



The Bolte Bridge - Melbourne's Biggest Tuning Fork Bridge

Can Tuning Forks Be Used On Trigger Points To Treat Chronic Pain And Are Tuning Forks More Effective Than Massage Techniques On Trigger Points?

Introduction

Because I am a massage therapist I was interested to look at whether people are using tuning forks as a substitute for trigger point therapy. Can the vibration of tuning forks replace massage? My internet research showed a lot of people are using tuning forks to enhance their treatments. I found people are using tuning forks in massage. Research showed tuning forks are used as a treatment by itself and also to enhance other treatments such as trigger points, acupuncture and Chinese meridians.

Massage is a hands-on manipulation of the soft tissues of the body including muscles, connective tissue, tendons, ligaments and joints. It is an alternative health option to help alleviate the soft tissue discomfort associated with everyday and occupational stresses, muscular overuse and many chronic pain syndromes. I use my knowledge of the trigger point patterns and massage techniques to reduce pain, relax the muscle and restore normal muscle range of movement.

I was curious to know if tuning forks may have the same effect. I have researched on the internet to see if people are using tuning forks instead of massage for trigger point treatments. I did not find many practitioners using tuning forks this way but there are people using tuning forks instead of acupuncture needles. I also found they are being used to enhance different treatment modalities.

Trigger Point Therapy

In 1942, Janet Travell, a recognised leading pioneer in diagnosis and treatment of chronic pain revolutionized our concepts about pain and helped improved the lives of millions of people. She identified muscles and their referral patterns and began to chart these myofascial pain patterns graphically. According to her research, a practitioner could look and scan the body for active trigger points (knots) and re-create the client's pain pattern when pressed. Her research on trigger point massage has become very important in the treatment of chronic pain.

Trigger points develop as a result of trauma, poor posture, repetitive strain, or overwork of muscles. Other causes are stress, getting cold, chemicals, drugs and alcohol, pollutants, etc... The trigger points which refer pain to other parts of the body can cause weakness, pain and limited mobility or flexibility. Trigger point pain often does not refer along a nerve route, many doctors and some manipulative therapists have been confused by presented pain referral patterns. This is because it is often assumed nerve root pressure or other pathology is involved, when more commonly they were observing referred trigger point pain.¹

Below are examples of a trigger point referral patterns²

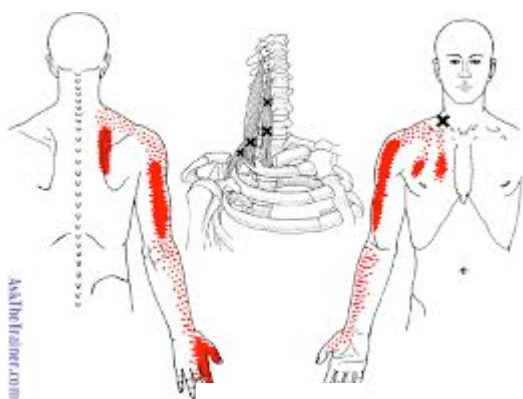


Figure 1



Figure 2

Please note - in the diagrams below:-

X = the position of the trigger point (TrP).

● = the position where the referred pain is felt.

Figure 1 show the scalene trigger point

Figure 2 shows the sternocleidomastoid (SCM) trigger point

Why does Sound Heal?

Every atom, particle, and molecule is in constant vibration and the entire Universe is in a state of vibration. Human beings are in a state of vibration. If there is vibration there is sound. Sound healing is based on the theory of vibration. It looks at how frequency resonates and affects the human body. On the Sound Healing Association website it says "Every organ, cell, bone, tissue and liquid of the body, and also the electromagnetic fields which surround the body (aura), has a healthy vibratory frequency. If we are not resonating with some part of ourselves or of our surroundings, we become dissonant and therefore unhealthy. Our naturally healthy frequency becomes a frequency that vibrates without harmony, creating illness."³ To change ourselves or our environment on the physical or etheric plane we need to identify the sounds that correspond.

¹ . <http://altonadvancedbodywork.co.uk/techniques/trigger-point-therapy/>

² <http://stopsuckingatlife.wordpress.com/tag/myofascia/> and <http://stopsuckingatlife.wordpress.com/tag/myofascia/>

³ <http://globalsoundhealing.net/en/tuningforks>

Tuning Forks and Trigger Points

Tuning forks are designed and calibrated (tested) to produce a pure frequency or tone when activated. They are used in medicine, music and science because of their accurate vibration and harnessing the body's natural capacity to resonate with pure sound.⁴ Tuning forks can heal through sympathetic resonance. The vibration of the tuning fork influencing the vibratory frequency of the trigger points and its associated pain pathways. I thought that through the use of tuning forks it may be possible to project the correct resonant frequency into the trigger point and return it to its normal frequency and relieve the pain. I was not able to find any good research to confirm this on the internet.

In my research I found dry needling is used on trigger points to treat chronic pain. Dry needling focuses on the deactivation of myofascial trigger points. Similar to acupuncture you look for the knot or point of pain and you insert a needle and roll down between your fingers to deactivate the area.⁵ This relaxes the muscles to improve nerve conduction and blood supply.⁶

On Back 2 Life Massage website they wrote "Tuning Fork Therapy is when sound and vibration travel into the body to stimulate the production of nitric oxide which surrounds tissues causing blood vessels to dilate, muscles to relax, and blood pressure to reduce. This creates an interruption in the tension and pain which allows the nervous system and muscles to relax to a normal state promoting healing, balance, and freeing blocked energy. When using tuning forks your body's biochemistry may be altered instantaneously, which can bring your organs, nervous system and muscle tone into harmonic balance. You could quickly enter into a deep state of relaxation."⁷ These findings seemed to be similar to the dry needling work done on trigger points. Because of this I think it may be possible that tuning forks could have the same effect as dry needling and the massage techniques I use.

While I was not able to find much on trigger points and tuning forks from a massage perspective I did come across Acutonics which is "... an integrated system of healing and education that incorporates ancient Taoist teachings of the meridians, pre-meridians and the immortal body with sound." It was developed by Donna Carey, PhD, LAc and Marjorie de Mynck, MA, LMP. It is an energy-based non-invasive treatment method. "Precision calibrated tuning forks are applied to specific acupuncture and acupressure points to access the body's meridian and chakra energy systems."⁸ Tuning forks have been adapted to bodywork for trigger-point release on muscles and joints, and revitalization of connective tissues to release tension and stagnation.⁹

Susan Stone, founder of Stone Health Center, in Southborough, Massachusetts, and a certified Acutonics teacher, outlines reasons for massage therapists to incorporate Acutonics into their repertoire: "It saves the practitioner's thumbs, fingers and hands. It expedites the pain-releasing process. It affords wider access to clients' pain - emotional sources beyond the physical. It provides therapists with a fundamental understanding of traditional Chinese medicine and new approaches and techniques for working with the energies of the body without having to become acupuncturists."¹⁰

⁴ <http://www.healingtuningforks.co.uk/Articles/Sound%20Therapy.pdf>

⁵ <http://mimt.com.au/info/course/dry-needling-course>

⁶ <http://www.osteopathicworks.com.au/dry-needling/>

⁷ <http://www.backs2lifemassage.com/#!services-and-rates/cagb>

⁸ http://www.acupuncture.com/newsletters/m_mar04/main2.htm

⁹ <http://www.massagemag.com/spa/treatment/acutonics.php>

¹⁰ <http://www.massagemag.com/spa/treatment/acutonics.php>

Cases Studies Using Tuning Forks

Case Study 1

A friend volunteered for a treatment from me. I went through the intake questions and responded to her answers so I didn't get to do specific trigger point work. Here is what my friend wrote about the treatment and the effects of the tuning forks:

"I was lucky enough to receive a tuning fork practice healing off Dennis Hedriana on Wednesday the 20th of November.

First of all I answered some questions about my health and my state. What I found really interesting was that it asked questions on how I was feeling that day. I was feeling flat and had been going through some grief. I didn't write down about the grief.

He set up a healing space with massage table and towels and music that immediately put me at ease. He'd already tuned into me before I went into the healing and I blurted out that I was going through the grief of about to turn 45 and not having any children. He had already guessed that what was what the healing was about. I was surprised as a man he really got where I was. I felt so comfortable with him to let the grief out.

Before the healing I've been having asthma attacks for a month, kind of guessing it was about that issue. I'd also been feeling a numbing pain in the chest like there was an energy ball there going around and around.

I also very often get a numbing pain over my ovaries in the crease where my legs and hips joined - this has been going on for years.

Dennis put the forks over these areas without me having to tell him anything. He put them over my ovaries and I remember the music helped too. It was a relief to feel the energy dissipate while tears started releasing down my face.

I could feel the uncomfortable tight energy there start to move outwards very gently. It was very subtle but powerful. I felt very nurtured by the vibrations. I've had many healings but I really responded to the subtle energy of the forks. It felt mainly like blocks were melting away.

I was surprised that the energy in my heart was "overworking" I can't remember how Dennis put it as I was in a zone, but he said I'm putting too much emphasis and decisions on my direction on my heart and not listening to other parts of my body and a more holistic intuition. That's what I think he said. I thought I was following my gut feeling but my heart was sore and did feel under pressure so I'm still contemplating what that means.

I started talking and going into my head once I felt deep grief. Dennis gently led me back to feeling the energy in my heart and ovaries and I started sobbing. I remember the forks just going over the areas very very gently once or twice - that's what it felt like.

I'm so glad he did that as it's been a huge weight that I haven't been able to shift on my own. I felt so much lighter the next day and still feel so much lighter. I was so grateful to have some of that huge burden lifted. I've never felt so much freer from that deep grief than after that tuning fork healing."

Genevieve M.

Case Study 2

I also did a session on a long term client who often gets headaches and has trigger points in the trapezius muscles which cause her headaches. She was not experiencing any headaches but I did find painful knots which referred pain up into her neck and produced a slight headache. I checked the muscle tension and then put tuning forks on the trigger points and also placed the forks near her ears first. She said the sound relaxed her and distressed her from a very busy and long day at the computer. She described referred pain at times when the tuning forks were on the various trigger points. When I had finished the half hour treatment with the forks I checked the texture of the skin and found it had changed. The muscles were also softer and she said they did not feel as painful. She told me the next day that her muscles were much freer but right shoulder tender and she had a headache by the end of the day even though she had not been working at a desk for the day.

Conclusion

In my research I found there are practitioners such as massage therapists and energy healers using tuning forks to compliment their work.¹¹ I found that they are replacing acupuncture needles with tuning forks along the meridian lines and points and getting the same results or better. I was not able to find any research on the internet which identified the vibrational frequency of the trigger points and their referral pain patterns mapped by Travell. Most of the information I found about the use of tuning forks was general information and did not go into much detail. What I want to do in the future is use the tuning forks instead of thumb pressure to see if it will have the same result or effect. My case studies showed the tuning forks can have a greater impact than massage and it will also save my hands. I did get bruises from activating the forks on my legs so I need to sort that out in the future.

¹¹ <http://www.massagemag.com/spa/treatment/acutonics.php>; <http://www.biosonics.com/FAQ-s.html>; <http://tuningforkresearchalliance.blogspot.com.au/search?updated-max=2013-02-07T10:46:00-08:00&max-results=7&start=7&by-date=false>; <http://www.kinesiologyshop.com/Ohm%20Fork%20Brochure%20A4.pdf>; <http://www.innersourcehealth.com/docs/Acutonics%20Planetary%20Tuning%20Forks%20Vibrational%20Healing%20Modalities%20Using%20Tuning%20Forks.pdf>; <http://soundbalancing.net/>; <http://tama-do.com/roothtmls/acupuncture.html>; <http://www.acutonics.com/tuning-forks-use.php>; http://totalfitness.net/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/free-downloads/Beginners_Guide_To_Sound_Healing_With_Tuning_Forks.pdf; <http://www.globalsoundhealing.net/en/tuningforks>; <http://www.healingtuningforks.co.uk/Stock%20List.pdf>; <http://www.ommmreikimi.com/in-formation/nitric-oxide-a-tuning-forks.html>; <http://www.triggerpointtherapy.com.au/Trigger%20Points.html>; <http://saveyourself.ca/articles/self-massage.php>; <http://www.themovementclinic.com/trigger-point-therapy/>