

CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY WORK BOOK



Contraindications

1. Acute Stroke, Acute Cerebral Hemorrhage, and Active Cerebral Vascular Conditions:

Individuals who have recently experienced an acute stroke, acute cerebral hemorrhage, or any acute cerebral vascular condition with an active bleed should avoid craniosacral therapy. These conditions require immediate medical attention and should be managed by healthcare professionals specialized in acute care. Once these conditions have been stable for six months, Craniosacral Therapy can be beneficial, but a doctor should clear it before starting.

2. Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) Leakage:

CSF leakage occurs when the protective layers surrounding the brain and spinal cord are breached, causing a loss of cerebrospinal fluid. It is important to avoid CST in cases of CSF leakage due to the risk of exacerbating the condition or introducing pathogens into the central nervous system. If you suspect CSF leakage, consult a healthcare professional for appropriate evaluation and management.

3. Recent Epidurals:

Individuals who have recently undergone epidural procedures should exercise caution when considering craniosacral therapy. The epidural space, which is targeted during these procedures, is in close proximity to the craniosacral system. Waiting for at least six weeks after an epidural before pursuing CST allows for proper healing and minimizes the risk of complications.

4. Arnold Chiari Malformations:

Arnold Chiari malformations are structural abnormalities in which the lower part of the brain extends into the spinal canal. If you have been diagnosed with Arnold Chiari malformation, craniosacral therapy can be helpful to reduce symptoms. However, seeking an experienced craniosacral therapist with knowledge and training in working with this condition is crucial.

5. Skull Fractures:

In cases of recent skull fractures, it is advisable to wait for a minimum of six weeks before considering craniosacral therapy. This waiting period allows for proper healing and reduces the risk of complications. As with any condition, it is essential to consult with a healthcare professional to determine the appropriate timing and safety of CST.

The Listening Stations-Step 1

The first step in feeling the craniosacral rhythm is to start at specific listening stations on the body.

The first step in feeling the craniosacral rhythm is to start at specific listening stations on the body. These stations, such as the cranium, sacrum, or feet, are key areas where the rhythm can be most easily perceived. Gently place your hands at these points, allowing yourself to tune into the subtle movements.

As you work with your partner or massage client, remember the power of positive suggestion. Speak with calm confidence, encouraging them to relax and trust in the process. Your words can enhance the effectiveness of the therapy, helping to create a healing environment where their body can respond more fully. This mindful approach not only aids in detecting the craniosacral rhythm but also leverages the placebo effect, optimizing the overall therapeutic experience.

The Listening Stations

- The feet
- The thighs
- The hips
- The respiratory diaphragm
- The shoulders
- The head

The Feet

We will now start at the first listening station at the feet. We will begin with gentle holds, placing our hands lightly on both feet. These holds allow us to tune into the body's craniosacral rhythm and assess the overall energy flow and balance.

As we hold the feet, we'll focus on feeling any subtle movements or rhythms, allowing the body to guide us. This practice helps establish a connection with the client's entire system, providing insights into areas of tension or imbalance. By starting at the feet, we can begin to facilitate a sense of grounding and relaxation, setting the stage for deeper therapeutic work as we progress through the session.



The Thighs

Next, we will move to the thighs. Place your hands gently on the client's thighs, just above the knees. These holds allow us to continue tuning into the craniosacral rhythm, moving closer to the core of the body.

As we hold this position, we will focus on any subtle movements or shifts in tension. The thighs are a significant area for grounding, and by holding them, we can help release any stored tension and encourage a sense of stability. This practice continues to build the connection with the client's system, helping to promote overall balance and well-being as we move through the session.



The Hips

After the thighs, we move to the hips. Place your hands gently on the sides of the hips, just above the pelvis. The hips are a central area for balance and stability, and they often hold tension related to movement and posture.

As you hold the hips, focus on any subtle shifts or movements you may feel. This area can reveal deep-seated tensions that affect the lower back and legs. By applying gentle, steady pressure, we encourage the release of tension, promoting a sense of grounding and alignment in the lower body.

Listening at the hips helps to support the overall flow of energy between the upper and lower body, contributing to a more integrated and balanced state of well-being as we progress through the session.



The Respiratory Diaphragm

Next, we move to the respiratory diaphragm. Place your hands gently on either side of the lower ribcage, just below the sternum. This area is crucial for breathing and energy flow, and by focusing here, we can assess and influence the body's respiratory function. Do your best to feel for the craniosacral rhythm here.

As you hold the diaphragm, tune into the subtle movements that occur with each breath. You may feel the expansion and contraction of the ribcage, as well as any areas of tension or restriction. Holding the respiratory diaphragm allows us to encourage deeper, more relaxed breathing and to facilitate the release of any tightness that may be affecting the client's overall well-being. This step is vital for promoting relaxation and enhancing the flow of energy throughout the body.



The Shoulders

Next, we move to the shoulders. Place your hands gently on each shoulder, just above the collarbones. This area often holds a lot of tension, especially in response to stress and posture.

As you hold the shoulders, focus on the subtle movements of the craniosacral rhythm and the way the shoulders naturally respond to the breath. You may notice areas of tightness or resistance, as well as any gentle shifts as the muscles begin to relax. By holding the shoulders, we aim to release tension and promote a sense of ease and openness in the upper body. This helps to improve the overall alignment and balance of the body, supporting the client's ability to relax and heal more deeply.



The Head

Finally, we move to the head. Gently place your hands on either side of the cranium, cradling the head with care. This is a key area for tuning into the craniosacral rhythm, as the head is directly connected to the brain and the central nervous system.

As you hold the head, focus on the subtle movements and rhythms that you feel. The cranial bones may have slight expansions and contractions, and you might sense the flow of cerebrospinal fluid. This hold allows us to listen deeply to the body's signals and to identify any areas of restriction or imbalance.

By listening at the head, we help to facilitate a deeper release of tension and support the body's natural alignment and healing processes.



The Head



The Therapeutic Releases of the Body-Step 2

Now we are going to start the second step which is working on the therapeutic releases of the body and the diaphragms

The therapeutic Release and Still Point

We will now explore what to expect during a therapeutic release and the still point in craniosacral therapy.

There are 4 possible outcomes as you do this work:

- **Release**
- **Unwinding**
- **Still point**
- **No change**

The intent of performing cranial work is to facilitate a release. When you feel a release, wait for a little while to make sure it is complete, and then move to the next technique.

Release

A therapeutic release occurs when the body lets go of tension or restrictions, often accompanied by a sense of warmth, tingling, or softening in the tissues. This release can lead to profound relaxation and a deeper sense of well-being.

You will know a release by noting if any of the following occur:

A lengthening or opening of the tissues you are touching

The area warms up, or you feel a steady and strong vascular pulsation

The bone becomes smoother or wider in its range of motion- a more liquid feeling

An increased energy flow to the area being treated

A general relaxation of the whole body

Fasciculation- or trembling or twitching

The clients' breathing pattern alters- becoming slower or deeper, or includes a yawn or a sigh

An emotional release- possibly weeping

The intent of performing cranial work is to facilitate a release. When you feel a release, wait for a little while to make sure it is complete, and then move to the next technique.

Still Point

The still point is a concept in craniosacral therapy that refers to a momentary cessation or pause in the craniosacral rhythm. Normally, the craniosacral system moves in a subtle, rhythmic motion, much like the ebb and flow of a tide, as the cerebrospinal fluid circulates around the brain and spinal cord. However, during a craniosacral therapy session, there may be moments when this rhythm temporarily stops or slows significantly—this is known as the still point.

The still point is often seen as a powerful therapeutic moment. When it occurs, the body is given a brief period of deep rest, allowing it to reset and reorganize itself at a fundamental level. This pause can lead to a spontaneous release of tension, both in the physical tissues and the nervous system. As the body comes out of the still point, the craniosacral rhythm typically resumes with a renewed sense of balance and vitality.

Experiencing a still point can have various benefits, such as reducing pain, relieving stress, and promoting overall relaxation. It is often associated with a feeling of profound calm and a deep sense of peace, as the body uses this time to heal and realign itself naturally. For many practitioners, facilitating a still point is a key goal during a session, as it can significantly enhance the therapeutic outcomes for the client.

Unwinding

Unwinding is a change in the facial tensions that induce spontaneous movement in the client's body. The movement can be large- the clients arm extending, or small- the clients neck rotating. The sensitive practitioner can let the body lead, and support the motion that the body wants to make. Just hold on and allow the body to move.

Upledger reports that during unwinding many clients end up in the same position that they experienced in an initial trauma. Unwinding is the body's natural process of releasing restrictions, and if it occurs should be allowed to continue. After the unwinding stops, both you and the client will notice a release has occurred in the tissue you are working with.

No Change

Perhaps there are no restrictions to release, or the practitioner might not be feeling the cranial rhythm accurately, making it difficult to assess changes. If palpating the cranial rhythm is challenging, try lightening your touch. Students often make the mistake of applying too much pressure. Given the delicate hydraulic balances within the cranium, only about 5 grams of pressure—the weight of a quarter—is needed to apply a fulcrum. This light finger pressure, combined with the therapist's sensitivity to the cranial rhythm, facilitates a release. Many cranial techniques involve this light compression, which loosens the sensitive reciprocal tension membrane, allowing it to unwind. It doesn't take much pressure to effect significant change; sometimes, the touch is so light that the practitioner's intention is enough to initiate movement.

In craniosacral therapy, presence is just as important as technique. Monitoring the craniosacral rhythm of a client is very difficult if you are not present and internally quiet. Any personal practice that helps you quiet your mind and body will greatly enhance your ability to perform craniosacral work.

The Lumbosacral Release

The sacral release can alleviate lower back pain, improve pelvic alignment, and ease sciatic discomfort. Clients may feel a greater sense of balance and grounding, with tension in the lower body dissipating. This release can also promote emotional release, helping clients feel lighter and more at ease.

Restriction in the sacrum can pull on the dural tube, causing dysfunction all the way up into the cranial base. A restricted sacrum can be the culprit in sinusitis, migraines and other maladies that effect the cranial base, as well as the more obvious lower back pain.

On the personal level the sacrum houses a fiery energy and may also hold memories and trauma relating to birth, sex, and survival. Keep this in mind as you get still and connect to the sacrum, allowing it to speak to you.

The purpose of the following techniques is to release any restriction in the client's sacrum and SI joint and restore a healthy, harmonious range of motion to the sacrum.

Now, let's perform the sacral release, and explore what can happen during this process, including the still point.



The Lumbosacral Release

Begin by gently cradling the sacrum, placing one hand underneath to fully support it, you have two options:

1. place your hand between the persons legs to access the sacrum
2. place your hand on the sacrum by coming in from the side and not between the legs

with the other hand resting next to it for stability at the level of L5.

Allow your hands to follow the natural, subtle movements of the sacrum, moving with it rather than applying force.

As you hold this position, you may notice the sacrum gradually shifting or rocking, indicating that the body is beginning to release tension.

During this time, a still point may occur—a moment when the sacrum's movement pauses or slows significantly. This still point is a profound therapeutic moment, where the body's craniosacral rhythm temporarily ceases.

During the still point, clients might experience a deep sense of calm, as if time has momentarily stopped. They may feel a wave of warmth, a spreading sense of relaxation, or even an emotional release as the body resets and rebalances. This pause allows the body to reorganize and let go of deep-seated tension, leading to a more profound therapeutic effect and a deeper state of relaxation.



Hand between the legs position



Side on view of hand positions

Hand between the legs position-a side on view

Alternative-hand comes in from the side



The Pelvic Diaphragm Release

To perform the pelvic diaphragm release, begin by positioning one hand on the sacrum and the other on top on the pubic bone. The pelvic diaphragm, which supports the organs in the pelvic region, is a crucial area for releasing tension and promoting overall balance in the body.

Your focus should be on sensing the subtle movements of the pelvic diaphragm, which may feel like a gentle expansion and contraction, similar to a slow, deep breath.

Throughout this process, you might notice small movements in the pelvis, such as a slight tilting, widening, or shifting. These movements are indications that the diaphragm is beginning to release tension and restore balance. The client may also feel a spreading warmth or a sense of softening in the lower abdomen and pelvic area.

As tension in the pelvic diaphragm dissipates, the overall flow of energy and circulation in the body may improve, supporting a more balanced and grounded state of well-being. The pelvic diaphragm release can relieve pelvic pain, improve bowel and bladder function, and enhance overall pelvic health. Clients often feel a deep sense of relaxation and ease in the lower abdomen, with improved mobility and balance in the hips and pelvis.



The Respiratory Diaphragm Release

Now sit at the thoracic area and place one hand under the thoracic spine at T12 and the other over the chest, half over the stomach and half over the xiphoid and sternum with fingers spread.

The thoracic diaphragm is the primary muscle involved in breathing, and releasing tension here can significantly improve respiratory function and overall relaxation. It is also an area with many emotional qualities related to strength, courage, cowardice and vulnerability. Fear and anxiety are also intimately related to this area, we also relate to having 'a knot in our stomach' or 'a feeling of being gut punched or having no guts'.

During the release, you might notice the ribcage subtly expanding, contracting, or shifting slightly as the diaphragm responds to your touch. The client may feel a deepening of their breath, a spreading warmth, or a sense of spaciousness in their chest and abdomen. You may also sense your hands shifting sideways, rotating or moving in opposite directions. This is part of the process of unwinding, that is, releasing a pattern of restrictions in the muscles and fascia.

The thoracic diaphragm release can lead to a variety of outcomes, such as increased ease in breathing, a feeling of greater openness in the chest, and a deep sense of relaxation. By releasing tension in this central area, the client may also experience a ripple effect of relaxation throughout the entire body, improving circulation and promoting a more harmonious state of health.



The Thoracic Opening Release

To perform the thoracic opening release, you'll place one hand on the client's C7 vertebra, located at the base of the neck, and the other hand on the upper chest near the clavicle. This positioning allows you to gently influence the thoracic region and facilitate the release of tension.

This area relates to personal expression through our voice, love, personality, and heart. Emotional traumas and experiences can also manifest here in the tissues and when this area is unbalanced or blocked people can have difficulties expressing themselves. Also, there is a lot of tension housed here especially when people feel insecure, anxious and stressed. The thoracic opening release can improve chest and shoulder mobility, enhance breathing, and alleviate tension in the upper back and neck.

Begin by placing your hand on C7, applying light, steady pressure to stabilize the area. With your other hand resting on the upper chest by the clavicle, gently encourage the chest to expand with each inhale and relax with each exhale. Your role is to support this natural movement, allowing the tissues to release gradually. You may also feel your hands being moved around again as unwinding takes place here. As the release progresses, you might feel a subtle stretching or softening under your hands, indicating that the tension in the thoracic region is easing. The client may experience a lightness or increased mobility in the chest and neck area.

This technique can lead to a sense of openness and improved alignment in the upper body, helping to alleviate tension that often accumulates in the thoracic region. The client may also notice deeper, more effortless breathing and a general sense of relaxation and ease.

The Thoracic Opening Release



The Atlanto-Occipital Release

Blockage or tension at the Atlanto-occipital joint can result in symptoms such as headaches, neck pain, dizziness, and restricted neck movement. Clients may also experience visual disturbances, fatigue, or a sense of imbalance, as this area is closely connected to the central nervous system and cranial nerves.

To begin the AO release: Start by positioning the top of your client's head one hands-length down from the end of the table. Cradle your client's head in your hands, and contact just inferior to the occipital ridge with your finger-pads. Lift the client's head by straightening your fingers as much as you can in an anterior direction, allowing the weight of your client's head to rest on your finger pads. As the client relaxes, the weight of their head will fall more into your palms and your finger-tips will penetrate deeper into the sub-occipital space. When your fingers begin to feel the posterior arch of the axis, apply light traction in a cranial direction with your index and second finger, while your ring finger guides the axis in an inferior direction away from the occiput. The client may experience a feeling of floating. This is good.

You may notice differences in tension on one side to the other. Your goal is to encourage the natural alignment of the joint, allowing any tension or restrictions to release.

As you hold this position, you may notice the head subtly shifting or tilting, which is a sign that the body is responding to the technique. The release may involve a gentle lengthening or decompression of the neck as the muscles and connective tissues relax.

The client might experience a variety of sensations during the release, such as a lightening of tension, increased range of motion in the neck, or a profound sense of relaxation. In some cases, they may feel a warmth or tingling as circulation improves and the nervous system resets.

By releasing the Atlanto-occipital joint, you can help alleviate the symptoms associated with blockage in this area, promoting better alignment, and enhancing the overall flow of energy and communication between the brain and body.

The Atlanto-Occipital Release



The Cranial Releases

Now it's time to start the cranial releases. We'll begin by gently working with the bones of the skull, using light, precise touches to encourage the release of tension and restore balance. This process helps to align the cranial structures, promoting a more fluid movement of the craniosacral rhythm and supporting overall well-being.

As we move through each cranial release, focus on the subtle shifts and movements that occur, allowing the body to guide the process. These releases can have a profound impact, helping to alleviate headaches, reduce stress, and improve the function of the nervous system. Let's proceed with care and attention, tuning into the body's natural rhythms as we support its healing process.

Before we begin the cranial releases on someone else, let's take a moment to do a quick recap of the bones and sutures of our heads, and palpate them to familiarize ourselves with the key structures we'll be working with.

As you palpate each bone and the sutures, take note of any areas that feel tense or tender, feeling for any asymmetries. This practice helps to enhance your sensitivity to the cranial structures, preparing you for the precise work of cranial releases. Then we'll proceed with the therapeutic techniques, using this knowledge to guide our touch.

The Frontal Release on Yourself

Let's now perform the frontal bone release on ourselves to get a feel for the technique and understand the sensations we should expect when doing it on others.

Start by sitting comfortably and placing both hands gently on your forehead, with your fingers resting across the frontal bone just above your eyebrows. Allow your thumbs to rest lightly on your temples for support. Apply very gentle pressure with your fingers, as if you're cradling the bone rather than pressing into it, aiming to establish a light yet meaningful connection with the frontal bone.

As you hold this position, focus on the subtle sensations beneath your fingers. You may notice a faint pulsing or a soft, rhythmic movement, which is the craniosacral rhythm. The goal here is to encourage an anterior movement of the frontal bone, which helps to release any sutural restrictions at the coronal suture, where the frontal bone meets the parietal bones.

Continue to hold this gentle pressure, imagining the frontal bone slowly releasing and moving forward. This release helps to free up any fascial restrictions, particularly from the falx cerebri, the fold of dura mater that separates the two cerebral hemispheres. As the bone begins to shift, you may feel a softening or widening sensation under your fingers, indicating that the release is occurring. It may also feel as if it's floating and no longer wants to 'snap back'.

Pay attention to the effects of this release. You might notice a sense of lightness or openness in your forehead, a deeper breath, or a spreading feeling of relaxation throughout your head and neck. When performing this technique on others, you should feel the same subtle anterior movement of the bone, along with a release of tension in the fascia and sutures, leading to an overall sense of relief and balance.

The Frontal Release on Your Client

Position yourself at the head of the treatment table, making sure you're comfortable and able to maintain a steady, gentle touch. Place both of your hands gently on the client's forehead, with your fingers resting across the frontal bone just above the eyebrows and your ring fingers on the ridge at the outer edge of the frontal bones by the end of the eyebrows

Apply very gentle pressure with your fingers, as though you are cradling the bone rather than pressing into it. This pressure should be extremely light—about 5 grams, roughly the weight of a quarter. This delicate touch is essential for engaging the craniosacral system without overwhelming it. As you hold this gentle contact, focus on encouraging a subtle anterior movement of the frontal bone. Visualize the bone slowly moving forward, helping to release any restrictions at the coronal suture, where the frontal bone meets the parietal bones.

Maintain this hold, staying attuned to the subtle movements and sensations under your fingers. You might feel a softening, widening, or a slight shift as the bone releases tension. This process also helps to free fascial restrictions, particularly those involving the falx cerebri, the membrane that separates the cerebral hemispheres. Allow the release to occur naturally, without forcing any movement. Your role is to support the client's body as it responds, providing a safe and nurturing environment for the release to take place.

As the frontal bone releases, the client may experience relief from tension headaches, reduced eye strain, and an overall sense of relaxation. The release can also enhance cognitive function by improving cerebrospinal fluid circulation and reducing fascial tension. Through this gentle and attentive approach, you can help restore balance and ease within the client's craniosacral system.

The Frontal Release on Your Client



The Parietal Lift on Your Client

Start by placing your thumbs lightly on the crown of the client's head and positioning your fingers at least an inch or so above the top of the ears so that you are above the temporal bones and the squamous suture and also posterior to the frontal bone.

Now feel for the cranial sacral rhythm feeling for its inward and outward pulse feeling your fingers moving with the parietal bones in and out. What do you notice Is it symmetrical? Does it expand and contract equally on both sides?

Once you are aligned with this rhythm, apply gentle medial pressure with your fingers, waiting for the temporal sutures to disengage. This may take several minutes, during which you should feel a slight softening under your fingertips. Remember, the pressure that you are using should be virtually imperceptible to your clients.

When you sense this softening, gently release your hand position for a few seconds to allow the cerebrospinal fluid to normalize before proceeding with the actual parietal lift. For the parietal lift, let your thumbs move away from the skull while your fingers apply gentle traction in a superior direction. On an energetic level, visualize pulling the parietal bones towards your open heart, moving into a space of compassion.

This technique aims to free the sagittal, squamous and lambdoid sutures and release tension in the falx cerebri, contributing to a sense of peace and tranquility. It is particularly beneficial for clients experiencing vertex headaches or those who are easily angered. As you reach the end of the range of motion, gently hold until you feel further softening, then follow the parietals as they settle back next to the temporals.

Recheck the cranial sacral rhythm for balance, strength and symmetry.

The Parietal Lift on Your Client



The Sphenoid Decompressions on Your Client

The sphenoid bone is a central bone in the skull that plays a crucial role in craniosacral therapy due to its connections with nearly every other cranial bone. Its position and shape make it a key player in the overall alignment and function of the craniosacral system.

The importance of the sphenoid release lies in the sphenoid's pivotal role in cranial mechanics and overall body function. The sphenoid bone articulates with nearly every other cranial bone, making it essential for the proper alignment and movement of the entire skull. Any misalignment or restriction in the sphenoid can impact the function of other cranial bones, potentially leading to a range of issues, including headaches, sinus problems, vision disturbances, and even hormonal imbalances due to its proximity to the pituitary gland.

Furthermore, the sphenoid plays a crucial role in the circulation of cerebrospinal fluid, which is vital for protecting and nourishing the brain and spinal cord. By releasing restrictions in the sphenoid, the practitioner can help ensure optimal flow of this fluid, which can have far-reaching benefits for the client's overall health and well-being.

In essence, a sphenoid release not only addresses localized issues but also supports the broader craniosacral system, contributing to a balanced and healthy central nervous system.

Gently place your hands on the client's head, with your thumbs resting on the greater wings of the sphenoid bone, just in front of the temples. Your fingers should cradle the occipital region at the back of the head.

The Sphenoid Decompressions on Your Client

Using very light, almost imperceptible pressure, focus on sensing the movement of the sphenoid bone. The goal is to feel the cranial rhythm and detect any restrictions in the bone's motion. The sphenoid can move in multiple directions, including flexion and extension, and even slight rotations however the most prominent movements are inferior and superior.

When you have a good sense of the movements, direct the sphenoid posteriorly to get a release and disengagement of the sutural and fascial restrictions, once you have achieved this then direct the sphenoid anteriorly. These are both direct and indirect techniques to get better balance and freedom of the sphenoid and surrounding structures



The Temporal Release on Your Client

Now that we have addressed the sphenoid release, we will move on to the ear pull temporal bone release, a technique essential for balancing the complex movements of the temporal bones. The temporal bones, located on the sides of the cranium, are intricately connected to several other cranial bones, including the sphenoid, parietals, occiput, zygomas, and the frontal bone at the pterion. They also articulate with the mandible through the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), and their inner surface connects to the tentorium cerebelli.

To perform the ear pull temporal bone release, begin by gently contacting each ear using your thumb, index, and middle fingers. Place your thumb inside the ear and position your index and middle fingers outside the ear, establishing a firm yet gentle contact. Hold this position and become still, tuning into the client's cranial rhythm. Pay close attention to any differences between the two sides—whether one side feels stuck or restricted, or if both temporal bones are moving freely.

Clients suffering from conditions such as tinnitus, TMJ dysfunction, or vertigo—particularly postpartum—often have one temporal bone that is stuck or compromised. Balancing the temporals can be profoundly therapeutic, not only for these specific symptoms but for the entire craniosacral system.

The Temporal Ear Pull Technique

To begin the decompression, slowly pull the ear back and down at a 45-degree angle to the table. As you perform this movement, ensure you maintain full contact with the cranial wave. Stay focused and attentive to the subtle motions under your fingers. Visualize the tentorium cerebelli, the horizontal elastic membrane attached to the inner surface of the temporal bones. Imagine its rhythmic movement, feeling the elasticity and the pull as the tentorium goes through flexion and extension.

This process helps to unwind lesions and restrictions within the temporal bones, potentially relieving conditions such as headaches, tinnitus, nausea, and other related issues. The feeling of a healthy, relaxed temporal bone is elastic, with a rhythmic pull that you can detect as you hold both temporal bones simultaneously. Balancing the temporal rhythms not only supports the health of the temporals themselves but also gives insight into the behavior of the sphenoid and mandible, which are closely linked to the overall craniosacral system.



The Mandibular Release on Your Client

Next, we'll move on to the mandible release, a technique that directly addresses the jaw and its relationship with the craniosacral system. The mandible, or jawbone, articulates with the temporal bones at the temporomandibular joints (TMJ), making it central to both cranial and facial function. Given its connection to the temporals and the intricate balance required for proper jaw movement, releasing restrictions in the mandible is crucial for alleviating TMJ dysfunction and related issues.

To begin the mandible release, position yourself comfortably at the head of the treatment table. Gently cradle the client's jaw with your hands, placing your thumbs on the client's chin and your fingers along the jawline, reaching towards the angle of the mandible. Ensure your touch is light yet firm enough to engage with the cranial rhythm.

Start by observing the natural movement of the mandible as you hold it. Pay attention to any restrictions, asymmetries, or areas of tension. The mandible, like the temporal bones, can hold significant tension, particularly in clients who grind their teeth, clench their jaw, or suffer from TMJ disorders.

The Mandibular Release on Your Client

As you tune into the cranial rhythm, gently guide the mandible upwards superiorly. The goal is not to force any movement but to encourage the mandible to release and return to its natural position.

During the release, you may feel a softening of the tissues around the TMJ, a realignment of the jaw, or a more balanced movement pattern. It's important to stay patient and allow the mandible to release at its own pace. This technique not only helps in relieving tension in the jaw but also positively influences the temporal bones and the craniosacral system as a whole.

Once you have done this, place your fingers on the masseter muscles near the corner of the jaw and direct the mandible gently inferiorly.

Releasing the mandible can have a profound effect on reducing symptoms such as jaw pain, headaches, earaches, and even neck tension. It also supports better alignment of the bite, which is essential for overall cranial balance. The mandible release is a vital technique in craniosacral therapy, especially for clients experiencing TMJ dysfunction, and it enhances the overall harmony of the craniosacral system.



The CV 4 Release and Still Point on Your Client

Finally, we will cover the CV4 hold, also known as the fourth ventricle technique, which is one of the most profoundly relaxing and impactful techniques in craniosacral therapy. This technique is designed to enhance cranial rhythmic function, improve lymphatic flow, and deeply activate the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and healing.

The CV4 hold primarily targets the occiput and works through its connections to the falx cerebri, falx cerebelli, tentorium cerebelli, and the dural tube. Because of these deep anatomical connections, freeing the movement of the occiput can have widespread effects throughout the body. This technique is often used to relieve headaches, reduce fever, assist in labor, alleviate sinus and lung congestion, reduce edema, and even help with trauma recovery, such as after a whiplash injury.

To perform the CV4 hold, Your fingers should be gently cupped, with your thumbs resting along the sides of the neck or touching together. It's crucial that your thenar eminences are in contact with the occipital bone, as this allows you to monitor the cranial wave as it moves through flexion and extension.

The CV 4 Release and Still Point on Your Client

Once your hands are in position, begin to track the subtle movements of the occiput. Sometimes, the occiput may spontaneously pause in its movement—this is known as a still point. During a still point, the movement temporarily stops as the body reorganizes itself around the fulcrum provided by your hands. Simply be present and allow the process to unfold naturally. Eventually, the movement will resume, potentially with a different rhythm or quality.

To actively encourage a still point, gently resist the occiput's motion as it contracts during extension. The resistance should be incredibly light—more of an intention than physical pressure. As you do this, you may feel the occiput wiggle or shift slightly against your thenar eminences before relaxing into a still point. This is a powerful moment when the body is given the opportunity to reset and reorganize its cranial rhythm.

When the body is ready to move out of the still point, you will feel the occiput gather itself and move into flexion, accompanied by whatever corrective motions the body needs to make. It's important not to hold this position for longer than ten minutes at a time. If the client begins to move their head or starts to unwind their neck, follow their movements while continuing to support them. You can gently shift the client's head off the end of the table if needed, allowing for full and free unwinding.

Once you feel that the reorganization of the cranial rhythm is complete and the client has finished unwinding, gently release the hold, taking care not to jar or disrupt the client's state. The CV4 hold is a highly effective technique for inducing deep relaxation and promoting the body's natural healing processes, making it an invaluable tool in craniosacral therapy.

The CV 4 Release and Still Point on Your Client

Option A



Option B



Final Thoughts

You have now completed the entire craniosacral therapy protocol. By guiding your client through each of these techniques—from the initial listening stations to the final CV4 hold—you've helped to balance their craniosacral system, promote relaxation, and address various physical and energetic imbalances.

At this point, it's important to allow your client to rest for a moment. Give them time to fully absorb the work you've done, as the body may continue to process and integrate the changes even after the session has ended. Encourage them to gently bring their awareness back to the present moment.

Once they feel ready, slowly assist them in sitting up, ensuring they move at a comfortable pace. It's a good idea to check in with your client, asking them how they feel and if they noticed any particular sensations or shifts during the session. This feedback can be valuable for both you and your client, helping you tailor future sessions to their needs.

Remind your client to stay hydrated and to be mindful of any changes in their body over the next few days. The effects of craniosacral therapy often continue to unfold after the session, so it's important for them to listen to their body and rest if needed.

As a practitioner, take a moment to reflect on the session, noting any insights or observations that might inform your ongoing work.

Craniosacral therapy is a subtle yet powerful modality, and each session is an opportunity for both you and your client to explore the profound connections within the body.

Thank you for dedicating the time and attention to mastering this protocol. The techniques you've learned and practiced can have a profound impact on the well-being of your clients, and you are now equipped to incorporate these skills into your broader practice.

Whether used as a standalone treatment or integrated with other modalities, craniosacral therapy is a valuable tool for promoting health and healing.