

**2013 Structural Integration: Optimizing Structure, Function and Energy**  
**By Jean Louise Green, Certified Rolf Practitioner**

In Structural Integration, the three-dimensional balancing of the musculo-skeletal system of the body gives rise to a more harmonious relationship with gravity. In a ten session sequence of bodywork, the major body segments are organized around a vertical line so the center of gravity of each segment lines up over each other. The body's muscles are balanced side to side, front to back, and inner core muscles with outer superficial muscles. With balanced structure, less energy is expended as gravity pulls equally from the front, back, and sides.

As the body moves back to the symmetry of its original design, subtle life force energy can move more freely, activating the body's own healing processes. Dr. Ida P. Rolf, founder of Structural Integration, also known as Rolfing, said "The unimpeded flow of gravity through a human structure supports and maintains that structure. When the body gets working appropriately, the force of gravity can flow through. Then, spontaneously, the body heals itself."

Like a building, human structure is subject to laws that state that masses must be balanced in order to be stable. Stackable segments of the body include the head, torso, pelvis, etc. They are held in place by bones, muscle, and fascia, or myofascial tissue. Like the "world wide web," myofascial tissue envelopes the entire musculo-skeletal system. Chronically short muscles can pull attached bones out of alignment. When the myofascia is balanced and repositioned, bones can spontaneously reorient.

Dr. Rolf compared the body's musculature to that of a tent, with the pole being the spine. If the pegs supporting the tent are too loose, the tent will sag. If they're too tight, it will torque. With equal tension, the tent will have optimal height and width. The tent pole or spine then becomes a spacer, not a weight bearer. This spacial symmetry occurs through reorganization of the fascia.

Fascial tissue is comprised of collagen proteins. It wraps around every muscle and organ creating various fascial planes and bags that hold the body together. When a myofascial structure is injured, it secretes semi-fluid materials that dry up and become a glue that causes tissues to adhere together, impeding true movement. When a practitioner

of Structural Integration applies energy to the knotted collagen tissues by using their fingers, knuckles, or forearms, the glue seems to dissolve and the muscles release.

“Bodies carry their history written within them,” said Dr. Rolf. “In accidents, muscles get displaced slightly, so in continuing to move around, the body uses a different muscular pattern. That different muscular pattern places itself on top of what should be the effective muscular pattern of the uninjured body.”

Chay Dake, a trainer at Chico Sports Club, spoke about his Structural Integration experience. “People don’t understand that it is muscle patterns that are getting them in trouble. They don’t understand that the injury they incurred as a 15 year old is lingering and has a snowball effect. First it’s your hip. Then it becomes your foot because your hip is out of alignment; and then the lower back and a shoulder. By the time you know it, there are seven things out of alignment from one issue!

A gentleman friend of mine was trying to go the method of lifting weights, jogging and stretching. Nothing was helping him so I told him, “It’s because you are stretching your body that is not aligned! Since I have been getting these sessions, my body is becoming aligned and it’s allowing me to reach my potential. I don’t have any pain! No pain in my hip and I used to have pain to where I couldn’t sleep and I would actually hit my hip because it hurt so bad. And now I can bend forward and place my hands on the ground. And I haven’t stretched for ten weeks! I just feel amazing. Once you’re lined up, being pain free is something money can’t buy!”

Structural Integration is an arena for personal transformation. With upright posture, confidence naturally arises. Mental states become more focused with the balance of the body. People may have more awareness of how they express their feelings and emotions.

“This work helps propel other avenues of one’s life to become aligned,” said Chay. “You get physical benefits as well as mental and emotional benefits. It just embodies everything! I remember feeling so calm and in tune with my emotions after some sessions. I was just level-headed and intelligent. It was fun! I could access things because my body wasn’t expending energy on pain or thinking about what was wrong. When that is relieved, the body is like, “Yeh. Finally! Now **this** is who I am!”

“It’s been fun to share with everybody about this process and the fact that Structural Integration is beneficial to all,” said Chay. “It’s a physical truth. The body is made this way and this is how to fix it.”

Structural Integration puts order and symmetry into a three dimensional body. “Bodies need to lengthen and balance,” said Rosemary Feitis, Dr. Rolf’s associate. “And a balanced body will give rise to a better human being. Ida wanted nothing less than to create new, better human beings. The ills would cure themselves; the symptoms would melt as the organisms became balanced.”

Jean Louise Green

CMT, Certified Rolf Practitioner

(530) 899-7653

<http://jeanlouisegreen.com>

[jeanlouisegreencmt@gmail.com](mailto:jeanlouisegreencmt@gmail.com)