

# SET TALK

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## KINESIOLOGY IN MASSAGE

Many years ago when I was starting my practice, I had the good fortune to attend a lecture/demo given by a chiropractor who was doing some new advanced chiropractic techniques. While this lecture/demo was a practice builder for him, it was an eye opener for me. The most important concept I learned was that applied kinesiology (muscle testing) can be used to evaluate symptoms and conditions presented by our clients. Using applied kinesiology (muscle testing) the chiropractor was able to verify a structural imbalance in his model for the presentation, and also determine the specific muscle involvement that supported the structural imbalance. I was entranced. Here I was a massage therapist who was focusing on relieving painful symptoms and conditions and addressing structural problems in my clients, and a chiropractor, who really didn't do anything substantial with soft tissue, was showing me a way of evaluating both the structure and soft tissue conditions. I attended several of his classes in applied kinesiology. Thus began my love affair with applied kinesiology.

Let's examine more closely several reasons why this new technique was so important to me:

**1) The effectiveness and accuracy of my treatment increased.** When client's came in for a session with me, I would stand them up and do body reading to analyze the structural distortions. I was a relatively new massage therapist and would sometimes misinterpret what I was seeing in my client's structure. Consequently, I would not always apply the optimal treatment which was frustrating for both me and my clients because we couldn't achieve maximum improvement.

Applied kinesiology provided a tool to verify my observations. If I observed a rotation of an ilium, I could determine specific muscle weaknesses with muscle testing that would verify that rotation. If I observed a whole body structural distortion, applied kinesiology would determine the specific muscles weakened by the structural distortion throughout the pattern from the top of the head to the feet, which verified all aspects of the structural pattern. More importantly, it helped me realize that not all structural distortions would involve all the muscles, and I found that I was able to be much more specific in my treatment by isolating the weakened or overcontracted muscles, and my effectiveness increased.

**2) I had immediate feedback on the results of my treatment.** As I became more effective with my muscle testing, I was able to test after a treatment to see if a significant structural change had taken place. Thus, I could verify an ilium rotation, determine which muscles were weakened by that rotation with applied kinesiology, and apply the appropriate massage techniques. After the treatment I could retest the muscles that had tested weak, and if the distortion had been released, those muscles would now test strong. I had a feedback system that let me know if my treatment was successful, and with that information I could optimize the treatment of the muscle or area to accomplish the desired results. I have used this tool through years of treating clients, and have been able to fine tune my soft tissue palpations skills as a result.

**3) I had a tool to determine the amount of energy flow to and within a muscle.** After treating a distressed muscle that tests weak there is usually an increase in energy flow to the area and the muscle will test strong. This can be due to the release of fluid and toxin that tends to disperse energy flow, the clearing of acupuncture/acupressure points that I find are usually synonymous with trigger points, the clearing of the energy blockage within an acupuncture meridian, or the clearing of emotional energy that is blocked behind character armor (contracted soft tissue).

**4) By being able to determine energy flow in muscles, I could achieve optimum results in balancing the structure.** The increase of energy flow usually results in increased muscle strength and brings opposing muscles into balance. Consequently, it is possible to achieve and maintain structural balance within the body. This can work two ways: a) when a muscle is overcontracted from too much energy, it cannot release to its full length, and the shortening of the muscle creates a structural distortion - releasing this trapped energy allows the muscle to regain its length, and its impact on structural distortion is released; b) when muscles are weak from lack of energy and overstretched, restoring normal energy flow allows them to contract to their normal non-working length and thus back to structural balance.

**5) I can build client rapport quickly.** Pain is real, and when you can verify for both you and your clients the weaknesses associated with that pain, you are validating their problem, and building confidence that you will be treating the area causing their painful symptoms. The muscle testing also creates a non-threatening light touch evaluation, and the information that you are getting from the client's body is feedback that both the client and therapist can observe. I have found that when I explain these weaknesses and their relationship to the pain,

many clients feel validated in that they are finally in a clinic where someone understands them and their problem. Also, with this information I can apply Cranial/Structural techniques in the first 10 minutes of treatment that will initiate significant improvement in the client's condition that can be substantiated by previously weakened muscles now testing strong.

With applied kinesiology in my tool box, I had an evaluative tool that would tell me what techniques were appropriate, especially after I was exposed to craniosacral and Cranial/Structural therapy. I no longer needed a shotgun approach that usually included applying every cranial mobilization for every client.

When I integrated Cranial/Structural techniques into my practice, the use of muscle testing to evaluate the structural collapse of the core distortion pattern proved invaluable. When new clients would come for treatment, I would use applied kinesiology to demonstrate how the structural collapse of the core distortion could well be the basic cause of their painful symptoms. Using muscle testing I would be able to show them the structural distortions, cranial distortions, cranial adhesions, cranial energy involvement, soft tissue involvement, and muscle energy involvement throughout the body. Then, after the application of a Cranial/Structural mobilization, I would be able to verify the changes to the client by showing through testing that the previously weakened muscles now tested strong. Many clients gained immediate hope and confidence that their recovery had already started. I would also know for sure that I had effectively applied the Cranial/Structural technique to release their structural collapse of the core distortion. Also, since I was not the only therapist using Cranial/Structural techniques, I could determine whether a client had already had the structural collapse of the core distortion released with the application of the Master Release protocol.

**Case Study:** Jim, a 30-year-old tri-athlete, came for treatment for his low back and knee pain. Upon structural examination (body reading) it was apparent that he was in a structural collapse of the core distortion. This consisted of an anterior rotation of the left ilium, a posterior rotation of the right ilium, a tipping of the sacrum, and longer left leg with the knee medially rotated and hyperextended. The foot was laterally rotated and everted. In the right leg (shorter leg) the gluteal muscles, biceps femoris, and psoas were contracted and shortened. While Jim was lying on the table I used muscle testing to verify the anterior/posterior rotation of the iliums. Next, I used muscle testing to show Jim how this rotation weakened his left leg down through his foot. I also used muscle testing to show Jim that on his right side the biceps

femoris, gluteus maximus and psoas were weakened. The next step was to show Jim, using muscle testing, that there was a cranial distortion that corresponded to the weaknesses in his legs and low back. At this point Jim was surprised at how weak the weakened muscles were, and that I had such a clear picture of what was going on. I then proceeded to apply the Cranial/Structural Master Release to balance the iliums and equalize the leg lengths. After the application of the Master Release, I retested Jim's left leg that had been weak, and he was amazed that it was now strong. I also retested the gluteus maximus, biceps femoris and psoas on the right side that now tested strong, showing Jim that positive changes had already taken place. We then proceeded to treat the soft tissue holding the structural distortion to give the low back and knee further support. Jim left a very satisfied client who was now pain free.

Another function of muscle testing is to evaluate individual muscles or muscle groups. This is important for clients who have had injuries that affect an individual muscle or muscle group, as well as determining muscle function for athletes. **Muscle injuries:** If an injured area tests weak prior to treating the injury, you can retest the same area after treatment to determine how effective the treatment was - if it still tests weak, you know it needs further treatment; if it tests strong, the treatment was sufficient and you can move to another area. **Athletes:** The strength of opposing sets of muscles should be relatively equal. If there is a significant difference in muscle strength when you isolate and test opposing sets of muscles, the client can use this information and strengthen the weakened muscles to prevent possible injury.

As you can see, from the information above, applied kinesiology (muscle testing) can greatly enhance your ability to evaluate and effectively treat clients who are in pain. In addition, it builds your clients' confidence in your abilities as a therapist because they will realize that you understand the cause of their pain, and that the treatment will be specific to their conditions. This is especially helpful when clients have been bounced around from professional to professional without successful treatment or relief. It has helped me design and implement many new protocols to effectively treat client problems. Muscle testing is an integral part of the Cranial/Structural techniques that have expanded my effectiveness, and it has become a significant evaluation tool in the development of Structural Energetic Therapy®.

I hope you will explore any opportunity you have to learn and develop your skills utilizing applied kinesiology. You will be a better therapist for it.