



Inner Balance
health clinics

Inner Balance Health Clinics

CrossFitter's guide to Osteopathy

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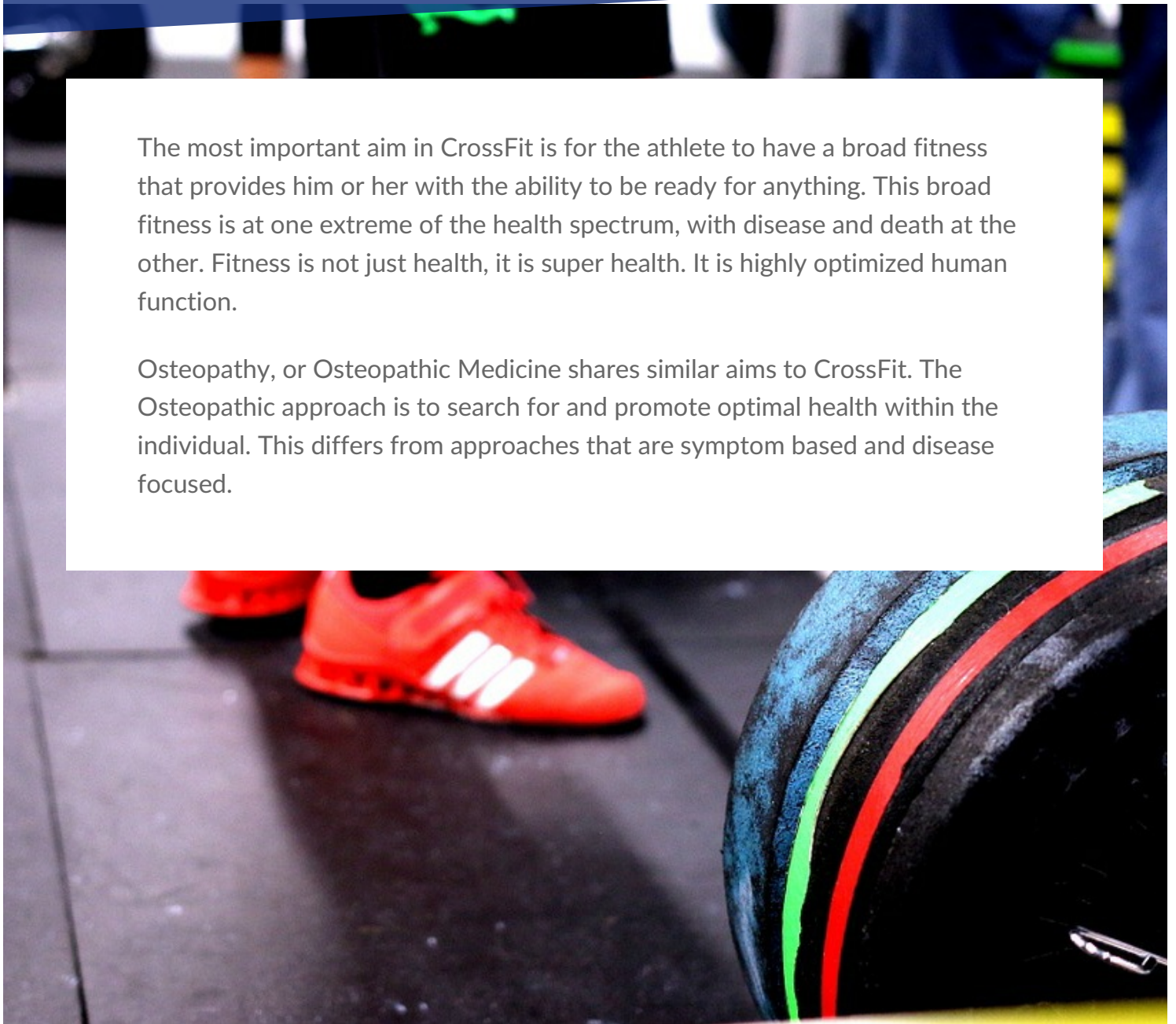
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What is Osteopathy and why is helpful for CrossFitters?

The most important aim in CrossFit is for the athlete to have a broad fitness that provides him or her with the ability to be ready for anything. This broad fitness is at one extreme of the health spectrum, with disease and death at the other. Fitness is not just health, it is super health. It is highly optimized human function.

Osteopathy, or Osteopathic Medicine shares similar aims to CrossFit. The Osteopathic approach is to search for and promote optimal health within the individual. This differs from approaches that are symptom based and disease focused.



Where Does The Name 'Osteopathy' Come From And What Does It Mean?

When most people hear the word 'Osteopathy' they immediately think of bones, or that Osteopaths treat bones. There's more to it that I can quickly explain.

Osteopathy developed in the USA in 1892 as a new system of medical care. The new idea was that optimal human health depended upon optimal function of the musculoskeletal system. **A loss of function in one area of the body would reduce the overall health of the individual, and this may lead to pain, injury and potentially, disease.**

To assess the function of the musculoskeletal system, Osteopaths observe and assess your movement. Movement happens at joints, and is caused by muscles pulling on bones. Osteopaths assess movement by observing how the joints and bones move. This is where the 'Osteo-' part of the word comes from (Osteo means 'bone').

The Osteopath observes the movement of bones to understand how this might contribute to pain, injury or disease. This is where the '-pathy' part of the word comes from (Pathos means disease).

So, Osteopathy makes perfect sense. **Osteopathy is about assessing your movement to promote optimal health through optimal function.** Osteopaths aim to optimise your health by identifying and helping you correct sub-optimal, impaired or abnormal movement.

How Does Optimal Movement Optimise Your Health?

Any impaired or abnormal movement within your body represents a loss, or decrease in your overall function. A loss of function reduces your fitness and therefore, your health. A body that has abnormal movement, has reduced function, and this is a move away from optimal health.



How Might Osteopathy Help The CrossFitter?



By being observing the way you move, the osteopath can identify:

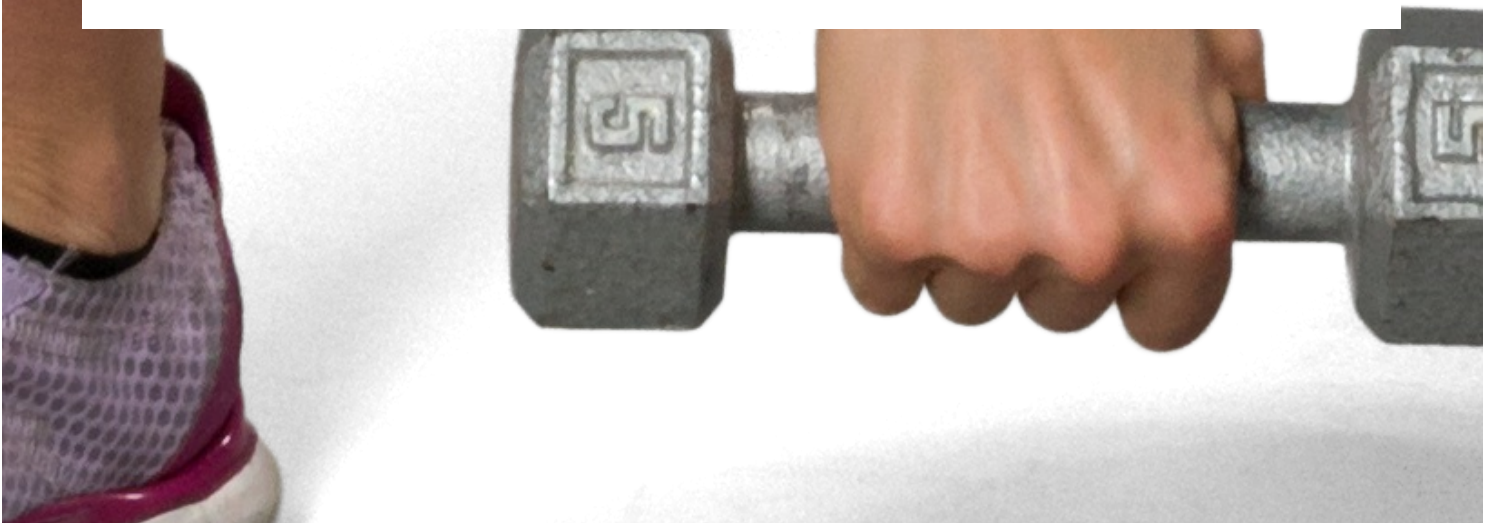
- normal movement that could be improved and optimised
- abnormal or poorly controlled movement patterns that reduce your ability to perform at your best
- restricted, excessive or unstable movements that prevent or limit optimal function
- injury or disease or disuse

Squats

For example, during a squat, the gluteal muscles are most strongly activated when the hip crease is lower than the knee (when it's Ass to Grass). To perform a deep squat, and activate your gluteal muscles most strongly, you must have full mobility in your ankle, knee and hip joints. A loss of movement in one or more of these joints can prevent you from completing the deep squat.

You might still be able to squat to 90 degrees and develop your gluteal muscles ... but it's not optimal. **The Osteopath might help to improve or correct this movement dysfunction** and enable you to perform a deeper squat. The flow on from this will be noticed in many other activities of sport and daily living.

Another athlete might have excessive movement in her right hip. She is able to perform a deep squat, and yet has a pinching pain in her right hip as she begins to push up from the bottom of her squat. This pain limits this athletes ability to perform the squat. It also creates stress, fear and frustration, none of which represent optimal health.



How does an Osteopath work with CrossFitters?

The Osteopath observes the athlete and notices that her right hip, knee and ankle collapse when she begins to push at the bottom of the squat. Her hip turns inward, her knee moves inward and her leg turns outward. Her ankle also collapses as the foot flattens.

By helping the athlete to correct this, the Osteopath helps her squat without hip pain. This relieves her stress, fear and frustration and replaces it with a sense of a achievement. She can now get in the 'zone' during CrossFit.

Lastly, an athlete might perform a technically perfect squat at low and medium weight, yet he is unable to improve his one rep max. The Osteopath notices that when he squats with a heavy weight, he bends too much from his hips. This pitches him forward making it harder to push up from his heels.

With further assessment, the Osteopath notices that he is stiff in his upper spine. This loss of movement makes it difficult for him to stay upright during the heavy squat. This is why he bends forward at the hips. So, the Osteopath works with the Athlete to improve the movement in his thoracic spine. This then enables him to remain upright and perform a heavier squat.

In each of these examples, the athlete was having difficulty with his or her squat. And in each example the problem was different and the solution was different.

The combination of Osteopathy and CrossFit enabled these Athletes to move toward optimal health through optimal functional movement.

Another Important Principle For the CrossFitter

The way you use your body can change the shape and composition of your body. For example, the bones in the dominant arm of a tennis player are thicker and have more density than their non-dominant arm. That's because the force and torque of the tennis stroke cause the bones to adapt and change.

This is an easy to understand example of an amazing function of the body. And yet what about more subtle changes? What about that squat of yours that's lopsided ... where you push more through the right leg. Your body ... muscles, skeleton, and nerves ... will adapt to this imbalance.

What about that alternate grip you're using with the deadlift? Your body will adapt and develop an asymmetry from right to left if you use it all the time.

And what about the way you strain your neck without noticing every time you do that box jump or wall ball?

These subtle ways that you use your body have an impact on the structure of your body in the long term. Would you choose to do something that is sub-optimal or something that optimises your function ... if you had the choice?

The key message to understand is that the way you function ... or use your body ... is linked to the structure of your body. And the structure of your body will change in response to the way you use it.

This function-structure relationship is a core focus in Osteopathy / Osteopathic Medicine. Your Osteopath will look at the big things and the little things, so that you can optimise your function for better performance and optimal health.

Wholism



CrossFit and Osteopathy share a broad view of health and fitness, as apposed to a narrow view.

For example, the aim of a marathon runner is to run marathons ... not to be strong, powerful, flexible or any of the other non-endurance fitness domains that CrossFitters train for. Marathoners train for endurance, rather than short bursts of explosive movement.

Optimise your movement

The CrossFitter trains for a broad fitness that not only includes cardiovascular endurance, but also: stamina, strength, flexibility, power, speed, coordination, accuracy, agility, and balance.

And there are substantial mental health benefits, especially in reducing anxiety and depression. But CrossFit brings more than that. It helps create focus, grit and social support ... which are elements of mental fitness.

This broad, or wholistic approach, has been the hallmark of Osteopathy / Osteopathic Medicine since it's beginning. So, the Osteopath sees the importance of this wholism and treats their patients with this in mind.

By watching how you move as a whole, your Osteopath thinks beyond one or two problem areas, and sees how this fits together for your movement as a whole. Your Osteopath will help you optimise your movement to optimise your potential for fitness and health.





The Body Has Self Healing Mechanisms

Survival is a primary function of your mind and body and when you are fit, your body is optimised for healing. When you get a cut, your body automatically begins to heal that cut.

Sometimes our body gets this automatic healing wrong, and the results can be disastrous, e.g. asthma, allergies, and auto-immune disease.

Nevertheless, the fitter your body ... by definition ... the more effective these automatic healing functions are.

Now, we can't say that CrossFit or Osteopathy / Osteopathic Medicine can help you heal yourself ... there's been no studies done to show this.

But what we can say is that when you optimise your fitness, you optimise your health ... and part of this is to optimise the way your body heals itself.

The way CrossFit and Osteopathy / Osteopathic Medicine optimises your fitness is through optimising functional movement, optimising the way your body uses the energy systems, and by optimising your mental fitness.

The Most Sensible Way To Approach Your Health Is To Take These Core Principles Into Account

First, understand that the optimal function of your body allows you to optimise your fitness.

To optimise your function, you need expert help to ensure that you are moving in the best way possible. To prevent pain and injury, you need expert help to identify poor movement patterns, restricted movement or unstable movement.

The quicker you can improve in all these areas, the quicker you will be able to optimise your fitness.

Osteopaths are expert at assessing the function and movement of your whole body to identify major and minor areas for improvement.





Principles 2 and 3

Second, you are not a back, or an arm, or a knee ... you are a person ... and so you must be assessed as a person, and not just as a back, or arm, or knee.

This is especially important for the CrossFitter who uses their whole body in such dynamic movements as the snatch, kipping pull-up, overhead squat, handstand pushup, deadlift, burpee etc

Third, rather than being afraid or worried about injury, it's essential to know that your body does have self-healing mechanisms. While treatments can be used to help with healing, it's also important to understand how to support your body to heal itself. Your Osteopath can help with this by the expert assessment of the way you use your body.

Are You A CrossFitter?

The Osteopathic approach to the fitness and health of a CrossFitter is based on this understanding.

The neuromusculo-skeletal system is the primary machinery of life. These tissues and other soft tissue structures are how we move and experience the world, which is why they are so important in Osteopathic Medicine.

Find Out How Your Local Osteopath, **Dr Lachlan Goodwin** Can Help You Optimise Your Fitness

Call 9437 9555 to book your appointment.

or [Click Here](#) to visit our website

(Caution: Your friends might demand to know your secret weapon)

