

## When Nothing Else Works

The Bonacci Method and my Neural Centralization Technique were reverse-engineered during a 15-year period treating thousands of severe, chronic and complicated pain patients during the height of the opioid epidemic. At first, I thought I was just good at my job like many practitioners. Then, doctors and patients encouraged me to continue to develop and brand my technique, as it was getting unprecedented results.

Every patient referred to me had seen multiple physical therapists or chiropractors, or other highly skilled manual therapists or massage therapists. They had also been given various exercise protocols for pain relief — you name it, they tried it. They endured multiple medical treatments from long-term oral medication to interventional pain management, and often surgeries — some successful for a time, and some not.

I faced scrutiny from other practitioners whose knee-jerk reaction was, "Many doctors proclaim they have created a technique — most likely you're really just taking from other techniques and calling it your own." I had to check myself, then re-check myself, which I did over the years again and again. Is that what I was doing? Or did I reverse-engineer an advanced technique? In the early days I was not sure, but as time passed I became confident that I had developed something special that was all my own.

Yes, I did study concepts from other techniques — that's how most new creations take form — by learning from what has come before. I used existing knowledge from various methods to understand what I was seeing clinically and apply my own, new strategies to solve pain.

So how are TBM and NCT new and different — and an advancement in the field of manual therapy and chiropractic?

Let's use MMA (mixed martial arts) as an analogy. MMA is a product of multiple pure arts, such as boxing, kick-boxing, wrestling, jiu-jitsu and many other grappling and striking disciplines. MMA has become its own art, mastering many different disciplines and demanding from practitioners to utilize creativity in combining these skills. The fighter must constantly

assess the situation and instinctively make split-second decisions about what move needs to be made, and when.

Each individual discipline deserves respect. In its pure form, each discipline offers something unique and effective in an effort to win the fight. A pure striker or pure wrestler simply doesn't stand a chance in a mixed martial arts fight. The Bonacci Method is no different than MMA, except the fight is against complex pain — and the larger fight at that moment in my life was a fight against the chronic pain epidemic, a \$700 billion industry affecting more than 40% of adults. That huge number is more than heart disease, diabetes and cancer combined. Read that again.

In the world of manual therapy, there are many pure disciplines — for example, multiple chiropractic techniques, osteopathic manual manipulations, myofascial release with Rolfing, and cranio-sacral, just to name a few. Each offering a pure science in its own right, bringing something essential to the table, trying to get the body to function optimally and resolve pain and injury. However, in my mind, standing alone each pure discipline left something to be desired.

In order to understand my technique, one must gain an understanding of the genre of patient I was treating. When a patient is on long-term oral medication, the treating physician must justify continued use of medicine, and in this case many were prescribed opioids. In order to stay on their opioids, the patient was required to show they had tried and failed with all of the following: physical therapy or chiropractic, first-line medications, pain management interventions, and even surgery. These were chronic pain patients who had been on the medical system treadmill for years, never thinking they could get off their pain meds.

These patients were suffering from conditions such as RSDS, moderate to severe stenosis, unhealed disc bulges, spondylolisthesis, EDS, failed surgeries, and various co-morbidities. With many of these patients, it was a contra-indication, or simply not effective, to use a high-velocity chiropractic adjustment in the traditional sense — a “crack” — or myofascial release, or traditional physical therapy exercises. And in fact, many of these patients had experienced negative results with traditionally applied treatments, often experiencing an increase in pain or their condition made worse. In the best-case scenario, they felt temporary relief — which still wasn't enough to get them off their pain pills.

First, what I did was modified certain moves from various disciplines to apply to chronic pain and injury, so as to not increase the pain cycle, cause more damage to the body, and to give them hope and show some immediate improvement. Every single patient I was treating had already been to many physical therapists, or chiropractors, and I was well aware was thinking, *why the hell am I here* — I had to have a good explanation and a treatment that worked. For me, it was nothing more than putting food on my table to feed my family and keep my referring physicians happy.

At the time I was taking a lot of insurance, which had horrible allotment for a chiropractic, meaning I had five or six approved visits to get them better. I had to make each visit count.

Second, I had to consider the way in which I could apply mixed disciplines in one session. For example, it simply wasn't time-effective for the patient to come to me and get an adjustment, and then go to their Rolfer and get skilled manual therapy, and then go to the physical therapist and get exercises. My thought process at the time, was what if I were able to apply what was needed from each discipline in an effective way in one session in order to get an exponential, compounding positive affect on the body's alignment, posture and movement? That would be an amazing achievement. My technique has blossomed several times from there, but that was the essence of the seed of the idea.

NCT is at the heart of the Bonacci Method. NCT is a series of 10 to 15 cervical thoracic and lumbar pelvic manual moves devised to gently align the brain, the central nervous system, and the peripheral nervous system. It was born out of treating thousands of complicated pain patients, thereby doing my own research on what I was experiencing in clinical practice.

Importantly, the moves associated with NCT give insight on diagnosing the origin of the pain or symptom when traditional evaluation falls short. Not only do these moves give clarity on whether the symptom is musculoskeletal or neurological, they also provide direction for manual therapy and exercises, and allow the traditional efforts of treatment and home-care to be more effective.

In conclusion, to answer the questions: Am I self proclaiming to have created a technique? Yes. Did I take from other disciplines to do so? Yes.

The NCT moves, however, to my knowledge, have not been previously engineered, understood, or described by any other technique. The more traditional joint alignment and myofascial moves were established by other techniques, yet have never been applied as multiple disciplines in the manner and combination apparent in my technique, to severe chronic and complicated pain or injury, or to severe fragile medical conditions.