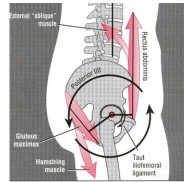


Postural Integration

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE USE OF THE TRAGER M.D



DEFINING THE TRAGER M.D APPROACH



WHAT IS POSTUROLOGY?



PAIN, THE NERVOUS SYSTEM AND HOW TO DECREASE PAIN.

TRAGER MD



Report on Postural Integration using the Trager MD Therapy Approach

The Trager MD Approach within a preventative naturopathic healing practice.

Christina Serpa N.D,
Quebec Naturopath,
Massage and
Movement Therapist

As a Quebec practicing certified Naturopath, massage and postural correction movement therapist, I thrive on helping individuals take back personal responsibility for of their health and life styles.

In my opinion, it is only through a combination of self-care, personal responsibility and self-love that one is able to maintain a harmonious functionality is ones' organism. It is my opinion that the process of moving oneself into a state of authenticity and power helps in decreasing an individuals "victim mentality" and by default their perceived pain.

With the increase in chronic diseases plaguing industrialized countries and the need to live with these diseases longer, (due to our increase in life span), an individual needs to find balance.

I have devoted my academic and personal career to finding and applying the most efficient methods by which one may increase and maintaining one's Quality of life (Qof). It is during this journey that I discovered the Trager MD approach, fell in love with it, studied it and incorporated it into my practice. My motto is simple; I learn it, live it and then share it.

I now devote myself to getting the message out about the Trager MD Approach into the world, both through my personal practice and the my passion for health and wellness publications.

How to define the Trager MD approach?

The creator of this healing method was Dr. Milton Trager. He was a gifted Doctor, who actually studied medicine later on in age. He studied medicine in order to prove the effectiveness of his therapeutic manual techniques and healing methods.

Dr. Trager was a man ahead of his time, already teaching his students about the mind, body and spirit connection as well as how all these things were interrelated. If Dr. Milton's history and biography is of interest to you please go to the official International Trager MD website found simply at [HTTP://www.trager.com/](http://www.trager.com/)

*Christina Serpa N.D
Trager M.D treatment
interventions clients*



The Trager MD protocol may be used with a variety of different clients, including young children as one may see from my middle image.

Children benefit from very short sessions and Trager has been effective in my practice when dealing with colic type pain.

Unlike traditional massage therapy techniques, a certified Trager practitioner does not seek to impose their strength or will upon the client. On the contrary a therapist works to discover the correct rhythmic vibrations, oscillations and rocking motions to which the client will respond to. The movements "sent" to a client through gentle touch must manifest from the therapists feet or "core". The "therapy" truly begins when the correct frequency and combinations are discovered and applied to the client's body, after which a calming soothing effect on the client's entire nervous system is usually obtained.

Although Trager is gentle, it is a powerful tool that may be utilized in order to send messages to our autonomic nervous system. (Please see the section on the nervous system for further detailed explanation.) The Trager Method is two fold, it is comprised of both manual therapy as well as personal movement protocols ,referred to as: "mentastics" by the International Trager Association.

The individualized movements are used to prolong the sensation and the messages sent to the nervous system of; "lightness, circulation and a freer range of motion" with our clients.

Trager Hydration and Nutrition

Trager is most effective on a fully hydrated client, therefore proper hydration should be recommended in order to maintain the body's healing capacities.

Although we are taught that the human body is "primarily water" and that we may not live for more than a few days without the "correct type of water", (example sea water consumption will cause more damage than distilled water), people still do not appear to hydrate themselves adequately.

Low hydration levels may decrease both the positive short and long term benefits of a Trager session. Why? Simple, the process is similar to the movements of water.. The larger the body of water the more powerful and effective the possible "waves/ ripples" which may manifest within the body of liquid. The more water, the higher the possibility for a variety of intensities as well as movements/ waves/ ripples.

The human body is an environment with an impossibly high number of chemical reactions. The nervous system's environment is often compared to electrical signals, in reality it is also a bio-electrical model rich in highly reactive chemical processes.

Chemically balanced water within our bodies is at the centre of this entire system. Without it, the healing process is often stunted or even halted. Without proper hydration levels the needed essential waves upon which a majority of Trager Therapy Table protocols are executed, become ineffective. It is therefore essential to begin a gradual naturopathic hydration strategy with one's clients in order to reprogram pain perception within the patient. This means that a gradual water consumption protocol is created for each individual, with a case by case approach. Please take note that a client with serious kidney dysfunction is not to be introduced to any water protocols by an alternative health practitioner.

According to the Dietitians of Canada website:

[HTTP://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Nutrition-A-Z/Water/Why-is-water-so-important-for-my-body---Know-when-.aspx](http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Nutrition-A-Z/Water/Why-is-water-so-important-for-my-body---Know-when-.aspx) (2015)

"To keep your body hydrated, aim for a fluid intake of about:

- 3 L (12 cups) for men 19 years old and over each day
- 2.2 L (9 cups) for women 19 years old and over each day."

What is Posturology?

It is the applied study of the attainment and expression of each humans ideal physiological and psychological manifestation of their healthiest posture, both at rest as well as during movement.

Posturology is not simply about "strengthening" and stretching specific muscle groups. It is also concerned with organ inflammation and oxygenation. A posturologist must take into consideration incorrect nervous system information assimilation as well as psychological manifestations of feelings such as; inadequacy, shame, low-self-confidence .(only to name a few)

Postural Integration therapy is often practiced within a Naturopathic self-healing protocol, allowing the self-discovery process to unfold. A client must be ready for considerable self-implication throughout the correctional strategy. In essence, they have to be ready and willing to change.

The process of postural correction is strongly based on the re balancing of muscular chains through movement type protocols, assisted by soft tissue manipulation of "overly tight muscle groups" , which is often done prior to the creation of a strengthening type exercise programs. Ideally, a client must also be involved in a balanced nutritional regimen and engage in adequate amounts of nightly regenerative sleep. Unfortunately, many individuals who seek treatment for muscular and postural weakness often suffer from a lack of rest due to discomfort and consistent pain. This pain in turn requires more table Trager sessions in order improve a client's long term physical mobility.

Posturology and the Trager MD method an effective marriage.

Postural restoration protocols often differ from one practitioner to another. Over the last 90 years of research, by medical institutes, protocols have evolved and advancements have been made.

Prior to my discovery and training in the Trager method, my clients experience results but also a great deal of pain, during their treatments. You see, my previous mentality was one based on Chinese and Swedish/ sports massage education. During these types of soft tissue work, the therapist must find muscular nodules and attempt to eliminate them through high pressure techniques. In order to rip them apart. The objective and theory of these more aggressive methods is to destroy the imbalances and scare tissue causing imbalances, thereby forcing the body into an inflammatory response. The inflammation and destruction of the tissue is done in order to "force" the human body

to heal the treated parts. By default, the new tissue should be healthier, younger and generally better etc...

This is a similar thinking process when one finds a dislocated shoulder from a traumatic injury. If a trained medical professional finds that the body began to heal the soft tissue network around an incorrect bone structure, they will often dislocate the bone once again and place it in its correct location. This technique is only done on healthy individuals who have the ability to heal and regenerate for an additional trauma such as this.

Although the above technique along with a remedial exercise program has proven somewhat effective in a healthy vital population, its use on individuals with ineffective healing capacities has, in my opinion, become less effective than the use of the gentle nervous system and soft tissue reprogramming the Trager MD approach has accomplished in my clients.

The scientific study entitled: The effect of Trager therapy on the level of evoked stretch responses in patients with Parkinson's disease and rigidity. By: Du val C1, Lafontaine D, Hébert J, Leroux A, Panisset M, Boucher JP. may be used to validate my personal opinion. The study may be quoted as follows, "Results from the present study strongly suggest that it is possible to modify the level of EAR by using Trager therapy. This stretch reflex inhibition may induce a reduction of the muscle rigidity seen in these patients. The present results may eventually lead to the development of a specific complementary therapy for patients with Parkinson's disease and rigidity."

The Trager Table work was found to improve muscle rigidity within this type of client. My thoughts are as follows; If Trager work is able to improve the lives of individuals with Parkinson's what are the possibilities for a healthy athletic population in reducing muscular injury rigidity caused by repetitive incorrect movement patterns?

My hypothesis is one of great hope. My highly athletic clients as well as unhealthy have adopted the Trager method as their primary choice for manual therapy intervention.

My protocols have completely changed and have allowed me to guide my clients towards a faster healing and postural reprogramming without increasing the inflammation process.

My athletic clients create in themselves high level muscular inflammation on a consistent basis. Why would I add to this inflammation, increasing and forcing the body into using even more of its resources to repair destroyed tissue? My goal should be to gently encourage the body to repair tissue and guide the nervous system into a state of efficient mobility and stability for their sport. This what I have been incorporating into my practice.

To truly understand the conclusion and the complete paradigm shift I have done over the past few years, (which was very difficult for my personal ego), one must look at how the nervous system works chemically as well as structurally. The nervous systems brings function to our internal visceral environment as well.

What is the nervous system and how it expresses pain.

The central nervous system is a fascinating, adaptable and essential organism in it's own right. But it is also a cellular organic entity which can be "tricked" into interpreting data collected incorrectly. An example of consistent pain manifestation can be seen with "phantom" limb pain, whereby a patient has had a limb "removed" yet still complains of pain in the non-existing limb. The nervous system still sends "pain" sensation to the brain and therefore "incorrect data" is being placed on a type of "loop". Loops can often be eliminated or at least attenuated with various Trager MD sessions.

In order to better understand the process on "incorrect data assimilation" I purpose a simple but astounding experiment. It requires a little work, but it helps open our eyes to how our body can be easily manipulated.

Here we go ... Prepare 3 different buckets of water, of equal size and filled with equal amounts of water, but different temperatures. Bucket 1, must have very hot water (please no water that may cause skin damage). Bucket 2 is to be at room temperature. Bucket 3 should contain very cold water. (I did not choose the exact temperature because each individual has various temperature tolerances... But there must be at least a 20 degree difference from the 2 opposing buckets- buckets 1 and 3.) The next step is to be able to keep your hands in each opposing temperature bucket- the cold one and very hot one, for a minimum of 2 min.

After the required time elapses, quickly plunge booth hands into the room temperature bucket. Your conscious brains knows that both hands are in the same temperature bucket...

Astonishingly each hand will not be emitting the same signals. The hand that was in the cold water will read the middle bucket water as "hot" and the third bucket's hand will send signals of "cold" water.

You see, although we are complex creatures our nervous system sends data to us through a comparison of old data and is often unable to "neutralize" the inaccurate information in order to incorporate real time information.

The following medical explanation was taken directly from the published academic resource; DISORDERS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEMS Primer, Written by Alexander G. Reeves, M.D. Rand S. Swenson, M.D., Ph.D., researchers and professors at the Dartmouth University. https://www.dartmouth.edu/~dons/part_2/chapter_19.html

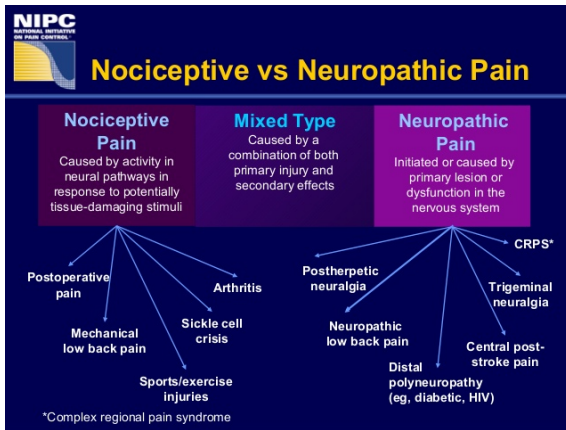
"The location of pain maybe defined by the tissues from which pain is being generated, although referred pain (the perception of pain in a different, usually more distal) part of the body is common



Part 1 of experiment



Part 2 of experiment



when deeper tissues are involved... Pain can be divided into nociceptive and neuropathic pain. Nociceptive pain results from direct activation of pain nerve fibers, either due to chemical, inflammatory or mechanical mediators. Neuropathic pain refers to pain that is generated or sustained by the nervous system. These two types of pain are fundamentally different in mechanism and, therefore, require different treatment...

Neuropathic pain is fundamentally different from nociceptive pain and is much more complex. This type of pain is generated or sustained by the nervous system. This can either relate to changes in the peripheral or central nervous systems. For example, peripheral nerve fibres can be altered in terms of sensitivity or response due to many factors. In the central nervous system, there may be reorganization of the pathways that transmit the signal or the functions of systems that normally filter or suppress pain....The sympathetic nervous system does appear to be involved in more general inflammatory reactions. This occurs with release of inflammatory mediators along with sympathetic neurotransmitters. These factors interact with tissue elements, and have been shown to contribute to inflammation in various experimental conditions (such as experimental models of inflammatory arthritis). Therefore, inflammation must be considered to be a complex interaction between tissue components and the nervous system."

The somatic nervous system also known as the SoNS or voluntary nervous system, is the part of the peripheral nervous system.

The peripheral nervous system associated with skeletal muscle voluntary control of body movements. The SoNS consists of afferent nerves and efferent nerves. Reflex Arcs and the Somatic Nervous System .In addition to controlling voluntary muscles movements, the somatic nervous system is also associated with involuntary movements known as reflex arcs. During a reflex arc, muscles move explosively and involuntarily without input from the brain.

This type of arc reflex reaction occurs when a nerve pathway connects directly to the spinal cord. Some examples of reflex arcs include jerking your hand back after accidentally touching something extremely hot or an involuntary knee jerk when your doctor taps on your patella (knee cap).

You do not have to think or ask your body to do these things. Sensory nerves carry signals to the spinal cord that then sends signals via to the affected areas via the motor nerves of the somatic system. Reflex arcs that impact the organs are called autonomic reflex arcs while those that affect the muscles are referred to as somatic reflex arcs. The primary function of the somatic system is to connect the central nervous system to the body's muscles and organs. Information taken in by sensory systems is transmitted to the central nervous system. The CNS then sends signals via the nerve networks of the somatic system to the muscles and organs.

Therefore, when a client is in a muscular relaxed state the Trager therapist has the ability to move a limb or increase a clients mobility without the somatic reflex activating. During a Table session the Trager movement therapist is “teaching” or “showing” the somatic as well as autonomic nervous system that a movement can be achieved with little to no pain. Having these types of mobility

exercises done by a certified practitioner as well as incorporating specific “Mentastic” self healing movement patterns, help to deactivate painful human locomotive patterns, increase mobility, circulation and nervous system control over skeletal muscle.

The Trager method, posture and back pain.

Unlike other treatment protocols a Trager Therapist must learn a set of self treatment movement therapy exercises named "mentastics", initially created by Dr. Milton Trager himself, in order for patients to take "responsibility" for their health. Unlike most muscular stretching or strengthening exercises a Metastics movement requires the participant to connect with the body and create a sensation of "lightness".

In many "exercise" programs a great deal of emphasis is placed on creating muscular resistance/ tension within the muscle in order to cause tears. On the opposite side of the spectrum "stretching" type exercises are used in order to increase mobility are also be used with in a Postural correction protocol. Therapists often use a combination of these 2 types of movements to "strengthen" weak muscular chains in order to improve stability and stretch/release tight inflexible muscular groups so that they have a better range of motion.

Where Mentastics in different from the above mentioned methods is in both the execution and messages sent to the nervous system by the participant. Movements are to be done using the entire body and require them to be done with little to "no pain" and with as little effort as possible. When one gazes at a "Mentastics" routine individuals often appear to be participating in a "contemporary" type dance. (This relates to the "dancing cloud trademarked" logo that The Trager International association has continued to use to represent Dr. Trager's work.)

The Mentastics Method (a combination of the words "Mental" and "Gymnastics") is the use of the body's weight and core stabilizing truck muscles to create movement with as little effort as possible.

A example of this phenomenon would be would if an individual wishes to lift their arm above their clavicles with a straight motion. (see figure 1.0.) This motion is often used in muscular strengthening programs to isolate the anterior deltoid in order to strengthen that specific region. (see figure 1.1) Clients with neck and shoulder pain will often execute the movement using the upper fibres of their Trapezius, (see figure 1.2). In combination with a forward type posture, these same fibres often get overtaxed and have high levels of scare tissue, causing low regeneration levels. These muscular behaviours often cause overuse injuries and recurring pain. In Mentastics practitioners would be asked to lift the arm forward with the



Figure 1.0, front raise

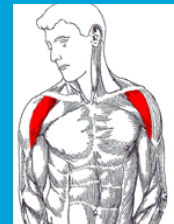


Figure 1.1 Anterior Deltoid

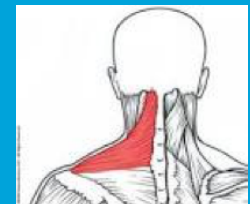


Figure 1.2 Upper Trapezius

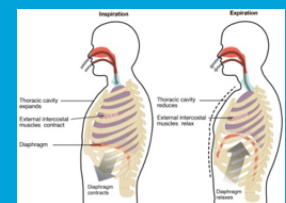


Figure 1.3- breathing thoracic movement

additional help the natural expansion of the upper torso which occurring during inspiration, (See figure 1.3) , the complex shoulder griddle and deep “core/stabilizer muscles”. (See figure 1.4). If an individual were standing during this movement, the gluteus Maximus/ buttock muscles would also have been engaged in order to execute the movement.

Mentastics is a fluid "recruitment" of the entire body for the use of all movements. The general theory behind this principle is simple, use the entire body's connected muscular system in order to avoid overuse injuries and pain over a lifetime of movement. My using more muscular fibres to create movement one can extend a human's pain free locomotive ability and do so for as long as possible. It stands to reason that having as many muscular fibres engaged during the movement would, by default, reduce the amount of "stress" on any one set of muscle fibres. This phenomenon allows a client to reduce the use of "overtaxed/ tight" muscular fibres by sending load to the entire body. This principle allows a client to keep the relaxed state of an area longer, after a Table Trager therapy, for extended periods of time. Giving the nervous system the message of "release and freedom" to sustain itself as long as possible until the next Table session.

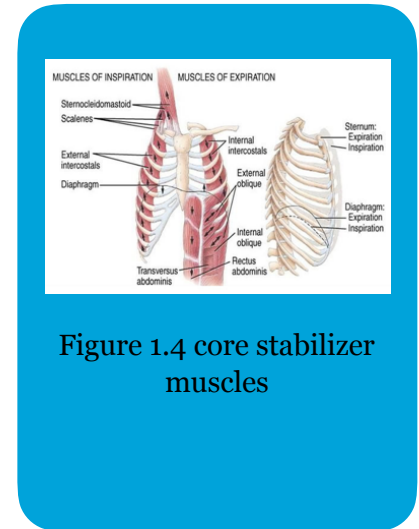
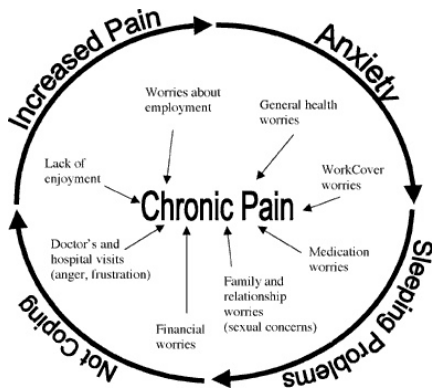


Figure 1.4 core stabilizer muscles



In the long term within my practice, humans following the entire Trager Therapy approach have been able to decrease the amount of perceived physical pain as well as take on a part of the therapeutic healing process. This has allowed a great deal of my clients to continue on a journey of self discovery and increased self confidence. The physical and emotional client evolution is what in my opinion sets The Trager MD approach apart from many other manual touch therapies.