

### Clearing the Static:

An introduction to Chakras, Shiatsu, Rolfing, Myofascial Release, Trigger Point & Gate Control Theory

by Todd Fiorentino

The chakras of your body are energetic lines established by gurus in India hundreds of years ago and documented throughout history. I have learned that it is best to look for mentors and not gurus in the alternative health field, but I do give some credence to these ancient systems of shiatsu points and chakras. Working along these energy lines is not dissimilar to clearing away the static on your radio so you can "tune-in" to a program that you enjoy. It could also be likened to hitting the "reset" button on an electrical outlet.

Beyond the sort of witchcraft (albeit, good witchcraft) of the chakra system, there are scientific reasons to accept the existence of these lines. For instance, we know that the body's fascial or connective tissue system extends long distances—head-to-toe really. Rolfing/structural integration and myofascial release often involve working the entire length of the body deeply in a slow, sustained way to bring about change. The other modalities are more given to "spot work" than these two. The twisting of tissues to break up the cell matrix in myofascial release helps to get deep results; rolfing's focus is mainly on posture.

Because of referred pain patterns, therapists may also do trigger-point work to starve a contracting muscle of oxygen and thereby get it to release. It is not uncommon to hit points in the upper back, shoulders or neck and find this pain traveling down the arm or into the head. For one, the brachial plexus nerve branch goes right down the arm from the neck and throat. Therapists typically hold points until they release, sometimes moving the given limb into different positions while pressing firmly.

When myofascial planes get restricted or chakra lines become jammed with energy, nerve pathways carry that pain signal back to your brain. In gate control theory, the therapist tries to beat the pain signal to the brain through other stimulus. This may be done via friction or stripping moves to align muscle fibers and normalize connective tissue. These techniques can help "clear the static" so you can hear that guiding voice, release your creative potential and feel good.