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A Gift From
Nancy Lankston, RN, LMT
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Balance Point, Inc.

(630) 248-7645
nlankston@balanceplace.com
www.balanceplace.com

I loved to play with Play-Doh as a child. And sand castles. And mud-pies. I adored the sensation of losing my fingers in the ooze and slime of mud or sand. I thrilled at the fun of creating new shapes with my hands. Oh, the sensual wonder of feeling a substance wake up and move under my touch! It was magic at my fingertips. And now, 30+ years later, I find that same thrill in my work.

I have people ask me all the time what exactly I do in a treatment session. I am tempted to say that I play with skin. Or that I hold a person's edges and help them define a new shape. I do both of those, in a sense. I know it sounds a little weird and even kinky, but I play with the boundaries within and around the human body.

My work is officially called CranioSacral Therapy and Reiki. It is a mix of bodywork and energy work. People see me for very serious problems. And I take their problems very seriously. Yet, my "work" also seems like play to me. Many times when I am in the midst of a session with a client - rocking a cranial bone, tugging an ear or coaxing a locked hip to let go and dance - I find myself grinning. I am smiling because the intricacies of the human body never cease to amaze and delight me. And also because this "work" is as much tactile fun as making mud-pies as a child. Only better because now the result is a happier healthier human instead of a mud-pie.

And not only is this work fun, there is also a bit of detective work involved. My hands move up and down a body like master sleuths searching for clues to solve my latest case. The "clues" I search for are the patterns of tension where bodies hide their pain and stress. And the case I am trying to solve is this: what is keeping this person from being healthy and balanced? Each little tense spot is like another piece of the jigsaw puzzle. I find one and gently stretch and cajole the blocked tissue to relax and let go into the natural flow of the body. And slowly, one micrometer at a time, the tension gradually opens up and the body gets a little more space.

Slowly, the entire body relaxes and the puzzle pieces all fall into place, creating a coherent whole. It is no mistake that the words whole, hole, holy and healing all come from the same root. Illness flourishes in rigid, locked bodies that have no room to move or breath. Healing comes when the body opens up space and rediscovers natural fluid movement.

Yes, my work is important and serious. But it is also play for me – sacred play within the profound spaces of the human body. So, if you see me after a long session grinning and giggling like a 4 year-old, just know that I have been doing my "work" again.

Balance Point, Inc. is dedicated to healing the World, one little ripple at a time.

Nancy offers CranioSacral Therapy & Reiki treatments in Naperville, IL
For more information, visit www.balanceplace.com or call Nancy at (630) 248-7645



A Healing Space

There is a space where true healing resides. This space is infinitesimally small, yet expansive beyond all reason. It lies at the edge of the Great Unknown. Step inside this space and you will know the healing power of boundless love. For the divine essence of life is here and all is well.

How do you find this tiny space from which healing beckons? There are many paths. Here is one: Sit. Your back is upright, your shoulders relaxed, your belly soft and your chin parallel to the floor.

Close your eyes and breathe. Just breathe. Feel your breath move in and out. In and out. Once, twice, a hundred times. Just breathe. It is so simple yet hard. Just breathe and your mind kicks into overdrive. Your thoughts will try to get in your way.

But you are not your thoughts. There is far more to you than thought. You can step out of the way of your thoughts and watch them dance by. Yes you can. Again and again, step out of your thoughts.

Again and again, just watch. Step out of your thoughts, Observe the incessant chatter of your "monkey mind", always restless, always grasping.

Step out of your thoughts again and again. And come back to the breath. Feel the rise and fall. Air rolls in to your body and air rolls out. This is the universal wave of life. Explore each wave as it rolls in and out.

Find the pause between two breaths. The pause, explore the pause, that razor sharp edge between the out-breath and the in. Explore that edge and feel it expand.

Again and again, step out of your thoughts. Ride the wave of breath. And find the space between.

Good Fat, Bad Fat

What if I told you that you probably are not getting enough fat in your diet? Yes, I do mean fat. Americans have been on a low-fat diet craze for years now and your body may be complaining. Why? Because eliminating all or most fat from your diet will make you sick. Without an adequate supply of certain types of fats, you become more susceptible to developing infertility problems, arthritis, diabetes, sleep disorders, asthma, hypoglycemia, fibromyalgia, allergies, gall stones and even heart disease.

You have probably heard by now how bad the fat in red meat and dairy products is for your body. And I will not argue with that – decreasing the amount of meat and dairy in your diet is good advice. But there are certain fats that are absolutely essential to the human body. Without these fats, many processes in the body cannot function properly.

Essential Fats

Essential fatty acids (EFA'S) are a major component of the membranes that surround every cell of the human body. Hormone production, healthy arteries, normal brain and immune system function all depend on an adequate supply of EFA's in your diet. A change in farming practices and eating habits has dramatically shifted the American diet. Most American meals and snacks are now loaded with the non-essential fats found in dairy products, take-out food and animal meat products, but deficient in essential fatty acids. The two main types of essential fatty acids are outlined in Figure 1 to the right.

Change your Oil

You need fat in your diet. And the type of fat you choose is important. Here are a few "greasy" suggestions designed to improve your health:

1. Decrease the amount of fat in your diet from red meat, dairy and fast food sources. I know those burgers and fries are quick and taste good, and eliminating them cold turkey from your diet can send you right into shock (been there, done that). So, try to slowly decrease how often you choose red meat, dairy and fast food.

2. Avoid partially hydrogenated oils in any food. These oils are a man-made dietary disaster. Partially hydrogenated oils are soft at room temperature. They also have a longer shelf life, which is why they are

Figure 1

Omega 3 EFA's

Also known as Alpha-Linolenic Acid (ALA), Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) and Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA)

Found in ocean tuna, salmon, sardines, flounder, shrimp, oysters, pumpkin seeds, black currant seed oil, cod liver oil, leafy green vegetables, soybeans, walnuts, wheat germ, fresh sea vegetables, linseed oil, wheat sprouts, flax seed oil.

Omega 6 EFA's

Also known as Linoleic Acid (LA) and Gamma-Linoleic Acid (GLA).

Found in soybeans, raw nuts, leafy green vegetables, legumes, sesame and sunflower oil, spirulina, evening primrose oil, black currant seed oil.

used in many pre-packaged foods such as chips, cookies, breads, etc. However, partially hydrogenated oils contain trans fatty acids. Trans fatty acids are linked to cancer, arthritis and heart disease. So, that longer shelf life may come at a high cost to your health.

3. Buy organic, expeller pressed, unrefined oils to cook with at home. These oils are available at health food stores and some grocery stores. The term organic means that no synthetic pesticides or herbicides were used on the nut, seed or vegetable that the oil is derived from. Expeller pressed means that the oil was extracted with a mechanical press rather than using chemical solvents. And unrefined means that no heating or treatment with solvents was done. In contrast, refined oil was heated to high temperature and washed with alkaline solvents to give it a longer shelf life. This process leaves toxic residue and causes trans fatty acids to form. Most oil sold at grocery stores is refined. If the label does not say "organic", "expeller pressed" or "unrefined", assume it is not.

4. Add essential fatty acids back into your diet. The best way to get more Omega-3 and Omega-6 oils is to include 3-4 of the foods listed in Figure 1 to your daily diet. However, it is not always possible to eat well-balanced meals every day. And getting small children to eat some of the foods listed above can be impossible. Flaxseed oil or fish oil supplements are a good alternative. The average adult needs 1-2 Tablespoons per day. Small children: 1/2-1 teaspoon per day. Infants: 1/4-1/2 teaspoon.

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- Pitchford, Paul; Healing with Whole Foods: Oriental Traditions and Modern Nutrition, North Atlantic Books, 1993.
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Using Flaxseed Oil

- ◆ DO NOT heat or cook with this oil. Heat breaks down its nutritious properties.
- ◆ Add flax to hot dishes just before serving
- ◆ Add flax to catsup, butter, salad dressing or mayonnaise
- ◆ Mix flax into peanut butter or almond butter
- ◆ Add flax to any dish that has a sauce - e.g. spaghetti, chili, stew
- ◆ Mix flax into your morning yogurt or cereal
- ◆ Sprinkle a little flax on the filling in tacos or burritos
- ◆ Add flax to shakes or fruit smoothies