

OMT for Patients With Sacral Somatic Dysfunction

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The sacrum is an important keystone for normal gait mechanics, connecting mechanical forces from the lower extremities and providing a foundation of support for the body. Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) may be used to treat somatic dysfunction of the sacrum to optimize the biomechanical efficiency of the pelvis. Additionally, treatment of the sacrum may influence parasympathetic tone to the large intestine and genitourinary systems. Parasympathetic innervation arises from the S2-S4 spinal levels and exits via the ventral rami to become the pelvic splanchnic nerves, which travel to their target organ. In this way, treatment of the sacrum may aid in conditions including low back pain, constipation, and dysmenorrhea.

One technique for sacral somatic dysfunction is sacral rocking (**video**), which uses breathing to reduce respiratory restriction of the sacrum. Respiratory motion affects the lumbar spine via diaphragm attachments at L1 through L3. During inhalation, lumbar lordosis decreases; as a result, the sacral base moves posteriorly, also known as counterrotation. During exhalation, the lumbar lordosis increases, moving the sacral base anteriorly, also

known as nutation. These motions are exaggerated during the sacral rocking technique and thus can improve somatic dysfunction and restriction of the sacrum. (doi:10.7556/jaoa.2018.041)

Resources

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