

## What is Positional Therapy (IPT) ...and how does it work?

The problem of chronic pain in our bodies is complex and far-reaching. As it applies to musculoskeletal pain it encompasses many different areas such the head, neck, back, limbs, specific joints and bones, and even chronic non-specific widespread tissue pain—just to name a few.

Yet, despite the wide-ranging conditions and symptoms, all types of musculoskeletal pain share similar underlying mechanisms, manifestations, and potential treatments. In the final analysis, most pain is foundational, resulting from imbalances in a musculoskeletal system that is out of alignment. There is a great deal of research that presents evidence that the root cause of many neuromuscular pain patterns is due to biomechanical misalignments caused by muscle imbalances. We are in pain, because we are misaligned or “crooked.” Therapists often refer this as the muscles being “locked long” or “locked short.” If you think you have good posture, you probably do not, as misalignments are often not obvious to the untrained eye.

IPT skillfully combines the application of two well-established and clinically recognized neuromuscular treatment approaches, Strain-Counterstrain (SCS) and Muscle Energy Technique (MET), specifically developed to address chronic and acute neuromuscular pain, and improve muscular-skeletal function and range.

This comprehensive program of recovery from neuromuscular pain, both chronic and acute is a form of manual medicine that addresses both the symptom and the root cause for long lasting relief. It is safe and effective and causes no pain during treatment. Many people will benefit from a private session, but It is also easy to perform on your self.

There are 3 components to IPT that are essential for success with this program.

1. The root cause must be identified. The heart of IPT lies in getting the pelvis, “the foundation” of the body, back in alignment. If the foundation of a house is not structurally sound the imbalance will show up throughout the entire structure. The same is true in our body. If the pelvis is out of alignment it will affect everything from head to toe. The root cause of a misaligned pelvis is muscle imbalances.

This simply means that some muscles are too short (typically from over use) and some muscles are too long. In both cases the muscles will feel tight and sore. The short muscle is contracted and tight and the long muscle is overstretched and tight much like an overstretched rubber band. The muscles that are overstretched actually feel more painful and 3-4 times tighter than the short muscle. It is estimated that 80% of all pain that you will experience in your life is related to these muscle imbalances. These muscles that are out of balance can cause a skeletal misalignment. Often that will lead to disc problems, nerve impingements, trigger points, low back pain and/or joint dysfunction.

2. The muscle imbalances need to be treated. Two neuromuscular techniques that were developed in the 1950's are applied to accomplish the rebalancing. Muscle Energy Technique (MET) and Positional Release Therapy (PRT) (also called Strain/counterstrain).

MET is a very powerful tool to quickly and easily lengthen tight, constricted muscles and restore range of motion. It is a form of stretching using active isometric contractions.

PRT (Strain/counterstrain) is also applied to these tight, constricted muscles. In this technique the affected area is passively shortened and held for 60-120 seconds thereby allowing the muscle fibers to effectively reset and return to neutral.

3. The Muscles must be trained to stay in balance. One of the most important parts of this therapy is that the client must become an active participant in their own healing process. This involves daily stretching, strengthening and slackening of the muscles to train them to stay in balance until the pain is eliminated. These easy to do exercises require about 20 minutes or less a day. Results are sometimes achieved in a few days but it can take up to 16 weeks for the body to rebalance itself.

Also recommended are lifestyle changes that will speed the healing process. This can include proper sitting, driving and computer positions. These ergonomic suggestions shorten the recovery time.

With a focus on the close relationship that musculoskeletal imbalances play in the development of general and localized pain, IPT delivers simple, therapeutic self-care techniques that help identify and correct muscular imbalances and effectively hone-in on many of the root causes of pain.