Osteopathy and Sports

Osteopaths believe the whole body must be functioning well together to ensure the best health and optimal performance. Everyone who is body aware or performs sports on a regular basis will appreciate this.

Running, for example, isn’t just putting one foot in front of the other. It’s a coordination between the lower extremity including hips and pelvis with the movement in the upper body. The ability for our mid and upper back to rotate freely allows us to drive the arms and shoulder girdle backwards and forwards to counter the forces from below with each stride. The head position not only affects this but also can change the ease and effectiveness of our breathing. Small imbalances whether from old injuries, underuse or overuse, can disrupt efficient biomechanics leading to reduced performance or even injury.

Many athletes, whether professional, weekend warrior or someone in between, see osteopaths for regular ‘tune ups’ to keep their body functioning mechanically at an optimal level. Because of the holistic assessment and treatment, osteopaths are often able to pick up on imbalances or strains before they even become an injury. Over a period of time then, the athlete is able to train more consistently, balancing and strengthening any weak points along the way leading to improved performance, body awareness and more enjoyment of their sport.

The 2012 Olympics, organised by Lord Sebastian Coe, a top former athlete himself, congratulated the efforts of the medical support team, in particular the osteopaths, in making the Olympics a success:

‘The Olympic and Paralympic Games in London 2012 were unique in its provision of Medical and Paramedical services provided to athletes. For the first time in Olympic history, Osteopaths were invited to be part of the Central Medical Team. Twenty-five highly dedicated osteopathic experts gave their time to volunteer as part of the Physical Therapies team, looking after athletes and support staff from all over the world. Osteopaths were present for the duration of both the Olympic and Paralympic Games, located in polyclinics at each major Olympic village, performing over 900 medical encounters.

The incredible success of London 2012 showcased the determination, enthusiasm and commitment of all those involved. Osteopaths were part of a team of 70,000 games makers who played an integral role to help create that legacy, which lit up the world and I thank them for their time, their professionalism and their dedication to the athletes. If this successful legacy is one we can take to Rio 2016, then it is sure to follow London’s footsteps in being a resoundingly successful Games.’
Lord Sebastian Coe, CH KBE, Chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games:

Osteopathy is a constantly advancing profession while still keeping true to its holistic principles, making it the choice therapy for many people.

Written by Stephen Watts M.Ost, LSSM(Dip)