Facial Manipulation to Heighten Proprioception: A Basis for Improved Standing Balance

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OBJECTIVE: To document Structural Integration in individuals with peripheral neuropathy.

BACKGROUND: Peripheral neuropathy describes damage to the peripheral nervous system, the vast communication network that transmits information from the brain and spinal cord (the central nervous system) to every part of the body. Peripheral nerves also send sensory information back to the brain and spinal cord, such as a message the feet are cold or a finger is burned. Damage to the peripheral nervous system interferes with these vital connections. Like static on a telephone line, peripheral neuropathy distorts and sometimes interrupts messages between the brain and the rest of the body.

CASE STUDY: 77 year old man has 25 degrees of Scoliosis and Neuropathy in the feet and legs, resulting in loss of balance. Had been using a cane for 18 months at suggestion of his attending physician.

As a previous massage client of mine, I recognized the potential of Structural Integration as a solution to his problem.

RESULTS: After two 60-minute structural integration sessions, patient stated he felt his feet and legs "for the first time in 10 or 15 years". When patient returned for third session he was walking freely without a cane, and has continued to walk for four subsequent months without a cane.

DISCUSSION: Lengthening the back as the heels become free to extend the entire back of the body can lengthen the back of the torso, develop a sense of lumbar balance and help the patient feel more "rooted" to the ground by restoring sensation to legs and feet.