

Moving From Pain To Progress with Structural Integration



Step One. Thank Yourself For Seeking Help

That's right. Take a moment to thank yourself for seeking help. Not everyone does this. It seems counterintuitive but it is very common for people to find ways to work around the pain messages they are receiving. This simply leads to continued or increased pain. Maybe you've tried this path; I know I did for far too long.

Just by being curious enough to read this, you have taken the first step toward progress and for that you should give yourself kudos.

Step Two. Honor the Messenger

Pain messages are *meant* to interrupt your life. They are intended to **demand attention** and to **encourage movement**.

Think about the following scenario: You touch a hot pan. What happens? That's right; you move.

The presence of pain messages, whether they are physical or emotional/mental, suggests that it is time for you to move something that needs to be moved: maybe you need movement in parts of your body, in your actions or choices, in your life energy expenditures, or in your perception of or interaction with the world around you.

The longer you wait, the more demanding your pain message will become. Imagine if you took your time moving your hand from the hot pan.

Step Three. Explore Your Experience: OPQRST

So, how do you start?

Progress starts when you shift awareness to your experience and explore what you are feeling. Here is a general set of questions to help you begin using the mnemonic: OPQRST.

Write down your answers to these questions:

Onset

When did this pain begin? How often do you feel it? Is there an event you can point to as the cause?

Provocation/Palliation

What brings it on? What makes it better? What makes it worse?

Quality

Can you describe it? Is it sharp, dull, crushing, burning, tearing, or some other feeling? Does it have a pattern, such as intermittent, constant, or throbbing?

Region/Radiation

Where do you feel it? Can you point to it with one finger? Does it radiate to any other part of your body?

Severity

Using a scale of 0 to 10, where zero is no pain and ten is the worst possible pain you have experienced, what is your experience of this pain most of the time?

Time (history)

How long have you been experiencing it? How has it changed since onset (better, worse, different symptoms)? Has anything helped in the past?

This kind of detailed information is critical to the people whom you employ to help you, and it is equally critical to your own process of personal awareness and progress.

Step Four. Get Curious About Your Experience of Your Experience

You've come so far already. Now it's time to explore *your experience* of your experience using your own curious nature. Write down your answers to the following two questions:

What do you think is causing this pain?

Ask the question and then be open to whatever comes in answer. We are often much more in touch with ourselves than we allow ourselves to be.

Perhaps your pain is the clear result of a pattern of body posture like sitting at a desk all day, or from compensating for an injury. Maybe you have terrible headaches or jaw pain from grinding your teeth from stress. Maybe your chest hurts because you breathe shallowly.

The answer can come from recent events or long-past events. It can show up in the form of mental or emotional trauma manifesting in the body, or a once-easy activity that is now limited.

How is this experience affecting your life?

This can be one large thing or a cascade of things, so it is important to evaluate, with great care and honesty, how your life feels in the present.

If your back hurts, that might cause you to not exercise which in turn causes unwanted weight gain and igniting feelings of unlovability or depression. If your feet hurt all day, dealing with that pain might deplete your energy or patience for the activities and people that bring you joy. A chronically stiff neck could make it hard to focus on work which makes you feel like a failure.

Or, maybe the chain goes the opposite direction. Maybe your life is overwhelming so you feel chronically worn down which leads to more nights on the couch escaping into great shows rather than finishing projects you enjoy. Perhaps you can't sleep well because of anxious thoughts, so your body feels perpetually sluggish even as your mind is racing. Maybe a fear of failure is causing you to overtrain or push through pain messages that should be heeded.

Whatever your experience is, getting clear on it is a big part of what comes next.

Step Five. How Structural Integration Can Help You Move Forward

The pain message alerted you that something needs to move, you heeded it, you explored it, and now you are ready to move forward. Here is how Structural Integration can help...

Classic Structural Integration (sometimes referred to as "rolfing") is performed in a standardized format called the 10-Series. This series of ten sessions systematically invites balance and optimization of both the structure (shape) and function (movement) of your entire body.

The 10-series has a beginning, a middle, and an end...

The Beginning. We begin by discussing what you have identified about your current experience of life. That is why the above steps are so important; your answers give us a starting place and also a destination.

The first three sessions address the surface (outside) structures of the body. The general goals are to enliven the body, allow you to get accustomed to the work, and make room for the highly focused work coming in the middle sessions.

The Middle. The next four sessions address the core structures that comprise the inner (inside) structures of the body. The general goals are to release any stuckness found within

the deeper layers of the body, find balance between the inside and outside of the body, and align the body in gravity to maximize efficiency and ease.

The End. The final three sessions integrate all of the work of the first seven sessions into a new experience of the whole. We take everything learned in the previous sessions and bring them together to a place of cohesion, stability, and whole-body balance. We also revisit where you started in session one and compare it to how you feel after session ten.

Each session focuses on freeing restrictions in specific areas of the body while maintaining a holistic view of your entire body. The work is very slow and deliberate; it is a meditation, an exploration, an education, and a movement practice together. What has needed to move, has been *begging* to move, will finally start moving in a way that is comfortable and harmonious for you.

If you would like to begin your journey forward from pain to progress, call (530) 588-0177 or visit www.chico-si.com. In the end, your awareness and participation are the keys to transformational progress and a new path in front of you that is full of promise.



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