

## **Darren Higgins: MY JOURNEY WITH MET**

When asked by FYSI to write a piece to promote the Muscle Energy Technique (MET) courses, at first I didn't know where to start. Do I explain the technical advantages of the techniques and how they work physiologically? Or do I write case studies to illustrate the amazing results I have achieved with my patients using these MET techniques? No! I've decided to tell you about my journey with MET and why I'm teaching these techniques all over the United Kingdom and also in Finland. In doing so, I hope to inspire some of you to take a "risk", and come along in August to find out more about MET.

As an Australian trained physiotherapist, I graduated with a very Maitland approach to the treatment of dysfunction; a very articular approach to assessment and treatment. Assessment and treatment was directed in many instances at mobilising joint restriction in order to restore movement and relieve pain. As I "grew up" from a Baby Physio, I realised that there were many patients for whom this didn't provide the total answer. Like many of us, I attended courses to learn new skills to add to my "tool kit". Along the journey I attended a MET course for the ribs and thoracic spine.

I had not really been able to treat this region independent of the thoracic spine before, and to my amazement the techniques I learnt not only helped my rib patients, but many of my low back, thoracic spine and upper back patients also improved when the ribs were functioning better. My appetite was awakened! I attended all the courses, learning how to assess and apply the Muscle Energy Techniques to the Lumbar Spine and Pelvis and also the cervical Spine and Thoracic Outlet. Patients whom I previously had not been able to "fix", were now getting better.

Of course I don't use MET exclusively, but integrate the techniques into my clinical practice so that each patient is treated with those techniques I decide are best for them. I can say, hand on heart, that the use of the Muscle Energy Techniques in the treatment of my patients has totally revolutionised my clinical practice, and is the very reason I spend so much of my "free time" teaching these techniques and the MET approach to physiotherapists in the UK and Finland. So why do they work so well, I hear you ask?

Treating any kind of musculoskeletal problem can at times be challenging, especially if the problem is long standing, complex or multi-regional. The muscle energy technique looks at assessing regional articular dysfunction in the body. It does this with mobilisation techniques, but importantly the treatment techniques not only treat the joint problem, but address the associated muscular dysfunction as well. This dysfunction is commonly overactivity or tonic overactivity in the global muscle system. It is my opinion that this muscular dysfunction is the reason that many purely joint mobilisation approaches only partially helping our patients.

OK – enough of that! I use these techniques with many varied groups of patients. All of my patients with low back pain are assessed using the techniques for the pelvis and the low back. Many low back patients have pain there because the pelvis is not functioning properly. I use the techniques for whiplash patients, with both pain in the neck and back. Spasm around the neck and loss of range of movement is very easily helped using MET. In England, the new "sporting injury" is the computer operator who gets pain associated with his/her work. The muscle energy techniques are excellent for this patient group.

My clinic sees patients from sports people with both acute and training induced overuse problems, new mothers with low back and pelvic pain, whiplash clients, desk-based computer workers, young and old patients with chronic back and neck pain to name just a few. The Muscle Energy Technique approach works for all these patients..... AND MORE!

I encourage you to join me and many of your Finnish colleagues in Helsinki in August this year to experience the Muscle Energy Technique approach. I know you won't be sorry you came.....