

Frequently Asked Questions about Body Memory



1. What is body memory?

Body memory refers to the energy of past experiences that is stored in the body. Your body converts the physical sensations, emotions and psychological impressions of your experiences into various forms of energy. When you feel overwhelmed or threatened by an experience, a protective mechanism is triggered that stores the energy in your body until a later date when you are able and willing to fully experience it.

Body memory creates tension that adversely affects the function of every system in the body. It has been discovered that many of the chronic, recurrent symptoms you commonly experience in your body are caused by body memory that has accumulated for years.

2. What is Body Memory Recall?

Body Memory Recall (BMR) is a form of therapeutic bodywork and integrates four mind-body therapy techniques; Myofascial Release, Cranial Sacral Therapy, Visceral Memory Release and Unwinding. Collectively, these techniques comprehensively treat the effects of body memory and maximize a person's innate self-healing abilities to release it.

BMR supports the complete release of body memory from all systems of the body. The approach was developed in 1997 by Jonathan A. Tripodi, a physical therapist and pioneer in the field of body memory therapy.

3. A Brief Description of BMR techniques.

Unwinding

Unwinding refers to the release of body memory through involuntary movement. A person can relax without releasing body memory which is why people remain still throughout a massage or other types of bodywork treatment. A release differs from relaxation in that it is dynamic and is orchestrated by the body's own innate self-healing abilities.

Unwinding is not something a therapist does to a person's body. Rather, it is a natural internal event that occurs when the body's protective response to a past experience or experiences is released. A therapist cannot make unwinding happen. He can only support it to occur.

With gentle, sensitive touch, a BMR therapist communicates safety to the body which disarms outdated protective responses and allows the natural self-healing ability to unwind to occur.

Unwinding and releasing or synonymous with movement. As the body unwinds, it may shake or tremble, get hot or cold and suppressed emotions can surface and release. Sometimes, individuals will involuntarily move into positions of old injuries or trauma, an experience referred to as "positional memory release."

Because of our lack of familiarity with unwinding and the fear of losing control, our body's most powerful ability to heal itself has been minimized to yawning. Yawning is the most common experience of unwinding. Its involuntary movement coincides with a release of tension. The beauty of unwinding is that we were designed to do it. A BMR therapist can help you to experience unwinding more deeply and experience relief unlike anything you previously imagined was possible.

Myofascial Release

Myofascial release is the component of BMR that treats connective tissue, also referred to as fascia. Fascia is a continuous, web-like tissue that surrounds and interconnects every structure in your body. Unlike a muscle that has a defined location in the body, fascia is three dimensional and is uninterrupted from head to toe.

Research in biophysics has revealed how fascia when hydrated becomes a liquid crystalline substance capable of receiving, storing and transmitting our experiences in the form of bioelectricity. When body memory develops, it is structurally and energetically encoded within the fascia.

Body memory causes muscles to tense and over time the surrounding fascia hardens and restricts. Since fascia surrounds every structure in the body, fascial restrictions create pressure on all structures in the body. Myofascial tension and restriction directly cause muscle and joint problems, including pain and mal-alignment.

Myofascial release consists of gentle, sustained pressure and stretch of myofascial restriction for 3-5 minutes, sometimes longer, until a release is felt. As restrictions are released, movement is restored and so is the transmission of stored bioelectricity or body memory.

Myofascial release techniques can be applied to all major areas of the body including the arms, legs, back and neck.

Cranial Sacral Therapy

When you perceive an experience as threatening or overwhelming, your nervous system sends a message to your muscles to take action. When you are unable or unwilling to act, you FREEZE.

The freeze response creates a high degree of tension in the body. In his book, *Waking the Tiger*, PhD psychologist Peter Levine describes how humans can remain in the freeze response long after the threatening or overwhelming experience has passed. This explains why so many people remain tense despite good therapy and exercise that does not result in the release of the freeze response. The freeze response maintains muscle guarding even while you sleep.

Cranial Sacral Therapy consists of light, sensitive touch to areas of the head, body and spine, which relaxes the nervous system and releases the freeze response. Cranial sacral techniques are also used to release connective tissue or fascial restrictions around the spinal cord, brain, sacrum and head.

Visceral Myofascial Release

Low back pain and organ dysfunction are associated with protective muscle guarding in the abdomen that develops from body memory.

The abdominal psoas muscles, pelvic floor and respiratory diaphragm. lock down in response to stress. When stress is stored, especially emotion, these muscles stay tight creating abdominal tensions that collectively cause shallow breathing and displace organs out of their ideal position.

Abdominal tensions from body memory, which include surgical scarring, also limit the passage of fluid and metabolic contents within the organs and their circulatory vessels. Spastic colon, gastric reflux, colicystitis, constipation, infertility and urinary incontinence are common examples of the effects of stored stress.

Visceral Myofascial Release incorporates gentle, rhythmic massage with sustained pressure and stretch around organs to release muscle guarding, scarring and body memory. Visceral myofascial release restores full healthy breathing, proper digestion, elimination, reproduction and circulation.

4. What is a BMR session like?

Interview: Your BMR session begins with an interview, during which you share with the therapist your medical history, current health conditions and goals for treatment. The therapist may also inquire about traumatic, stressful or particularly stressful experiences, past or present, which are often the source of body memory. Examples include injuries, illness, pain, trauma, abuse, surgery and overwhelming change.

Posture Evaluation: The interview is followed by an evaluation of your posture. The therapist will look for evidence of the freeze response and myofascial tension which pulls the body out of its ideal alignment. He will also identify "epicenters", or central areas of tension.

Imagine if you scrunched the center of a flat sheet. You would notice the tension created in the center of the sheet would extend into all four corners. Epicenters of tension in the body have a similar effect. A BMR therapist identifies and treats epicenters of tension which tend to be the primary cause of stress, pain and dysfunction.

Treatment: The therapist utilizes the information gathered in the interview and the postural evaluation to begin hands on treatment. Once his hands contact your body, he relies on the highly trained senses in his hands to locate and treat body memory. BMR bodywork may be combined with therapeutic dialogue to encourage relaxation and deepen the self healing process.

Follow-up Treatment: After your BMR treatment, the therapist will note changes in your posture, ask you how you feel from the treatment and provide recommendations on how to proceed. The frequency of treatment depends on what you want to achieve, the condition of your body and how you respond to the initial treatments.

Self-Care & Home Exercises: Your therapist will provide you with self care recommendations including exercises that will help you maintain and further your progress. If needed, s/he may recommend that you include other health care professionals such as a personal trainer, counselor, acupuncturist, dietician or physician to comprehensively address your unique needs for healing.

5. How do you feel after a BMR session?

You may feel relaxed and experience increased freedom of movement. Symptoms, such as pain, can temporarily increase from the release of stored stress but eventually decrease considerably as your body integrates and returns to a state of balance.

It takes energy to integrate the physical freedom, toxins, emotions and memories from a release of body memory. In general, a short period of rest, adequate hydration, vital nutrition and gentle exercise will maximize your self-healing process.

6. Can you feel worse after a BMR session?

Yes. There can be down times when you feel worse, however these periods are temporary and followed by significant change and progress.

7. What if memories surface?

When sensations, emotions and memories that have been suppressed surface, your therapist will guide you to open to them and experience them fully. Insights can occur during or after a memory recall that provide you with a new understanding about yourself and your past. If needed, your BMR therapist will recommend that you incorporate counseling, journaling or other self-help therapies that support you to integrate and resolve your body memories.

Conscious memory of a specific event does not always accompany a release. Individuals can carry a melting pot of stresses from many different experiences over many years, most of which are physical and emotional. For the most part, to the release of these accumulated stresses is all that is needed to feel a shift, or an improvement in symptoms.

Keep in mind that body memory relates to experiences you have already survived. The stressful events are over, but the associated survival energy is stored within the body's tissues as chronic muscle tension and patterns of restriction. Survival involves protection. When the body protects itself, it often disconnects from an experience that is overwhelming. BMR allows you to release bound up protective energy from the past and move more freely in the present. This transformational process of release and integration restores ideal health, function, and vitality.

8. Who is a good candidate to receive BMR?

A good candidate for BMR is anyone suffering from pain, stress, emotional challenges, overwhelming change, or a particularly challenging condition that has failed to resolve from other forms of treatment and therapy. BMR is safe and effective for seniors, children and infants and provides both relief and resolution of the conditions listed on the following page.

Body Memory Recall can provide relief and resolution for these conditions and others.

Joint & Muscle Dysfunctions

Fibromyalgia
Low Back Pain
Sacral Iliac Pain
Neck Pain
Joint & Muscle Pain
TMJ
Headaches
Scoliosis
Restricted Movement
Post-Surgical Pain & Dysfunction

Organ Dysfunctions

Digestive & Intestinal Disorders
Gallstones
Asthma
Breathing Problems
Heart Conditions

Immune System Disorders

Chronic Fatigue
Fibromyalgia
Lupus

Pediatric Conditions

Scoliosis
Autism
ADD
Hyperactivity

Infant Conditions

Colic
Torticollis
Poorly Shaped Head
Breathing Problems

Stress Conditions

Anxiety & Depression
Panic Disorders
Shock
Phobias & Fears

Reproductive & Pelvic Conditions

Infertility
Pelvic Pain or Painful Intercourse
Ovarian Cysts
Excessive Weight Gain or Loss
Overwhelming Change