

This article is for people who are interested in the well being of animals, and can adjust their view of the therapy world to more comprehensive pastures.

McTimoney Manipulation is one of many therapies, which are complementary to Veterinary treatment, but by no means a substitute for thorough veterinary assessment and diagnosis. A McTimoney treatment, may help in many conditions, but is by no means a cure-all. The treatment requires veterinary agreement as the law states to date, to protect the animal's wellbeing. The Practitioner will have graduated from the University of Wales with a PG Dip in McTimoney Manipulation and will be a member of a recognised body.

Chiropractic treatment has entered the awareness of many, in recent years. For me it was a step into unknown territory, and made me realise that there are other alternatives to 'conventional' Medicine. For my inter-vertebra ligament injury it was not too helpful, as for my horse, where it cured a non-diagnosed lameness with one treatment, it was. So what is this magic therapy? Not magic at all, just when it is the right treatment for the problem, it sometimes appears to be.

Whilst anatomy and physiology taught me that the spine, although flexible, is a rigid structure, I was also taught to observe without scientifically underpinning my observations, the results are real. I will try to explain!

The nervous system has a major control function in every cell of the body. It even controls the next major system, the hormone system. The nervous system can lose its ability to function at its best, both in controlling and counteracting disease, when interfered with by a *misaligned* joint.

A Mis-alignment is when two parts of bone, which compose to a joint are not quite sitting in the right place. The joint is still functional to a certain extent, but could be painful. More importantly, the surrounding nervous pathways could be impinged (i.e. a trapped nerve). This is best explained in the spine, where two adjacent vertebrae form a joint. Nerves are leaving the joint through just a narrow gap, which is surrounded by muscles, ligaments, tendons and other soft tissue. The nerve communication to the brain, and back to the whole of the body can be interfered with by a mis-alignment. In an attempt to correct this very slight miss-positioning of the bones, the body can react with inflammation, pain and muscle tightness (spasm). Sometimes however, the body is able to correct everything back to where it is meant to be. In some cases, the mis-alignment can not be corrected by the body and needs external assistance. As these joint movements are very small and not discernible on x-ray, they are very difficult to be diagnosed by a vet. The McTimoney practitioner is one of several therapists who are trained to palpate, locate and correct this miss-positioning of the joint.

Misalignments are caused by daily activity, not very helpful, I know. Repetitive strain movements, for example pulling on the lead, jumping after toys, twisting, turning and playing with a friend. This does not mean that every dog needs treatment, although it could well be possible, especially as these misalignments, if not corrected, can cause other problems later on. Imagine you performed all daily activities, favouring one side of your body (which you probably do), one side is under active and the other side over

strained. Once this is established you will show symptoms of discomfort. When this manifests in animals they will show symptoms such as, lameness, change in gait, unwillingness to exercise, go up or down stairs or jump into the car. Other bodily systems can be influenced, which are often more difficult to relate to the original misalignment.

The McTimoney Treatment corrects these misalignments by 'high velocity-low altitude' hand actions. This works so well because the movement is faster than the tightened muscle's ability to react. The milieu can then relax, as the joint moves back into the correct position. The treatment itself is not painful, as the adjustment is very light, however there may be a little discomfort, as the affected area is tender in the first place. Over the next 24-48 hrs the animal may experience some stiffness and soreness, comparable to muscle ache. It is beneficial to the success of the treatment, that the animal has the opportunity to rest and has some time to themselves, without strenuous exercise or vigorous play.