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Information about Neuromuscular Therapy

What is it?

Neuromuscular Therapy considers **five principles that cause pain**. They are:

- 1. Ischemia**
- 2. Trigger Points**
- 3. Nerve compression or entrapment**
- 4. Postural distortion**
- 5. Biomechanical dysfunction**

Ischemia. Typically, if less than 5 to 10 pounds of pressure causes tenderness, the tissues are in an ischemic state. This is one of the first conditions that a neuromuscular therapist analyzes.

Trigger Points occur when nerves fire impulses at a rapid speed into an area of the body other than that which has been traumatized. Serious pain may often be far removed from the actual site of the pain. This in turn inhibits proper blood flow, causing ischemia and further pain.

Nerve Compression or entrapment is pressure on a nerve by bone, cartilage, or soft tissue. Realigning vertebrae without treating associated soft tissue frequently treats the symptom and not the cause. Muscular spasm causes pressure on nerves and creates its own painful condition. Nerve entrapment is the most common type of pain and always causes ischemia. Ignored, it can produce associated trigger points.

Postural distortion is an imbalance...off the coronal, midsagittal, and horizontal planes. Gravitational force (33.5 lb. per sq. in.)...causes the body to compensate in an effort to retain balance. Muscle contraction, body distortion and pain are the results of compensations the body makes in order to maintain structural homeostasis. By determining why the compensations have occurred, the distorted patterns can be eliminated, proper posture restored, and associated pain diminished or eliminated in most cases.

Other body distortions are caused by muscles contracting or shortening while others lengthen in an effort to hold the body upright as a result of "righting reflexes" These reflexes respond to messages from the inner ear, eyes, muscles, or skin to bring the body into [functional] equilibrium.

Biomechanical dysfunction ...faulty movement patterns. Repetitive strain of certain soft tissues results in adapted movement patterns that become muscular "habits" and must be re-educated.

How does neuromuscular therapy help?

The therapist evaluates for:

- 1. Postural distortions**
- 2. Biomechanical dysfunction**
- 3. Soft tissue causes of these patterns and presenting pain conditions**

The NMT therapist **develops a treatment plan** by screening [and charting the above].

The therapist then **palpates the soft tissues** to determine if there are ischemic, trigger points, nerve compression/entrapment...**As tone [in muscle and related soft tissues] is normalized** [and balanced from front to back, side to side, etc.] **[the cause of muscle and nerve pain is eliminated.]** The **appropriate pressure to use during a neuromuscular therapy treatment varies**...age, fitness, nutritional health, postural pattern of the patient,...the extent of the trauma and toxicity level of the tissues...**pressure for 8-12 seconds to each area being treated...**

From "Discover the St. John Method of Neuromuscular Therapy", St. John Neuromuscular Pain Relief Institute. C. 1995