



Winter 2021 | Volume 36 | Issue 1

# MASSAGE *Message*

## Revitalize and Renew

Spotlight on Excellence:  
**Erik Dalton**

Integrating  
**CranioSacral Principles**

Maintaining and Maximizing  
**Your Immune System**

Staying Afloat by  
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## CONTENTS

- 4** President's Message  
& Executive Officers
- 5** FSMTA Board of Directors & Chapter  
Meeting Information
- 6** Member Schools Blackboard  
& Legislative Update
- 7** Social Media Guide
- 8** Maintaining and Maximizing your  
Immune System to Prevent COVID-19  
by Don McCann
- 10** Integrating CranioSacral Principles  
Into Other Manual Therapy Techniques  
by Emily Crocker
- 12** Spotlight on Excellence  
Erik Dalton, PhD, LMT
- 14** The Lateral Trauma Reflex Treatment  
Helps Chronic Somatic Conditions  
by Dale Alexander
- 16** Staying Afloat by Redefining Your  
Massage Career by Felicia Brown
- 18** Redefining Our Role as Massage  
Therapists in a Covid-19 Reality  
by Irene Smith



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### The Promise of a New Year



By Crystal A. Howard  
LMT, BCTMB

The start of a new year gives us the ability to reflect on the year that has passed. What can we/could we do differently? Was the climate of 2020 so difficult that we had no choice but to adapt? Did we utilize opportunities and resources available? Was 2020 a year of unexpected success? Each one of us has a unique perspective and experience moving into 2021 and I hope that we all have become stronger for it.

I believe that 2020 has given us a chance to reassess our strengths and the willingness to strive for change within the industry. Our ability to provide drug free, non-invasive healthcare to promote overall well being has been incorporated into many people's lifestyles as well as health systems across the country. We have the capability to work in conjunction with other healthcare providers and it is important that we reinforce this collaboration. The conversations many of us have about the importance of massage therapy need to follow through with action and engagement outside of our industry. Your participation, in both large and small ways, within the FSMTA and your community can help further advance our profession. Collectively, we must continue to educate lawmakers, consumers and the medical community. Let us strive for a greater sense of unity and prosperity in 2021!

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**BREVARD CHAPTER** - President Kha Taylor, brevardpresident@fsmta.org, (321) 591-1654 Meetings held the 2nd Tuesday of every month (except April, June, August and December) from 5:30-8:30pm alternating locations between Cocoa and Melbourne.

**BROWARD CHAPTER** - President Lygia Edghill, browardpresident@fsmta.org, (754) 224-8449 (text) Meetings held the 1st Tuesday of every month (except June and December) from 7-10pm at Imperial Point Medical Center, 6401 N Federal Hwy, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308.

**CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER** - President Thomas Buck, cflpresident@fsmta.org, (619) 609-6271 Meetings held the 3rd Monday of every month (except June and December) from 5-8 pm at Marks Street Senior Recreation Complex, 99 East Marks Street, Orlando, FL 32803.

**DADE CHAPTER** - President Renee O. Scioville, dadepresident@fsmta.org, (786) 230-6313 Meetings held the 2nd Wednesday of every month (except June and December) from 6:30-9:30pm at Miami Dade College Medical Campus, 950 NW 20th St, Miami, FL 33127.

**EMERALD COAST CHAPTER** - President Jocelyn Daniel, ecpresident@fsmta.org, (850) 736-5280 Meetings held the 2nd Monday of every month (except June and December) from 5:30-8:30pm at the Baptist Hospital, 1000 W Moreno Street, Pensacola, FL 32501.

**FIRST COAST CHAPTER** - President Eric Dancy, fcpresident@fsmta.org, (904) 482-8542 Meetings held the 3rd Thursday of every month (except June and December) from 6:30-9pm at Unity Church of Jacksonville, 634 Lomax Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204.

**FLAGLER/VOLUSIA CHAPTER** - President Gina Burroughs, fvpresident@fsmta.org, (386) 748-5927 Meetings held the 2nd Wednesday of every month (except December) from 6-8:15pm at Keiser University Auditorium, 1800 Business Park Blvd, Daytona Beach, FL 32114.

**GULF COAST CHAPTER** - President Donna Smith, gcpresident@fsmta.org, (850) 896-4118 Meetings held the 2nd Wednesday of every month (except June, July and December) from 7-10pm in Panama City (specific location to be announced).

**HEART OF FLORIDA CHAPTER** - President Teresa (TJ) Jones, hofpresident@fsmta.org, (863) 797-6107 Meetings held the 3rd Tuesday of every month (except

June and December) from 6:30-9pm alternating locations between Lakeland and Winter Haven.

**KEYS CHAPTER** - President Michael Abriola, keysresident@fsmta.org, (305) 509-2710 Meetings and events to be announced.

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER** - President George Pugh, northcflpresident@fsmta.org, (708) 267-7585 Meetings and events to be announced.

**PALM BEACH CHAPTER** - President Lesli López, pbpresident@fsmta.org, (561) 319-1814 Meetings held the 3rd Thursday of every month (except June and December) from 6-9pm at Forest Hill Community High School, 6901 Parker Ave, West Palm Beach, FL 33405.

**SARASOTA/MANATEE CHAPTER** - President Nancy Avishar, smpresident@fsmta.org, (941) 228-7789 Meetings held the 3rd Monday of every month (except December) from 6:30-9:30pm at the Sarasota School of Massage Therapy, 5899 Whitfield Ave, Sarasota, FL 34243.

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA CHAPTER** - President Emil Guido, swflpresident@fsmta.org, (239) 849-1486 Meetings held the 1st Tuesday of every month (except July and December) from 5-8pm at Bass Pro Shops, Gulf Coast Town Center, 10040 Gulf Center Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33913.

**SUGAR DUNES CHAPTER** - President Chester Cyrus, sdpresident@fsmta.org, (850) 225-0737 Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of every month (except June, November and December) from 6-9pm at Soothing Arts Healing Therapies School of Massage & Skincare, 12605 Emerald Coast Pkwy #2, Miramar Beach, FL 32560.

**SUWANNEE VALLEY CHAPTER** - President Laurie Taylor, svpresident@fsmta.org, (352) 317-4755 Meetings held the 2nd Wednesday of every month (except July and December) from 6:00pm at Florida School of Massage, 6421 SW 13th Street, Gainesville, FL 32608.

**TAMPA BAY CHAPTER** - President Anna Allen, president-TPA@fsmta.org, (813) 215-5050 Meetings held the 3rd Thursday of every month (except June and December) from 6:00-8:45pm at Town 'N Country Public Library, Community Rooms A&B, 7606 Paula Drive #120, Tampa, FL 33615.

**TREASURE COAST CHAPTER** - President Ross Hoffman, tcpresident@fsmta.org, (772) 359-3608 Meetings held the 3rd Wednesday of every month (except June and December) from 6:30-9pm at Indian River State College Main Campus, Building R or W, 3209 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, FL 34981.

# Legislative Awareness Day 2021



By Ian McIntosh  
Director of  
Legislative Affairs

Every legislative session the FSMTA legislative team heads to Tallahassee to advocate for our profession. Our main goal is to educate Florida legislators regarding Massage Therapy. We do this through meetings with members of the Florida House of Representatives and Florida Senate; and by offering chair massage to the support staff of legislators. In years past our legislative team would meet with over 20 key members of the legislature and provide more than 100 chair massages. With Covid-19 altering how we navigate our world, we are preparing to make the appropriate modifications for LAD 2021.

The FSMTA Legislative Team will continue to have a presence in our state's capitol for the 2021 legislative session. Covid restrictions will be in place, which means we will be unable to offer chair massage however our lobbyists are anticipating 20+ meetings with key legislators. Several LMTs have asked, "What is a key legislator?" Our legislative team defines "key legislators" as Florida Senators or Representatives who are members of one of the committees that relates to the health care professions. Any legislation that could affect the Massage Therapy profession would need to be reviewed and approved by members of these committees before the bills are voted on in the House or Senate.

We are hopeful to be able to return to some sense of normalcy for the 2022 Florida Legislative Session. This will allow for members to participate in the process of engaging our state legislators.

On December 2nd the FSMTA held a Town Hall Meeting on Zoom to discuss many aspects of our association. This included a brief overview of the ongoing efforts of the FSMTA Legislative Team both at the state level as well as local municipalities. All upcoming informational zoom meetings and ce courses will be included in the calendar of events at [FSMTA.org](http://FSMTA.org). If you have any questions please contact your chapter Legislative Chair or feel free to email me at [legislativechair@fsmta.org](mailto:legislativechair@fsmta.org).

## FSMTA Member Schools

### **Boca Beauty Academy**

7820 Glades Road  
Boca Raton, FL 33434  
(561) 487-1191  
[www.BocaBeautyAcademy.edu](http://www.BocaBeautyAcademy.edu)

### **Central Florida School of Massage Therapy**

450 N. Lakemont Ave, Suite A  
Winter Park, FL 32792  
(407) 673-6776  
[www.massagetherapy.cc](http://www.massagetherapy.cc)

### **Dragon Rises College of Oriental Medicine**

1000 NE 16th Ave  
Gainesville, FL 32601  
(352) 371-2833  
[www.dragonrises.edu](http://www.dragonrises.edu)

### **Florida Academy**

4387 Colonial Blvd, Ste 100  
Ft Myers, FL 33966  
(800) 324-9543 / (239) 489-2282  
[www.florida-academy.edu](http://www.florida-academy.edu)

### **Health & Beauty Institute of America**

460 State Road 436, Suite 200  
Casselberry, FL 32707  
(407) 636-6361 / (407) 797-2597  
[www.healthandbeautyus.com](http://www.healthandbeautyus.com)

### **International Institute for Health Care Professionals**

6870 N Federal Hwy  
Boca Raton, FL 33487  
(561) 394-5822  
<http://www.iihcp.com>

### **Orlando School of Therapeutic Massage & Yoga**

7575 Kingspointe Parkway, Suite 21  
Orlando, FL 32819  
(407) 673-6776  
[orlandomassagetherapyschool.com](http://orlandomassagetherapyschool.com)

### **Ridge Technical College**

7700 State Rd. 544  
Winter Haven, FL 33881  
(863) 419-3060 ext 4808  
<http://www.polkedpathways.com/ridge-technical-college>

### **Sarasota School of Massage**

5899 Whitfield Avenue, Suite 300  
Sarasota, FL 34243  
(877) 613-7768  
[www.sarasotaschoolofmassagetherapy.edu](http://www.sarasotaschoolofmassagetherapy.edu)

### **Soothing Arts Healing Therapies School of Massage and Skin Care**

12605 Emerald Coast Pkwy W, Ste 2  
Miramar Beach, FL 32550  
(850) 269-0820  
[www.soothingarts.com](http://www.soothingarts.com)

### **Space Coast Education Center**

1070 South Wickham Road  
West Melbourne, FL 32904  
(321) 308-8000  
[www.spacecoast.edu](http://www.spacecoast.edu)



# FSMTA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

## Connect with us on Facebook

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<https://www.facebook.com/FSMTAConvention/>  
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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FSMTAmembers/>

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6H-0EeseMykLNecgBSr5VVg>

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# Maintaining and Maximizing Your Immune System to Prevent COVID-19

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By Don McCann,  
MA, LMT, LMHC, CSETT

**You can either wait to see if you are going to be one of the 65% of Americans to be infected with COVID-19, or you can look for ways to minimize your susceptibility and maximize your immune system to prevent it.**

I see taking personal responsibility for maintaining and maximizing your immune system as the most important job you can do at this point. Following the CDC recommendations of distancing and sanitizing is just the first step. We also need to follow the recommendations of the Florida Board of Massage Therapy. They have given us guidelines that should help bridge the gap between social distancing and applying massage therapy techniques. Nothing is foolproof, and the potential for being exposed if you are practicing massage is larger than if you are not practicing. Therefore, taking care of yourself is of prime importance. There are many ways you can be responsible for maximizing the effectiveness of your immune system.

I have contacted many massage therapists, nutritionists and health professionals on steps that can help your immune system defeat exposure to COVID-19. Below are many of the suggestions that can make a difference:

- **Lower your stress levels.** Stress dramatically inhibits our body's immune response, and anyone going through this period of time has a higher than normal stress level. This is the time to pay attention to your breathing. Every time you are aware of not breathing in a normal pattern, consciously take 10 deep relaxing breaths. While breathing, concentrate on releasing the stress with each exhalation and reducing any restriction to breathing with each inhalation. The more often you tune in and become aware of your stress level, the more often you can lower it; so, tune in and make relaxation part of your life.

- **Meditate.** The benefits of meditation are extensive. Suffice it to say that relaxation, positive attitude and increased immune function are universal results of meditation. If you do not meditate and need a guided meditation, you can download my **free** Light Meditation from [www.cranialstructuralenergetics.com](http://www.cranialstructuralenergetics.com). The practice of the meditation will help bring about a state of homeostasis. If you already have a meditation that you do regularly **please meditate.**

- **Positive attitude.** Fear and a negative attitude lead to negative results and a compromised immune system. It is hard not to be afraid when hearing about the effects of COVID-19. When thoughts that promote



fear get stuck in your mind a very helpful action to take is to say the words “cancel-cancel” repeatedly until the thoughts and emotional fear diminish. This is a Silva Mind Control technique. Once negative thoughts are canceled, it is important to replace them with positive thoughts and positive affirmations such as “I am healthy,” “I am loved,” “I am happy,” “I am successful,” “I am not the circumstances of my life,” “I am grateful for my life.” These positive affirmations, and others you may choose, need to be repeated at least 10 times three times a day for maximum effectiveness. They may also be magnified in effectiveness when repeated in the meditative state induced by the Light Meditation.

- **Get plenty of sleep.** Sleeping eight (8) hours a day not only allows you to be rested but also allows your lymphatic system to detoxify your brain and bring your brain into homeostasis, which is a huge step in maintaining homeostasis for your entire body. A toxic brain is slow to initiate immune responses.

- **Stay hydrated.** Your immune system cannot function well when you are not hydrated. Be sure to drink more water than the minimum necessary for hydration. Stay away from alcohol, large amounts of coffee and tea, soft drinks, and even fruit drinks that have added sugar or high levels of fructose. Good old water is your best friend and should be chemical free.

- **Laughter is the best medicine.** Bernie Siegel tells a story of sitting under the table with an 11-year-old who had cancer and laughing with him by describing what was wrong with the shoes of the people at the table. This boy’s cancer showed a definitive decrease shortly thereafter. Tune in to the comedy channel, find some movies that are comedies, watch some feel-good programs that have some humor and laughter, share funny stories with your loved ones.

- **Sunlight is your friend.** We know your body creates vitamin D from sunlight. Did you know that viruses cannot exist for long outside the body in the high temperatures of sunlight found in Florida? Sherry Bell, a holistic health practitioner, shared



with me that 130 degrees will kill this virus, and that our sunlight outside (not the air temperature) will help kill the virus in the air around us and boost our immune system.

- **Limit your sugar.** Viruses feed on it. Do not give the virus an opportune environment inside your body. Sugar can also deplete vitamins and weaken the immune system. Best case is to eliminate sugar entirely from your diet. This includes alcohol, fructose, corn syrup, fast carbs, high-sugar fruits, raw sugar, and any other form of sugar. The low glycemic index diet is a good source for identifying other areas where sugar is found in our diet.

- **Detoxify.** A cleaner less toxic body has a higher immune response. Now is a great time to start using detoxifying herbs or supplements, juicing, and fasting to eliminate toxins from your body so your body’s immune system can operate at its highest level.

- **Use Supplements to boost your immune system.** Quoting from *Orthomolecular Medicine News Service*, Jan 26, 2020. **Vitamin C Protects Against Coronavirus:**

The physicians of the *Orthomolecular Medicine News Service* and the International society for Orthomolecular Medicine urge a nutrient-based method to prevent or minimize symptoms for future viral infection. The following inexpensive supplemental doses are

recommended for adults. For children, reduce these doses in proportion to body weight:

**Vitamin C:** 3000 milligrams (or more) daily, in divided doses.

**Vitamin D3:** 2000 international Units daily. (start with 5000 IU/day for two weeks, then reduce to 2000)

**Magnesium:** 400 mg daily (in citrate, malate, chelate, or chloride form)

**Zinc:** 20 mg daily

**Selenium:** 100 mcg (micrograms) daily

- **Flush your sinuses.** Many holistic doctors suggest that you use a sinus rinse or neti pot to flush your sinuses daily. This has been one of the best defenses against colds and viruses for years and continues to be a tremendous help to the immune system. Additional things that may be added into the saline solution are: Argentum 53 (colloidal silver), or Xlear Nasal Wash or Spray.

By practicing some of the above steps you will be proactive in strengthening your immune system and have a better chance to thrive in this time of COVID-19. Taking positive responsible steps to boost your immune system will help you feel better and regain a sense of control in these challenging times.

For more information please visit our website – [www.StructuralEnergeticTherapy.com](http://www.StructuralEnergeticTherapy.com). You can contact us from that site as well.

# Integrating CranioSacral Therapy Principles into Other Manual Therapy Techniques



By Emily Crocker,  
BA, LMT, CST-T, RYT

I have been a licensed massage therapist for 11 years. I was trained in Bend, Oregon at Sage School of Massage and Esthetics and have been licensed in Oregon and Texas. I have a private practice where I specialize in clinical massage therapy. I use a combination of CranioSacral Therapy, Visceral Manipulation, myofascial release, Reiki, and Swedish massage techniques to treat my clients. In 2010, when my family moved to Austin, Texas I took my first introductory Upledger CranioSacral Therapy class. I knew nothing about the modality other than it helped one of my massage school classmates with her migraines (1). The 12-hour introductory class intrigued me enough to continue with the curriculum. I have since taken 11 seminars and can unequivocally say that studying CranioSacral therapy has changed my touch, presence and results no matter which “modality” I use.



If you are looking for a way to develop your palpation skills, studying CST is a great place to start. Once you tune in and perceive the craniosacral rhythm, you become aware that there is a world of subtlety that the hands can perceive. In 2013, a Swedish study showed that human (2) fingertips can feel a “bump corresponding to the size of a very large molecule.” Imagine what we can perceive when we have our hands on our clients: the subtlety of temperature disparities, the quality of the tissue, the signs of tissue release, etc. Practicing the techniques of CranioSacral Therapy helps to develop more sophisticated palpation skills and awareness of what is going on inside the tissues.

Learning to perceive the symmetry, quality, amplitude, and rate of the craniosacral rhythm can give us insights to where in the body there is restriction and/or dysfunction. The craniosacral rhythm can be used for whole body evaluation, giving you a global idea of what is happening in the body. You can take this quick and easy evaluation and use it to inform your treatment plan.

“Treat what you find” may sound obvious, but I know how easy it is to listen to a client’s story, create an idea of what is happening with them based on past experience and begin treatment based on the most likely scenario. While it is important to take client history and your own experience and knowledge into account, it is also necessary to look and see what the client’s body is presenting with on that day. CranioSacral Therapy prioritizes assessment over common treatment protocols.

Upledger teaches that the most profound therapy happens when the therapist comes to the session from a place of neutrality. While we use techniques and study anatomy and physiology, the client’s body has its own agenda. CranioSacral Therapy allows the client’s inner wisdom to direct the session to serve the client best. Neutrality is a skill that takes practice. To be truly neutral, one must forgo the idea of an agenda and attachment to a result. This does not mean we throw out all of our experience and knowledge, just that we come to each client in each session with openness and a desire to really listen to what the tissues under our hands are telling us at that moment. When working with children and animals, neutrality becomes imperative. A child, pet or horse will react immediately if they sense you are not neutral. I became aware of my neutrality limitations through the CranioSacral Therapy: EcoSomatics Equine 1 course. I am not an animal therapist but experiencing working with horses illustrated when I was maintaining neutrality. Horses will literally walk away from you if you are not neutral. Practicing “profound neutrality” will yield better manual therapy results. Often the desire to help can interfere in the therapist’s ability to let go of preconceptions of what the client needs. I cannot tell you how many times I have explained an idea of a treatment plan to a client to have that change as soon as I put my hands on them. Neutrality allows us to be flexible and responsive to the body under our hands.

In the SomatoEmotional Release and Advanced CranioSacral Therapy classes, students learn to work, not only with the tissues under our hands, but also with the expression or release of an emotion that has been retained

in the body, mind, spirit or psyche of the client. We often use dialoguing and imagery to aid the body’s release. When working in this manner, it is imperative to meet the client where they are. For example, if a client speaks about their own faith, world view, or belief system, it is the therapist’s job to put our own beliefs and opinions aside and be present with the client through their experience. During the treatment session, the client’s story becomes the template for our session. After all, the client enters the treatment room with a lifetime of experiences and medical history which may or may not be contributing to their symptoms. Each manual therapy treatment session should begin with the understanding that the client’s history, experience, and world view has shaped what they are feeling in their bodies. For example, I have two clients who are siblings and seek treatment for different reasons. Each of them has shared experiences of their childhoods that seem contradictory. They each feel that they acted as the older sibling and “raised” the other. Does this mean that one of them is lying? No, each of their experiences is part of their story. Upledger courses teach us that meeting clients where they are individually allows the body (and mind) to feel heard, and the therapist to therapeutically hold space for the body to heal.

During his research, Dr. Upledger noticed that the craniosacral rhythm pauses when the body is doing something significant during a session. By learning the feel of the “significance detector” the practitioner can tell that they are on the right track at that moment. It is like having a cheat sheet to the client’s session. Learning to listen to the craniosacral rhythm can ensure that you are acting as effectively as possible during that session. Sometimes, if I am debating what to do next during a manual therapy session, I can pause and tune in to the craniosacral rhythm. By following the rhythm, the body will eventually show you where it really wants your hands.

Continuing education in massage therapy is imperative to hone our skills, re-energize and inspire us and, sometimes, to remind us of what we already know. I highly recommend exploring CranioSacral therapy as an option for continuing education hours. Even the first course (CS1) will change your touch, your perception, and give you techniques and skills that can make other modalities more effective. Studying his light touch technique has, on the most basic level, enabled me to deepen my awareness of what is happening under my hands. Further study and experience with the advanced courses have illuminated my shortcomings and helped me to practice becoming a more present, neutral and, therefore, a more effective therapist.

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**SPOTLIGHT on**  
**EXCELLENCE**



**ERIK DALTON, PhD, LMT**  
**Director of the Freedom From Pain Institute**  
**and Master Teacher**

Our Spotlight on Excellence Honoree for January 2021 epitomizes a master teacher philosophy, professionalism, and most notably a sincere desire to share his cumulative knowledge and experience, through manual therapy practices, in how the body and mind process pain.

Dalton has long been fascinated by the patterns of pain that recur in people from all walks of life. As he began to see that neck and back pain occur at almost epidemic rates, Dalton set out to develop a streamlined yet comprehensive way to effectively address that pain. As with so many of us, he was drawn to manual therapy to resolve his own pain challenges. Post-graduate workshops with legendary osteopath Dr. Philip Greenman sparked the desire to integrate joint and connective-tissue techniques into his own pain management practice. He took the most holistic approach possible, studying not only anatomy, but also the complex impact of the nervous system on human structure.

A fortuitous encounter with Dr. Ida Rolf at an Esalen seminar, began a lifelong journey that has brought us to this current accolade for Dr. Erik Dalton. Lao Tzu is quoted as having said that “The journey of a **thousand miles** begins with one step.” Dalton’s first steps of inquiry led him to study at the Dr. Ida Rolf Institute, the Menninger Foundation, the Mueller College of Holistic Studies, and Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. The development of his signature Myoskeletal Alignment Techniques (MAT) resulted. We are beneficiaries of those first steps.

Dalton published the first ever Home Study Course, which led to his Myoskeletal Alignment Techniques (MAT) in 1998, and soon after, due to favorable response, founding of the Freedom From Pain Institute, licensed through the Oklahoma Board of Private Vocational Schools, to provide a permanent facility for his training seminars. **Just five years later, in 2003, Indiana State University became the first major university in America to offer Dalton’s Advanced Myoskeletal Massage Therapy program as a minor degree in massage.**

Dalton is the author of three best-selling manual therapy textbooks and online home-study programs. In 2007, Dalton was inducted into the Massage Therapy Hall of Fame, and in 2012 he received the One Concept Lifetime Achievement Award.

Throughout this journey, Dalton has maintained a 40-year private practice in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, while splitting his time, along with wife Teri and their critter babies (dogs) between Oklahoma and Costa Rica. Sounds like a healthy life balance to me!

Coming full circle from his degrees in clinical psychology and philosophy from Oklahoma State University, he is an Affiliate Faculty Member at Indiana State University’s Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department, and a lifetime member of the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP). [iasp-pain.org](http://iasp-pain.org)

## “Changing the Brain’s Mind About Pain Through Touch”

-Erik Dalton

A perpetual student himself, Dalton continues to study pain management from every angle. Inspired by the latest advances in brain imaging, he has begun exploring the brain’s role in chronic pain — and now blends this exciting research into his brain-based bodywork teachings. His article on DOSE and the hormonal effects of touch is another aspect of how therapists can improve their manual therapy outcomes by enhancing the body’s own self-regulating responses to stress and pain (<https://erikdalton.com/blog/boost-the-bliss>). Our relationship with our clients is best realized when the mind/body connection is acknowledged by therapists facilitating healthy change outcomes. As Dalton notes, “We are always stressing the importance of developing keen observation and compassion skills, guided by the principle that the healer is ultimately within each client. We all like to take credit when clients improve, but we must stay humble and remember we are just facilitators in their healing.

As a personal note, I highly recommend that the reader investigate Dalton’s online course offerings. Specifically, I have benefitted greatly from the knowledge and hands-on application of techniques provided in his course, Dalton Technique Treasures e-Course. The educational platform is user-friendly and well-designed, including an introductory module that literally guides you through the process. You cannot help but be successful. Master teachers understand the importance of teaching for mastery rather than an arbitrary grade point. While ‘you cannot teach experience’, quoting Dalton, you can learn mastery of specific techniques that will enhance your professional manual therapy experiences and provide your clients with the best possible outcomes.

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# THE LATERAL TRAUMA REFLEX TREATMENT HELPS CHRONIC SOMATIC CONDITIONS



By Dale Alexander

This technique description is credited to Dr Thomas Hanna, PhD. His extraordinary intellect created a body of work which continues to serve all in the healing arts of manual therapy and movement education through the Somatic Systems Institute. (1, 2, 3)

Chronically compromised clients present with a typical triad of:

1. "I hurt."
2. "I have no energy."
3. "I can't move as I need to maintain my quality of life."

The Lateral Trauma Reflex Technique is one that I have used daily in my private practice for 40 years, to assist those with chronic somatic dysfunction and pain. This technique allows the nervous system to re-model its relationship to gravity and reduces the compression of the chest wall in response to the expansion of the heart and lungs. This allows new blood to be delivered in a timelier fashion. New blood is the body's most precious renewable resource to aid the healing process.

The technique is based on the evolutionary foundation that trauma from falling; impacts to chest, spine, or extremities; or even intense periods of chronic stress may provoke subcortical mediation to lock down the torso of the human body. (1) There are few clients who have not experienced such impact injuries as the wind being knocked out of them or whiplash occurrences, etc. The list is endless. The suddenness of the event or the ongoing presence of a stressor is what triggers this reflex. Remember Stanley Keleman's addition to Hans Selye's research into the effects of stress. There are three dimensions to consider: intensity, repetition, and duration. Any of these may provoke inflammatory cycles within our bodies, thus fueling the perpetuation of chronic somatic difficulties. (4, 5)

My studies with Dr. Hanna clarified my understanding of how this reflex triggers an additional triad of compression, congestion, and dis-coordination within the central nervous system. (6) Let us set the foundation. Reflexes are not something we consciously choose during the split-second occurrence of an unexpected event. They happen because our evolutionary adaptation has selected them. We were born with them. (7) The most important element to comprehend is that once this reflex has been triggered, one does not feel it within their sensory feedback loops. It remains activated, affecting both internal physiological function and our movement patterns. As educated somatic practitioners we need to include its potential presence into our treatment strategies. Dr. Hanna referred to this as sensory-motor amnesia. (1)

**Until you comprehend that a possible additional treatment variable may exist, you do not use it. The Lateral Trauma Reflex is that important in my clinical experience.**

We all have learned the power of adhesions to disrupt physiological processes and how they may be co-perpetuators of compensations within our movement patterns. However, little has been published as to how subcortical reflexes figure into the equation toward restoring your clients' quality of life. This one technique will assist you to help your clients every day.

#### **Assessment:**

With your client supine, stand at the top of your massage table.

Invite your client to raise outstretched arms over their head.

Grasp the forearms above the wrists.

Lean your weight backward, gently pulling their arms superiorly and feeling for which side seems more shortened between their shoulders and pelvis. Treat the shorter side first. Commonly, you may end up treating both sides.

#### **Treatment Steps:**

Encourage your client to lie on their side with the short side up.

Grasp the arm above the elbow with your superior hand and brace their ilium with your inferior hand.

#### **Explain and demonstrate the sequence you will be doing with them:**

"Reach your arm toward me as far as you can comfortably. Then, using the muscles in your side (latissimus and obliques), pull your shoulder blade toward your pelvis.

We will do this 3-4 times. The last pull will be an isometric contraction.

Think ounces, not pounds of force. "You are stronger than me in this position."

Have the client reach overhead toward you as is comfortable for them.

Then describe the downward pull of their shoulder toward their pelvis again.

Resist this motion only moderately the first time. Then, the second time, add more resistance to their pulling their shoulder blade down, more again during the third contraction, then upon the fourth, isometrically resist their movement. Then instruct them to really reach over their head as you tap the side of their rib cage. Assist them to place their arm comfortably on the table. Finally, touch their head at approximately the coronal suture with your fingertips. This is where the sensory motor cortex resides in our human brain.

The power of the client's movement is not what re-calibrates this reflex. It is the repetition and the sensory escalation within the nervous system that does. It is an elegant technique that releases a reflex that clients have no control over once it has been triggered.

**This is what clients pay us for...** to know more than they do and to have the skill sets to re-calibrate such reflexes.

#### **Special Situations:**

Ok, how might we do this reflex release with someone who cannot reach overhead because of adhesive capsulitis or frozen shoulder difficulties? Contact their axilla and work from there in the same sequence. It is their torso muscles, the latissimus, and the obliques, that are so important to re-calibrate.

Further, seek to enhance the ease of motion of their scapula in relationship to their ribcage. Osteopaths call this scapula-costal motion. (8)

#### **Implications:**

Releasing the left shoulder and side reduces the resistance to the heart's expansion; while releasing the right shoulder and side allows the three lobes of the lung on that side to expand more fully. Together, the heart-lung complex provides the body with newly constituted blood to deliver nutrients, oxygen, and hormones to all the cells within our bodies. This is a very tangible way that we assist clients to regain their quality of life, and it is how we prosper doing work that feels satisfying to us.

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By Felicia Brown

# Staying Afloat by **REDEFINING YOUR MASSAGE CAREER**

**It is no secret COVID-19 has changed the world at large, and perhaps for none as much as those of us in the Massage Therapy field. In fact, we and our clients are in an on-going discussion of how to perform massage safely when we are not one hundred percent sure it is possible to hug safely. What a crazy time!** Debates and deep breaths aside, this conundrum provides an unusual opportunity for massage therapists – both those who are staying in the profession and others who are leaving it – to make changes in their careers. For those who have been on the fence about moving in a new direction, the pandemic provides an obvious reason to move on – and one most clients can understand. If you are in this group, look at the COVID-19 challenges as a prompt to sail off to an adjacent field, revisit a former career/passion or to try something new altogether.

However, if you are planning to stay on board as a massage therapist, I believe there are good reasons to do so. First, now more than ever people are looking for effective ways to relax, get out of pain, improve their quality of life, and create experiences beyond buying stuff or traveling. Massage therapists have always attracted clients seeking these results and will likely continue to do so.

With the departure of some massage therapists (and a few of the businesses which employ them) from the field,

there may in fact be a smaller ratio of working therapists to clients wanting massage. Sure, some people may be hesitant to get massage right now. But when the pandemic recedes and/or an effective vaccine is available, many of them will warm back up to the idea of receiving massage and other up-close self-care services.

Though it is sad to see businesses close or move on, this will also open doors for massage therapy employees and contractors to start their own businesses. With fewer therapists and businesses, this will eventually mean more work for new entrepreneurs and those who stuck with it.

Additionally, companies of all kinds closing will provide greater availability and lower costs in commercial space. In fact, if you already have an office, you may be able to negotiate better terms with your current landlord or upgrade to a better location for less money than ever.

What is also likely is the creation of new business models, including more online and virtual wellness platforms. These will no doubt include ways for massage therapists to provide self-care guidance, wellness classes or other coaching for clients or other therapists. In the end, this level of creativity is good for our profession and the world at large.

As COVID continues, many clients are choosing to streamline or limit the number of places they and their dollars go. This makes it a perfect time to beef up



your services to provide each person with more ways to do business with you – and to have more targeted offerings. Though this could include adding other massage and energy modalities, some professionals will choose to move beyond the table into complementary fields.

One Orlando therapist who has both expanded offerings and focused his niche is Carlos Mendez, LMT. A massage therapist since 2012, Carlos listened to the demands of his clients before getting licensed as a barber.

“Many massage clients started asking about hair care and manscaping. I thought about it and decided to add it. Now I provide all services to my audience,” Carlos told me. “Even in the middle of the pandemic, I’m able to make my number goals.”

Another factor for Carlos’ continued success is his targeted audience. Though he welcomes all people to his table, Carlos’ primary clientele is male and includes larger individuals and the LGBTQ community. Because clients feel comfortable on his table, they quickly warm up to trying his barbering and manscaping services as well. Many of Carlos’ customers find him through connections in the LGBTQ community or through networking at local pool parties.

Nicole Kerner Deitrick is another Florida massage therapist who diversified her skills and offerings. After graduating from the Sarasota School of Massage in 1999, Nicole also became a Life Coach and Yoga Teacher. At the start of the pandemic, her yoga studio – *A Little Twisted Yoga* in Palmetto - began offering online classes while in-person classes were not an option. “It was a huge help to me emotionally to funnel my attention on to at least one aspect of my business that I could keep ‘open.’” Nicole shared.

While closed, Nicole’s business also offered a virtual workshop on how to massage your significant other for pain relief. Now, even though the studio has re-opened, online classes remain an asset for the business. “If we have to cancel a class for any reason, I have a library of class links I can send out to the students so they can continue their practice.”

Though additional training and/or licensing is involved, ideas for adding to your current hands-on skills and services could include...

- Personal training
- Yoga or fitness classes
- Esthetics or hair removal
- Cosmetology, barbering or hair braiding
- Nail technician
- Energy work

Should you wish to work within the massage field but expand your business in new directions, this could be a time to pursue other entrepreneurial or creative outlets. If you are an artist or creative type, why not showcase your masterpieces in your office or website? Those cute hand-painted stones you’ve been pumping out could be just thing clients want to take home with them. Or if you have a passion for wellness products, a multitude of retail and direct marketing companies would love to add you as a vendor or representative.

In my case, though I have not been doing massage, I’ve continued to provide business coaching and consulting to new and existing clients along with teaching a few online continuing education classes. I have also found it very therapeutic to help other people forget about their problems. Thus, I spend a fair amount of time as writing and speaking about my number one COVID coping strategy...racing rubber ducks in my backyard. (See photo.)

What started out as a way to pass the time and entertain my friends on Facebook has garnered multiple speaking engagements with the ducks (aka The Dream Team) to share their tips for “quacking up” and living a great life. Our story and the ducks’ wisdom also resulted in being published in a new book, *Break Through: Wisdom of the Soul*, compiled by former massage therapist and fellow creative, Gloria Coppola. Though my rubber duck racing career has yet to put big bucks in the bank, it has put countless smiles on my face and kept me laughing which is worth a lot.

Whether you choose to stay the course with massage or venture off on a new path, massage therapy has played an important role to bring you to this moment. Like Nicole and Carlos have shared, these times require all of us to be adaptable, inventive, and persistent to find our success. Like I have shared, you may want to add in a dash of fun and frolic amid the strategy to stay energized and keep smiling. Either way, I believe you have what it takes to stay afloat and sail on towards your success.



# MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

As a community of professionals that strive to help each other, we feel the need, even more so now, during these difficult times. The question many of our members have asked is how can we assist other members that may be struggling right now? What positive changes can we implement to help others?

Many of our members that are experiencing financial difficulty want to maintain their connection with FSMTA and the value they receive from membership but are having to weigh the decision of renewing FSMTA membership against other obligations.

We know our members care about FSMTA and the connections they have made with other FSMTA members, so we are pleased to introduce our Members Helping Members program.

For those FSMTA Members wanting to assist other members, this program provides an opportunity to donate a partial or full membership that can be offered to members that are struggling and unable to renew their membership, due to financial hardship. Donating members can choose to remain anonymous but will know that they have contributed to the benefit of another FSMTA member. Members experiencing financial hardship can apply to receive a partial or full membership so they do not have to miss any of their FSMTA benefits.

\* Donations are not tax-deductible.

# Redefining Our Role as Manual Therapists in a COVID-19 Reality

By Irene Smith



Massage is a modality of care provided within specific frameworks, and primarily facilitated within the one-on-one live model. Massage has always been taught this way and, for many in the massage industry, this traditional structure framework is the only option. This model, however, has left the medically fragile client underserved during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Massage may be the only intentionally focused touch intervention for the medically fragile client. Therefore, let us talk about the touch component and take it out of the massage framework.

*"Touch was never meant to be a luxury. It is a basic human need. Touch validates life and gives hope to both the giver and the receiver."*

The truth is that touch is as vital to physical wellbeing as food and water. Being a primary stimulant for our Parasympathetic nervous system, which holds our heart rate at rest and eases the flight or fight impulse generated from our sympathetic nervous system, touch basically keeps our anxiety lowered. Research shows that premature babies die without touch. It is simple; touch is not an option. The benefits of touch contribute to emotional and physical wellbeing, and many of the benefits stem from three primary outcomes.

## 1 Touch Stimulates the release of oxytocin.

Secreted by the pituitary gland, the hormone oxytocin appears to be linked with trust, bonding, and love. Nurturing touch is high on the list for stimulating oxytocin.

When we are touched, oxytocin fills us with the sensation of well-being and the emotion of security. We feel secure within ourselves, our environment and with all those in it. Oxytocin is a hormone that soothes our sympathetic nervous system, reduces stress and anxiety, and lowers cortisol, the stress hormone.

## 2 Touch stimulates the release of endorphins.

Endorphins contribute to a deep sense of pleasure. Touch research from Tiffany Fields, Director of the Touch Research Institute in the Miami School of Medicine, verifies that a seemingly simple touch of a hand on the shoulder can stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain suppressors.

## 3 Touch stimulates our sense of proprioception.

Proprioception is our ability to discern where our body parts are in terms of space.

Even with our eyes closed, we have a sense of body position. Information from our body is sent to the brain and, in turn, provides us with a sense of body orientation during movement.

Facilitating touch with medically fragile clients experiencing Huntington's Disease, where direction of movement may be confused, I have had the opportunity to see direction and movement begin to integrate during a session. A sense of proprioception begins to return momentarily.

## Current View

In this era of Covid-19, clients need to feel safe in their environments, in the world and with their current experience. They need to feel a sense of pleasure, usually experienced from social interaction with family and friends; and they need to have a greater sense of balance in this current unfamiliar world where everything they have identified with may be out of sight, creating an overall sense of being out of control.

Many medically fragile clients have been kept in their rooms since March. Anxiety, depression, and disorientation have become serious conditions leading to failure to thrive.

Although we will come out of this Pandemic, we can learn from this and prepare for other unforeseen times when

massage will be locked out of health care.

Currently the industry focus is on making massage essential. Although a needed focus, this leaves the medically fragile client without one of our core needs in life, intentional touch. Patients should not be touch deprived because a practitioner cannot get in to see them. We need a more expansive dynamic than that. One of the most amazing aspects of touch is that we do not need a massage therapist to facilitate it. It is an organic communication that we are born with. Touching ourselves and others with mindfulness is a birthright.

We develop relationships with the world and with our own bodies through self touch until we are taught verbal language and conditioned not to touch our bodies, the material objects in our environment, or people outside our family unit. Returning permission to touch self and others with intention needs to be more deeply cultivated within our industry, especially in the field of end-of-life care.

The wider picture is we have an opportunity to look deeper into our field and explore the possibilities of educating the clients and providers in skillful applications of this basic human communication.

Only in the last decade has the massage industry recognized massage for the medically fragile as a viable professional option, and hospice corporations have only just begun to see the benefits in offering massage.

Cultivating a wider view of how massage for the medically fragile can be explored through our virtual world, and suggesting the industry recognize new possibilities is challenging.

The overall challenge within the massage industry is currently being met by the educational institutions through curriculums online. The schools are being creative in how to teach massage at a distance. Practitioners are practicing on family members, on pillows, and on themselves. As touch teachers, we can be mortified or inspired. I choose to be inspired and receive this period as a revitalization and renewal of an industry being pushed into the new age. Just because this pandemic will end does not mean that brick and mortar classrooms will open again. We are being pushed into models that I believe will remain in effect.

So, how do we take this renovation into the room with our client? How do

we educate the health care provider, not in massage, but in skillful touch so that our clients and patients can receive the nurturing they deserve? The key is that we in the massage profession must see our role in a more expansive context and become Touch Educators. We are the future of compassionate care, the future of a more human approach to health care.

One on one is great. However, guiding a family member or nurse, through a virtual platform, toward being more conscious and grounded at the bedside while providing care will ease anxiety for the patient and for the care provider

Teaching our alert clients self touch can offer just the perfect on-the-spot pain control and calmness they will need when being isolated for any length of time.

Recognizing self-touch as self-care, and teaching care providers to touch more consciously through virtual formats remain unrecognized. How do we cultivate this support and invite others to share in this expansion?

## Examples

\*One practitioner sent a text to her client and told her about a calming breath she takes every night at a certain time. The client texted back and said how calming it was to have shared the breath with her practitioner the evening before. They started sharing the practice nightly.

\*Another practitioner was one of 10 hospice massage therapy employees being threatened with the loss of their jobs if they did not show up in the beginning of the lockdown. We talked about showing up virtually with a visualization and teaching the care provider on site to therapeutically apply lotion to the client's body. The practitioner provided both the visualization, which relaxed the care provider and the patient, and provided a teaching session in applying the lotion. She was thrilled and kept her job.

\*A practitioner from the UK is providing virtual massage. Her client is listening while the practitioner verbalizes the massage session she usually provides 'hands-on'. The practitioner massages herself as she speaks. Mirror neurons in the client's brain fire up, and the feeling last experienced from the past session is triggered from the familiar tone and visual of the current session. Deep relaxation has been reported by the client.

***Massage IS intimate. The intimacy is in relationship to the connection and presence of both persons involved. This still exists in the virtual world.***

## Practitioner Toolbox

Allow yourself personal reflective time and list the skills you have as a massage practitioner that support your hands-on technique. What part does presence play? What about eye contact, voice tone, breath, centeredness, grounding? Maybe you have a playlist of healing music, aromatherapy suggestions, or beautiful poetry to share.

You are not limited. You are amazing and have a whole toolbox of skills that you probably do not know you have. You are desperately needed right now, right where you are. You have virtual tools, clients in need and an overflowing toolbox.

You can also teach your clients self-touch techniques, and they will love you for helping to increase their ability to cope with stress and anxiety. My heart breaks thinking of all the well oncology patients that went or are going without touch when they could be easing their own pain with self-touch!

Show up now, however you can, with whatever formats and tools are available, and teach the care providers touch strategies that can be integrated into the care they are providing and teach the clients strategies in self-touch to ease pain and stress if massage is denied. Take your practice to the next level!

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