

ORTHO-BIONOMY®

by
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Ortho-Bionomy is a gentle, effective approach to somatic re-education that uses comfortable positioning and relaxing movements to unlock tension, relieve pain, promote structural balance, reduce stress and increase personal awareness and well being. Homeopathic in principle, Ortho-Bionomy incorporates a wide spectrum of techniques ranging from hands-on contact to non-physical contact with the energy field to initiate innate, self-corrective reflexes that remind the body of its own natural ability to find balance.¹

In a typical session the client, clothed and without shoes, lies on a table and identifies with the practitioner any areas of discomfort; the practitioner slowly moves the client into positions of comfort that allow patterns of tension to release and to be replaced by a sense of well-being. Developed from the practice of Osteopathy, Ortho-Bionomy addresses a remarkable number of painful and debilitating physical and emotional conditions; it is taught and recognized worldwide for its simple, gentle and lasting effectiveness.

Origin and History of Ortho-Bionomy

The philosophical and scientific roots of Ortho-Bionomy lie in the field of Osteopathy. This 100 year old system of health care recognizes the self-healing, self-regulating capacity of the body, and seeks to facilitate and augment the basic curative force inherent in the body. Osteopathy has developed a system of treatment that acknowledges the relationship of the physical structure of the body (both osseous and somatic) to the self-healing potential of the individual.²

A particular osteopathic treatment procedure, known as positional release, was developed by Lawrence Jones, an American osteopath. In 1964, Jones described, in an article called Spontaneous Release by Positioning, that pain and tension could be relieved in a few minutes by slowly and carefully exaggerating a lesion (an abnormal bony posture) in such a way as to make the patient maximally comfortable. He found that the muscle spasm that had been holding the bones in an abnormal position would spontaneously relax without a forceful manipulation.

Arthur Lincoln Pauls, a British osteopath, was inspired by Jones' work to dedicate himself to the principles of non-force corrective techniques. By 1976 Pauls had developed the Phased Reflex Techniques of Ortho-Bionomy. These techniques encompass positional

release and energetic techniques that enable the client to understand, consciously experience and even participate in their own capacity to self-correct.

The Function and Purpose of Ortho-Bionomy in the Traditional Health Care Setting

Ortho-Bionomy's primary benefit lies in helping people to break the cycle of pain, to correct structural and somatic dysfunction, and to release stress. This non-invasive, quick acting approach is an effective preparation for mobilization, movement and therapeutic exercise. Ortho-Bionomy incorporates a re-education process that includes isometric and isotonic techniques, posture and gait training, awareness based therapeutic exercise and positional release as part of the client's self-care program.

Ortho-Bionomy facilitates the therapeutic process. The body is always moved in the direction of comfort, allowing the client to relax and develop trust in the practitioner's hands and the therapeutic process. With Ortho-Bionomy the client experiences a greater sense of well being and ease from within, and learns to move toward comfort and away from pain. The client becomes physically and mentally attuned to inherent possibilities for change.

The key to the effectiveness of Ortho-Bionomy lies in the reflex activity and in the proprioceptive nervous system. This system generally works below normal waking consciousness, shaping posture and movement patterns by registering and adapting the body's subtlest responses to a lifetime of experience. In Ortho-Bionomy, the slow movements, gentle positioning and slight compression stimulate the proprioceptors at a pace that allows the client the opportunity to be consciously present and attuned to the stored experience within these movement patterns. Proprioceptively, the client is offered alternative and more functional patterns. This non-force and respectful approach affirms the natural wisdom of the body offering the client possibilities for change.³

The techniques of Ortho-Bionomy educate the client to recognize which positions relieve pain or stress. Finding the optimum position stimulates self-correction and interrupts the reflex arc that perpetuates the pain cycle. This is especially useful in chronic cases where the trauma pattern has been proprioceptively incorporated. For example, take the case of a woman who suffers an injury that disturbs her normal, healthy structural pattern of movement. She adapts to the trauma and develops compensation patterns somewhat more limiting, perhaps painful, yet still functional. The practitioner, guided by the client's preferred posture and subtle movement, supports and follows the movement patterns inherent in the tissue. This allows the client to self-correct her own structural faults, while at the same time, releasing any emotional and mental trauma that may have been generated by the injury and stored in the compensation posture. Through the action of the proprioceptive system the client can release the trauma, resistance and pain, increase her range of motion, and learn to integrate more effectively her physical, emotional, and mental experiences.⁴

In effect, Ortho-Bionomy is compatible with any system of traditional medicine. These techniques have already been incorporated into a variety of health care settings: medical offices, physical therapy clinics, sports medicine clinics, outpatient chemo therapy clinics, HIV and AIDS clinics, dental and chiropractic offices. Ortho-Bionomy is currently being used by osteopaths, nurses, manual lymph drainage therapists, physical and occupational therapists, massage therapists, bodywork practitioners, counselors, psychotherapists and social workers.

Diagnostic Categories addressed by Ortho-Bionomy

Structural and/or Soft Tissue Diagnoses:

Thoracic/lumbar pain	Edema
Neck pain	Fibromyalgia and myofascitis
Joint pain and restricted motion	Plantar fasciitis, bunions and crepitis
Scoliosis	Morton's neuroma
Sciatica	Carpal tunnel syndrome
Whiplash and head injuries	Thoracic outlet syndrome
TMJ	Muscle pain and spasms
Rheumatoid and osteoarthritis	Soft tissue restrictions
Fractured spines and knees	Contractures of stroke and paraplegia
Sports injuries	Parkinsonian rigidity
Tennis Elbow	PMS and cramping
Sprained ankles and wrists	Uterine fibroids
Foot and knee injuries	Sacral adhesions
Tendonitis	Abdominal and digestive discomfort
Rotator cuff injuries	Sickle cell anemia
Shin splints	Cerebral Palsy

Surgical sequelae:

Jaw pain after surgery	Frozen shoulder after mastectomy
Access port surgery	Joint replacement
Lumpectomy	Scar tissue formation
CVA	
Nausea, lack of energy, and discomfort after chemotherapy	

Psychological diagnoses:

Emotional tension and trauma	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
Anxiety	Hyperactivity
Occupational stress	

How is Ortho-Bionomy utilized in a traditional allied health care practice?

Traditional allied health care benefits from integrating Ortho-Bionomy in several ways. The techniques work quickly to release pain and discomfort. The average position of release is only held for 20-60 seconds, yet the relief can be profound. The client becomes engaged in the therapeutic process, learning that pain is not endless, and that comfort is a realizable outcome. Health care practitioners find that once pain is relieved, the patient can communicate more coherently about their symptoms and take a greater role in their healing process. Patient resistance to therapy is eliminated and recovery time can be reduced.

The work has been safely and extensively applied for a wide variety of orthopedic conditions. Ortho-Bionomy has totally eliminated pain in post surgical patients with bilateral hip replacements who could not tolerate any extrinsic movement. It is used to address the chronic and acute pain of scoliosis. Low back conditions and sciatica problems quickly resolve with the techniques and gentle exercise program of this work.

Physical therapists use Ortho-Bionomy positional release to relieve muscle pain and spasm, muscle imbalances, and increase range of motion. The techniques prepare the soft tissue and joints for mobilization, movement, therapeutic exercise, and more direct stretching and soft tissue work. Ortho-Bionomy is a useful adjunct to traditional physical therapy as it uses physiological principles that allow healing and release to occur from within. Internal cues increase proprioceptive awareness to allow reintegration, realignment, and the release of habitual or compensated postural and movement holding patterns.

When these techniques are applied before movement and muscle strength conditioning, the body performs the exercises with less stress to the joints. The proper alignment that is achieved through release of muscle tension patterns ensures increased range of motion, and increased muscle strength with a natural ease of movement. Ortho-Bionomy effectively treats sports injuries by stimulating natural neuromuscular reflexes to reduce swelling, decrease pain, increase range of motion, and enhance healing capacity.

In chiropractic clinics, Ortho-Bionomy balances muscle dystonia and dysfunctions, increases joint mobility and range of motion, and especially re-educates muscle spasm in preparation for joint mobilization and adjustment.

Ortho-Bionomy is highly effective in dealing with the side effects of cancer treatment. It alleviates discomfort secondary to surgical procedures including frozen shoulder and pain due to access port surgery. It also relieves nausea, lack of energy, and discomfort during chemo therapy sessions.

The hands on component of physical touch helps the cancer patient to relax, to reintegrate a somatic sense of their bodies, and to alleviate fear. Patients appreciate the opportunity to engage and focus on their bodies within a wellness perspective that encourages a sense of their natural healing capacity. Their somatic and emotional feelings are

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acknowledged in a safe and supportive manner. Ortho-Bionomy allows them to slow down, experience and reintegrate their sense of themselves in a somatic way that focuses on wellness and quality of life. The work helps them to understand how stress and fear affect the body and to implement somatic techniques that empower them to alleviate their own pain and discomfort.

Orthopedic surgeons, neurologists, doctors, acupuncturists, nutritionists, psychologists, massage therapists and chiropractors all refer patients to independent practitioners of Ortho-Bionomy. These professionals find that a wide variety of physical and emotional conditions respond to Ortho-Bionomy's non-invasive techniques. The gentle approach allows for the physical, mental, and emotional affects of trauma to be released effortlessly and re-alignment and reintegration to occur naturally.

Allied Health goals towards patient health enhancement---functional outcomes of integrating Ortho-Bionomy with traditional practice.

Ortho-Bionomy quickly and effectively reduces pain, increases range of motion, releases muscle contractures and spasms, and corrects postural patterns of dysfunction. It restores proper joint motion due to enhanced muscle function and mobility, and stimulates the relaxation response.

The gentleness and overall sense of safety that is communicated by the work makes it ideal for working in all physically delicate situations. In geriatrics, it is superb for maintaining range of motion and preventing and releasing contractures. The post CVA patient often responds very well. In Parkinsonian rigidity Ortho-Bionomy is useful and temporarily effective for getting through basic tasks like dressing and eating.⁵ The energy work of Ortho-Bionomy brings relief to patients with Sickle Cell anemia who suffer periods of severe pain and inability to tolerate touch of any kind.

Children respond well and quickly to the work, and trust in the non-invasive quality of the therapist / patient contact. Ortho-Bionomy has been used to release the contractures of cerebral palsy and to stimulate neuromuscular reflexes to increase range of motion and integrate functional movement patterns. Young soccer players have been treated with Ortho-Bionomy to relieve shin splints. The work has helped pre-teen ballerinas with foot and leg pain. A three year old boy was treated to relieve the trauma effects of a skull fracture and the treatment resulted in improved cranial nerve function.

Ortho-Bionomy reduces edema in traumatized tissue so the healing process will take place more quickly and efficiently with less congestion. For patients enduring long periods of confinement and resultant body aches, even 20-30 seconds of positional release with compression can bring enormous relief.

Post-mastectomy lymphadema, particularly when accompanied by more complex symptoms like burning, stabbing or radiating pain, throbbing and limited range of motion, is effectively treated by Ortho-Bionomy combined with MLD (manual lymph drainage). Pain is reduced and range of motion is increased by the Ortho-Bionomy positional release

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techniques. The resulting soft tissue relaxation then facilitates application of MLD techniques.

Ortho-Bionomy relieves physical pain, abdominal and digestive discomfort, diarrhea, and reduces stress in AIDS and HIV patients. Some individual cases have reported a return of T-cell count to normal levels when Ortho-Bionomy was included with their alternative treatment protocol.

In a psychiatric setting, the physical techniques of Ortho-Bionomy have been used with PTSD patients "to bring them back to the here and now" when they are in a dissociative state (i.e., flashback). Specifically, these techniques enable the patient to identify the beginning of a dissociative episode so as to have the choice of not entering into it. Ortho-Bionomy is also useful as a critical-incident stress debriefing adjunct, helping to prevent the formation of a set reaction pattern.⁶

In cases of head injury, Ortho-Bionomy has helped the client to release contractures, re-establish coordination, and re-integrate their proprioceptive and somatic senses for more coherent and easy functioning. Often, the physical techniques stimulate a somato-emotional release allowing the client to simply let go of emotional fixations caused by the trauma.

In the field of addiction nursing and alcohol rehabilitation the philosophy and principles of Ortho-Bionomy are clearly appropriate. The responsibility for wellness lies with the patient. Clients have reported that Ortho-Bionomy has assisted them to recognize and choose an internal sense of health and well-being as opposed to a chemically altered state. Practitioners have also applied the techniques for neuro-development with infants and toddlers who are recovering from prenatal exposure to drugs.

When used to address the chronic and acute pain of scoliosis the techniques result in the release of muscle spasms throughout the ribcage and improvement of spinal structure. Low back conditions and sciatica problems quickly resolve with the techniques and gentle exercise program of this work.

Documentation and Reimbursement Issues

Documentation of work varies from practitioner to practitioner depending upon individual situations. Those who work from a doctor's referral receive a prescription for number of treatments that includes a diagnosis code. Those working in allied health practices can chart Ortho-Bionomy under the hands-on codes for neuro-muscular re-education, joint mobilization, myofascial release, soft tissue mobilization, and therapeutic exercise, and some chiropractors include it in 99213, 99214, 99215 (evaluation/management codes). Independent practitioners generally keep client notes to record which techniques were used, track client change and progress, and record client comment and experiences.

Reimbursement by insurance companies varies greatly from situation to situation. Those working in allied health fields under the supervision or orders of a physician can sometimes bill through the clinic. Some insurance companies will pay if the practitioner is Ortho-Bionomy® is a registered trademark of the Society of Ortho-Bionomy International, Inc. and is used with permission.

a licensed massage therapist. Often when the work is addressing the after effects of a motor vehicle accident, reimbursement is dependent upon how much medical payment funds are available from the car insurance policy, or can be expected from litigation or settlements. A few cases have been covered by workman's compensation when the client was able to get a doctor's referral. Independent practitioners usually collect payment at the time of service. Some will write up a statement for the client's insurance company for possible client reimbursement. In some cases, practitioners are willing to do the insurance billing paperwork and wait for payment.

Training Courses

Registered Instructors with the Society of Ortho-Bionomy International® offer courses for personal interest or towards completion of the practitioner training programs. Registered Practitioners have completed either 500 or 1000 hour trainings.

Society of Ortho-Bionomy, International®, 5875 North Lincoln Ave, Suite 225 Chicago, IL 60659, (800) 743-4890, offers information on practitioner training programs, a newsletter with a schedule of classes throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, and sells a directory listing Registered Practitioners and Instructors by state and country. Recommended reading: Ortho-Bionomy, A Manual of Practice, Kathy L. Kain with Jim Berns, is available from North Atlantic Books, P.O. Box 12327. Berkeley, CA 94712.

Notes:

¹Overmyer, Luann. "Ortho-Bionomy." In Bodywork in America, edited by George Quasha, to be published.

²Chaitow, Leon. Osteopathy. Northamptonshire: Thorsons Publishers Limited, 1983, pp.13-17.

³Overmyer. Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Valasek, Richard. Personal correspondence with author, 1997.

⁶ Ibid.

Acknowledgments:

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Luann Overmyer is a Licensed Massage Therapist, a Nationally Certified Therapeutic Bodyworker and a Registered Senior Practitioner and Advanced Instructor with the Society of Ortho-Bionomy, International. She teaches Ortho-Bionomy seminars in the United States and Australia, and maintained a private practice in Albany, California from 1980-2003. Luann trains instructors, supervises practitioner trainees, and has developed techniques to address carpal tunnel syndrome and neuritis conditions of the arm. She has been involved in the teaching and the development of Ortho-Bionomy since 1980, has served on the Board of Directors for the Society of Ortho-Bionomy, International, and on the Curriculum Committee and the Practitioner Evaluation Committee. She holds a BA in Psychology with a minor in Education from UCLA. Luann is currently writing a book on Ortho-Bionomy Self-Care. She can be reached by email: nadolu@earthlink.net

Case Study

Ortho-Bionomy as Adjunct Therapy to Traditional Allied Health Care

Patient Documentation

Prepared by: Luann Overmyer

5/5/97

PATIENT: WHITE FEMALE

AGE 56

DIAGNOSIS: FIBROMYALGIA

HISTORY

Pt. complaints are constant pain and discomfort throughout her body. Pain levels fluctuate between 6 and 10 +. The pains seem to travel, at times decreasing in some areas and increasing in others. Particular areas of pain include neck, low back, shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists, legs, and knees. Knees sometimes become weak and buckle beneath her. The patient also experiences fatigue. Treatment with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory did not help. Vicadin did not help, but Roxicet helped some. Symptoms accompanied by anxiety and depression. Pt. under care of psychiatrist.

Patient was referred to me for gentle therapy that would not aggravate her condition.

TREATMENT PLAN

Initially, I focused on stabilizing pelvis and relieving pain and discomfort. In subsequent treatments, I continued to keep pelvis stabilization and alignment in focus, as well as working to relieve pain in neck, shoulder, ribs, arms, legs, and knees. As pain decreased self care exercises were taught to relieve pain and tension and to maintain the results we achieved.

TREATMENT NOTES

6/29/96 Initial treatment focused on stabilizing pelvis. Using Ortho-Bionomy positional release to relieve pain at the 3rd, 4th., 5th. lumbar referred pain points, I then released the posterior right ilium, the left patella, the 3rd. rib and left Parker's reflex point at the lateral edge of scapula.

9/17/96 Pt. returned claiming treatment had helped her low back, and that now she was "having more good days than bad". She complained that neck and left shoulder had been bad for last three weeks and she was experiencing pain where upper ribs meet the sternum. I used Ortho-Bionomy positional release to relieve tension in left cervicals and scapula and to release left C7 and trapezius. Isometric techniques for left first rib, and Ortho-Bionomy Phase 5 subtle movement to release left third rib and left brachial plexus. And then a combination of Phase 4 positional release with compression and Phase 5 subtle movement to release elbow, forearm, wrist and hand.

9/24/96 Pt. reported discomfort after last session that lasted a few hours, but then she felt much better next day and even better since. Pain levels are definitely decreasing. I addressed the 2nd., 3rd., and 5th. lumbar and sacrum and anterior left ilium and the tension in the mid-cervical region with standard Phase 4 Ortho-Bionomy positional release techniques. Then released the first rib with the isometric technique and then released coccyx pain with Phase 5 subtle movement and balance with wrist. I taught her the side position Feldenkrais shoulder release exercise to work with at home.

9/30/96 Pt. reported pain in left shoulder, left inner arm, and sharp shooting pains in both knees and left groin. With Phase 4 Ortho-Bionomy positional release with compression, I released the 1st., 4th., and 5th. lumbar points, the psoas, and the ilio-sacral articulations. Knees were locked in incomplete extension, so I used the Ortho-Bionomy positional technique to release femur override. For left shoulder pain I released coracoid process and 1st. rib using isometric / isotonic techniques.

11/25/96 Pt. returned with pain in right hip at center of gluteus, and inside thigh. Worked slowly with positions, compression, and slow movements to release contractions at right groin and around acetabulum and greater trochanter. Released pain at right coccyx with isometric technique. Addressed right knee at patella and medial release points, right 2nd cervical and left occiput with Phase 4 Ortho-Bionomy positional release techniques. Taught self care isometric technique to assist femur rotation correction to relieve groin pain.

3/24/97 Pt. returned reporting that she feels much better and that she feels fibromyalgia is almost gone. Pain is infrequent and when experienced is mild. Lately has been experiencing discomfort in her knees and right hip. She wanted review of isometric for femur rotation. With standard Phase 4 Ortho-Bionomy positional release techniques I released the 4th. lumbar points, tension at right ischium, right ramus, and left medial knee points. Balanced the ilium movements and sacral spring with forward isotonic movements

from front of knee. We reviewed femur rotation isometric / isotonic exercises. Released thoracic tension using Ortho-Bionomy positional release.

RESULTS

Pt. felt noticeably better in lower back after the first session, and remarked that she was having "more good days than bad since the treatment". As treatments progressed pain decreased significantly, muscular tension was reduced, range of motion increased, and overall functioning greatly improved. She has integrated the releases and holds her alignment more easily. She clearly functions with more ease and very little pain. Flare-ups are less frequent and mild.

FOLLOW UP

Pt. continues occasional treatments. She has become more active in her life, feels a greater sense of ease, well being, and capacity to function and move without pain. Her fear and anxiety have significantly decreased. Although she still experiences occasional discomfort the pain level remains mild compared to the original levels of intensity and frequency. She has noticed that she is no longer susceptible to flare-ups produced by hot or cold weather changes.

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For further information about training programs or practitioners in your area, go to

The Society of Ortho-Bionomy International website: www.ortho-bionomy.org

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Registered Advanced instructor with the Society of Ortho-Bionomy International since 1980. Teaches internationally.

Instructor trainer for the Society. Trains instructors by apprenticeship, supervision, and seminars. 1983 - present.

Advanced instructor trainer for the Society. Developed advanced instructor training program, and supervises advanced instructor trainees. 1987 - present.

Director of Bay Area Ortho-Bionomy. Sponsors training twice a year. 1990 – 1997.

Vice President, Board of Directors, Society of Ortho-Bionomy International. 1994- 1997.

Chairperson, Practitioner Training Review committee for the Society of Ortho-Bionomy International. Developed and reviewed curriculum standard requirements for practitioner trainees. 1986 -1993.

Education

Basic and Advanced Training in Ortho-Bionomy, 2000+ class hours of Phased Reflex Techniques, Posture Re-education, Chapman's Neurolymphatic Reflexes, Awareness of Movement Patterns, Somato Emotional Release, and Cranial techniques with Arthur Lincoln Pauls DO. 1978 –1997.

Training in Esoteric Healing, 400 class hours with Dr. Barbara Briner DO, 1991-present.

Cranial Sacral Therapy, 100 class hours with Jim Asher of the Cranial Institute, Boulder, Colorado. 1988 -1990

Eutony, 80 class hours with Gerda Alexander, Copenhagen. 1987 - 1988.

Process of Psychotherapy, a 200 hour, 1 year course with Charles Harris Ph.D. 1984-1985.

Advanced Instructor Training in Ortho-Bionomy with Arthur Lincoln Pauls D.O. 1980

Functional Anatomy, 60 class hours with Lynn Drummer, Ortho-Bionomy instructor and Anatomy instructor at University of California Medical School at Davis, California. 1980

Instructor Training in Ortho-Bionomy with Arthur Lincoln Pauls DO, Berkeley CA, 1978

Advanced Training in Lomi Bodywork, 100 hrs. Gestalt Therapy and breath work. 1977

Training in Manipulation Therapy with Lauren Berry, LPT, Sacramento, CA 1976-1978.

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