

## OUR HOLISTIC TREATMENT PROTOCOL

---

**After a thorough evaluation by Dr. Weiss and a staff physical therapist,** a comprehensive, holistic treatment program is devised for the patient. It is important to note that because similar symptoms can be caused by different underlying problems, each patient's program must be individualized.

The basic plan involves a combination of internal and external manual therapies aimed at addressing pelvic muscle and nerve dysfunction and/or injury. More invasive therapies (such as trigger point injections, Botox® injections and nerve blocks) are administered by Dr. Weiss as required. Additional holistic components are then added in accordance with the patient's unique needs. Dr. Weiss and the therapist confer regularly regarding the patient's progress and adjust the program accordingly.

### **Treatments by Dr. Weiss:**

- Internal myofascial release
- Dry needling of trigger points
- Anesthetic injection of trigger points
- Botox® injections
- Pudendal nerve block
- Subcutaneous tissue infiltration
- Homeopathic and pharmacologic remedies
- Acupuncture (in conjunction with other therapies)

### **Treatments by the staff physical therapists:**

- Internal and external myofascial release
- External manual energy techniques (METS)
- Soft-tissue mobilization (STM)
- Joint and lumbar spine mobilization
- Connective tissue manipulation (CTM)
- Strain-counter-strain (muscle rebalancing)
- LPG® CelluM6 connective tissue therapy
- Cold laser therapy
- Pelvic floor stretching/strengthening
- Neural mobilization
- Neuromuscular re-education
- Biofeedback
- Home exercise programs

### **Treatments by Associated Practitioners:**

- The Feldenkrais Method® (body awareness training)

- Podiatry (problems related to the feet)
- Physiatry (therapy performed by an M.D. specialist in spinal and sacral abnormalities)
- Stress reduction/behavior modification
- Nutritional counseling

## **Protocol Overview**

### **Treatment by Dr. Weiss and Our Physical Therapy Staff**

Internal and external manual treatments focus on eradicating trigger points, normalizing shortened muscles, and decreasing connective tissue hypersensitivity. Various methods are used by our physical therapists, including: Myofascial or trigger point release (performed by Dr. Weiss, as well as the therapists); muscle energy techniques (METS) to restore balance and alignment; joint mobilization (JM) to eliminate stiffness; soft-tissue mobilization (STM) to relax muscles and restore normal tissue texture; and strain-counter-strain to address muscle imbalances.

Our therapists also use other powerful non-invasive modalities including: biofeedback to retrain muscles for relaxation or strengthening); cold laser therapy (to stimulate the body's natural healing process; and the LPG® Cellu M6 device to disrupt connective tissue restrictions.

Each patient is assessed regularly by Dr. Weiss to determine if their program requires modification. Occasionally, he finds that the above manual modalities are successfully resolving the patient's pain or dysfunction. However, given the complexity of the cases we see at our center, many patients require more invasive internal treatment that must be performed by a physician. In such cases, Dr. Weiss generally starts with dry needling or injection of pelvic floor trigger points. When necessary, he then progresses (as determined by patient's condition) to infiltration of tender subcutaneous connective tissue with anesthetic agents, Botox® injections into spastic, tender muscles unresponsive to other therapies, and nerve blocks with cortisone and/or anesthetics for nerve trauma and entrapment.

Dr. Weiss also frequently incorporates homeopathic remedies and topical or oral pharmacologic agents for pain relief and/or muscle relaxation into the patient's program until pain reaches tolerable levels. Whenever possible, homeopathic or topical pharmacologic agents are used to avoid side effects.

Homeopathic remedies work on an energetic level to help the body heal itself. They contain minute amounts of animal, plant, or mineral substances that are diluted to the point where only the substance's energy (quantum) remains. The substance chosen is one that, in much larger concentrations, would cause the symptoms the patient is experiencing. Homeopathic remedies stimulate the body, much like a vaccination, to increase resistance and promote healing, but with no potential harmful impact.

### **Treatments by Associated Practitioners**

Patients with obvious biomechanical abnormalities of the spine, sacrum, or feet are referred to an M.D. physiatrist (spine and sacroiliac specialist), or a podiatrist (foot specialist). Since problems with these underlying skeletal structures may cause pelvic floor muscle and nerve pathology, it is extremely important to address them. The failure to do so may make it difficult, or impossible, for us to effectively treat and resolve the patient's pelvic pain condition.

Because it is essential to quiet the sensitized, "up regulated" nervous system, mind-directed therapy is also included in our treatment protocol. Rather than explore past psychological traumas, we suggest that patients consider cognitive behavioral therapy and stress reduction counseling to help them cope with and manage pain. These methods incorporate meditation, visualization, and mindfulness (living in the present moment rather than the past or future).

Nutritional therapy is another, very important, component of the holistic program. Given that nutritional deficiencies can perpetuate muscle and joint dysfunction, the treatment we administer is likely to be ineffective if proper nutrition for these structures is lacking.

The Feldenkrais Method® is also recommended. It uses gentle, neurologically based movements and touch to help the patient learn more functional, non-injurious movement patterns. Patients find the non-invasive sessions to be interesting, deeply relaxing and effective.

### **The Patient's Role**

We believe in empowering our patients by providing a thorough knowledge base about their conditions and encouraging them to embrace all components of the healing journey. One of the keys to our success lies in obtaining the patient's willingness to become partners in their care and share responsibility for the outcome.

Perhaps the patient's most important responsibility is to recognize that they have a complex condition that is likely to require time, consistent therapy, and their commitment to a specific treatment plan to achieve lasting relief. This recognition lessens anxiety and promotes the body's ability to heal.

Our goal is to facilitate, with the patient's participation, a full recovery that lasts! To help achieve that goal, we recommend our Home Program to many of our patients.

### **The Home Program**

The Home Program was developed by our physical therapy staff. It includes external stretching and strength training exercises, kegel exercises, diaphragmatic breathing, do-it-yourself internal manual therapy, and the appropriate use of a "theracane" and other devices for treating external trigger points. Willing partners can also be trained to perform some of the internal manual stretches and compressions the physical therapist uses. These include techniques for treating urinary urgency and frequency in women, as well as the vaginal pain and tightness that accompany intercourse, making penetration difficult and unpleasant.

A chapter is devoted to the Home Program in Dr. Weiss' forthcoming book, *Breaking Through Chronic Pelvic Pain: A Holistic Approach for Relief*.

### **Wisdom Healing Qigong**

For patients interested in an alternative healing approach with the potential to speed their recovery, we recommend Wisdom Healing Qigong. This powerful self-directed therapy was developed by Qigong grandmaster Dr. Pang Ming, a physician trained in both Western and Chinese traditional medicine, and the founder of China's largest non-medicinal hospital. Rather than medicines, surgeries and special diets, Dr. Pang's treatment program consists exclusively of daily Qigong practice combined with gentle exercise. It has been used to treat many thousands of patients suffering from a huge range of ailments with an overall 95% success rate (from complete cure to noticeable improvement) and has been studied extensively and chronicled by well-known authors and journalists.

'Qi' means 'life force' or 'energy'. 'Gong' means 'cultivation' in the sense of disciplined effort or work, involving both body and mind, that is applied to a formal practice. Thus, Qigong can be defined as "integrative energy work". It is a healing art, which originated in China over 5,000 years ago, and for which western science can now provide a clear explanation. It has been passed down in a variety of forms or disciplines, each with its own particular focus.

The "Wisdom Healing" form developed by Dr. Pang (referred to as Shineng Qigong in China, or Chi Lel in the United States) is a standing meditative practice, the beginning level of which is

geared toward self-healing. It incorporates gentle body movement with visualization techniques that together, promote physical and emotional well-being and mental clarity. The beginning level is easily learned in workshops and can be practiced at home with the use of the DVD and CDs that are available.

Introductory seminars with one of Dr. Pang's protégés, Master Mingtong Gu, are available in the San Francisco Bay Area, other parts of the United States, China and Europe. Dr. Weiss is studying with Master Gu, a powerful healer and teacher, and highly recommends Wisdom Healing Qigong to his local patients.