

***Somatic Patterning***  
**Supplemental Instructor Materials**  
**Chapter 6: Organic and Fluid Movement**

*Note: Numbered points in the chapter's reading list, objectives, and summary are correlated and focus on topics that I think will be most relevant for massage students.*

*In brackets after suggested readings and objectives you will find an occasional reference from a subsequent chapter that expands on material introduced in this chapter. Please contact your education director for answers to the chapter questions.*

**Chapter 6 Suggested Readings**

1. The Motility of Organs and Fluids, pp. 145-146
2. Organs and Emotional Processing, Feeling Organ Sensations as a Therapeutic Tool, pp. 146-147
3. The Gastrointestinal (GI) Tract, pp. 150-151
4. The Heart and Lungs, The Urinary and Reproductive Systems, pp. 150-152
5. Fluid Systems, Fluid Forces, pp. 153-154
6. Circulation and Physiological Rhythms, pp. 154-155
7. Flow, Accessing Fluid Rhythms, pp. 155-156
8. Water, Intercellular and Extracellular Fluids, pp. 156-157
9. The Heart, Blood Distribution, Cardiac Health and Heart Rate, pp. 157-161
10. Interstitial Fluid and Fascia, Lymph, pp. 161-162
11. Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF), pp. 163-164, [*Unwinding and Somato-emotional Therapy*, pp. 310-311]
12. Lubricating Joints, p. 165
13. Responsiveness and Organic Movement, pp. 165-168

**Chapter 6 Objectives**

1. Describe how posture, movement, and holding patterns affect fluids and organs.
2. Discuss the association between organ sensation and emotions.
3. Describe how posture, movement, and stress affect the gastrointestinal tract.
4. Describe the effects of posture on the heart, bladder, and uterus.
5. Identify three fluid forces and their intrinsic effects on the body.
6. Define a physiological rhythm.
7. Describe the movement qualities of the two contrasting types of flow.
8. Describe the fluid environment in the body and in relation to the cells.
9. Describe the three circulatory rhythms of the blood and their relevance to touch.
10. Describe the circulation between interstitial fluid, fascia, lymph, and blood.
11. Describe the role of cerebrospinal fluid circulation in somatics and bodywork.
12. Discuss the role of synovial fluid in joint health and movement.
13. Define responsiveness and its relationship to organic movement practices.

## Chapter 6 Summary

1. The organs and fluids fill the musculoskeletal container, giving the body a volume that provides postural support and an inner motility that gives movement a fluid quality. Holding patterns occur from chronic contractions in skeletal muscles as well as smooth muscle in the organs. In addition, holding patterns can create fascial restrictions around organs that compress and torque them, restricting circulation and motility.
2. Organ sensations manifest as both physical urges and as gut feelings. The organs express basic biological survival needs such as hunger or thirst, which are metaphors for emotional needs, such as the need to take in nourishing connections with other people and to reject toxic relationships.
3. The gastrointestinal tract is highly susceptible to postural stresses from prolonged compression and inactivity. Lower GI tract stress manifests in irritable bowel syndrome and upper GI tract stress manifests in ulcers. Brisk walking and exercise stimulates the digestive organs and contributes to healthy tone and circulation in the GI tract.
4. The heart is suspended between the lungs by the pericardium and can be compressed by postural collapse and restricted breathing patterns. The bladder and uterus rest in the lower pelvic cavity in front of the rectum and can tip off center from positional stresses and from abdominal distension, chronic pelvic tilts, and compressed postures.
5. The three fluid forces are: buoyancy—the upward force of water and tissue hydration, which counters gravity's downward pull on the body; lift—the flow of air in the current of respiration, which alternately inflates and deflates the thorax; and drag—what happens when flow meets resistance, which occurs when gravity's downward pull overpowers the lift of anti-gravity postural muscles and drags the body into a collapsed posture.
6. A physiological rhythm is the biological pulse of various body pumps, such as the heart beat, breathing, and intestinal peristalsis. Various physiological rhythms reflect the circulation of body fluid, which include the blood, cerebrospinal fluid, lymphatic fluid (lymph), and interstitial or intercellular fluids.
7. There are two extremes of flow, free flow and bound flow, each with a unique quality of movement and personality. Free flow, is open-ended, spontaneous, and carefree, such as the dynamic movements of children playing. In contrast is slow, even, and controlled bound flow, such as the sustained movement of Tai Chi or the movement quality it takes to thread a needle.
8. All bodily tissues and cells reside in a water-based environment. Fluids circulate within tubes and intercellular spaces and pass from one system to another across membranes, which filter their substances and change their composition. Intercellular fluid is found inside cells and extracellular or interstitial fluid is found between cells.
9. There are three circulatory rhythms of the blood—the arterial pump, venous return, and capillary suspension. The arterial pump has a strong, rhythmic pulse similar to African

dance and the rhythm of petrissage. The venous return has a long, sweeping flow similar to the rise and fall of a waltz or the long, gliding strokes of effleurage. Blood in the capillaries moves with a slow, suspended quality that reflects low blood pressure.

10. All body fluids could be considered one fluid that changes composition as it circulates in and between different body systems. Blood seeps out of capillaries into intercellular spaces, becoming interstitial fluid, which makes up the ground substance in fascia. The tissue pump of muscular contractions circulates interstitial fluid into lymphatic vessels, where as lymphatic fluid it is cleaned of debris by lymph nodes. Once filtered, lymph is dumped back into the bloodstream, where it becomes blood once again.
11. The thinnest body fluid, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), cushions, nourishes and protects as it circulates around the brain and spinal cord. The CSF is contained by the fascial membranes of the dura and meninges. It moves organically, with a slow, barely perceptible, floating rhythm that is accessed and manipulated in craniosacral therapy, and during trauma release therapies that utilize fascial unwinding techniques.
12. Synovial fluid fills the spaces in synovial joints. It is as thick as Vaseline and becomes thinner when heated by joint motion. This thinning action is vital to the health of synovial joints because movement spreads synovial fluid across joints surfaces, lubricating and nourishing their articular cartilages as it removes debris.
13. Responsiveness is the ability to respond. In relation to somatic patterns, responsiveness is the ability to allow movement and touch to flow freely through the body and its many tissue layers. Organic movement practices increase the responsiveness of the tissues, loosening fascia, releasing tension, and creating motion between muscles, nerves, joint structures, bones, and organs.

## Chapter 6 Questions

*Note: Make sure to pay attention to the italics in some of the questions because they ask you to identify the statement that **does not** refer to the topic of the question.*

1. Organs sensations alert a person to what kinds of experience? [Diana- note this style point, with short phrases, I do not cap the first word. This comes from Pearson's style sheet]
  - a. joint range of movement
  - b. gut feelings and biological needs
  - c. skeletal muscle contractions
  - d. obsessive thoughts and beliefs
  
2. Which of the following statements *does not* describe how holding patterns and faulty postures affect organs?
  - a. Holding patterns can occur as chronic contractions in the smooth muscles of organs.
  - b. Faulty postures can cause fascial restrictions around organs that restrict motility.
  - c. Collapsed postures can compress organs and restrict circulation in them.
  - d. Holding patterns can improve the circulatory flow to digestive organs.
  
3. Tension and chronic stress often manifest in the lower GI tract as
  - a. irritable bowel syndrome.
  - b. heartburn and indigestion.
  - c. stomach cramps and ulcers.
  - d. menstrual pain and cramping.
  
4. The heart is susceptible to compression stress from
  - a. an anteriorly tipped pelvis.
  - b. abdominal distension.
  - c. collapsed postures and restricted breathing.
  - d. locked knees and flat feet.
  
5. Which of the following *does not* describe physiological rhythms?
  - a. They are the biological pulses of the various circulatory pumps.
  - b. They include the heart beat, the respiratory cycles, and intestinal peristalsis.
  - c. They manifest in the circulation of blood, lymph, and cerebrospinal fluid.
  - d. They include the static positioning of the bones in a standing posture.
  
6. The quality of bound flow in movement is
  - a. open-ended, spontaneous, and carefree.
  - b. slow, even, and controlled.
  - c. a series of changing rhythms.
  - d. an irregular staccato sequence.

7. Effleurage has a similar rhythm and flow as
  - a. the strong pulse of the arterial pump.
  - b. the long, sweeping motion of venous return.
  - c. the slow suspension of blood in the capillaries.
  - d. the gentle milking of lymphatic fluid flow.
  
8. Fluid circulates from the
  - a. interstitial fluid through the lymphatic system to the bloodstream.
  - b. interstitial fluid through the lymphatic system to the cerebrospinal fluid.
  - c. cerebrospinal fluid through the lymphatic system to the bloodstream.
  - d. bloodstream through the lymphatic system to the interstitial fluid.
  
9. The cerebrospinal fluid rhythm has a
  - a. long, sweeping rise and fall.
  - b. quick, strong, pumping pulse.
  - c. slow, barely perceptible, floating rhythm.
  - d. alternating inflation and deflation.
  
10. In relation to somatic patterns, responsiveness is a person's ability to allow movement and touch
  - a. to be contained in one part of the body.
  - b. to affect muscles but no other tissues.
  - c. to flow through the entire body and its many tissue layers.
  - d. to penetrate through the spongy layer of bone.

## Chapter 6 Suggested Learning Activities

*Note: Any exercise titled “Patterning Exercise” can be found in the current edition. Page numbers for these exercises (inserted in parentheses) are included to help instructors utilize activities during lessons that may be based on other segments of the book. “Skills Exercises” are not found in the current edition but will be included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of SP.*

### **Patterning Exercise #44: Organ Awareness through Touch and Movement** (p. 148)

*Adapted for partner applications*

*Objectives:*

- To improve organ awareness, relaxation, and motility in your own body.
- To improve touch skills in the organs systems.

*Exercise: (10 minutes for each part by yourself, 20 minutes for each partner exchange)*

1. *Feeling and moving individual organs:* Practice this exercise on your own body, then practice it with a partner. Sit in a comfortable position and place your hands over the organ of your choice. The following list will give you the location of each organ and where to place your hands to contact it:
  - Liver: below and around the lower right side of the costal arch and ribs.
  - Kidneys: across the back at the level of the lower ribs).
  - Heart: on the sternum.
  - Lungs: anywhere on the ribcage, front, back, or sides.
  - Intestines: on the center, sides, and top of the abdominal cavity and lower back.
  - Bladder and uterus: right above your pubic bone.
  - Throat and bronchii: front of the neck, center of the upper chest and upper back.
  - Stomach and spleen: up under the left side of the ribs.
  - Pancreas: in the solar plexus.
2. Tip your body or your partner’s body in the direction that will allow the weight of that organ to sink into your chest or abdominal wall (PE Fig.). Breathe into that organ. Slowly sway and rock, sensing its weight shift around inside its respective cavity.
3. *Rocking the organs:* Now lie on your back or have your partner lie on the back with both knees bent and feet flat. Gently rock the pelvis, using the rocking movement to relax the organs and encourage them to sink toward the back of the body.
4. Next, slowly move your head or your partner’s head, feeling or visualizing weight sinking through the brain, tongue, throat, bronchii, and esophagus during the motion.
5. In a supine position with the knees bent and feet flat, gently rock the pelvis up and down, then side to side, using the movement to get the organs to sink into the lower back and relax.
6. *Yielding organ weight through the front of the body:* Now lie on your belly or have your partner lie on the belly. Progressively sense weight sinking through each organ along the front of the torso, from the head to pubic bone. Place your hand on your

partner's back and gently press along each segment, encouraging your partner to feel the pressure go through the back into organs and into the front of the body.

### **Patterning Exercise # 51: Feeling the CSF Rhythm** (p. 163)

#### *Objectives:*

- To sense the relaxing quality of the CSF rhythm through the entire body.
- To develop skills for the practice of organic movement, cranialsacral therapy, and myofascial unwinding.

#### *Exercise:*

1. To feel your CSF rhythm, sit or lie in a comfortable place. Tune in to your body and notice any subtle movement impulses that you might feel in your head and trunk, such as a gentle floating, swaying, rocking, or slight twisting in the head and spine first in one direction, then the other.
2. If you notice these motions, begin to follow their rhythm with your awareness. If you cannot feel this rhythm, sit as still as possible for at least five minutes. Within this stillness, the CSF rhythm tends to arise as a subtle and deep motion. You may notice that your body is slightly swaying or feels like it is floating. If you feel these sensations, you are probably feeling the CSF rhythm. Exaggerate the rhythm a little to feel it more clearly.
3. As you sense the CSF rhythm, begin to move with it. Move in a slow, sustained manner, as though you were floating in water. Continue moving and allow the rhythm to spread through your entire body. It may feel a lot like an organic unwinding, or an unstructured, floating, gentle movement improvisation that loosens and relaxes your entire body.
4. If you cannot feel the CSF rhythm, find a CS therapist and have him or her palpate it for you.