



Integrative Manual Therapy

Written by, Kimberly Burnham, IMTC, PhD

Director of Knowledge Management, CenterIMT

Integrative Manual Therapy (IMT) is a hands-on approach to healing and recovery from a variety of conditions.

One aspect of IMT is the palpation and normalization of motilities or rhythms in the body. These rhythms are reflective of physiology (how the body functions) or patho-physiology (disease or dysfunction of body functions). An example of a rhythm is your pulse. IMT Therapists treat many rhythms in the body associated with all different body systems. The work can be described as using precise pressure in specific locations to normalize the rhythms and the physiology, contributing to improved health and quality of life.

Often, people ask: how can you feel these different motilities or circadian rhythms? It is not unlike the wine connoisseur who can taste a glass of wine and tell you what kind of grapes it was made from, where the grapes were grown, the bottler and the year. How is this possible? They are using sensory information, taste and smell and translating it into something else: a date, location, or a winery. In IMT, the therapist takes sensory information: touch, sight and more and translates it into something else: a tissue type or a type of dysfunction. The therapist may say there is a bone bruise in the thigh or a compression in the ACL of the right knee. How will the client know that the therapy is helping? They will feel and function better.

Another way to view IMT is as a biomechanical approach where therapists use pressure in specific ways to help the tissue and joint surfaces shift, decompress and unwind, allowing for more space and better movement. When the tension on blood vessels, nerves and other tissue is released, fluid and information flows better and facilitates recovery.

IMT Therapists also use reflex points to expedite healing. There are many different systems that use reflex points, including acupuncture, shiatsu, reflexology and Chapman's points (Osteopathy). IMT therapists use reflex points that are reflective of spinal cord level reflexes, brainstem level reflexes as well as reflex points considered to be influenced by the hypothalamus, autonomic nervous system and cortical parts of the brain. These points are contacted to create a change in the pressures and tensions in the tissue.

If you watched a man walk with really bad hip pain on the left leg, you would most likely be able to tell which hip was painful. You might not be able to articulate that the sound of his foot fall is heavier on the right or that he grimaces slightly as he lands on the left foot or that his knee doesn't fully extend or his shoulder dips slightly more on the painful side. A person with left hip pain walks differently from someone with right hip pain. Most people can see the difference, but are still picking up the information unconsciously. The IMT therapist makes more of this information conscious and is able to articulate more of what they perceive. A person with a bone bruise in their right femur lies on the table differently from someone that has a problem with the wall integrity of their femoral artery that is found in the hip region as well. The information is there for anyone to see, but it usually takes some training and practice to pick up this information, make it conscious and articulate what you see.

As Arthur C. Clark put it, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Integrative Manual Therapy is advanced technology.

*CenterIMT
Suite 211
800 Cottage Grove Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002
860-243-6571
fax: 860-243-6579*

*CIMTBloomfield@CenterIMT.com
www.CenterIMT.com*