

## Are You Treating Your Patients Right?

Have you ever had a patient that comes back treatment after treatment with the same complaint? You do a good job when the patient is in for a treatment, and they feel great when they leave. But the same symptoms return before the next appointment with you. You have to work on the same tight muscles, treat the same trigger points and release the same tight fascia. If you don't see progress within two to three treatments, the problem may be you are using a technique and not doing a treatment!

We are introduced to a lot of techniques in massage school. Many continuing education courses teach techniques in greater detail. But what is the difference between a technique and a treatment?

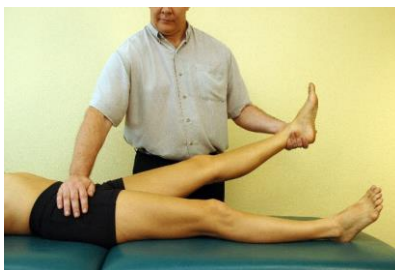
A technique is a procedure to complete a task. A technique follows a predetermined protocol. A treatment, on the other hand, implies you have applied therapeutic principles and investigated the nature of the dysfunction in order to determine the appropriate procedures to use for that individual to achieve the goal of medical rehabilitation.

It sounds more complicated than it is. But if you are doing massage for more than just relaxation, you need to employ the principles of a treatment and not just use the one or two techniques that you like the best.

Total Body Balancing (TBB) is a series of seminars developed by Dr. Kerry D'Ambrogio. Under the tutelage of Dr. John Wernham in England, Dr. D'Ambrogio learned the osteopathic principles that lead to his development of Total Body Balancing. As well as being an osteopathic physician, Dr. D'Ambrogio is a physical therapist, a doctor of Oriental medicine and an acupuncture physician. He teaches over 20 different courses on manual therapy all over the world, while maintaining a clinic in Sarasota, Florida.

Total Body Balancing is based on the osteopathic philosophy that every part of the body is interconnected and interrelated. So you can't just treat individual parts of the body, where the pain is or only one system at a time. Total Body Balancing uses critical thinking, anatomy, physiology and therapeutic principles to address multiple systems of the body. When you work with the muscles are you conscious of how that affects the other systems of the body? Whether you know it or not your massage will affect other systems by just working with the skin and muscles.

That is why it is important to start and end each Total Body treatment with evaluation. When you use a combination of evaluation techniques and critical thinking to discover the underlying cause of a person's dysfunction your treatment approach will be more successful. We use the acronym A.R.T.S. for evaluating the body.



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## **TBB Uses A.R.T.S. to Evaluate**

**A.-** stands for **Asymmetry** or postural distortion. Are there any postural distortions that are giving us a clue to the cause of person's pain? If a body is not opposing gravity effectively it will put a stress on the muscular and fascial systems. So a high shoulder or a rotated hip can be clues to the underlying dysfunction a person is experiencing.

**R.-** stands for **Range of Motion**. Total Body Balancing teaches you a thorough but quick evaluation of all the joints in the body. The initial evaluation procedure evaluates the extremities, the spine, the ribs and the hip joints. During the TBB treatment you are evaluating each area for barriers or restriction as you treat. So you get real time feedback to the changes that you are making with your treatment.

**T.-** refers to **Tension Tests**. Healthy tissue feels soft, supple and has a springy end feel. If the sensation is hard and restrictive, this is an indication that somatic dysfunction is present. You know when you work on your patients what the quality of their tissues are just by putting your hands on them. In the seminar you will learn more specific tension tests to be more precise with your evaluation.

Finally, **S** stands for **Special Tests**. The quick, yet concise evaluation taught within Total Body Balancing utilizes orthopedic testing to confirm previous findings. These findings paint a picture of the overall pattern of tension and body armoring that is representative of the stress that the patient is carrying, be that physical, mental, emotional, or a combination of all three.

The combination of the results of these evaluation techniques will help formulate your treatment plan by understanding the nature of the dysfunction. We talk about the Total Body Lesion in looking at the patients' dysfunction. The Total Body Lesion is the sum of the patient's dysfunctions of their mind, body and spirit at a given moment in time. These Total Body Lesions are an accumulation of every car accident, sports injury, other injuries, falls, surgery, repetitive motions and stress. This holistic approach to evaluating the body will give you a better understanding of the interconnectedness of the systems of the body.

## **Benefits of Evaluation**

The additional benefits of a thorough evaluation are threefold. You show your patient what is normal and in their case what their limitations are in each area. You build the patients trust in your expertise and credibility. Most importantly, you build their confidence in your ability to help them achieve their goals.

Another benefit of doing an assessment is it will give you quantitative measurements of progress before and after each treatment. Your treatment plan will follow the body's changes, not follow a preset protocol, thereby addressing the patient's actual needs.

Total Body Balancing uses a 5 phase treatment template. In as little as 20 minutes, you can integrate the whole body using gentle rhythmical oscillation techniques. Oscillation is an inherent motion in the body, and it works to balance the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system while increasing circulation of arterial, venous and lymphatic flow. The calming of the nervous system aids in decreasing pain, and improving mental and emotional outlook.



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We also use rocking and pumping techniques to release fascial tension, encourage lymphatic flow and release muscles. These techniques are also designed to release tension and restrictions in the hips, spine, craniosacral system and visceral systems. The Total Body Balancing template not only allows us to work with multiple systems simultaneously, but it also gives us a foundation into which we can incorporate more specific techniques. So if you have neuromuscular, myofascial, craniosacral or other training, you can incorporate those techniques into a Total Body treatment.

We use the phrase “Global, Local, Focal” in the TBB treatment philosophy. By starting “Globally” and treating the body holistically, you get a complete appreciation for the dysfunctions you are facing. Then as you peel the layer away, like peeling an onion layer by layer, you treat more “Locally.” And finally, after the primary lesions are released you can “Focus” on the remaining minor dysfunctions and fine tune your patient for optimal health.



*Jack Ryan, LMT is the owner of the Soar Point Massage Clinic in Sarasota FL. He is a teaching assistant and instructor for the D’Ambrogio Institute. Jack lectures and teaches on the topics of Total Body Balancing, Muscle Balancing, Joint Balancing and pain-free foam roller techniques. His practice is based on pain relief and rehabilitation.*