



Donald Q. Dillon RMT

Transform Pain and Stuck-ness;
Liberate Movement and Expression

Remedial exercises, resources
DonDillon_MassageTherapist



Thank You



for your referrals

How Bodywork Works

You may have sought bodywork initially to relieve pain and stiffness. Many people do. Others seek relief from the symptomatic experience of anxiety and depression, enhanced physical function and athletic or work performance, or to ground the mind and body, shaken by upheaval and trauma.

So many events in our regular lives place us in “fight, flight or freeze” state. We remain exhaustingly hypervigilant, bracing for the next upset. Like the stressed lab animal, we brace, we withdraw, we cower, we collapse. Alternatively we may attack, lash out, make a “run for it”.

The body says what words cannot.

- Martha Graham

There are interwoven familial, societal, cultural, economic and historical reasons for the continuous assaults on our equanimity. To re-seat ourselves in consciousness, we must reach beyond our rationalizing, problem-solving mind to reconnect with our truest and most fundamental knowledge... our feeling states of the body.

Many of you have expressed surprise following your bodywork session, how quickly - even “miraculously” - you move easier, breathe easier, think with more clarity, feel the relief of pain and stiffness. You want to know how bodywork “works”.

While this subject begs for more research, we can pollinate our theory from empirical observation peppered with what we know about how the body (physiology) and mind (psychology) works.

Let’s start with our organizing and regulatory systems – the brain and endocrine (hormone) systems.

These systems monitor and respond to information from inside our body - our skin, muscles, joints and connective tissues, visceral organs – as well as from outside – sights,

sounds, smells, tastes, tactile (touch), social cues, and other perceptions – to make sense of our world. We learn about ourselves in the same way we learn about external objects – through the engagement of our senses.

Our posture, our functionality, our behaviour, are all reflections of what we have learned about ourselves and how we apply it. How can you discern if someone is feeling anxious, depressed, enthusiastic, furtive, fearful, traumatized, saddened, dejected? Simply observe them.

Their posture, their gestures, their behaviours will betray how they are really feeling. We physically manifest outwardly the way we feel inwardly.

Our sensations design and direct our responses. But can our sensations betray us? Based on context, habits and other factors, our brain can dampen or exaggerate sensations coming from the body.

You might suppress the nagging back ache when a work deadline is looming, or ignore the leg injury as you limp to assist another person worse off. But our sensations can amplify into aggravating symptoms – that headache becomes

unbearable in conjunction with learning of a troubling medical diagnosis, or the stomach ache demands your attention as you grieve the anniversary of a loved one’s death.

Our postural feebleness, our emotional guardedness, our corrosive mental self-flagellations, our insolent behaviours can produce engrams – rehearsed patterns – solidified and reinforced over time.

Our brain uses engrams to reduce cognitive load, allowing us to perform regular daily functions without meticulously thinking each step through, every time. However it also habituates our postures, functions and behaviours that may not be productive, representative of our values or health-sustaining.

The good news is the body and mind are open to novel information and education. We can trim or override those postures, functions and behaviours that no longer serve us. Bodywork is one means that can

impose practical and desired changes to these engrams, transforming the way you think, feel and behave. Mindfulness practice, journaling, counseling, practicing art forms, physical activity, social engagement, communion with nature are also novel and productive ways to adjust our habits.

Particular to bodywork, it appears the intentional, pleasurable application of touch – grounded in science, artfully applied and intuitively administered – transforms the armored muscle bracing and tensioned posture produced by trauma, distress and pain. Far more than a mechanical fix or hedonistic pleasure, bodywork reroutes us back to our sensate self...firmly grounded.

In your next bodywork session, feel inward. Leave your rational, cognitive brain behind for an hour and surrender to the sensate, feeling part of your brain. See what you notice as your body yields to skillfully applied pressure. Notice the quality of your thinking and feeling states afterward, your enhanced perception. Just notice. In a world so demanding, strenuous, even punishing, bodywork provides a medium to bypass the hypervigilant, stressed-out thinking mind and return one’s perceptions to the body...an act of embodiment.

