

## A Whole-Person Approach

# The Zero Balancing Technique

by Kate Chase Ryan



COURTESY OF THE ZERO BALANCING HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Standing at the end of the massage table, I lift my client's feet to apply the opening curved traction, called a half-moon vector, to impart a clearer, stronger field of energy through her tired body. When I set her feet back down, she takes a huge breath, smiles and laughs a bit. I smile back at her.

### The basics

Human self-evolution has taken a big leap forward with major new body-mind therapies, such as body-centered psychotherapy, Rolfing and Zero Balancing. Zero Balancing is a profound addition to understanding the skeletal portion of the musculoskeletal system.

Massage therapists find more ease and efficiency when they incorporate it into their sessions because by releasing bone-held tension, the soft tissue that overlay it will also release. Clients, in turn, appreciate receiving bodywork that deepens their ability to feel the energy and vibrancy of their skeletal system, and the empowerment that follows that sensation.

Zero Balancing is a bone-centric, nondiagnostic modality. It is received through clothing while lying supine on a massage table—and it feels absolutely fantastic. Clients crave it, actually, and they often adopt it into their wellness plans after only a few sessions.

Zero Balancing was developed in the early 1970s by Fritz Smith, an osteopath, medical doctor and acupuncturist. The

integration of energy and structure, seamless joining of ancient and new wisdoms, and interface with energy in the very bones of life make Smith's work one of enormous cultural and evolutionary import. It is grounded in Western anatomy and fused with an Eastern understanding of energy, resulting in a simple protocol that has the power to touch both systems simultaneously.

It is used by massage therapists, acupuncturists, physical therapists and other health professionals across the country and around the world because it has a profound effect on the recipient and is easy on the practitioner.

## The working tools

Zero Balancers use gentle finger pressure, called fulcrums, to work with the structural and energetic anatomy of the body in an organized, flexible protocol.

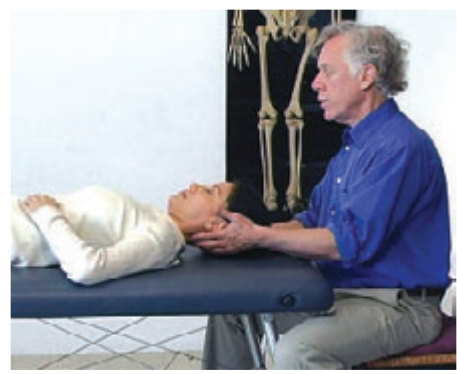
Have you ever been on a train that stopped next to



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Interface touch allows the therapist to stay centered on the receiver's needs.

## A Zero Balancing fulcrum acts like a telephone pole to create a temporary, static reference point.



One of the guiding principles of Zero Balancing is having clear boundaries between the client and practitioner, called “interface” touch. When fulcrums (the working tool of Zero Balancing) are applied, a clear connection is made with no overlapping of boundaries.

Zero Balancing balances the body's structure (bones) and energy using fulcrums. While it feels relaxing and nurturing, the work is effective in releasing deeply held physical, emotional and mental patterns.

Zero Balancing contacts deeply engage the client's body-mind, after which internal reorganization occurs without additional effort. Practitioners learn how to set change in motion and then hold a space for clients to balance themselves.

another stopped train for a moment? Your train appears to start rolling along again, but after a moment you realize, whoops—the other train is moving, not you! Consider the possibility that a static object, such as a telephone pole, between the two trains would have made it obvious it was the other train that started moving. The stationary pole would have provided a reference point.

A Zero Balancing fulcrum acts like that telephone pole to create a temporary, static reference point. By applying fulcrums to bones and joints moving at different speeds and in different directions, the systems have an opportunity to synchronize with each other. With more synchronicity comes a more global vision and path for wellness via whole-body recalibration.

Zero Balancers apply fulcrums at “interface” or with interface touch. While at interface, therapists acknowledge an energetic boundary between themselves and the receiver to respect their personal space and provide a safe, contained environment for transformation.

## Cue the donkey

*What does it actually feel like?* It feels as if the Zero Balancer is bringing the weight of the bone into her hands and pausing for a moment before she sets it back down. By repeating this gentle traction to a broad area of bones and joints, she is assessing to identify areas that stand out with, perhaps, a different temperature, texture or density.

The areas that stand out are a cue for a fulcrum. The sequence of assessing and applying fulcrums is repeated to address the whole body. Once completed, it has a much more profound effect than one would initially expect—because it's rooted in science.

Wolff's Law basically says that when pressure is applied to a bone, the bone responds. An example is maintaining or increasing bone density with weight-bearing exercise.

Conversely, we lose bone density without stress or pressure on bone, like astronauts in space. Understanding

that bone is living, malleable tissue under the dominion of scientific law, we know fulcrums can connect with both the structure and energy that affects its living matrix. Touching bone at this level creates a systemic, relaxing prompt for the physical body, emotions and psyche of the person. In Zero Balancing terminology, we say it communicates with the client's "donkey."

Zero Balancing lauds the hard-working, earnest donkey as its totem animal. A little context: Donkeys, and pack animals in general, are known to lean on each other and work together with heavy loads while wending up and down hills. They trust each other to lean at the appropriate time.

As Zero Balancers, we anthropomorphize the donkey's lean. We talk about the fulcrums we give as a lean. Each time we place our hands on clients, we are listening for their donkey to cue us with a breath, sigh or other working sign that it likes our lean.

Why use this language? It's a safe, nonjudgmental language that lets us explore our comfort levels regarding depth of pressure, speed or how an injured area responds.

As Zero Balancers, we recognize that we all have preferences and we don't necessarily choose them. Your donkey is your body's instinctual wisdom, and it knows the preferences of both your conscious and unconscious mind. How can you be judgmental about that? You can't!

## Donkey benefits


Zero Balancing feels great and promotes a sense of well-being and happiness. Physically, Zero Balancing improves diaphragmatic breathing, promotes postural alignment, reduces stress-related symptoms and addresses musculoskeletal pain, as well as biomechanical imbalances.

From a mental-health perspective, Zero Balancing seems to reduce anxiety and quiet the mind. Clients typically leave feeling more grounded and with momentum. Zero Balancing also facilitates an expanded state of consciousness, which helps clients express the courage to realize change in their lives that may have seemed daunting beforehand.

Common feedback after the first session is a feeling of ease, particularly in the low back, hips and neck. Clients also report feeling positive and optimistic about their life, especially with concerns mentioned before sessions. Almost without fail, clients report they sleep soundly after their session and would like to work on solidifying that level of sleep.

Zero Balancing is well received by healthy people and those who need more tender touch, such as the elderly, the terminally ill or those who are grieving.

Zero Balancing's cultivated touch and whole-person approach opens up the possibility of healing far beyond just a decrease of symptoms or stress-related conditions. This technique is a beautiful complement to one's personal health and wellness plan, including allopathic and primary health care. Zero Balancing affords the opportunity for infinite, multidimensional experiences of vitality and wholeness.

Kate Chase Ryan, L.M.P., is a Certified Zero Balancer and certification mentor in Seattle, Washington. She is the founder and creative director of Advanced Educators LLC, a registration and coordination firm for leading-edge massage educators. Info on Advanced Educators' workshops and Zero Balancing can be found at [www.AEzerobalancing.com](http://www.AEzerobalancing.com). 



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