**Bridget SYMT Case Study**

Intake Notes:

HPI – 39-year-old woman presenting with debilitating back pain. Has tried “everything”. Her best friend takes yoga and sent her along to me. Her friend, Barbara, also got her a physioball to sit on at work, but she believes this is actually making it worse.

Other complaints – HBP (is medicated), eyesight is getting worse, hand/wrist pain (she says from too much typing on job), reports she is very overweight and would like to reduce but has no time.

Bridget seems very happy, and like a natural *kapha* type. She looks like she doesn’t know where her spine is. It is not an awareness I get when I look at her. She seems very verbal and intelligent. I like her. ☺ When she took off her shoes to enter my studio (I said she could keep them on) she was wearing nylons which scrunched her toes. It is like she has one big toe instead of many toes!

Back pain onset was gradual over last @ 18 mos. Increasing. Had x-ray no structural damage reported. She would like to go to yoga, her friend thinks it will help, but she doesn’t want to get hurt by it. Also she doesn’t want to wear tight fitting gym clothes and thinks it would aggravate her wrist pain. Her whole back is very tight and sore but primarily around lumbar and sacral area. Goes from a 4 in am, to a 9 or even a 10 which is unbearable if she has to sit up in the evening after she gets home from work. Sitting is aggravating, lying down with large heating pads and Ibuprofen is alleviating.

Skeletal – Although her face is very pretty with colorful well-done make-up, standing she looks like a sack of potatoes with no spinal awareness what-so-ever. I am intrigued by that – how does one grow up to be such a lovely, friendly person with no spinal awareness whatsoever? Feet and legs rotated outward, toes scrunched into nylons. Would like to investigate whether or not deep rotators are part of pain scenario. And what would her feet do if they were freed from the nylon tubing? ☺

Somatic Dynamism – asked her to sit on my physioball and show me how it worked at work for her (this is roughly the same size ball). She put shoes back on and was actually okay at keeping herself upright but seemed to not inhabit the space around her body and the ball very much, so that limited her ability to balance, as I believe investing in space helps with balance. It looked like she didn’t have enough strength in her body for this to be a great idea for her for more than a short amount of time - and that it would exhaust her if she tried to do it all day.

I suggested she use it for a few minutes a day at intervals as a seated “break.”

Did not seem to require Autonomic or Energetic assessment at outset.

I am not sure what else may be involved, although I am curious about who she is in her own mind!

Global: Introduce lifestyle supports: walking breaks, walking! Exercise or yoga video at home. (Get away from her domineering friend! ☺ )

**Immediate Plan:**

Since I don’t want her to have to get up from the floor, we did everything on a low futon folded out in my office. She can do the practices on her bed at home. She said it is firm.

* *Take bath or hot shower prior to practice!*
* Propped Relaxation and breathing. Propping was under knees and shins. Roll under neck and shallow pillow. (Shallow pillow to support her heart.) 5 – 8 minutes.
* Pelvic Tilts – 5 with breath on exhale, inhale lower. Rest and repeat.
* Very slow and gentle breath coordinated knee drops – side to side: 5, rest, 5 more.
* Very gentle breath-coordinated Cat-Cow – 5 times max. Rest, 5 more times.
* Lifestyle: Set timer and get up every 25 or so minutes. Get water, go to Ladies Room, go to mailroom, find some other reasons to get up and walk somewhere and move a bit! Take a lap around the quad.

SESSION TWO:

* She said when the weather gets cold her office is drafty. I said this I not going to help her back and to have on hand a sweater or shall – go out a splurge on a pretty shawl to keep over the back of your chair! Keep her neck and back warm! A scarf that is warm around her neck (not just pretty, but thinker fabric – pretty and warm = functional fashion! ☺).
* Overall pain reduction of 3-5 points on days when she did practice in am after hot shower.
* Recommend hot bath 5 nights a week!
* *Aswini mudra* 10 hold 5 counts, 10 more.
* Added look back to tail into Cat Cow: do 6 times each.
* Figure four stretch, with shin crossed over, legs stay on floor. Hold 1-2 min each side.

SESSION THREE:

* Began the practice of Agni Sara. Mula Bandha, and Uddiyana Bandha. She did okay with the breathing but I will hold here until she “gets’ them. 10x, pause, 10x.
* Added arm raised in front of body on inhale and exhale lower and squat to high Ugrasana with knees over toes (would work on hip alignment later, but as long as over knees for now is okay!) 8-10 times.
* Seated posture, pretending to be at desk. Asked her to push with tail to balance book on head – see if she can type like that! ☺

SESSION FOUR

* She reported her desk is too low! “Jaime, I’m blind as a bat and I sit hunched over all day long! No wonder my back hurts!”
* Now she rarely enters the above 5 zone of pain! Has times with no pain. ☺
* Asked if she could take lunchtime walks at work or just after work. . .
* Putting together a revised practice for her to keep for a while . . .
* Revised “Bridget’s Almost Daily Yoga Back Practice”

(shoot for 4-5 times a week and keep taking baths!)

1. Relax and breathe. 2 mins
2. Aswini mudra on back 10 times hold for 5 seconds. 2 to 3 sets.
3. Desk pose vinyasa – 5 times exhale as lift
4. Knee Drops 5 times and hold 5-10 seconds
5. Figure four stretch, with shin crossed over, supporting leg stays on floor. Hold 1-2 min each side.
6. Reclined gentle twist – both legs to one side, knees bent (do only after shower warm-up; if you skip warm-up, skip this!)
7. Agni Sara: MB and UB
8. Cat Cow (4xs) and tail back cat cow (4xs). Add elbow cross and lift (4xs)
9. Press down with laced fingers on top of head and push upward!
10. Overhead stretch
11. Forward bend to table or counter top
12. Arm to sides and twist each way
13. One arm side bends each way
14. Mountain Pose with book (real or pretend on head) 5 breaths
15. Keep spine “long” do squat chops with *knees over toes* – 10 xs.
16. Spinal roll downs and up with book on head at end! (3xs or as many as you like!)

SESSION FIVE:

* Checked her practice. Made minor corrections - focused on alignment and breath.
* Asked her if she could take regular walks during the day. Like 10 + 10 + 10 (weather permitting).

She reported she is pain free except from her neck occasionally. Has gotten a very nice shawl for work that she keeps on her chair. Bought some hybrid work shoes (Teva’s) that she can wear to work and also walk in. She is looking for other kinds.

I asked her what she was doing about her desk position and she said she has asked HR about it and if there were any ergonomics she could get. She is waiting for response.

Eventual Plan:

I would still like to understand why she never developed spinal awareness. I suspect she was “book-ish” and smart and not very encouraged to be physical, and to be a pretty girl who doesn’t do “tom boy” things. But also discouraged from succeeding and pursuing career. So she is in office staff position. Kind of thwarted dreams but still a genuinely pleasant and happy personality. That her friend Barbara is so dominant in her life, makes me wonder if her family and culture was very dominant and as a younger sibling that she was not able to assert herself much but had to go along with what they thought and wanted her to do and be. If she were to return to study yoga more deeply or work with herself more deeply, I would see if we could explore any of these hypotheses in relation to her spine and her sense of “I” in her world.

**@ 1.5 years later. Bridget returned with Carpel Tunnel Syndrome.**

Update:

Her back is good, gets sore sometimes but she “does her exercises and takes baths and wears warm clothes and gets walking” and it gets better! So far so good. ☺ Has avoided going to Barbara’s yoga class (says it is too hard) but would still like to try gentle yoga when she has time.

Asked about ergonomics for her workplace (where we left off) and she said she was on her own with that, and outside of the ball, that she eventually gave away nothing has been done.

Onset over past 3 mos. Had a change in office leadership and department has changed. More work, more typing. Still drafty office. More stress. Colleague will retire early to “escape” new boss. She does not seem as jubilant. Seems a tad heavier. Reports she is concerned about her job and the office environment is more tense and unhappy – people are grumbling and scared about the changes. She is too!

Talked about acute versus chronic and that ice, a wrist splint at night, and rest and compression during the day (with breaks) is what to do in acute times. Also if okay to take Ibuprofen or other NSAIDS or natural ones. X-Flame is recommended. There are others.

Assessment in standing- more spine but not as much as I would like. Still curious about this!

Pretended typing at desk. Need for ergonomic changes:

* Elevate hand position, possibly tilted stool under feet, move monitor close so she can see it better!! Tilt keyboard, or get specialized keyboard. Looked at tilted split ones.
* Will send her examples.
* Taught true Agni Sara to support her sense of self!
* Added warrior pose with emphasis on its name! Add these to practice
* Get outside for walk at lunch! Start a walking club/group of office folks!
* Did cellular touch with wrists
* Bone traced
* Showed anatomy of where tunnel is and what is “annoyed” ☺ (What else is annoyed?)

Second Session

* She is thinking of having surgery
* She is thinking of getting a different job but doesn’t want to go through the effort (a true kapha!)
* Shared with her Dr. Demers Dosha quiz to show Kapha nature
* Asked her about need to change ***or*** need for changes at office?
* Discussed (a little) not asserting herself much growing up – no need for it, never got anywhere with it.
* Maybe it is time to do so now? If you like job and want to keep it, not have to find new one. Ask to list what changes you need to be “okay” at office and bring in.
* Suggested the walking group again!
* Added Punch twist with exhalation “ha!” sound standing.
* Keep RICE going
* Use some sick days and let wrists rest!!
* Did cellular touch with wrists.
* Did oh so gentle traction in horizontal plane through wrist where carpal tunnel is.
* Asker her to ice throughout the day!

Third Session

* Wrists are a bit better
* Began sand bowl therapy @ 4 xs a day for 30 secs to 1 minute each time. Ice afterwards.
* Rubber band from pinky to thumb on back of hand to stretch between Tripezium and Pisiform. (Hand asana)
* Talked about leaving job or getting what she wanted where she was.
* Not able to influence boss to stop being so disagreeable.
* What would it be like to stand up for self and make it “go her way?”
* What is worth “fighting” for?
* What is fighting?
* Is there a better way?
* Maybe boss is not like her family…
* Maybe boss is trying to find his way into a closed, system and is looking for support?
* What if she just started doing what she wanted and saw what happened? ☺

Fourth Session

* Wrist is improving
* Talked about giving some of her typing work to co-worker in exchange for some accounting duties as a trade until she is better!
* Wearing brighter colors today! Looks great!
* Began walking with 2 co-workers; she is finding new connections at work. This is a way to talk when they walk together – gaining solidarity and support.
* Added simple Lumbricle stretches. Keep icing!!
* Worked with spread palm position in hand for typing. Keeping wrists wide . . .

**Eventual**

Will begin shoulder and upper body and more spinal work if she continues to improve

Will ask about how finding the right key board is coming

Will ask if maybe she will try yoga class at some point….

Etc…