

Ask the Faculty

On Continuing Education

Q *I'm a relatively new practitioner and I see many choices and options for continuing education (CE) to fulfill my manipulation and elective credits before advanced training. I have heard that Dr. Rolf said to focus on Rolwing® only for a number of years, but I also hear so much about the enhanced results that come from integrating spinal mechanics, cranial and visceral work, or trauma work into my practice. What advice do you have on choosing a CE curriculum? And how do I bring in knowledge from other disciplines and yet stay true to the practice of structural integration?*

A After twenty-five years of practicing Rolwing, my advice would be to immerse yourself in your Rolwing practice, studying with Rolfers, so that Rolwing becomes your framework for any additional studies and practices that you add to it. Further studies are like adding spices to a magnificent culinary entrée. Rolwing is a brilliant work, where Dr. Rolf discovered the innate order of the human body. There are now incredible tools to assist and encourage that order, such as the osteopathic work of spinal mechanics, craniaosacral, visceral, and neural release. I have been immersed in a yoga practice that informs me that Rolwing is perhaps the bodywork of yoga. Many have uncovered this mystery of how the human body works, but Rolwing appears to integrate all of these parts of the mystery. Be true to this work of structural integration by practicing it and getting to know it as it becomes a part of you. Dr. Rolf was asked near the end of her life what it felt like to have developed this significant work of structural integration. She answered simply that she was “pleased to have provided meaningful work for so many people.” Choose what is meaningful to you. There is tremendous freedom within the brilliant structure of Rolwing. Find subjects that excite your mind, find the teachers that speak to your heart, and practice in service to the people who come through the door.

Karen Lackritz
Certified Advanced Rolfer™,
Rolwing Teacher-in-Training

A I remember when I was in my twenties and was learning to build houses, a very

experienced carpenter told me “It takes five years to learn anything. It will take you five years to know that that piece of wood you’re cutting is 27 inches, $13/16$ ths and not 27 and $7/8$ ths. That’s how long it takes. Don’t rush it.” When I first trained as a Rolfer, I was told something similar by my teacher. After thirty-some years in practice, I can now tell you that both the carpenter and my teacher were definitely right. Take your time; it only gets better.

Paul Gordon, M.A
Certified Advanced Rolfer,
Fascial Anatomy Instructor

A First and foremost, I would choose classes that continue the development and support and expansion of the techniques and viewpoint you have learned in your basic training. Get good at what you have learned. It is very gratifying to master the basics and it will produce results that will strengthen your practice. I always think that Rolfers’ development follows their curiosity, and that a Rolfer’s curiosity grows out of his or her practice. As you work with what you already know and get good at it, you will discover something very pressing that you absolutely must learn about. Learn that. Don’t be in a hurry. Let your practice lead you. To do that, you have to cultivate your practice, which you will do by mastering the material you already know, as you serve the clients who come to you from your community. Good luck.

Michael J. Salvesson
Certified Advanced Rolfer,
Advanced Rolwing Instructor

A You mention having heard that “Dr. Rolf said to focus on Rolwing only for a number of years.” I myself have heard her quoted differently, as having said that one should “stick to the Recipe” for several years. Perhaps she said both things – but they are very different things, as Rolwing is more than the Recipe, and Rolfers do employ tools and strategies beyond the Recipe while engaged in the practice of Rolwing Structural Integration. In fact, as a new practitioner, your basic training most likely included many tools complementary to Dr. Rolf’s classic Ten Series. With that in mind, I hope you don’t mind if I interpret your question to ask, “When and how should I venture more deeply into, or even beyond, what I learned in my basic training?”

In answer to that question, I certainly agree with Paul Gordon and Michael Salvesson about taking your time and solidifying through experience what you already know. Dr. Rolf said it takes about five years of steady work to really get a sense of what this work is about. It is my take that beyond gathering experience, she was referring to embodying the concepts of integration and aligning what you know with your personal abilities and interests.

Your basic training gave you a framework on which you may now organize your continued development. You can use CE to reinforce and build up what you already know, like, and have a natural talent to do, and it will serve you well. But CE is also an opportunity to grow by exploring less familiar or comfortable aspects of the work. You may use CE both to build on your strengths and challenge your weaknesses and biases. Therefore, in selecting your CE, you might ask yourself:

- What do I really like? What excites me?
- What do I avoid exploring or deepening?
- Am I a “big picture” person or a “detail” person?
- Do I gravitate to the physical – or to the metaphysical?

Balance is the key in planning what to study. Go with what you are already good at and what excites you, but also take the opportunity to challenge yourself. Also, do not forget your framework. Follow the logic of the “tenth hour”: As you seek completion, always ask whether the new knowledge can be integrated into the whole.

Can you, in this moment, integrate the new tool or technique into your framework for Rolwing? In this moment, is there a place in your personal framework to put the tools of spinal mechanics, visceral manipulation or cranial work? If so, by all means explore them. If not, put them aside for now and explore them later.

Because Rolwing is a principle-based science, many tools and techniques may be integrated within it, so long as you respect the principles. Do recognize that many of these explorations represent fields of inquiry in and of themselves, but you have the choice to integrate what you learn as tools for your Rolwing practice without venturing into entirely different paradigms. So, my advice to you would be to stay within the paradigm of Rolwing for now, and study only that for which you have “space” within the framework of your current training and understanding of the work.

**Pedro Prado, Ph.D.
Certified Advanced Rolfer,
Advanced Rolwing Instructor**

As chairperson of the continuing education committee, I’d like to add a few words about the “official position” of the Rolf Institute of Structural Integration® faculty on continuing education. The intention here is to help you understand how the faculty as a whole has designed the CE program, and what the thinking is behind this design.

In most professional organizations, continuing education is an ongoing requirement for membership in the organization. At this moment in the Rolf Institute, continuing education is only required for the interval between the basic and advanced training, although we hope that it stimulates a habit of continuing to learn that the Rolfer will keep up for all of his or her professional life.

In the interval between basic and advanced trainings, the main goal of continuing education is to prepare the Rolfer for the advanced training. This has led us to require three different categories of continuing education credits: manipulation, movement, and elective.

Manipulation credits (nine are required for entrance into the advanced training) refer specifically to workshops that perfect the practitioner’s understanding of Rolwing and

help to refine his or her touch. Workshops that focus on learning more about a specific part of the body from a Rolwing viewpoint – such as the shoulder girdle, the pelvic girdle, and the spine – are workshops that may offer manipulation credit, as well as workshops that review the ten-session series. The teachers of these workshops are usually Rolf Institute faculty or people who have been approved and recommended by a member of the advanced faculty. The idea here is to refine knowledge from the Rolwing point of view.

Movement credits (three are required for entrance into the advanced training) are included in the CE program to assure that the Rolfer’s understanding of function from the viewpoint of Rolwing Movement, and how it affects structure, takes a step forward before he enters the advanced training. The Rolwing Movement faculty teaches the workshops that give movement CE credits.

Elective credits (six are required for entrance into the advanced training) are meant to encompass disciplines that while they are not specifically Rolwing, relate to Rolwing and help the practitioner to understand Rolwing better, from a different

viewpoint. Trainings like craniosacral, Somatic Experiencing®, energy work, or visceral manipulation, to name a few, are examples of workshops that Rolwers may take for elective credits. Workshops that give elective credits are often taught by Rolwers who have studied in other areas and wish to share their insights from these studies with other Rolwers. Sometimes the teachers of elective-credit workshops are not Rolwers at all.

Dr. Rolf is quoted as having said that a Rolfer is not fully trained until he or she has completed his advanced training. From this point of view, the intermediate years between the basic and advanced training are focused more on continuing to work with the information that was passed on in the basic training and preparing for the refinement and further deepening that occurs in the advanced training. I hope this helps you, and I wish you an ever-fascinating and deepening exploration into Rolwing as you continue your career.

**Lael Katharine Keen
Certified Advanced Rolfer,
Rolwing Instructor**