

The Search for the Origin of the Wiggle Technique

John Hanks, DC

When Bob had adjusted me previously, most of the time I knew what he was doing. But this time, he had me lie on the treatment table in the usual [side-posture](#) position, and he "wiggled" my sacroiliac with the fingers of both hands, while stabilizing my pelvis with his forearm. Oddly, to check the other side, he requested I sit up first and then lie on my other side, still facing him. I felt much better when I stood up.

"Where did you learn that move?" I asked, with some small measure of surprise. "I'm moving around pretty good now!"

Bob said, "You know, I use that technique sometimes. It was shown to me by a classmate in chiropractic school named Ralph."

I became more curious. "I've been around for awhile, but I've never seen this 'wiggle' thing. What do you call it?"

Bob thought about it. "I don't really have a name for it. I guess I just call think of it as the 'Ralph move.'"

Well, as they say, this was the beginning of the story. "So ... where did Ralph learn it?" I asked.

"Hey, let's find out!" Bob exclaimed, and by chance, got Ralph on the phone right then.

"I remember clearly," he told us. "I was in some equipment vendor's hospitality suite, during the state association's annual convention. You know, booze and appetizers. Anyway, this chiropractor was tipsy and adjusting one of the salesmen on the treatment table that was for sale. That's where I saw the technique for the first time, and I thought it was cool. I don't know the guy's name, but this was in San Diego. And ... oh yeah! He was wearing a tie with an [atlas vertebra](#) on it."

Bob and I were now on a mission. Who was this mysterious DC who had spawned this trail of technique appreciation? I contacted the state association, but they did not have a list of attendees at that convention, since it had taken place more than 20 years ago. Facebook, Twitter, etc., were of no help, since we didn't have a name or address.

Then I got a call from a former chiropractic state association secretary who had worked the association conventions for many years. "I had lunch with Helen, who has a daughter that now works for the chiro association, and she mentioned that her daughter got a call from you about some DC that had a vertebra on his tie," she said. "I remember that guy! He wore that tie every year when he attended our Southern California seminars! I know he was from somewhere around suburban Phoenix."

The Arizona state database of chiropractors could not identify a DC with an atlas vertebra tie, but it did at least identify many doctors who practiced in the Phoenix area during that time. One name

caught my eye. It was a woman I knew who had been active in national chiropractic leadership all her career. I figured she might know a lot of DCs, so I emailed her about my bizarre quest.

Evelyn indeed knew the man, since he apparently did wear his tie at a lot of chiropractic functions. Her reply identified him as Harry Lindquist, now retired in Tucson. I phoned, he answered, and we talked for quite a while.

"Yes, yes, the Oscillation Technique! I used it frequently during my time in practice," he said. "Taught to me by ol' Bill Cunningham from Sierra Vista when I was just a young greenhorn chiropractor. Comes in handy sometimes."

Further investigation was easy, but disappointing. Dr. Cunningham had passed away four years ago. It seemed to be the end of the line. But I tried one more search and sure enough, I found his elderly widow living with her daughter outside of Bisbee.

"Bill used to adjust me like that," she told me over the phone. "The Hender technique, he called it, after Oscar Hender, who showed it to him many years ago. You know, Oscar is still living, right here in Bisbee, in assisted living."

Now I was obsessed. After a conversation with his assisted living facility staff, we got permission to hook Dr. Hender up with me on Skype so I could actually see him in real time. He looked surprisingly good for a man 92 years old, and was very cogent.

"I never really had a name for the technique," he said. "I reckon it was out of desperation that I thought it up. You see, I'd suffered a fall and sprained both of my wrists real bad. I had to work to eat, you know. So, I just used my fingers and kept my wrists in braces, using my forearms to brace the pelvis. This worked pretty good for adjusting the sacroiliac joints."

"But what about that sitting-up thing and turning over on the other side, yet facing the same direction on the table?" I asked him. "What good does that really do?"

Oscar chuckled when I brought it up. "My treatment room was very small," he explained. "I had to push my adjusting table up against a wall just to walk into the room! So when I worked on their low back with 'em on their side, and then needed to work on the other side, I just had 'em sit up and lie down again!"

Almost every yarn has some truth to it, and this is a yarn. Ask an old timer. They might recognize some bits and pieces of the story. The names of the subjects have been changed to protect the innocent.

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