

Rob Rich
Ortho-Bionomy



A study guide for Ortho-Bionomy® students

BY ROB RICH
ORTHO-BIONOMY INSTRUCTOR

Ortho-Bionomy® and the sand dollar® design are registered trademarks of Ortho-Bionomy Australia Ltd and are used with permission.

Ortho-Bionomy is a unique form of self-development, as well as an amazing form of therapy that works with all the aspects of the human being. Learning Ortho-Bionomy will lead you through a process of discovering yourself, learning how amazing your body is and how to work with your body (and other people's bodies) to reduce pain, increase range of movement and the fluidity of movement. All this is without using forced manipulations or techniques that cause pain.

Each of the courses in the basic practitioner program is like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle that helps you meet your client's body in a slightly different way. This allows you to meet the body where it is dysfunctional and stimulate the body's self-corrective mechanism. This is when the magic happens. When the body has the information it needs, it can self-correct painful dysfunctions that have been around for decades.

Before we explore the courses involved in the practitioner training program, I will outline a different view of how your body works.

Gravity is one of the most important forces we deal with on a daily basis, and although we give it very little thought, it is crucial for how we operate on a musculoskeletal basis. Our skeletal alignment is vital because our bones are designed (and grown) to support us under the constant downwards force of gravity. In order to efficiently organise our bones to best support our weight, we need a feedback system to tell us where our bones are. This falls to the proprioceptive reflexes. The proprioceptive reflexes give us the sense of having a body and they track movement (direction, momentum). The proprioceptive reflexes are in the tendons, the belly of the muscles, and in the joint capsules. From this feedback, we infer where our bones are. We often get it wrong because our ability to sense individual bones is limited.

This is one of the underlying factors in musculoskeletal conditions. With Ortho-Bionomy, we use the proprioceptive reflexes and the touch receptors to show the body where the bones are. This allows the body to self-correct the alignment. The more aligned the bones are, the less load there is on the ligaments. This feels more stable, so the body can release the global muscles recruited to stabilise joints. If you are experiencing tight muscles, that is a good indication that your posture could do with a tune up. The old paradigm of "stand up straight, suck your gut in and push your chest out" is rather useless. As you recruit global muscles to try and create a better posture, you are just adding to the complexity of the muscle tension patterns in your body and soon you will fatigue the muscles and go back to your "normal" posture. Real postural change occurs when you



change the patterns in your skeletal system. Balance the sacrum and the pelvis so your spine has a solid foundation, and then help your lumbar, thoracic and cervical vertebrae stack on top of each other, so your weight falls through the body of the vertebrae. The ribcage is available for supported rotation and the shoulders sit back, so weight is transmitted into the ribcage and down the spine. Your weight falls effortlessly down your legs and onto your feet, so the weight is evenly supported by your heel, the ball of your big toe and the base of your little toe.

There are, of course, strong emotional factors that affect our physical structure. The impact of stress on muscle tone in the lower back and neck and shoulders is something many people experience. With Ortho-Bionomy, we stimulate the parasympathetic nervous (relax/digest) system. This reduces the activity of the sympathetic nervous (fight/flight/freeze) system, which gives you a delicious, deep sense of grounded relaxation.

Receiving Ortho-Bionomy sessions leads to a change in the level of awareness within your body. This leads to an increase in your ability to be truly present in your body (being embodied) and to be grounded and relaxed.

In Ortho-Bionomy, our focus is on giving the body the information it needs to self-correct. Any technique that works with the body's innate ability to heal is going to be more effective than trying to "fix" or use force to change what the body is doing.

The ability to feel into your structure and assist it in self-correcting changes how you relate to musculoskeletal pain. Most people relate to internal pain as something to resist and avoid. This leads to a disconnection from the affected area. This disconnection, and the muscular bracing that prevents movement, reduces the clarity and quantity of the feedback from the area. By feeling into the area and finding the bones, the system can start to put together the pieces to self-correct.

OSTEOPATHIC PRINCIPLES INCORPORATED INTO ORTHO-BIONOMY

This often requires sessions with someone who knows what they are doing (an Ortho- Bionomy practitioner), although using the self-care exercises and feeling internally heightens your ability to work on yourself. This form of internal work assists with bodies where there are complex tension patterns and trauma. For example, people who have had car accidents, big falls, or have experienced violence can benefit from taking a leading role in unwinding their bodies in this way.

Ortho-Bionomy has both an external form and an internal form. The external form is the standard techniques taught in Phase 4. The standard techniques are there to help you find the place where the body you are working on recognises where it is. The sweet spot, where the body starts to respond, is different for each body. Finding it and stimulating the body to respond is how we put information into the nervous system.

Occasionally, you will get someone who does a Phase 4 course and mistakes the external form for the whole art. They miss a huge part. It's a bit like thinking a photo of a sunset is the same as being there experiencing the scale and colours for yourself. The standard techniques are really like exercises to help you experience finding where/how to help someone else to self-correct.

The internal form is harder to explain. In many ways it must be discovered. Again, the techniques taught in Phase 5, Phase 6 and Phase 7 lead you to the place where you may discover what is there. The key is to practice and explore.

The practitioner program is 500 hours in length. It is made up of a variety of different courses & other learning experiences. The table has the course names, which are further explored on the opposite page.



PRACTITIONER PROGRAM CURRICULUM CHECKLIST:

(Units are approximately equal to one hour, 16 units per weekend)

64 Units	Phase IV
16	Phase V
16	Phase VI
16	Postural Re-education & Post Techniques
16	Isometrics
16	Exploration of Movement Patterns
16	Chapman's Reflexes
16	Ethics & Emotional Issues
16	Demonstration Skills
16	Elements of a Successful Practice
32	Anatomy & Physiology
16	Elective(s)
40	Residential (5 day minimum)
16	Practitioner Training Seminar
18	Study Group (six 3/hour minimum)
8	Sessions Received
3	Feedback Sessions
9	Consultations/Tutorials
3	Evaluation Sessions
1	Supervised Demonstration (one)
1	Essay
150	Documented Sessions
Total units 505	

Adapted from the Practitioner Program Handbook 2016

PHASE 4

The fundamental course is called Phase 4, this was named by Dr Arthur Pauls, the Osteopath that developed Ortho-Bionomy in the 1970's.

Phase 1 is when you are asleep and your body naturally seeks to find a comfortable position by rolling over. Unconscious fine tuning for comfort.

Phase 2 is when you are awake and you change your stance or seated position to find a position of comfort. Conscious fine tuning for comfort.

Phase 3 is the work of Lawrence Jones a US Osteopath that pioneered positional release work in the 1960's. Jones called his form of body work strain & counter strain.

Phase 4 developed out of strain & counter strain work and continues to evolve. Phase 4 is the stage of Arthurs research where the techniques stimulated the body's ability to self-correct usually in 10-30 seconds, rather than the 90 seconds to 20 minutes with strain & counter strain techniques. There are other differences between Phase 4 and Jones work, these will be discussed in the introduction to the Phase 4 course when you attend one.

Like a martial art, Ortho-Bionomy relies on you having a strong knowledge of the basics. Phase 4 is the course that gives you that knowledge. Ortho-Bionomy courses are so full of information that you will not get it all first go. Phase 4 covers the structural releases that you will use 70% of the time in sessions, as well as an introduction to the underlying principles of Ortho-Bionomy.

The principles are important, as they help you fine-tune what you do from standard Phase 4 positions to fit your client's body. The more you can fine-tune what you do, the more effective you will be at stimulating the body's ability to self-correct.

Phase 4 techniques are where you start, and where you return when you want to help the structure change. When you lose your way, coming back to the structure allows you to find how to proceed.

PHASE 5

Phase 5 works with the fascia and the reflexes in the body. Because it is more fluid, it is quite seductive. It is common for students after a Phase 5 course to end up doing Phase 5 more than Phase 4. The problem with this is that the client's body will often require information about where the bones are and the relationships between joints, which is what you get from Phase 4 work.

Phase 5 helps to increase your ability to feel the subtle changes that go with a body that is self-correcting. The skills you learn here increase your ability to fine-tune techniques to meet a body and stimulate its self-corrective process.

PHASE 6

Phase 6 works energetically, but in a structured way. You can work with the relationship of bones across a joint, assess the alignment of joints, release "stuck" energy, change the sympathetic/parasympathetic balance (release stress), work with organs, and much more. Phase 6 also greatly improves your ability to track the subtle changes in your client's body.



POSTURAL RE-EDUCATION AND POST TECHNIQUES

As mentioned above, we use our bones to support our structure against the constant force of gravity. We refer to the patterns we use as our posture. When our posture is supportive, our bones, ligaments and postural muscles take the load. When our posture is inefficient, our weight falls on the ligaments, which distort. This requires the body to recruit our global muscles (the muscles meant for movement). Posture techniques help to align the skeletal system. Sometimes when there are big changes in chronic long- term patterns, other areas of the body may need help to release the compensation patterns. Things can get stuck if this is not done. Post techniques help avoid this by helping the body integrate changes throughout the system.

EXPLORATION OF MOVEMENT

The body is designed to move. When there is a musculoskeletal dysfunction, the body recruits the global muscles. This stops the body area moving fluidly. Therefore, we can

use movements to locate imbalances, help the body to change imbalances, and integrate changes. It is amazing how the body can change so effortlessly when passive movement is used. Exploration of Movement is also where we vary the standard techniques of Phase 4, and further fine-tune it to the client's body.

ISOMETRICS & ISOTONICS

The muscular system is a powerful part of the body. Patterns of habitual use that have developed over years of compensation for being out of alignment can affect how the body functions. With Isometrics & Isotonics we can assist the body in changing these compensatory patterns.

Our focus with the isometric/isotonic techniques is on the nervous system. Therefore, the techniques are different from muscle energy technique (MET) which are also referred to as isometrics and Isotonics.

CHAPMAN'S NEUROLYMPHATIC REFLEXES

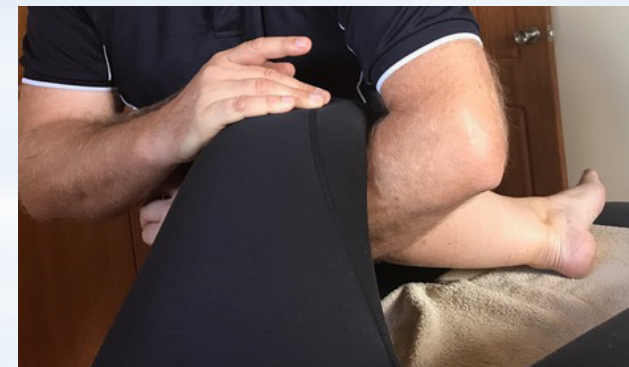
Chapman's points enable us to work with the link between the fluids, the nervous system, the organs and the emotions. The Ortho-Bionomy principles are applied to working with the Chapman's points, so there is no painful rubbing or deep stimulation to achieve an outcome.

ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY (A&P)

One of the underlying principles of Ortho-Bionomy is that structure governs function. Therefore, the study of A&P is an important part of learning how to work with the body. A&P taught in Ortho-Bionomy has a different focus from the standard A&P courses available.

DEMONSTRATION SKILLS

Because Ortho-Bionomy is not a straightforward bodywork modality, explaining what we do and how we do it can be a challenge. The Demo Skills course helps you find ways of expressing yourself and up-skilling in the presentation of Ortho-Bionomy effectively, so you can more readily attract clients.



ELECTIVES

Ortho-Bionomy continues to evolve. Electives include courses such as cranial work, and courses focused on specific conditions such as carpal tunnel, and herniated discs.

PRACTITIONER TRAINING SEMINAR

This course explores issues around how to run a session, how to integrate with other practitioners and the Ortho-Bionomy association, what and how to record your sessions and a lot more.

ETHICS & EMOTIONAL ISSUES

Having a strong ethical basis is important for any group that interacts with the public. With Ortho-Bionomy, we explore ethics deeper as we work physically and energetically with people. There is a subtle level where we need to observe ethical practices.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

Building a successful business can be a challenge. This course is designed to help you with ways to achieve this with a focus on Ortho-Bionomy.

RESIDENTIAL

Imagine a week of Ortho-Bionomy. A great relaxing location and awesome healthy organic food. What better way can you think of to spend a week? You will learn new techniques and new ways to integrate techniques together as well as have a great time connecting with other Ortho-Bionomists from around Australia.

SESSIONS RECEIVED

Learning Ortho-Bionomy is a two-part process. It includes both working on other people, as well as experiencing the feel and effectiveness of the work yourself. Never neglect the opportunity to get a session from a visiting instructor. If you are lucky enough to live near one, get regular sessions. In each session, you will learn something different, and this will help your body to become more functional, as well as help you become a better Ortho-Bionomy practitioner. Receiving sessions helps you feel what your clients may experience. It also helps you integrate what you learn in class and how to work on different levels in a session.

STUDY GROUPS

Study groups can either be on a particular topic, which will normally include a set of notes, or can be focused on questions about techniques, treating different conditions and doing Ortho-Bionomy sessions. The latter won't have prepared notes. Study groups are a great way to explore areas at depth that we don't get time to cover in the courses.

CONSULTATIONS/TUTORIALS

Tutorials are often observing a session and discussing what the instructor did, and more importantly why. There are a few options with this. Either a client pays for a session with an instructor and you go along to watch, or alternatively two students get sessions from the instructor and observe/discuss the sessions. Observing sessions is a great way to learn.

DOCUMENTED SESSIONS

Documented sessions allow an instructor to see how you are going with your sessions on clients/friends/family. Are you missing anything in how you are treating particular conditions? Documented sessions enable the instructor to support you and suggest alternative ways of working with certain conditions. The more information you put on the session sheet, the more you can get out of the process. You need 150 hours of documented sessions. Getting an instructor to review them every 50 hours helps you to upskill your Ortho-Bionomy.

SESSIONS FOR FEEDBACK

Receiving feedback from an instructor on what you are doing in a session is an excellent way to get one-on-one attention. This is really a chance for you to rapidly upskill and get feedback on the subtle aspects of Ortho-Bionomy. Try and do a session for feedback at least once a year so you can get help fine-tuning how you work. Sessions for feedback and evaluation are not exams. You don't need to be stressed about doing them. If you do feel stressed, just talk about feeling nervous (which will help you relax). The requirement for the practitioner program is to do three sessions for feedback. These should be done with the same instructor who is going to do your sessions for evaluation.

SESSIONS FOR EVALUATION

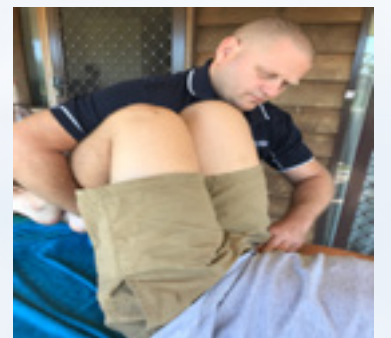
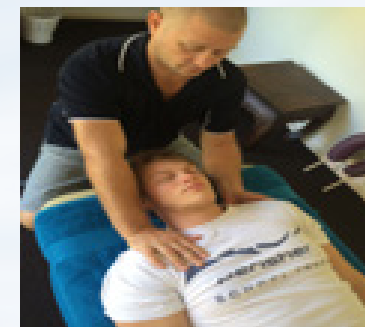
Towards the end of your practitioner program, you need to do three sessions for evaluation. Ideally these should be done on different instructors. Giving a session for feedback prior to the session for evaluation lets you know what the instructor is noticing, so you can work on improving that area. It also helps you feel comfortable with giving the instructor a session.

SUPERVISED DEMONSTRATION

One of the last things people complete is a supervised demonstration. This can either be a live demo with an instructor observing, or you can film a demo and email it to an instructor. You need to demo to at least four people but after the Demo Skills course this should not be a difficult.

ESSAY

The final piece is usually the essay – the topic – How have the principles of Ortho- Bionomy affected your life? The essay can be a page or a poem. Whatever floats your boat.



HOW DOES THIS ALL FIT TOGETHER?

Each course adds to your skill level and helps you meet your client where they need to be met. Being able to connect to the physical and energetic aspects of a person enables you to find where they need the information that will help them self-correct.

For example, when working with a person with chronic lower back pain, you might start with Phase 4 techniques to work on aligning the lumbar vertebrae, some gentle isometrics to help the body release and rebalance the tension patterns in the muscles.

Some Phase 5 techniques to work with the tension in the fascia and Phase 6 to work with the emotional content and release the trauma from the back pain. Check the change in the function with some exploration of movement and finish off with some

postural and post techniques to help the person integrate the changes that have occurred and become more grounded at the end of the session.

THE ADVANCED PRACTITIONER PROGRAM

During the Basic Practitioner Program, you will be introduced to the many techniques, and start to practice them. This is the external form. The Advanced Practitioner Program is there to help you deepen your understanding, and helps you pick up any areas you may have missed or forgotten. More importantly, you will change as you go through the basic program. The Advanced Program then gives you the chance to revisit the courses from a new viewpoint, one that is more aware on the subtle energetic level yet grounded in your physical structure.

The tricky thing is, because you will develop the internal form more in the Advanced Practitioner Program, there is less that can be explained and more for you to discover. When you look back you can see and feel the shifts that have occurred but to describe them is impossible, as language is a blunt instrument for such complex and subtle changes.

PHASE 7

Phase 7 works on a spiritual plane. allowing you to work on a much subtler level.

NOTES FOR STUDENTS

As people go through Ortho-Bionomy training, there are some patterns that occur.

‘The miracle’ - when someone who has had a chronic painful condition for decades sees you and you give their body exactly the information it needs (or close enough to help the system change) and it self-corrects, they jump off your table saying what an amazing healer you are, just like Jesus ... Here’s the thing: it isn’t you who is responsible. The body system has the capacity to self-correct when the missing information becomes available.

We don’t heal and we don’t fix. We assist the body to self-correct. It is an amazing thing to be part of, but if you give your ego the juice, then you set yourself up for the next

pattern – ‘the session that you can’t find how to get anything to work’. There is no change and the client gets up and leaves with no apparent change. Often this can be an indication that there is a pattern of trauma stuck in the body. This can be released with Ortho-Bionomy, but you may not have had that training when the client comes to you for a session.

Particularly when you are new to Ortho-Bionomy, you are unlikely to have all the tools for working on all the possible levels, so this is more likely to happen. This is not your fault. Nothing works for everyone all the time. If you find a client like this, try referring them to a more experienced practitioner or have them come along to a tutorial with an instructor. This can help you upskill.

There is always more to learn to deepen your connection and ability to perceive. Enjoy the process. Life is an amazing teacher. The principles of Ortho-Bionomy* are really an excellent way to observe and work with the patterns in the body and through your life.

**For more information on the Principles of Ortho-Bionomy, download the free E-book from my Facebook page ‘Ortho-Bionomy on the Sunshine Coast’.*



Rob Rich

Ortho-Bionomy



☎ 0405 671 033

✉ rob@ob.net.au

🌐 www.ob.net.au

📘 Ortho-bionomy on the Sunshine Coast
students 📘 Ortho-Bionomy students forum QLD