

Course Report: Introduction to **Fascial Counterstrain**

Dr Roger Kingston DO

Run by the Jones Institute, I attended a 3 day introduction into Fascial counterstrain in Adelaide taught by Brian Tuckey a direct student of Dr Lawrence Jones DO. I have been using "classical counterstrain" for over 15 years now and have found it to be an excellent modality and had thought that I'd got it "sorted". Oh boy - I was WRONG!

Brian Tuckey is a PT who did an internship in OMT under Dr Jones in the United States and then worked with Dr Jones. Brian has been instrumental in the research into and expansion of the whole counterstrain system. Classical Jones theory is based on a series of tender points correlating to specific dysfunctions within the musculoskeletal system but this now extends to over 800 points relating to reflexes in ligaments / joint capsules, lymphatics/ veins, arteries, nerves / the brain, muscles and bone. In fact all subdivisions of the human soma. Jones latterly admitted his "tender points" were simply reflexes and doubted they were necessarily named musculoskeletal dysfunctions. What struck me very quickly is that Brian is a genius with an encyclopaedic knowledge of anatomy and a phenomenal grasp of physiology. He literally oozes osteopathy and osteopathic principles. His teaching style was sharp, concise, accurate and backed by fact. Nice chap too.

The course had 28 physiotherapists, 9 massage therapists, an MD and 1 osteopath on it!

Much of the diagnostic regime of how to begin started by palpating specific areas of the skull for rigidity (beyond the normal) and tenderness and this would determine which subsystem and where to begin. Certain subsystems taking priority. Having seen acupuncture charts, motor and sensory homunculi, various AK correlations like the temporo-sphenoidal line this wasn't too uncomfortable to understand and it is suspected there is strong embryological component to its origin. A better question is does it work and is it reliable? Well so far it seems so but it's a skill that needs developing to consistently get good results.

This 3 day course was very much an introduction to the subsystems of counterstrain and Brian would teach the theory and then demonstrate 10 techniques per system. We started with the hip ligaments / 4 tender points for the hip capsule. Usually very tender and once in the release position a 10 -15 sec hold before release - HMMMMMM why has the SIJ and entire lumbar spine just released as well? Then into the ribs and serrato costal fascia.

Next; CNS - I knew of the concept of neural tension but this expanded to describe how sympathetic / parasympathetic drive in the fascia surrounding a nerve would contribute to tension within the body. After exploring the phrenic nerve we then dived into sympathetic pre ganglionics, post ganglionics and their respective plexei. So someone totally stressed out and a physiological mess can be calmed down quickly!

Then into the lymphatics and veins; lymphatic and venous tension is a huge area and has massive implications for musculoskeletal function and movement. Techniques for cervical, thoracic and lumbar epidural veins, major veins etc and I am finding great success in practice with this. Lymphatic drainage issues will perpetuate inflammation and poor tissue health and so is one of the primary areas to address in any chronic case. Outstanding for fibromyalgia and lymphedema.

The the arteries, arterial tension and dysfunction around a nerve and very quickly you'll understand ischaemic pain. One release to the anterior spinal artery just had me so relaxed it was fantastic and has since been helping with my headache patients. The last section was an introduction to fascial counterstrain of the viscera; thoracic, abdominal pelvic. Its quick simple and massively effective.

Whilst I now have 50 new points and different concepts with which to integrate the way I work with counterstrain has changed dramatically. No longer do I see a sacroiliac dysfunction as purely a bone / muscle problem with a neural interface - now its ok how do the nerves, arteries, veins, lymphatics, viscera etc all intertwine and now I can search out the involvement of each sub system quickly and prioritise so I can treat the appropriate primary. Feeling a dysfunctional vein release followed by a massive shift in somatic tension in all adjacent tissues is quite amazing. In particular releasing the cervical epidural and anterior spinal arteries has a massive palpable change in the cranial mechanism.

Its early days putting all this together and there are at least 6 modules to do to get the complete picture. But it has me excited about the next frontiers of osteopathy and in particular the brain course. Brian richly illustrates his teaching with video clips and he is truly a remarkable healer. As usual I wanted fixing and in particular a recurrent swimmers ear infection. Brian traced this down to a lateral cranial lymphatic drainage point draining the temple lobe - understanding that an ear infection spreads into adjacent tissues the body walls off and protects itself from the spread of infection. The reflex was treated and the constant pain and hearing loss has gone and my kids don't have to yell quite so loud now.

What also amazed me was just how open and receptive the physios all were to me and just how much osteopathic philosophy appealed to them. Not many had a good word to say about dry needling and most were doing Barral visceral and cranial courses. One even quizzed me about John Wernhams' approach. At a time when Australian osteopathic schools are dropping so much from their syllabus the physios want it adding into theirs! Some damn good hands there too.

To do any of the advanced modules you need to do an F1 course (described above) or 1 Jones classical course with the Jones Institute and some details on this are below. Haydn Gamblin is the contact in Adelaide and he is a smashing chap and very approachable. My eyes have been reopened and for me its the most significant shift that I've seen in osteopathic development in over 20 years.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7oLJFs7wCp81gn2KTes0JA>

<http://www.jiscs.com/Article.aspx?a=0>

<http://www.jiscs.net/about/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheJonesInstitute>

Please contact me if you'd like to know more,

Roger