

How does Organ Massage help our bodies to function optimally?



What is Visceral Manipulation a.k.a Organ Massage?

Visceral Manipulation developed by world-renowned French Osteopath and Physical Therapist, Jean-Pierre Barral is a gentle hands on technique used to enhance the motion of our organs and integrating movement of the body as a whole. Our organs do not stay still and they are constantly moving. As motion is a sign of life, the same principle applies to every structure in our bodies, including the viscera, a.k.a. our organs, such as liver, stomach, intestines and kidneys. For example, the rise and fall of diaphragm during respiration causes the stomach to move up and down, 12-20 times a minute, hour after hour, day by day. There are also tissues (fascia) that hold our organs in place. These tissues allow a smooth surface for organs to glide across and when things are in order, these motions happen effortlessly, allowing our bodies to function optimally.

Who will benefit from the treatment?

Many factors can cause tissues to lose their normal motion including direct trauma, surgical scar, post infections, and overuse injury from repetitive movement, poor posture, diet and emotional stress. These factors could cause the tissues to become sticky and forming adhesions, creating areas of tension, pulling on the attached organ. Eventually, problem arises from the repetitive 'pulling', causing tissues to become irritated, affecting the functions of an organ. When our organs don't move well, our body doesn't function well!

A typically diagnosed mechanical lower back or sciatic pain (or disc bulges pain) that is not going away even after extended period of physiotherapy or chiropractic treatment might want to consider having other areas evaluated, such as the large or small intestines. Especially if you've had any surgery done around the abdominal wall, including any keyhole surgeries, or has been particularly stressed at the onset of mentioned musculoskeletal pain, may want to find out if there are

any restrictions in the organs. As there are vast connections between organs to organs, and to connective tissues, as well as nerve and arterial supplies, a sluggish organ can lead to numerous musculoskeletal symptoms. For example, reduced mobility in the large intestines can display symptoms such as medial thigh pain, sciatica pain, femoral nerve pain, locked psoas muscle, lower back and hip pain, and even ovarian problems in women. A sluggish liver could lead to right shoulder pain and a slow moving stomach could lead not only to gastric acid problems but also potential left shoulder pain and left frontal headaches.

How is Visceral Manipulation done?

The idea of visceral manipulation is to facilitate and encourage normal movement of the organs. A trained visceral manipulation therapist will be able to detect areas of reduced organ mobility through his/her highly sensitive hands, gently releasing these areas, which are often described as a slow and precise technique. Patients can sometimes sense warmth and increase blood flow at the affected area. The effects of treatment can take days to manifest fully. Once these restrictions are addressed, the organs will be able to return to functioning normally, breaking free of the adhesions and restrictions that were initially 'pulling' on the adjacent structures.

As physiotherapists, we aim to integrate our hands-on skills, as well as our Pilates and rehabilitation knowledge, to address dysfunctions in the system holistically. Contact our studio today and book an appointment to discover how you can benefit from Visceral Manipulation!

- *Vanessa Wong, Physiotherapist trained in Visceral Manipulation under the Barral-Upledger Institute Singapore*

REFERENCES: Barral, Jean-Pierre, and Pierre Mercier. Visceral Manipulation. Revised ed., Eastland Press, 2005.