

Thomas Seebeck

Osteopathic Self-Treatment

Finding Health

**Exercise
Book**

About the book

The aim of osteopathic treatments is to activate the oftentimes impaired self-healing powers and thereby initiate a completely natural healing. The osteopath achieves this by means of his knowledge of human anatomy and physiology and with finesse of his palpation. The osteopathic techniques are however also wonderfully suited for self-treatment. This is where personal body-awareness comes into play.

In this book, Thomas Seebeck conveys the principles of osteopathic treatment, and particularly the “osteopathic medicine cabinet”: exercises for common problem areas (e.g. head, back, sprains) are illustrated in a detailed and practical manner.

About the author

Thomas Seebeck, born 1971, has been a physiotherapist since 1995 and has been running his own clinic in Dinklage (Germany) since 2002. In 2006 he received the Diploma in Osteopathic Therapy from the German Society of Osteopathic Medicine (DGOM), for which he has also been a teacher since 2008. He is the chairman of the German Association for Osteopathic Therapy (DAGOT) and academician of the DGOM.

He dedicates his free time to music, amongst other things, classic Chinese medicine, and QiGong and loves windsurfing. He runs self-awareness courses together with his brother, Andreas.

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**Thomas Seebeck
Osteopathic Self-Treatment
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For my patients,
who taught me
to “dig deeper”.

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*To find health
should be the object of the doctor.
Anyone can find disease.*

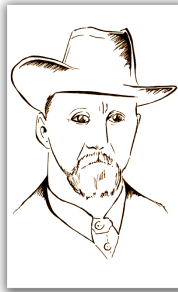
A.T. Still

Prologue

“I have asked a few questions pertaining to organic action and life, because Nature is a school of question and answers, which seems to be the only school in which man learns anything.”

A.T. Still

What is the secret of the mode of operation of osteopathy?



Andrew Taylor Still

When Andrew Taylor Still (1828-1917), the founder of osteopathy, lost three of his then four children to a meningitis epidemic in February 1867, he lost all faith in the conventional medicine of his day.

Still began an intensive study of, what he called, the “Book of Nature”. He wondered why his daughter Marusha had survived the illness, and what had made her immune to it. In his study he came across principles that are also known in classic Chinese medicine. Being a technically gifted inventor (of several tools and machines for which he held the patent rights), he viewed the human body as a perfectly constructed machine. Man in his entirety, however, he viewed as a unity made up of body, spirit and soul (“triune man”). From the very start he applied his knowledge and skill not only to his patients, but also to himself.

This book offers you the best methods of self-treatment according to the principles of osteopathy.

Thomas Seebeck, July 2014

Introduction

Sit in an upright and relaxed position on a chair or stool. Take a moment and feel the air flowing through your nostrils.



The three components of osteopathic self-treatment: breathing, movement and awareness.

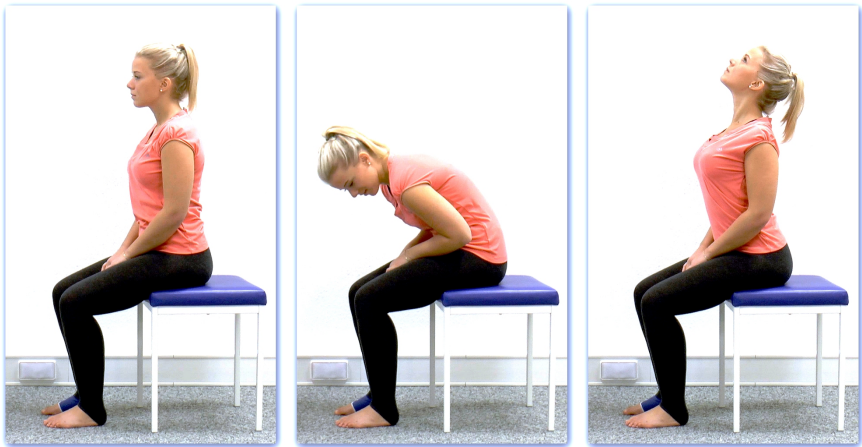
Discern carefully: does more air flow through the right or left nostril or is the difference unnoticeable? Can you feel that the air you breathe out is warmer than the air you breathe in?

Now guide your awareness to your torso and spine. Can you sense that your breathing is connected with a small movement of your torso

and spine? When you breathe in, your spine extends a little, and when you breathe out it retracts a little. If you can sense this, then you are ready for your self-treatment, because for this you will not require much more than a sense of breathing and movement.

Your first osteopathic self-treatment

In the introduction I asked you to feel the connection between breathing in and the slight extension of the spine, and breathing out and the slight bending of the spine. Now please try to find out which direction of movement is more comfortable for you. If you cannot be sure with very small movements, simply make the movements larger. Please remember though, that you are trying to find the maximum relaxation. If you move too far into the more comfortable position, the tension increases again.



Testing in the “yes plane”: neutral, bending and stretching

Test

Bend forward only as far as it is comfortable. Be mindful of the

feeling when returning to the neutral position. If it is uncomfortable, you have moved too far!

When stretching you will obviously reach your movement barrier much sooner. However if you move carefully and mindfully, this could be your more comfortable direction of movement.

Once you have found out which one of the two directions is more comfortable for you, combine this movement with breathing. There are two options.

If **stretching** is the more comfortable movement for you, then breathe in while moving into the comfortable position, and breathe out while returning to the neutral position.

Now switch the breathing around: breathe out as you stretch and breathe in while returning to the neutral position. Which combination feels better? If you cannot feel a difference, pick an exercise randomly.

If your more comfortable movement is **bending forward**, then breathe in while bending forward and breathe out while returning upwards. Then the other way around: breathe out while bending forward and breathe in while returning to the neutral position. Which combination feels better?

Exercise

Repeat your “comfortable combination” of breathing and movement for several breaths. It is reasonable to take a little break after breathing in and then out, i.e. to stop breathing and movement at the same time. The length of these breaks depends on what you feel is comfortable. After a while you will better be able to feel the impulse to continue breathing.

End the exercise after two minutes. Take a short break, in which you perhaps might briefly move your shoulders or shake yourself out a little.

Retest

First test the direction of movement that you exercised. Never mind the breathing now. This movement should at least not feel worse. Now test the other direction. Can you feel a change? Normally, this movement should now feel better than it did in the initial test. If this is the case, congratulations! You have just successfully completed your first osteopathic self-treatment.

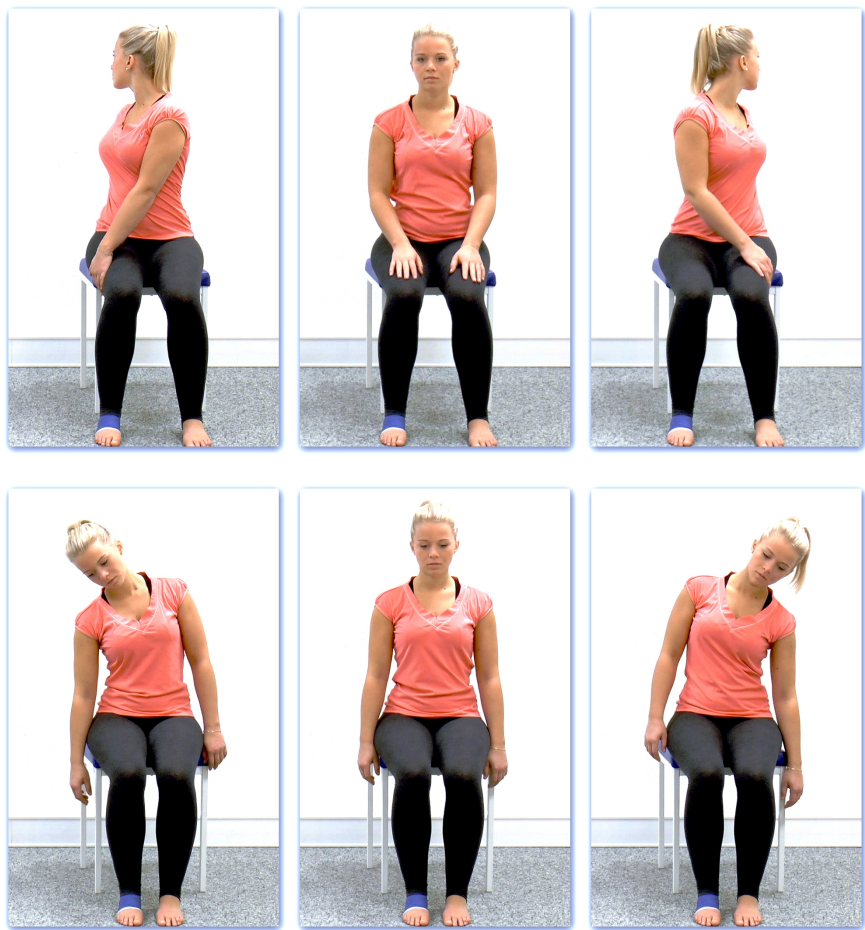
If there is no improvement or you could not feel a difference in the movements in the beginning, you probably require a different direction of exercise. The principle of the exercise, however, remains the same.

Basically, if you can feel a difference, exercise the better option. That might seem strange at first, but once you have understood it and successfully put it into practice, it becomes really easy. Sooner or later you will find an exercise after which your discomforts will suddenly disappear. From that moment on, these exercises can become highly addictive, partly because you will suddenly have the feeling that you have recovered part of the responsibility for your own health and that you can do something straight away when you feel an ache or pain.

Crucial to success is that you perform the exercises mindfully, i.e. that you put your mind and heart into the exercises.

The three planes of movement

The testing of movements is always performed on the basis of the three base planes of space, i.e. the body. The “yes plane” (sagittal plane) depicts bending and stretching movements, like e.g. nodding your head. The “no plane” (horizontal plane) depicts horizontal turning movements as e.g. performed when shaking your head. The “maybe plane” (frontal plane) depicts sideways movements, like e.g. the leaning of your head to the left and right.



The “no plane” and the “maybe plane”

Overview of the exercise sequence

Test

Testing the movement: which is the more comfortable direction?

Testing the breathing: how does the breathing best match the more comfortable direction of movement? Does it feel more comfortable when

- you move in the better direction while breathing in and return to the middle while breathing out? Or
- when you move in the better direction while breathing out and return while breathing in?

Exercise

Repeat the “comfortable combination” of breathing and movement for several breaths or minutes. After breathing in and out, stop breathing and movement at the same time.

Retest

Retest the movement first to the better, and then to the worse side. Be aware of the difference to the initial test.