

***Somatic Patterning***  
**Supplemental Instructor Materials**  
**Chapter 4: Balancing Patterning Approaches**

*Note: Numbered points in the chapter's reading list, objectives, and summary are correlated and focus on topics that I think will be most relevant for massage students.*

*In brackets after suggested readings and objectives you will find an occasional reference from a subsequent chapter that expands on material introduced in this chapter. Please contact your education director for answers to the chapter questions.*

**Chapter 4 Suggested Readings**

1. Cognitive Therapy and Behavioral Approaches, p. 94, [*Cognitive Therapy, Transcending the "Story" pp. 339-341*]
2. Neurolinguistic Programming, pp. 94-95, [*Neurolinguistic Programming, Tracking, Representational Systems, pp. 341- 343*]
3. [*Matching and Rapport, Reframing, Association, Dissociation, Transference, Changing Associations, Transference through Touch, pp. 343-347*]
4. Brain Centers and their Associated Patterns, Forebrain, Midbrain, Hindbrain, The Cellular "Brain," pp. 95-97
5. Emotional Intelligence: The Brain as an Organ, pp. 97-98
6. The Body-Mind Dilemma: Patterning or Psychotherapy?, pp. 98-99
7. A Neurological Approach, pp. 99-100
8. Autonomic Patterning, The Relaxation Response, pp. 100-101, [*Autonomic Flexibility, Autogenics, Biofeedback Therapy, Brain Wave Feedback, Progressive Muscle Relaxation and Electromyography, pp. 322-326*]
9. Organic Movement Practices, p. 101, [*Responsiveness and Organic Movement, pp. 165-168, Automatic Movement and Cellular Touch, pp. 298-299, Continuum Movement, pp. 299-300, and "Authentic Movement" in Dance Movement Therapy p. 359*]
10. Neuromuscular Patterning, Reflexes, Developmental Movement, pp. 101-103
11. Balancing Experiential, Body-Based Learning with Cognitive Learning, p. 104
12. Reflexive and Reflective Movement Coordination, pp. 104-106
13. Integrating Facilitation with Inhibition, pp. 106-107
14. Sensory and Motor Balance, pp. 107-109
15. Establishing Support before Movement, pp. 109-111
16. Motility and Mobility, pp. 111-112

**Chapter 4 Objectives**

1. Describe an aspect of cognitive therapy that can be used in somatic patterning.
2. Describe how neurolinguistic programming (NLP) improves communication skills.
3. Identify three NLP skills that can be used in somatic or body-based therapies.
4. Identify the functions associated with each of four major brain centers.
5. Define emotional intelligence and its application in somatic therapies.
6. Describe how to maintain a boundary between somatic therapy and psychotherapy.
7. Describe a neurological approach to somatic patterning.
8. Define autonomic patterning, autonomic flexibility, and the relaxation response.
9. Describe why and how to use organic movement practices in autonomic patterning.

10. Define neuromuscular (NM) patterning and identify two NM patterning approaches.
11. Describe the educational approach of modulating dualities in somatic patterning.
12. Explain and contrast the reflective and reflexive coordination of movement.
13. Describe the basic patterning skills of facilitating and inhibiting a body pattern.
14. Describe how to balance sensory input with motor output in somatic therapies.
15. Define the patterning premise of support before movement and provide two examples.
16. Define the terms motility and mobility and give examples of each.

### **Chapter 4 Summary**

1. Cognitive therapy is a psychotherapy in which a person learns to change maladaptive thought patterns associated with psychological problems. Cognitive therapy techniques can be used in somatic patterning to identify and change the thought patterns or beliefs that perpetuate limiting or unhealthy body patterns.
2. Neurolinguistic programming (NLP) is a system of tracking and altering observable language and body patterns in order to improve communication skills. For example, practitioners learn to identify a client's communication preferences to visual, kinesthetic, and auditory channels in order to communicate in the same channel.
3. Examples of NLP techniques used in somatic therapies are matching a client's rhythm or pace to develop rapport with that client, reframing a situation to be able to view it from a new perspective, and recognizing when transference in touch is occurring.
4. In somatic therapies, a practitioner can recognize which brain center is dominant to help a client develop balance between centers. The forebrain is associated with thinking and analyzing, the midbrain with emotional responses, the hindbrain with neuromuscular reflexes and movement patterns, and the cellular brain with systemic responses to touch.
5. Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to inhibit an emotional reaction in order to reflect upon it and choose an appropriate and healthy response. This process requires a number of skills used in somatic patterning, such as body awareness, self-control, empathy, listening to signals from the body, reflective thinking, and conflict resolution.
6. To maintain a boundary between somatic therapy and psychotherapy, a practitioner needs to stay focused on the client's body patterns and refrain from any dialogue that would engage the client in talking about psychological issues.
7. In a neurological approach to somatic patterning, the practitioner facilitates the client's active participation and movement in a way that reorganizes two aspects of the client's nervous system: the autonomic nervous system and the somatic nervous system.
8. Autonomic patterning is any approach in which a person practices relaxation techniques to improve autonomic nervous system tone and specifically autonomic flexibility—the ability to move from a stressed state to a relaxed state at will. Autonomic patterning elicits the relaxation response—a physiological state of parasympathetic tone marked by sensations that indicate slower respiration, heart rate, and brain wave pattern.

9. Organic movement practices are slow, minimally structured, and fluid movement improvisations, which are usually practiced with the eyes closed and guided by a sensory awareness of intrinsic body motion. They can be used as autonomic patterning exercises to help people release autonomic tension and learn to relax while actively moving. *[For more information, see Chapter 6 on Organic and Fluid Movement.]*
10. Neuromuscular (NM) patterning is the practice of structured movements done to improve the overall coordination and efficiency of joint and muscle function as well as somatic nervous system tone. Examples of NM patterning exercises include quick movements that engage reflexes, the developmental series of push and reach patterns, and fundamental movement patterns such as pelvic tilts and limb motion. *[For more information on neuromuscular patterns, see Chapters 7-10 on Developmental Patterning, Neuromuscular Patterning, Postural Stabilization, and Fundamental Movement Patterns.]*
11. The various methods of modulating dualities in somatic patterning focus on counterbalancing two opposing elements of the somatic experience to improve the body/mind connection. To this end, the overriding educational approach in somatic patterning alternates between experiential learning and cognitive learning.
12. The reflective coordination of movement, which involves carefully observing each part of a slow movement sequence to identify and change the faulty stages of a pattern, is counterbalanced by the reflexive coordination of movement, which elicit reflexes with playful activities such as balancing and rolling on a physioball.
13. A basic patterning skill is to combine the facilitation of movement in inactive areas of the body while inhibiting faulty patterns from overactive muscles. Balancing facilitation with inhibition also mobilizes restricted areas while stabilizing hypermobile areas.
14. To balance sensory input with motor output during the patterning process, a person can alternate between sensing a body pattern and practicing a movement that changes the pattern.
15. A basic premise of any patterning process is to establish support before movement. This is done in several ways, such as contracting postural muscles before moving, increasing muscular tone before lifting something heavy, or eliciting a relaxation response before using neuromuscular techniques to release muscular tension.
16. Motility describes the intrinsic movement of the organs and fluids, such as the movement of breathing or the jostling of organs as a person rolls over. Mobility describes the observable movement of the body through space, such as the muscular contractions a person generates to bend a joint or make a weight shift.

**Chapter 4 Questions**

*Note: Make sure to pay attention to the italics in some of the questions because they ask you to identify the statement that **is not** found in or **does not** refer to the topic of the question.*

1. A cognitive therapy skill used in somatic patterns helps a person to
  - a. analyze the images that bubble up when a massage client drifts off into reverie.
  - b. practice positive affirmations to change feelings of low self-esteem.
  - c. track and change negative thoughts that perpetuate unhealthy body patterns.
  - d. journal about and draw pictures of family patterns of posture and movement.
  
2. Which of the following skills *are not* found in neurolinguistic programming?
  - a. Tracking a client's visual, kinesthetic, or auditory channels.
  - b. Matching a client's somatic preferences in order to develop rapport.
  - c. Reframing a somatic pattern to view it from a new perspective.
  - d. Intuiting what a client's goals are for a session.
  
3. Emotional responses are regulated by
  - a. the forebrain, which is often referred to as the "project manager."
  - b. the midbrain, which houses the hypothalamus and limbic system.
  - c. the hindbrain, which includes the cerebellum and brain stem.
  - d. the "cellular brain," a metaphor for systemic responses to touch.
  
4. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to
  - a. control an emotional reaction until you have had time to think about it.
  - b. flying off the handle whenever you feel strong emotions.
  - c. to do well on a written test about the source of emotions.
  - d. to express a broad range of emotional responses.
  
5. Which of the following behaviors *violates* the professional boundary between body therapies such as massage or somatic patterning and psychotherapy?
  - a. Staying focused on the client's body patterns when the client experiences emotions.
  - b. Refrain from any dialogue that would engage the client in talking about psychological issues.
  - c. Ask the client if he wants to talk about the emotional issues that are coming up around a recent divorce.
  - d. Offer a client having an emotional release support and reassurance while staying grounded and present and avoiding probing questions.
  
6. Autonomic flexibility is the ability to
  - a. move from a stressed state to a relaxed state at will.
  - b. bend over and touch your toes without strain.
  - c. sleep soundly through an entire massage session.
  - d. relax only when you are getting a massage.

7. Neuromuscular patterning focuses on
  - a. helping a client learn and practice relaxation skills.
  - b. learning efficient movements that improve joint and muscle function.
  - c. slowing down respiration and heart rate.
  - d. noticing the bodily sensation of different brain wave patterns.
  
8. Which of the following statements *does not* describe an approach to modulating dualities?
  - a. Balance the facilitation of movement restrictions with the inhibition of muscular holding patterns.
  - b. Balance sensory input with motor responses.
  - c. Always practice slow, controlled patterning exercises.
  - d. Balance the inner motility of the organs and fluids with the outer mobility of body movement through space.
  
9. Which of the following statements *does not* describe organic movement?
  - a. Organic movement has a slow, unstructured, fluid quality.
  - b. Organic movement practices can release autonomic nervous system tension.
  - c. Organic movement is a structured exercise to improve specific muscle function.
  - d. Organic movement is usually practiced with the eyes closed.
  
10. Which of the following statements *does not* describe an activity based on the premise of establishing support before movement?
  - a. Contracting core muscles to support your back before lifting a heavy box.
  - b. Contracting the postural muscles before moving.
  - c. Establishing alternative support mechanisms before releasing a holding pattern.
  - d. Figuring out the psychological reasons for holding patterns.

## Chapter 4 Suggested Learning Activities

*Note: Any exercise titled “Patterning Exercise” can be found in the current edition. Page numbers for these exercises (inserted in parentheses) are included to help instructors utilize activities during lessons that may be based on other segments of the book. “Skills Exercises” are not found in the current edition but will be included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of SP.*

### **Patterning Exercise #124: Progressive Relaxation** (p. 328)

*Adapted for a classroom exercise*

*Objectives:*

- To develop a sensory awareness of muscle tension and relaxation.
- To develop control over the muscles through alternating contract-relax exercises.
- To practice an autonomic patterning exercise that can be used in client education.

*Exercise: (20-30 minutes)*

1. Turn off your cell phones and turn down the lights. Put on about 30 minutes of quiet, relaxing music.
2. Lie down in a comfortable position. Put a blanket over yourself to stay warm because as the body relaxes, it loses heat and becomes chilly.
3. During this exercise, you will focus on alternately contracting and relaxing muscles in one area of your body at a time. To avoid cramping, make sure to contract slowly and lightly, to a level that is manageable for you, especially in your neck and legs.
4. Here are some directives to guide you through the process:
  - a. Contract your *scalp and neck* and hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then relax and allow your scalp and neck to become loose and slack.
  - b. Tighten your *jaw* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then relax and allow your jaw to become loose and slack.
  - c. Scrunch up your *forehead and face* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow your forehead and face to relax and become smooth and unwrinkled.
  - d. Contract and tighten your *shoulders and between your shoulders blades* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow your shoulders to relax, release, and settle.
  - e. Contract and tighten your *chest and abdomen* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow your chest and abdomen to relax, release, and settle.
  - f. Contract and tighten your *right arm and hand* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow your right arm and hand to relax, release, and settle.
  - g. Contract and tighten your *left arm and hand* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow your left arm and hand to relax, release, and settle.

- h. Contract and tighten your *hips* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow your hips to relax, release, and settle.
- i. Contract and tighten your *right leg* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow your right leg to relax, release, and settle.
- j. Contract and tighten your *left leg* and lightly hold . . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow your left leg to relax, release, and settle.
- k. Now scan your body from head to feet. If there are any areas that still feel tight, contract them slowly and lightly and hold. . . Feel the holding . . . Then allow those areas to relax, release, and settle.

*Homework:*

Practice this exercise when you go to bed at night, especially if you have trouble falling asleep. By practicing it, you will deepen your relaxation skills, which provides you with a valuable tool to help your clients relax.

When you are working on a client who has trouble relaxing an area of the body, have that client tighten that area and hold, then relax it.

**Patterning Exercise #25: Cortical Patterning with the Arms** (p. 25)

*Objectives:*

- To practice a neuromuscular patterning approach.
- To practice reflective thinking during patterning using slow movement.
- To balance the shoulder girdle, release tension in the arms, and improve symmetry.

*Exercise: (10 minutes)*

1. Lie on your back in a comfortable position. Bend your knees to keep your lower back relaxed. Put both arms out to the sides, palms up.
2. Keeping your arms straight, bring your palms together directly above you. Then return your arms to their original position.
3. Do the movement again and notice how your shoulders move. Are they symmetrical? Is there any stress in the action? What happens between your shoulder blades?
4. Repeat the movement very slowly. Reach through your fingers as you raise your arms. Keeping your shoulders on the ground, sense the upper arm gradually turning in the socket. Widen the space between your shoulder blades. Breathe deeply into this space as you move. Relax any tension you feel in your neck, spine, or hips as you move your arms.
5. Slowly reverse the motion and return your arms to the original position. Again, keep breathing. Keep the space between your shoulder blades wide. Open and widen your chest. Relax any tension you feel anywhere in your body.
6. Repeat the movement one more time, this time visualizing that your arm moves on your shoulder like a door on a hinge. Then rest.

*Homework:* Practice this exercise after giving massages to restore symmetry and balance to your shoulder girdle and arms.

**Patterning Exercise #29: The “Sand-Bag” Brain and Body** (p. 120)

*Adapted for a classroom exercise and updated for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.*

*Objectives:*

- To practice autonomic patterning with organic movement.
- To relax while moving.
- To increase the motility and fluidity in the trunk.

*Exercise: (10 minutes)*

1. Lie on your back in a comfortable position with your knees bent. Close your eyes and let your back relax into the floor.
2. Imagine that your head and body are filled with liquid sand. Keep the back of your head on the floor as you gently and slowly roll your head from side to side. Visualize each imaginary grain of sand slowly sifting to the side as you turn your head.
3. Slowly roll your head back to center. Then repeat to the other side and back to center again.
4. This time, roll your head and your entire body to one side. Moves as though your trunk were filled with liquid sand, sensing your organs and fluids pouring and sifting into the side you are rolling toward. Focus on the quality of movement. Let go of structure and control. Relax into the movement. Let your body become heavier as you roll to one side. Indulge yourself.
5. If reach a point where you feel stuck, you may have hit a still point. Hang out in this place and relax, until you feel the sensation of inner fluidity return, then continue.
6. Slowly roll your body back the center, then to the other side.
7. Go back and forth several times until you feel relaxed and more fluid in your body. As you let go of controlling the movement, your body may start feeling like its moving with a slow, fluid momentum, as though your body were moving itself, independent of any mental control or thought.
8. When you finish, sit up slowly and open your eyes. Take a moment to notice how you feel and reorient yourself.