

Rolf, Rolfing, & Structural Integration (www.idaprof.org)

Rolfing is the nickname given by the early consumers of the Ida P. Rolf method of Structural Integration. Rolfing? is also a service mark owned by the Rolf Institute of Structural Integration

Dr. Rolf began her institutional training at the Esalen Institute in 1964, in Big Sur, California. She originally called her work Structural Integration of the Human Body. Her audience at the Esalen community created the term "Rolfing" after her name. It is easier to say: "I got Rolfed" and "I am becoming a Rolfer, rather than "I got Structurally Integrated" and "I am becoming a Structural Integration Practitioner. Plus there is a certain sound to it.

In the 1970's the Rolf Institute, the school founded by Dr. Rolf, deposited the service mark: Rolfing?. The original alleged intentions of the legal service mark were to insure continuity of Dr. Rolf's method of Structural Integration and to insure quality of education to the consumer.

The Rolf Institute has maintained high standards of education in the 1980's and 1990's after the founder of Rolfing/Structural Integration died in 1979.

While many keep calling Structural Integration "Rolfing", the service mark is causing some developmental problems in the industry. In effect, other quality trainings cannot legally enjoy the renown of Dr. Rolf's method under the name Rolfing.

Fortunately, search engines and directory listings are not so regarding of the service mark issue. They are, concerned with indexing the Internet resources for the consumer, and not making benefits out of the word Rolfing. In other words, they have to put all photocopy machines under the same category, even if this category is mislabeled "Xerox", because it is the popular term.

This phenomenon is controlled by the fact that professionals not authorized to use the service mark are hesitant to use the term Rolfing in their communication and marketing. Indeed, legally, it should not appear that professionals are promising to deliver Rolfing as part of their services if their membership with the Rolf Institute is not in order. Because professionals are usually careful in their publishing, they do not get listed as high on the charts if they do not use extensive "Rolfing" occurrences on their web pages and their titles, descriptions, and keywords for instance.

However, there is no point in denying the fact that people that are looking for "Rolfing" or "Rolfers" should be able to connect with all professionals that are perpetuating the principles and techniques of Structural Integration as taught by Dr. Rolf. The words Rolfing and Rolfer were invented by consumers, and in the end belong to the consumers, despite the present legal status.