

# Craniosacral Therapy Benefits Football Players

by Mary Hardin

Attention is finally being given to the issue of concussions in sports, especially football. That awareness is being credited with helping to reduce the number of concussions reported last season in the NFL. Still, players struggle with finding ways to recover from concussions and other injuries so they can get back on the field quickly in the competitive business of professional football.

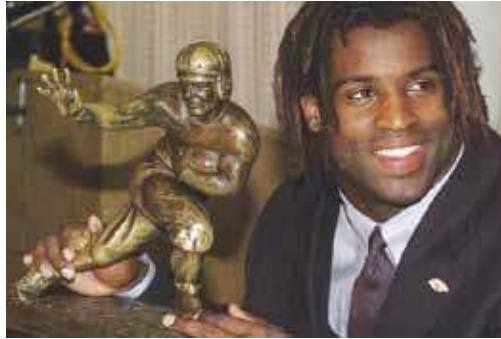
Craniosacral work is a light-touch therapy that helps the body gently heal and unwind trauma from the inside out, helping to reduce inflammation and increase tissue mobility. Receiving craniosacral work helps players recover faster and get back in the game sooner.

“What I’ve found with craniosacral is that it’s almost a perfect fit for athletes,” said Ricky Williams, an all-pro running back who recently retired from the Baltimore Ravens after playing in the NFL for more than a decade. Since retiring, Williams has created ProjectLimitless to increase healing and consciousness among athletes and the world. “When I was playing, I noticed that everything about the game was just easier and when I thought about it, I realized it had something to do with the craniosacral work that I was doing.”

Williams discovered craniosacral work after breaking his arm and tearing his Achilles tendon while playing for the Toronto Argonauts in 2006. He was so impressed by how good he felt after receiving craniosacral sessions as part of his recovery that he decided to take classes and became a trained craniosacral therapist studying with the Upledger Institute and at the Milne Institute.

The craniosacral system exists within every human being and animal with a brain and spinal column. According to Dr. John Upledger, the modern day founder of Craniosacral Therapy, the craniosacral system extends from the bones of the skull, face and mouth (the cranium) through a network of fluid hydraulics and membranes to the lower end of the spine (the sacrum). Because the craniosacral system surrounds and protects the brain and spinal cord, restrictions in its membranes can directly affect all aspects of central nervous system performance, from motor function to emotions.

Balancing the fluid and releasing restrictions in the tissue is especially important after a concussion and helps improve concentration and balance and relieves headaches, dizziness, depression, confusion, insomnia and mood swings. The



Ricky Williams

benefit of Craniosacral Therapy is that it works with the whole body, helping all injuries heal faster and easier.

“The nature of football is you train really hard and there are injuries. Because the season is so long, there is not much time to rest and you are putting layer upon layer of injuries,” Williams said. “So especially a lot of the unwinding work we do in craniosacral literally peeled off years of trauma from my body and gave my body more freedom. Craniosacral work definitely

contributed to the longevity of my career.” Still, craniosacral work is not widely known in the sports community.

“My point of view is we spend six months destroying our body very intensely so I took the point of view that I wanted to spend the off-season taking care of my body very intensely,” Williams explained. “And in doing that I found I don’t ‘age’ in football and my body stays supple and stays fresh.”

But Craniosacral Therapy is not just for football players. Anyone can benefit from this gentle work. It’s especially helpful for people suffering from headaches, migraines, joint pain, anxiety and sleep problems.

“Once someone experiences a craniosacral session, it’s very difficult to not want to go back and receive more of the work,” Williams said. “For a lot of people when they receive craniosacral, it’s the first time anyone has ever helped them listen to their body – our joints, our organs are screaming out for some attention, for some nurturing and we don’t do it for ourselves. So it’s nice when you find a very caring therapist – of any modality – that helps you listen to your body and create a communion between you and your body.”

It’s often difficult for people to describe what a craniosacral session is like, but the results are clear. Ask Ricky Williams. “The benefit of craniosacral work is your body’s going to feel better and your mind’s going to feel better.”

*Mary Hardin helps football players and others recover from injuries and concussions, get out of pain, relax and unwind so they can get back to their lives and careers. She’s been involved in the healing arts for 14 years and is a certified Integrated Craniosacral Unwinding practitioner and board certified Polarity therapist. Her holistic bodywork practice, Ultrasonic Core Body Therapy, is located at The Healing Center, 5601 W. Slauson Ave., Suite 138, Culver City. For more information, call 310-822-8068 or visit [UltrasonicCore.com](http://UltrasonicCore.com).*

