacy of his/her interventions.

Other information and exercises. The client is informed of any ill effects that may result from the session.. The scope of what can be expected is quite vast and will depend on many factors: how sensitive the client is, the importance of the work done, the body's ability to adapt, etc. These reactions may last from 48 to 72 hours and will vary from feeling quite relieved and having more energy to less pleasant reactions from the different systems that have been worked directly or indirectly. The unpleasant reactions can include musculoskeletal (aches and pains in muscles and joints), eliminatory (increased frequency, change in consistency, unpleasant

odours, coughing, sweating), emotional (feeling good, feeling bad, irritability, euphoria) etc. These reactions are of short duration and once the body has readjusted, will be replaced by a feeling of well-being. Your therapist may suggest that you carry out specific exercises in between visits to support the work that was done in the clinic.

Frequency of visits. It is highly unlikely that your condition will be resolved on the first session. It is therefore recommended that you have follow up visits to continue the work that was began and to maintain the gains that were made. Your therapist will propose a frequency that is appropriate to you, depending on your particular situation. Typically, you may be asked to return the following week and then at bi-weekly intervals. Usually, after three to four sessions you and your therapist will be able to determine the frequency and duration of your future sessions. Some clients chose to return for regular sessions at a frequency of 2 to 3 times yearly.

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