



Craniosacral is a subtle yet potent bodywork approach which effectively combines scientific skills with the sensitivity and intuition of the practitioner. It re-establishes freedom of movement in the craniosacral system which affects the body in its wholeness and supports its self-healing abilities.

The craniosacral system is a physiological system that exists in all mammals. Its formation begins in the womb and its function continues until death. The bones of the skull are connected to the spinal cord and sacrum by a continuous membrane system that envelops the brain and the central nervous system.

An important function of this system is the production, circulation and reabsorption of the cerebrospinal fluid which is contained within a tough, waterproof membrane called the Dura Mater. Cerebrospinal fluid provides the nourishment and the physiological environment in which the brain and nervous system can develop, live and function. The rhythmic movement of this fluid creates a slow and subtle pulse which can be felt throughout the body, and is used by a practitioner both for evaluation and the treatment of dysfunction (disease).

The biodynamic foundations of cranial osteopathy and craniosacral biodynamics is grounded in the philosophy and practice of three osteopathic teacher-physicians over three lifetimes: Andrew Taylor Still (1828-1917), the founder of Osteopathy, William Garner Sutherland (1873-1954), the father of Cranial Osteopathy, and James S. Jealous (1943-2021), the founder of Biodynamic Osteopathy.

The osteopathic concept views all creation as perfect, and the expression of a higher ordering principle. Still had a deep belief in the universal principle that the natural world is constantly changing, and what is fixed (or without motion) becomes out of balance with its environment.

In 1899, a student of Dr Still, William Garner Sutherland, had an amazing insight. While gazing at the articular surfaces of a temporal bone, the thought came to him: "Bevelled like the gills of a fish, indicating articular mobility for a respiratory mechanism". This thought led to a lifetime journey to discover its nature.

Dr Sutherland identified and recognised the involuntary rhythmic movements of the skull, the brain, the meninges, the cerebrospinal fluid and the sacrum, which are now part of the fundamental concept of the cranial method. He noted that the movement of these structures acts within a unified system, which he called the Primary Respiratory Mechanism (PRM). He developed a method of evaluation and treatment based on the understanding of these involuntary movements, which he called cranial osteopathy.

His teaching is based on the perception of the inherent motion of the elements of the PRM, a movement that is expressed in rhythms, cycles and regular fluctuations. It was his belief that "primary respiration" (PR), an intrinsic cellular breathing, was already present before pulmonary respiration. He spoke of the Breath of Life as the vital impulse which generates these rhythmic cycles, and which coordinates, maintains, regulates and regenerates the body. He began to describe these rhythms as Tides, associating them with the cyclic motion of the ocean tides.



The third teacher-physician is James Jealous whose Biodynamic Model of Cranial Osteopathy attracted great interest and controversy within the profession. He adapted the term "Biodynamic" from the study of the German embryologist Erich Blechschmidt, and not from the Swiss philosopher Rudolf Steiner, although Steiner's Biodynamic concepts resonate with Biodynamic Osteopathic principles. Jealous continued the work of Sutherland, and Rollin Becker after him, bringing Cranial Osteopathy back to its spiritual base. In 1994 he started teaching his concept of Biodynamic Osteopathy, aligning his work with the latest theories of embryology, which saw the foetus developing around an energetic midline. He linked this energetic force with Sutherland's concepts of the Breath of Life and Primary Respiration.

"To find health should be the object of the physician. Anyone can find disease." Andrew Taylor Still

The term craniosacral therapy was first coined in the 70's by the American osteopath, Dr. John E. Upledger (1932-2012). He used the term "craniosacral system" to describe the primary respiratory mechanism, and "craniosacral rhythm" for the primary respiration. He spent years at Michigan State University's department of biomechanics, where he carried out original experiments, and developed a scientific basis for the work, essentially demystifying craniosacral. In the 1980's he started teaching Craniosacral Therapy outside of osteopathic schools, and is responsible for the spread of this work worldwide.

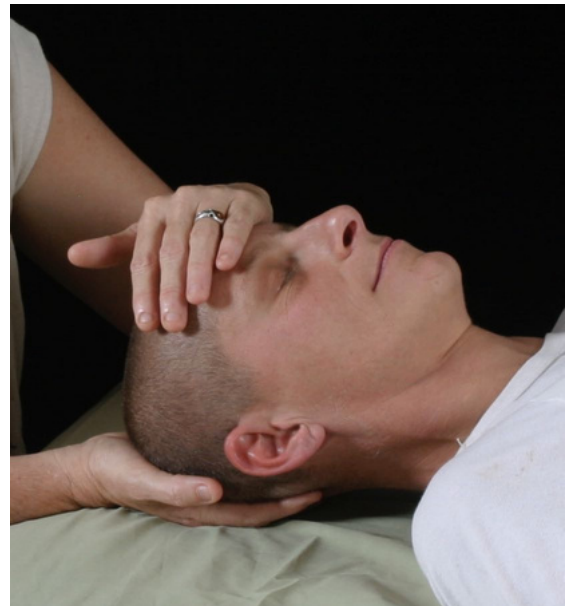
“Over time, I have come to understand that the Breath of Life is a divine presence only appreciated in a state of stillness and unknowing. It appears everywhere all at once and is sensed as a Presence that is numinous, non-linear and radiant. It arises out of a profound Stillness that lies at the heart of all form and is the fulcrum from which all form arises. Unlike the Tide it generates, it has no rhythm, yet is at the heart of all rhythms. It cannot be manipulated or used by the practitioner in any way. One can only humbly witness its creative action within and between human systems. Clinical work in its presence is about stillness, resonance and co-operation. This is a humbling and joyful process to witness.”  
~ Franklyn Sills

## Craniosacral & Biodynamics Cont.

In 1989, a former student of Upledger, Bhadrena Tschumi, taught the first course of Craniosacral Balancing at The Academy of Healing Arts at the Osho Commune in Pune, India. While initially based on the Upledger Model, Craniosacral Balancing gave more emphasis and space to the spiritual and meditative experiences and connections which can arise from the work. She established the International Institute for Craniosacral Balancing in Europe, and provides practitioner trainings, spreading biodynamic concepts around the world. It is now the foremost model in craniosacral work.

The biodynamic concept wants to highlight the presence of vital forces responsible for shaping matter and therefore forming and maintaining the body. Although the biodynamic approach appears to be a new concept, in fact it is related to the discoveries and original principles of the method. Looking at the biodynamic development of the cranial concept is a return to the roots of the work.

The primary respiratory mechanism is seen as a unified system, within which rhythmic tidal motion express metabolic processes, as a whole. The tides are generated by potencies, which are in turn guided by an innate organising principle, according to an original matrix. Interventions and methods of approach have been improved to support the healing process and the innate ability of self-regulation of the body.



**“My belief is in the blood and flesh as being wiser than the intellect. The body-unconscious is where life bubbles up in us. It is how we know that we are alive, alive to the depths of our souls and in touch somewhere with the vivid reaches of the cosmos.”**  
**D. H. Lawrence**

“All life is manifested in energy or motion. Without motion, in some degree, there can only be death. Furthermore, motion is essential to function. But that motion must be intelligent and purposeful for the living organism to successfully compete with its environment. Hence that motion must be guided and directed by a Supreme Being. There must be a channelling of the Universal Intelligence down to the individual cell or organism. Otherwise, all would be chaos. What is the Supreme Intelligence? How does the channelling take place? No one knows for sure. The fact remains that the existence of such is a positive and irrefutable fact which is emphasised by the world’s greatest scientists”.

Dr. Harold Magoun D.O., Osteopathy in the Cranial Field (1st ed. Sutherland Cranial Teaching Foundation, 1951)