

My First Osteopathic Treatment



Emma's Clinic Experience
June 2019

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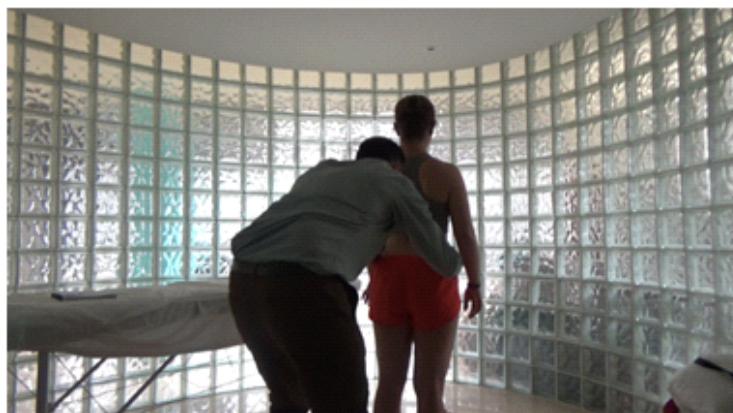
On the 25th of June 2019, I attended a 1 Hour Consultation for Osteopathy with Osteopathic Solutions Director Gareth Milner. To begin the consultation Gareth firstly asked me a bit about my background to note if I had any previous injuries and what type of back/ body pains I suffer from. I informed him that I often suffer with some stiffness in the lower back (described as central) and pain in the upper back, sometimes after exercise/ running. I informed him that my hip joints click when I get up from my office chair, more so the right hip. I also informed him I had no history of medical conditions, accidents/ fractures or operations.



My work background has involved previous desk-bound office roles. Prior to that, I studied Art at University which involved mostly seated posture, with my neck regularly held in forward flexion (forward bent) for sustained periods.

I had previously never been to an Osteopath/ Chiropractor before, or even had a thorough back massage so I was unsure what to expect but was very much looking forward to having my back assessed and treated by a true expert in the profession. I very much enjoy listening to Gareth share his wide knowledge of biomechanics of the spine and the human body and am learning new things about various muscles and joints and their functions daily which I hadn't learned in the past.

The Osteopathic assessment began with Gareth observing my body posture and alignment in a standing position.



He also did a forward bending active mobility assessment.



From his initial assessment Gareth gathered the following (please see Gareth's blog also on www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/osteopathic-solutions-blogs for full musculoskeletal terminology and in-depth diagrams):

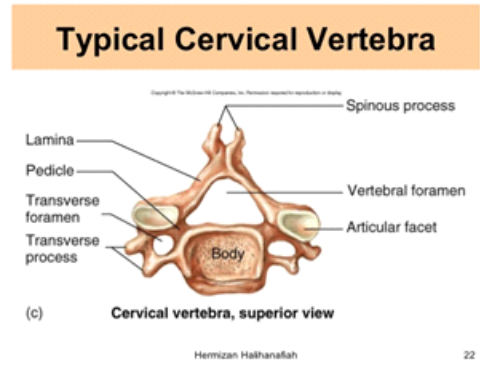
- Extension (backward bending) through the Lumbar (lower back) and Thoracic (mid back) spine. Gareth asked me if I had a history of gymnastics and/ or dancing to which I haven't, as apparently extended spinal postures are common with these past times
- Flexion (forward bending) through the upper Thoracic spine (common with people like myself who work in offices on computers daily)
- My shoulder blades were level (which is rare for people!)
- Pelvic asymmetry with my right iliac bone anterior and my left iliac bone posterior (a common pelvic position)
- Hypertonicity (increased muscle tightness) of both leg hamstrings, bilateral (both sides) upper thoracic erector spinae, bilateral upper trapezius, bilateral lower lumbar erector spinae, left quadratus lumborum, bilateral suboccipital muscles (more so on the left side)
- External rotation (rotation away from the centre of the body) through my right hip (which tends to click more than the left)
- Right rearfoot pronation
- Right foot 5th toe hammer toe deformity

Following this, Gareth's positional and passive mobility assessment (whilst I was supine on the clinic bench) gave the following findings:

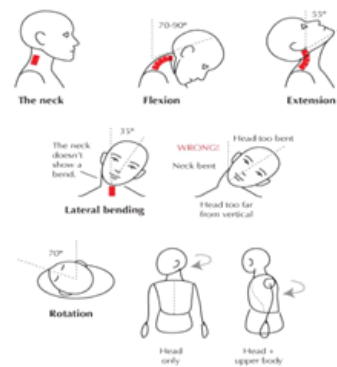
- My leg lengths were level (often it is common for people to have one leg shorter than the other)
- Spinal somatic dysfunctions at the left occipito-atlantal joint, C1/C2 and C5/C6 facet joints
- Somatic dysfunction of the right talus (anteriorised) and right middle cuneiform

As part of this Osteopathy treatment, we took video footage (viewable **here** on our YouTube page) for our website Osteopathy page www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/osteopathic-solutions-osteopathy. I will now run through some of the treatment techniques Gareth gave me within the clinic, linked with the video footage.

Here we can see Gareth assessing the position of the first cervical vertebrae on my neck. The right image is what a typical cervical vertebrae looks like up close (very interesting for me to know).



In the below image Gareth is testing side bending of the upper neck. The image to the right shows the neck and its movements.



The next images (both left and right) show Gareth manipulating the C1 vertebrae (high velocity thrust technique) from both sides. This was a unique feeling for me, as I had never experienced it before and I didn't realise the human body could be manipulated in these sorts of ways. Some of the techniques blew me away slightly and left me a bit speechless (in a good way!) as you will see from the video footage, at Gareth (and our team's) truly unique abilities to physically treat people.



Below Gareth is articulating my cervical spine.



Below Gareth is performing a technique called cervical (neck) traction. Cervical traction provides many benefits. It can alleviate pain from joints, sprains and spasms. It is also used to treat neck injuries, pinched nerves and cervical spondylosis. Cervical neck traction works by stretching the spinal vertebrae and muscles to relieve pressure and pain. Force or tension is used to stretch or pull the head away from the neck.



Below Gareth is performing a deep tissue massage on my neck. A deep tissue massage helps to treat muscle pain and improve stiffness.



Below Gareth is performing a trapezius and posterior scalene muscle stretch. The trapezius is a flat, triangle-shaped muscle. It extends from the neck down along the spine to the middle of the back across the shoulder blade. There are a right and left trapezius muscles. These large muscles support your arms and shoulders and are needed to raise your arms. The scalene muscles are used to assist in breathing when it becomes difficult.



The Trapezius Muscle

Below he is mobility testing my lower neck.



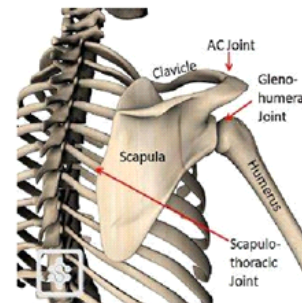
It was now time to lie on my front again for more manipulation of the neck. Below Gareth is performing a high velocity thrust of the 5th cervical vertebrae.



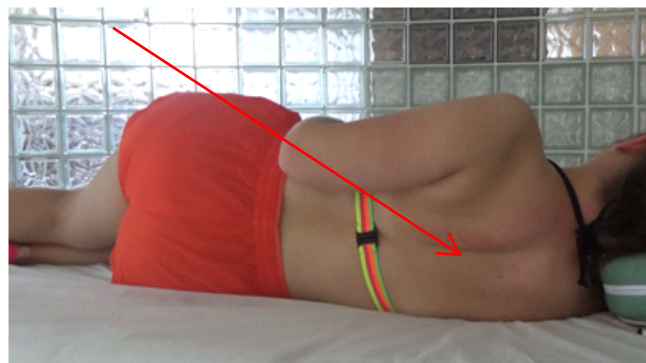
In the image beneath, Gareth is moving my scapulothoracic joint in circular motions. This was a very relaxing technique which I felt loosened everything up for me. Please view the diagram of the scapulothoracic joint below.



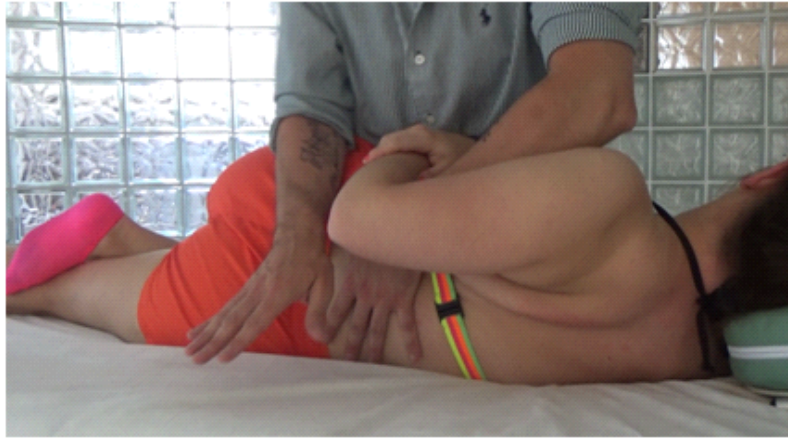
SCAPULOTHORACIC JOINT



Below if you look closely in the image, the track of my vertebrae can be seen in my upper back. This can be described as 'red reflex.' This interesting term is a quick Osteopathic test to see which thoracic areas of the spine are dysfunctional. The Osteopath's fingers are dragged along either side of the vertebrae to distinguish the biomechanically dysfunctional area.



It was then time for another high velocity thrust manipulation as shown below. Here Gareth articulates and then thrusts the L5/S1 spinal segment.



Here (below) Gareth is performing articulation of the left sacro-iliac joint. This involved movement of my right leg in circular motions and will help to resolve the clicking of my hip joint which could lead to breakdown of cartilage in later years if it hadn't been observed by Gareth.



Below he is massaging my right leg IT band. As I have done a lot of running over the last few years this area was very tight. This (although it does not look it!) was a very painful experience.



Below he is articulating my upper Thoracic spine.



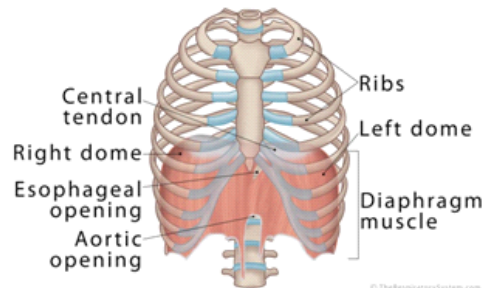
Followed by some gentle muscle traction and movement of the upper ribs.



Next it was time for some work on my diaphragm. The diaphragm is a thin skeletal muscle that sits at the base of the chest and separates the abdomen from the chest. It contracts and flattens when you inhale. Interestingly, this creates a vacuum effect that pulls air into the lungs. When you exhale, the diaphragm relaxes and the air is pushed out of lungs. Below Gareth is stretching the anterior fibres of my diaphragm which helps to free up the ribs, aids digestion and breathing.



Diaphragm Location



Next it was time for some soft tissue massaging of the lower back (lucky me, if only every day at work started like this!)



Below Gareth was using a cross hand traction technique. Spinal traction is a form of decompression therapy that relieves pressure on the spine. It can be performed manually or mechanically. Spinal traction is used to treat herniated discs, sciatica, degenerative disc disease, pinched nerves, and many other back conditions.



Then it was time for some oscillations through the lower back.



Before palpating the thoracic spinal muscles.



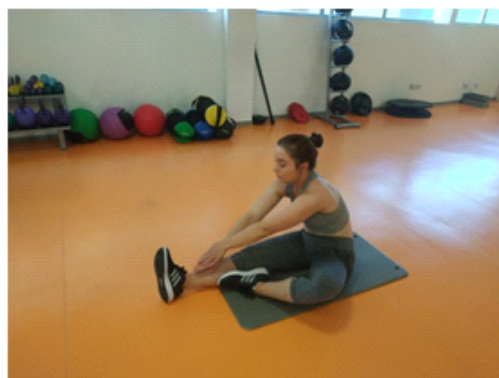
Gareth lastly performed a high velocity thrust manipulation on my thoracic spine at the T6/ T7 level. Below on the left he is assessing (very accurately) the correct area of the thoracic spine to manipulate. On the right he is carrying out the high velocity thrust technique.



On completion of the treatment, Gareth gave me some useful stretching exercises to increase my flexibility, strengthen my muscles and improve my posture:

Bilateral Hamstring Stretches.

Hamstring stretches can increase flexibility and improve the range of motion in the hip. These benefits will help me perform my daily tasks, such as getting up from my desk and bending over, with ease. When the hamstrings are too tight, the muscles rotate the pelvis backward.



Bilateral trapezius & cervical muscle stretches (shown below)



Pilates based (shown below) core stability exercises (These focus on strengthening the abdominal muscles and reducing the generalised spinal extension posture, therefore reducing postural strain to the symptomatic upper Thoracic Spine and Cervical Spine



My 1 hour Osteopathic treatment was a great insight into Gareth's truly unique skill and ability as an Osteopath. His ability to manipulate and treat areas of my body which are linked to some of the stiffness and pain in which was feeling in my back was incredible. I also discovered many things about my body which I would never have known, if I had never had this very specialised treatment. I am very grateful for the opportunity of having this in depth bodily assessment and Osteopathic treatment and I am looking forward to learning more about my body and documenting the process, as Gareth has very kindly agreed to treat me every 2 weeks.

Thank you very much Gareth!

