

## **2011 Structural Integration: Easing the Strain**

**By Jean Louise Green, Certified Rolf Practitioner**

I roll up my sleeves, enter my treatment room, and prepare to work. I may not know what challenges await, but I eagerly take up the request to assist. People come to me because they want to change; to clear restrictive patterns in their body, to find the freedom and ease of movement they've been missing and know is possible. I expect such changes on my table. For my clients, they can be life changing. For me, it's all in a good day's work. I am a practitioner of Structural Integration.

In 1986 I received my first 10 sessions of Structural Integration. It too, changed my life. Years of gymnastics training had left its patterns; an excessive arch in my lower back, feet, legs, and hips that turned out from dance training, and hip rotator muscles in my pelvis that were rock solid. I had also injured my nose and tailbone. Standing, sitting or kneeling for any length of time was uncomfortable. So much pain and strain in my young body! I shudder to think of my life without the balancing and de-straining of Structural Integration.

As work progressed in my own body, my hips became horizontal. The tightness in my pelvis released. My legs and feet tracked straight ahead underneath me, and my tailbone and nose no longer bothered me. I could move and stand with ease. Elated, I felt confident and free to live out my dreams. Becoming a certified practitioner of Structural Integration in 1991 was one of them.

Structural Integration, also known as “Rolfing,” was developed by Dr. Ida P. Rolf, a woman biochemist and physicist in the 1960's. Through a series of ten specific sessions, the major body segments of the head, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles are organized around a central vertical axis. Dr. Rolf said that when these major segments are properly aligned over each other, gravity can flow through and be a supportive beneficial force.

“Nobody can prove what I am about to say.” she said, “But I think it is so; every energy in which we live is nourishment to us. It would be absolutely ridiculous if we lived in a field of gravity and it had no effect on us, yet down through the ages this has been our assumption, that it didn't make any difference.”

New science based on geophysics, biophysics, electrical engineering, electro-physiology and medicine have emerged since Dr. Rolf's passing in 1979. She would be pleased to see how it supports her energetic theories on the gravitational field and the human body.

Scientists have determined that the surface of the Earth is covered with a vast reservoir of energy created by the movement of tiny subatomic particles called free electrons. These free electrons have a negative charge. Studies show that these particles enter the body through the bottom of the feet when we are barefooted and move through the body via

our hydrated connective tissues. When they come in contact with positively charged free radicals that create inflammation, they neutralize them. Wow! Electrons can neutralize inflammation! Enormous implications.

The connective tissues of the body transmit beneficial subatomic negatively charged electrons. My sense is those electrons arose out of the electromagnetic energy of the gravitational field and they are synonymous with beneficial life force energy. The same energy Dr. Rolf had referred to.

What are connective tissues and how do they transmit this energy through the body? Connective tissues include ligaments, tendons, cartilage, bone, adipose, deep layers of fascia within muscle tissue, fascial sheaths, and even blood. They give the body its form and shape. They are also the medium through which energy is transmitted in the body.

Dr. James Oschman, a scientist and author who has studied the energetic basis of complimentary medicine, describes the connective tissues of the body as the “living matrix.” He said, “The living matrix is a structural, energetic and information system that reaches to and into every cell. No part of the organism is separate from this matrix. It simultaneously conducts energy and information throughout the body and regulates growth, form, and wound healing. Memories are stored within this system and the totality of its operations gives rise to what we refer to as consciousness. This system is accessed by acupuncture and other complementary medical approaches.”

Stress can disorganize connective tissues. When stress becomes internalized, it is known as strain. Strain can create short, painful, adhered, dehydrated and rotated tissues. Rotation patterns in the connective tissues can adversely affect discs and joints, pull the bones out of alignment and contribute to neck, back and sciatic pain.

With slow, intentional myofascial release techniques, a practitioner of Structural Integration can use their fingers, knuckles, elbows and forearms to stretch the connective tissues. This releases stuck pain and helps hydrate tissues in the body. As areas of strain release, the body becomes longer and more spacious. That spaciousness creates potential for optimal structural and functional change.

Because all the major systems of the body lie within the connective tissue, easing strain there will help each system function more efficiently. Circulation will flow better, electrical impulses will conduct effectively, nutrients can be delivered and wastes removed, energy levels will rise and that body will have more ease of movement.

The Living Matrix or connective tissue is what we Rolf practitioners work with. As body segments are aligned and connective tissue strain is cleared, life force can flow through. We can be energized and supported by the gravitational fields in which we live. Then our bodies can become conduits of this connection, charged and renewed like living crystals.