

## IDA ROLF

Ida Rolf was an extraordinary lady. She was born in 1896 in New York and was raised in the Bronx. As a young woman attending college during the war, Ida was given opportunities women of earlier generations did not have. Ida graduated in 1916 and was hired by the Rockefeller Institute in New York city, where she continued her education. She earned a PhD in biological chemistry from Columbia University. Ida continued on at Rockefeller where she attained the rank of Associate.

Ida married Walter Frederick Demmerle, an electrical and mechanical engineer. Together they had two sons, one who followed in his mother's footsteps and still practices today.



Ida's work of Structural Integration began as a search for answers to personal and family health problems. Ida took up the study of osteopathy, chiropractic medicine and yoga. Her broad background and keen mind led her to discover how proper alignment and manual therapy could be a solution. This quest became a lifelong passion.

In 1940 Ida began teaching Structural Integration therapy, which her students preferred to call "Rolfing." Structural Integration is the umbrella term for the manual therapy she invented. Throughout her studies, Ida sought a way to organize the human body to utilize gravity's power. The basic law of Structural Integration is that once the body's components are aligned and balanced, the entire system functions as an integrated whole.

When the legs are aligned with the hips, when the shoulders are appropriately balanced with the rib cage, and when the body is positioned over the feet, balance and functioning are restored, as nature intended. Increased flexibility and improved posture ensure that chronic pain conditions do not return.

Structural Integration demonstrates that the form of the body is determined by the relation of the body to the gravitational field. When the body's fascial systems are out of balance, the body is restricted by areas of shortening and strain in the body. These areas cannot handle the force of gravity in the way healthy alignment can, which may result in pain and further misalignment. Areas that can't lengthen will often rotate.

By changing the way the body relates to gravity, movement flows through the body freely and uninterrupted.

Dr. Rolf asked this fundamental question:

*"What conditions must be fulfilled in order for the human body-structure to be organized and integrated in gravity so that the whole person can function in the most optimal and economical way?"*

Her life's work was devoted to the investigation of this system of soft tissue manipulation and movement education called Structural Integration, the field under which a number of different schools now teach, including The Equine Natural Movement School.

In order to pass along her work to others and to make the education process accessible, she developed an expedient series of sessions that restores balance and fluid movement to the body. This series of ten sessions works from the superficial areas to the deep intrinsic layers, making sure that as the work moves deeper, it integrates the layers along the way. Each session builds on the previous one, facilitating more coherence between the deep core and outer sleeve.

*"When the body works appropriately,  
the force of gravity flows through.  
Then, spontaneously, the body heals itself." -- Ida Rolf*