

Integrating Massage and Touch for Health

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Over the years as an instructor I've seen many massage therapists and bodyworkers take Touch for Health classes and inevitably ask, "Now how can I start integrating these techniques into my practice?" Most find it impractical to use a 14 muscle balance during a massage session but are eager to use their new skills to benefit their clients. I find most choose to use techniques which are simple and do not require muscle testing. Providing an approach that meets the needs of massage therapists and also encourages them to utilize the powerful tool of muscle testing has been a challenge and the subject of discussion by massage therapist TFHA group at recent annual meetings.

In the hopes of encouraging more bodyworkers to begin implementing TFH techniques into their work I have developed a workshop format that teaches basic muscle testing procedure (using only one muscle) and blends several simple TFH skills. I have also developed some balancing techniques that can be easily integrated into any bodywork practice as a compliment to what is already being done. Keeping the techniques as simple as possible works best for those new to Touch for Health. Some of the techniques which are presented in the "Integrating Massage and Touch for Health" workshop include ESR, meridian massage, neurolymphatic massage, checking for water, auricular massage, and procedures using spindle cell and golgi tendon techniques.

The neuromuscular procedure using spindle cell and golgi tendon techniques that Dr. This describes in the TFH manual is of particular interest to bodyworkers. Ann Holloway's informative article *Golgi Tendon, Organ, and Spindle Cell* in the 1990 TFH International Journal presents further explanation on the methods and mechanism involved. The spindle cell and golgi tendon apparatus are receptor mechanisms within a muscle and tendon that monitors the length and tension of that muscle. These techniques are used when a muscle or joint area has been strained,

overworked or after other strengthening techniques (i.e. neurolymphatics reflexes, neurovascular reflexes, etc.) have failed to generate the desired muscle response. Manually stimulating the muscle fibers in specific directions can be effective in resetting a dysfunctioning neuromuscular spindle cell which is causing abnormal muscle function.

The spindle cell and golgi tendon techniques are generally used in conjunction with testing the involved muscle or joint. Testing the muscle before and after using these techniques will give one feedback as to the effectiveness of the techniques, but may not be appropriate if the muscle or joint area is too painful to move. Using the techniques without muscle testing, as in weakening a cramp in a muscle, may provide relief, but may only be temporary.

Over the past five years I've been working with a method that identifies muscle imbalance using a surrogate muscle. This circumvents muscle testing the specific muscles involved. With this method one can identify and correct specific muscle fiber imbalances for an area that has been injured or overworked without the risk of further aggravation it. This technique checks the entire area involved and the opposing muscles to bring about a more thorough and long lasting correction. The technique is easy for anyone to use and is especially useful for bodyworkers. Be ready to see immediate and long lasting results for both acute and chronic muscle problems with this technique.

Specific Neuromuscular Precision Reset Technique - "Muscle Toning"

1. Begin with a clear indicator muscle, check for switching and water.
2. Place hand over suspect area. The indicator muscle will switch off if any muscle imbalance is present.
3. Check for emotion on line.

Touch For Health International Journal, 1991

4. Touch 2 fingertips along length of muscle while testing indicator muscle while testing indicator muscle.

5. If indicator muscle switches off then.

a. Stroke muscle with fingertip in one direction (along length of fibers) Then retest

b. Stroke muscle in opposite direction. Retest.

6. Correct by massaging in direction that made indicator muscle stay switched on. Using 4 or 5 times works best.

7. Recheck indicator muscle by touching the specific muscle just massaged. Muscle should now test switched on. To challenge and make sure that is all the muscle needs to rebalance it, scratch or tap the muscle twice. Then retest the indicator muscle.

8. If the indicator muscle stays switched on when challenged, then go on to the next area of the muscle (about a finger's width away) and begin procedure again. If the indicator muscle switches off when challenged then the spindle cell technique will be needed to correct the imbalance. To check for this

a. Stroke → ← on muscle. Retest.

b. Stroke ← → on muscle. Retest.

Correct in the direction that switches on the muscle.

8. Recheck the muscle by retesting and challenging it by scratching or tapping it twice. Muscle should now stay switched on. Move on to the next area to check.

Note: It is important to do an entire area and opposing muscle groups, not just the specific area feeling pain or tightness to receive the optimum results.