

OSTEOPATHY

...a treatment from head to toe

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What is an osteopath?

Besides the training in human anatomy and physiology, the osteopath has an “educated” sense of touch and can identify every part of the body and how it should feel under normal circumstances. That way, it is possible to identify dysfunction in the “living anatomy” (i.e. compression in bones, obstruction to cerebral spinal fluid, damage to tissues, etc.) In England, the academic qualifications of an osteopath are similar to those of a physiotherapist.

What does an osteopath do?

Regardless of the symptoms of the patient, the practitioner will « screen » the whole body with their hands in order to understand the way that particular body functions (depending on the patient’s physical and emotional history.)

How come my osteopath is often testing or treating parts of my body which are away from the painful areas?

I am frequently asked how I can feel dysfunctional tissue in a leg, the back, or the pelvis, while my hands are on another part of the patient’s body.

We have our hands on the fascia and feel the position and the tension in it. You could think of fascia as being similar to one large piece of shrink wrap, covering all the organs, lining all the body cavities and encasing all parts of the body including muscle, nerves, blood vessels, and bones. One can see how tension in any part of this fascial envelope will be transmitted to all other parts, since it is literally one big piece of tissue. Remember that fascia also has contractile elements in it as explained in any physiology book. These contract in response to injury and a pattern can be imprinted in the body that way.

For example, a patient in a motor vehicle accident doesn’t realise that their body reads like a road map to the osteopath because of the trauma locked into the tissues. Each injury creates a pattern in the body which is unique, depending on the amount of force and direction of the force that was applied to the tissues.

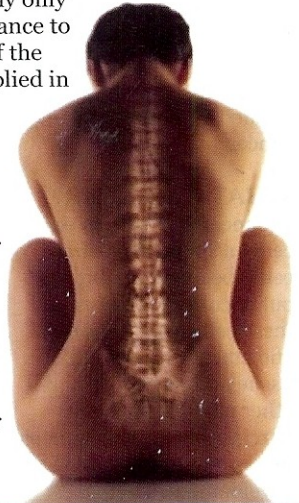
The pathological force can be to one part of the body only or to the whole body and nervous system. Each of these has a different palpatory sensation. If the forces of an injury are strong enough, they are literally imprinted on the body tissues. If the injury is not too large, the body treats the pathology with no need for assistance, otherwise it will remain.

The osteopath’s “sense of touch” actually feels the dysfunction in the tissues. Practitioners monitor tissue tension, tissue texture, and different waves of tissue motion, among other things. He/she will then apply the adapted technique in order to release the forces of strain of the affected tissues (joints, ligaments, internal organs, nervous system...)

Most patients may expect more “force” in treatment like in a treatment of “Rolfing” or “Chiropractic.” Osteopathy is not similar to either of these. It is an interesting side note that both these are offshoots of osteopathy; their philosophy only bears a superficial resemblance to it and concerns only part of the osteopathic philosophy applied in a specific manner.

Osteopaths aren’t concerned about putting force into your body, but, rather, taking the force out.

For more information, please feel free to contact Clémentine Duplan or Mark Shurey, both osteopaths, or Bernadette Veeger, General practitioner at Clínica Mar y Salud 952 532 065 or 622 078 432.



Dr Bernadette Veeger - General Practitioner

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