

## Tucson Citizen

# Ouch - It Feels So Good....

When it stops, that is. Rolfing® is a type of massage designed to realign the body. Results are positive and immediate, say many who've experienced it.

By Matt Stewart Citizen Staff Writer



It's a type of massage you won't soon forget. The therapy is called Rolfing, and the object is to put the body, twisted and turned by life's stresses, back into its natural order.

Rolfing realigns the body, so the person can "stand up straight in the field of gravity without trying," said Clay Cox, 52, a certified advanced Rolfer™ .

"There's a blueprint in everyone for every cell to go back in place," said Cox, who has worked in Tucson for 17 years. "The body holds a memory in the tissue. How we fix aches and pains is by correcting people's posture."

Muscles that are stressed through emotional trauma, physical injury or poor posture, explained Cox, often remain stressed. Over time, these muscles become frozen in that stressed state, held in place by envelopes of fascia which eventually adhere to each other. Rolfing separates the fascial envelopes from each other, enabling the muscle to return to their normal anatomical positions, Cox explained.

The rolfer™ first takes a picture of the patient, wearing a bathing suit or underwear. They then discuss what needs to be done to straighten the patient's posture.

"We need to get to know each other a little bit before we trust each other through this process," Cox said.

The rolfer then manipulates the fascial envelopes, freeing the muscles to move closer to their ideal position.

“A rolfer creates space in which the muscles can move,” Cox said. “Within that space, the muscles can go back where they belong.” Rolfing doesn’t make you stand straight,” Cox said. “It gives you the choice, and people find that it feels much better to stand straight than to stand slouched.”

Rolfing consists of 10 sessions. Each session focuses on a different part of the body. Many patients say they see immediate results.

“You go in for one session and you can tell your body has changed,” said Erich Brauer, 23, a patient who has gone through three sessions. “before my back felt normal, but now it feels more normal. The old normal is a joke.”

Rolfing is named for its creator, Ida P. Rolf, a biochemist who spent 50 years perfecting her technique for permanently correcting a person’s posture. She theorized that people could be physically and psychologically balanced only if their bodies were properly aligned. When people get rolfed, they report feeling more graceful, more fluid,” Cox said.

Rolfing has become accepted in the athletic community. “I’ve Rolfed many athletes,” Cox said, “and it definitely improves performance. It also reduces the number of injuries because the body is not working against itself to do the task at hand.”

Some fear that being rolfed may be painful, but Cox insists the procedure while uncomfortable at times, need not be painful.

“The body holds memories in its muscles, and oftentimes, once you start working on those muscles, the memories come back,” Cox said.

“Parts of it hurt and parts of it don’t,” Brauer said. “When he hits a spot, I remember, ‘Yeah, I used to have an injury there’”.

Cox got into rolfing through his own injury. At age 30, he fell off his motorcycle and broke his neck in two places. While in traction, a friend who was a rolfer, guaranteed he would get him out of bed and back to a normal life.

“I had been flat on my back, totally immobilized in traction for two weeks. He spent 20 minutes with me and I got up and dressed myself, and we walked out of the hospital.”

The technique impressed Cox enough that he decided to learn it himself. He resigned as a Los Angeles County probation officer and applied to the Rolf Institute in Boulder, Colorado, the only certified school for rolfing in the world. So determined was he that he would learn the technique that he moved to Boulder before he was even accepted into the program.

There are currently 850 certified rolfers in the world, Cox said. To become a certified rolfer, one must study for two years at the Rolf Institute, and then continue training for seven years.

It’s an amazing process,” Cox said. “Everyday someone comes in and changes right before my eyes.”

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