



## Structural Energetic Therapy (SET) Breakthrough Treatment For Spinal Stenosis And Chronic Strain-Pain Issues

*Written by Jim Gabriel, LMT, SET, NMT, BA*

When Sandra came in with back pain, and spinal stenosis with “burning feet and lower legs, painful neck, shoulders, arms and hands”, it was clear her need was urgent. She asked me to do whatever I could before she “had to go” to get a series of injections to control the pain. “What is the worst pain?”, I asked. “My feet”, she said. “It feels like scalding water is burning me from my toes to my knees.”

After nearly thirty years as a rehabilitative massage therapist helping people with pain, I had just completed a two year, 240 hour training in Structural Energetic Therapy (SET). I thought, “Can I help Sandra enough for her to transcend a downward spiral of constant pain, drugs and surgery?”

The first part of SET involves innovative treatment of the cranium called Cranial Structural Therapy. Strain patterns that spiral through the body going up from the feet all the way into the head and vice versa are what creates core distortions. An indication that this has occurred is that one pelvic bone is usually twisted forward or back with one hip being higher and the other being lower. Ears (located on the temporal bones) are prone to the same kinds of distortions with one being higher and one being lower.

To illustrate: when one uses a roto-rooter to clear a drain, twisting on one side of the coil causes twisting on the other side and untwisting movements on one end helps to untwist the other end. Humans have more complex mechanical and neurological reflex mechanisms and yet amazingly, this simple concept still applies to our bodies!

Using scoliosis (twisted spine) as an extreme example of core distortion, the most successful treatments are done through the “unwinding” of the body from the head down. Following the application of the cranial techniques, the therapist always returns to the body to treat the adhesions and stuck neuromuscular patterns that haven’t released from releasing the cranium.

Prior to beginning Sandra’s therapy, I used a test with orthopedic pelvic blocks to determine whether her spinal stenosis could be safely treated. After this her gait and posture were visually examined, her muscles palpated and tested to properly assess her postural strain pattern.

### **Set One: Cranial Structural Treatment**

Gently, firmly and methodically, by use of hands, manual pressure is applied to move and stretch the membranes of the sphenoid and occipital bones of the cranium. These two bones articulate with all the other cranial bones. Therefore, the membranes of all the cranial bones move and are stretched. Tissues that were once rigid, become elastic. As the membranes are released from their rigid restrictions, the cranium becomes more balanced-symmetrical and out of strain. At this point, many patients will experience the strain being released out of the body. It may create a tingling or aching in different areas as their spine, knees or hips unwind. Rounded shoulders may ease back more comfortably onto the table.

### **Sandra’s Experience of the First Treatment**

After the first 15-20 minutes, she said, “The pain in

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my feet is less". After another 15-20 minutes, she stated, "The pain in my feet is almost totally gone. I can hardly believe it!" Later at the end of the 90-minute treatment she stood up and noticed that her feet did not hurt; the pain in the rest of her body was lessened, she could move more freely and her spine was straighter.

How could this be and how was her stenosis pain relieved? Invision the spinal cord and the spinal canal which the cord travels through. When the spine is twisted, compressed or bent, the spinal canal can close in on the spinal cord and nerve roots. This causes pain and neuromuscular dysfunction along the nerves, often firing into the organs and extremities they supply.

As the spine unwinds, balances, decompresses and lengthens, the canal has less twists in it that may press onto the spinal cord. Thus, unwinding can often relieve spinal impingement even when there is arthritic inflammation in the spinal canal.

#### Saundra's Progress Through Follow-up Visits

After the first visit, I saw her every week or two for several months. SET treatments, kinesiological myofascial therapy, as well as other SET cranial procedures stabilized her body. This relieved 90% of the feet and other body pain she had experienced due to her injuries. Incidents of pain became less intense and were infrequent.

#### Conclusion

All people have postural distortion patterns in their bodies. After severe injuries or constant postural strain, often work related, these patterns become further distorted and create chronic pain.

In further articles I will write about the core distortions that are common to many of us: scoliosis, coordination issues, organ compression and strain sub-patterns. SET treatments provide a unique approach to correct, not just temporarily relieve, the deep core dysfunctions that disable people and steal the quality of life that we are entitled to. Stay tuned!

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*After twenty five years of pioneering Neuromuscular Therapy in Atlanta, Jim Gabriel and his wife, Becky happily returned to Sarasota to open the Gabriel Center for Massage Therapy. As an accomplished public speaker, he loves to share his experience and perspective on holistic pain management.*