

# The Magic of MPS: A New Approach to Treating Chronic Pain

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by James Armstrong



A decade of research and clinical practice has led to significant progress in the treatment of chronic pain by integrating Eastern and Western therapies into one easy-to-use modality.

## A new direction to the treatment of pain

Microcurrent Point Stimulation, or MPS, is a noninvasive treatment of chronic neuromyofacial pain that is grounded on the principle of drug-free manipulation of the autonomic nervous system by combining Eastern philosophies and Western neurology. This integrative knowledge is then woven into easy-to-apply protocols, which are then treated with MPS-concentrated microcurrent stimulation (within the scope of practice for licensed massage therapists) or manually applied through acupressure.

What makes MPS unique is that this simplified, easy-to-apply and highly effective pain therapy can, in many cases, produce instantaneous outcomes. "Much of chronic pain is musculoskeletal in nature, and much of that is muscular," says Jay Shah, M.D., a physiatrist in the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Clinical Center. "The theory is that by stimulating



acupuncture [and trigger] points, you can significantly relax muscles and the nervous system, and therefore, relieve pain."

### MPS: a massage perspective

William, an MPS practitioner and massage therapist for eight years, was referred a difficult patient: a 60-year-old male Vietnam veteran suffering from bursitis of the left shoulder for more than two years. The client, desperate for help, tried chiropractic, physical therapy, trigger-point injections, acupuncture and traditional massage therapy with little or no outcomes—and in many cases, his pain was worse. He described the pain level as "9.5/10," significant, William thought, for a client who admitted refusing anesthesia during dental procedures.

Given the client's difficult history and tough constitution, William decided to approach this client unconventionally. He started his session by asking him if he had any visible scars located on his body. The client indicated he had several scars, one located over his left eye, the result of a childhood injury. Two other scars were also located in the mid tibialis-anterior region of the shin on both legs, a result of a battlefield injury. William released all three scars bilaterally and then finished the session by stimulating some acupuncture points, targeting emotions. The client's pain level immediately dropped from a 9.5 to a 0. Three years after this treatment, the client's pain levels did not return.

### Basis of MPS therapy

Knowledge of what drives the pain cycle, acupuncture points and philosophies, as well as concentrated microcurrent stimulation (CMS), is the basis of MPS therapy. First, understanding the relationship between up-regulation of the autonomic nervous system and chronic pain is a key. Medical research and years of extensive clinical trials has determined that the following two pathologies hold the greatest influence of up-regulating the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and sympathetically producing a state of fight or flight. This sympathetic up-regulation is what drives the chronic pain and disease cycle.

**1. Subclinical Radiculopathy (nerve root impingement).** A medical term referring to the impingement of nerves and its role in the heightened sensitivity of the ANS that controls the pain cycle. Subclinical radiculopathy refers to the soft-tissue changes surrounding the nerve-root entrapment. Applying CMS paraspinally to erector spinae muscles relaxes tissue and releases impinged nerves, reducing pain and sensitivity. Neurologically, lower back nerve roots influence leg pain and the neck controls the upper limbs.

**2. MPS Scar (Neural) Therapy.** Neural (scar) therapy was developed by two German physician-dentist brothers, Walter and Ferdinand Huneke, in the 1920s and '30s. They accidentally found that when procaine is applied into certain spots, such as scars, it can significantly relieve pain in areas far away from the place of application. The brothers called these spots "interference fields."

The tissues in which interference fields are found can be shown to have abnormal cell membrane resting potential. This creates electrophysiological instability and abnormal afferent signals, which, in turn, trigger abnormal ANS responses, or heightened sensitivity in patients. Applying MPS directly around the scar restores cell membrane electrical potential to normal,

improving cellular metabolism, instantly softening and reducing the scarred tissue. This healthier, local tissue environment facilitates fascia release throughout the body, producing structural realignment and deregulation of the ANS (pain relief). Results are often permanent.

### Acupuncture philosophies

Acupuncture points are essential building blocks of MPS therapy. Key acupuncture points like H7 (valium point) can quickly calm a heightened nervous system and release endorphins, reducing patient guarding and improving functionality. This process also influences tissues, muscles and pain levels and can significantly help massage therapists quickly reduce their workload and improve client outcomes.

### Method of MPS application–CMS

CMS is the preferred method of application for MPS therapy for a variety of reasons. First, concentrated DC stimulation can clinically duplicate the "De Chi" of traditional acupuncture therapy, including nociception, endorphin, histamine and energetic responses, but do so noninvasively, in a fraction of time of needles. Second, CMS also has the ability to relax contracted muscle tissue, responsible for the nerve impingement(s) found in cases of radiculopathy. Thirdly, MPS may be applied during massage to help release local trigger points and avoid patient guarding. Finally, MPS Therapy can save enormous amounts of time and effort for massage therapists, significantly improving outcomes while reducing their own repetitive strain injuries and chronic pain.

"MPS has been a huge bonus for my practice," says Joe Durant, L.M.T. "As a massage therapist in a clinical pain setting, I was having difficulty with many of my chronic pain patients and I was noticing I was developing carpal tunnel myself. MPS significantly boosted my patient outcomes, and its ease of use made massage therapy easier on my hands, eliminating my carpal tunnel."

Because MPS is noninvasive and the device assists the therapist to quickly locate and treat acupuncture points, it's an easy device to integrate into any clinical setting. That's a key advantage of MPS, according to Dr. Jay P. Shah of the National Institutes of Health.

Shah, who stumbled upon MPS to relieve his own pain, says he's used it daily during the past 15 years to treat clients with neck, shoulder, back and other soft-tissue pain. A physician by training, Shah has also studied acupuncture and finds that MPS offers many of the same advantages in relaxing muscles to ease pain.

"It's a wonderful tool for patients to treat themselves," Shah says. "[It also] causes them to rely less on medications. You can give pain medication, but you really are not getting to the underlying cause of the problem, which is often the nervous system and muscular contractions"

Since almost all soft-tissue pain is controlled by the autonomic nervous system, many difficult disorders often respond exceptionally well to this approach, including:

- Back and neck pain, whiplash, TMJ/TMD
- Fibromyalgia, migraines, headaches

- Sports injuries, carpal tunnel, plantar fasciitis
- Frozen shoulder, post-operative pain

Although MPS therapy is not a panacea for all disease or pain conditions, it consistently generates tangible and measurable results for a variety of conditions in a short period of time. The simple beauty of MPS therapy is it enhances the body's natural ability to heal itself, thereby promoting an accelerated return to homeostasis.

## **Client feedback**

*For the thousands of people who found relief from their chronic pain, the discovery of MPS could not have come soon enough. In describing the impact MPS therapy has had on her life and the potential it holds for others, client Quentin Glenn says:*

*I told my massage therapist, Teresa Esterline, of all the difficulty I was having with my legs after having two hip replacements. After recently taking an MPS seminar, Teresa explained my pain may be due to the scar tissue from the two surgeries. She said she can now release the scar tissue and it should relieve the pain. Never hearing of releasing scar tissue before but knowing Teresa and hearing the enthusiasm in her voice, I saw her the very next day.*

*The next day she released my scars and I walked away feeling better than I have felt in many years. I have been to physical therapy off and on for one-and-a-half years, and both of the physical therapists were blown away; they could not find any trigger point or tight muscles in my legs after the session. One of them said, "I had never seen anything like this before."*

*I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for teaching people like Teresa to heal people without all the pain of physical therapy and drugs. It has to be over 25 years since I have felt this good and I give the glory to our God, and to you, Teresa, for helping me.*

## **Sharing the knowledge**

For more than 15 years, MPS Pain Therapy has been instructed to health care professionals, and currently more than 30,000 doctors and therapists throughout the world now employ MPS as the primary modality for the treatment of their chronic pain population.

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