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**A
Natural Health
Primer**

**Ten Alternative Treatments
for What Ails You**

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Editor's Note

The last few years have seen a resurgence in alternative medicines and treatments as people search for ways other than traditional medicine to cure what ails them. One of the main reasons for this is the harmful side effects that go hand in hand with chemically manufactured pharmaceuticals.

Most of these date back to ancient times, and involve a more holistic approach to treating physical ailments. You will find that the theme of balance is present throughout.

It bears repeating that I am not a doctor, or medical practitioner of any sort. If you have any concerns about trying any of the remedies, and even if you don't, you should discuss them with your health care practitioner before trying them. This is especially important if you are taking any medications now.

With that being said, I hope you enjoy this compilation, and that you find it of some use in your quest for a healthier body.

Ruth Ritchie, M.A.
December 2005

Acupuncture

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a natural therapy that involves inserting hair-thin needles into specific points on the body to stimulate the body's natural healing abilities. Acupuncture can be used to heal and overcome a variety of physical and mental health related problems. Acupuncture is quickly gaining acceptance in Western culture for its proven ability to treat emotional and physical problems without the side effects associated with other forms of medication.

What Can Acupuncture Do For You?

There are several things that acupuncture can be used to help with. One of the benefits of acupuncture is that it increases the body's level of endorphins. This makes it a good way to relieve pain without resorting to medications. Another benefit is that because acupuncture points and the central nervous system are connected, acupuncture also helps normalize nerve impulses.

There is also evidence to show that acupuncture strengthens the body's immune system and natural resistance. It has been shown that there is an increase in white blood cells, as well as in the level of Alpha, Beta, and Gamma Globulins after an acupuncture treatment. Alpha and Beta Globulins are thought to help white blood cells better fight infection, while Gamma Globulins assist in the production of immune antibodies.

Since acupuncture can be used to detoxify the body and strengthen the immune system, it is also useful in the treatment of allergic reactions. Allergies are caused by the immune system reacting to substances that are harmless to most people. Environmental factors, such as pollen, dust and chemicals are common causes of allergies. Foods such as milk, wheat, and shellfish can also cause allergic reactions. Allergies can cause watery eyes, stuffy nose and sneezing. They can also cause more serious problems, such as joint pain, diabetes, glaucoma, kidney problems, depression, heart palpitations and learning disorders.

Another benefit of acupuncture is that it can help reduce withdrawal symptoms, decrease cravings, and relieve tension. This makes it useful in treating drug, alcohol, and other types of addictions.

Acupuncture can also be used to release muscle tension, as well as tension in the connective tissues. This allows the lymphatic, nervous, and circulatory systems to function more efficiently. For these reasons, acupuncture is helpful in both prevention and treating musculoskeletal disorders. Many professional athletes use acupuncture in order to improve training and performance, as well as to speed up healing and to manage pain.

Acupuncture can help with more than 50 different internal medical problems. Some diseases that have been effectively treated with acupuncture include: bronchitis, asthma, diarrhea, ulcers, and hypertension. The exact acupuncture treatment varies depending on the medical condition and may be used in conjunction with other natural therapies, such as herbs and massage.

Acupuncture and Balance

According to Chinese medicine, balance is an essential part of good health. Acupuncture can help to bring the body's energies back into balance and relieve the symptoms of stress, menopause, and PMS.

Stress can lead to more serious health problems, such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and respiratory problems. According to Chinese medicine, stress causes these problems when the liver energy is out of balance. Therefore, acupuncture helps bring this energy back into balance, which relaxes the muscles and brings about peace of mind.

Women going through menopause often suffer from symptoms that include night sweats, hot flashes, insomnia, mood swings, and heart palpitations. In Chinese medicine, these symptoms occur when the Yin is out of balance. Yet other symptoms of menopause can include weight gain, hypertension, indigestion, and water retention, these are caused by an imbalance in the Yang. If these are left untreated, it results in a Qi deficiency, which causes feelings of fatigue, a dry vagina, decreases sex drive, lower back pain, cold extremities, and incontinence. Acupuncture helps get the Yin and the Yang back into balance, thereby reducing the symptoms of menopause.

Many women experience both emotional and physical pain and discomfort before and after menstruation. Emotional difficulties can include sadness, anger outbursts, depression, and irritability. Physical pains can include pain in the lower back and the lower abdomen. Acupuncture can help bring the body back into

balance and eliminate or lesson physical and social pain associated with menstruation.

Acupuncture can be used to treat a variety of illnesses and conditions without the need for prescription medications, and their sometimes harmful side effects. This is a more healthy alternative that relies on the body's natural energies for healing.

Crystal Therapy

What is Crystal Therapy?

Crystal therapy is defined as wearing of precious and semiprecious stones for healing the body and emotional well-being. The belief is that all gemstones carry certain vibrations and when placed within a person's aura, it can change the mental and physical outlook of the wearer. It is believed that the human aura consists of nine colors: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, infra-red and ultra violet. An excess or deficiency of any of these colors leads to illness and emotional distress.

The practice of healing with stones has been around for centuries dating back to the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians. The Vedas in India used gemstones widely. They believed that certain imbalances could be corrected by wearing gems against the skin. Gems were also ground and were used in oral medicines. Even royalty wore certain gems on their crowns and in jewelry in hopes of having better health. Gems were thought to influence not only the body, but also nature and it was possible to increase wealth, power and popularity if worn.

Today, those who believe crystal therapy works believe that the stones transmit certain wavelengths to the body. The wavelengths convert aura rays into a chemical form that the body can use to improve health.

Does Crystal Therapy Work?

Some critics of crystal therapy believe that the healing or sense of well being the wearer may feel when wearing a crystal is more about the power of suggestion or attitude, rather than actual healing. Other critics argue that crystal therapy has no basis at all. They also say there are no scientific studies that show that crystal therapy really helps the wearer, so most of it is only wishful thinking.

Those who dismiss crystal therapy also believe that even if it proved beneficial, a small gem worn on a necklace or bracelet would not be sufficient enough to heal. Instead, the whole body would need to be covered in the gemstone to show any effect at all. Critics also say that crystals and other gemstones cannot possibly

harness and direct energy at all, even though some does produce an electrical charge when compressed.

Those who practice in crystal therapy will point out that many people wearing certain gemstones report feeling better or have an improved sense of well-being. Crystals and gemstone do carry vibrations and channel good energy while warding off bad energy. In addition, those who maintain that crystal therapy works believe that gems can help with self-expression, creativity, and meditation and improve the immune system. They also believe that it is a much healthier and natural approach to healing than taking prescription medication.

How Crystal Therapy Works

It is important to understand that different stones work differently from person to person. The simplest way to practice this form of therapy is to wear high quality gems of natural origin around the neck. Synthetic gems are not recommended because these gems have been heated and changed during processing and do not work as well as natural gems. Look into these commonly found gems for healing benefits.

Ruby is said to open the heart and helps the wearer overcome fear.

Sapphire is believed to provide mental clarity.

Amber helps with depression and emotional stress.

Diamonds can increase personal clarity.

Jade can create a sense of relaxation and help the wearer feel calm while reducing tension.

Coral can strengthen the wearer's emotions.

Black onyx helps change bad habits. It is believed that those wishing to lose weight or stop smoking wear a necklace of black onyx.

Emerald is used to improve both physical and emotional well being.

Aquamarine can help the wearer handle difficult situations.

Opal is believed to broaden the perspective of the wearer.

Rose Quartz can help give emotional balance and soothes the emotions.

There are just some examples of crystals to get you started.

Feng Shui

What is Feng Shui?

Feng Shui is an ancient Chinese belief that involves the study of both the natural and the built environment. The arrangements of these objects affect the yin and the yang, as well as the energy of a room.

Feng Shui has developed into many different versions based on religion, geography, symbolism and culture. One commonality of all Feng Shui practitioners, however, is the belief in energy. The different schools of Feng Shui have developed into seven different predominant forms.

The first school of thought is the Compass school. The compass school uses 8 trigrams of the I-Ching. These 8 trigrams are known collectively as Pa Kua, which is based on the eight main directions of a compass. Each of these directions is associated with a specific chi. A southern direction, for example, is vibrant energy and is associated with the middle of the summer.

Another school is the Eight Mansion School, also known as the Eight House Feng Shui. This school of thought is based on the individual number of a person. The number of the man living in the home is used to bring harmony and balance to the home. Furthermore, people using this system have both lucky and unlucky numbers, with the west numbers being 2, 6, 7, and 8 and the east numbers being 1, 3, 4, and 9.

The Form school of thought is based on the landscape's shape and uses four symbolic animals. These animals are used to identify the type of landscape. The Form school is easy to use along with the Compass school to increase chi both in and out of the home.

The Black Hat Sect is another school of thought. The Black Hat Sect used a fixed entry point for determination of the life areas. It is similar in philosophy to the Compass school, but the areas are different. In addition, the Black Hat Sect mixes psychology, Buddhism and basic design principles, as well.

Another school is the Nine Star Key School. This form used stars to help identify lucky and unlucky days. Using complicated math formulas, this school can pinpoint when a person will get married and the astrological sign of the person to be married to. This form is very inflexible and is based purely on science. The Nine Star Key will also tell the practitioner what house he lives in and makes suggestions on how to live based on the house.

The Flying Star philosophy is the most common Asian form of Feng Shui and is based on astrology and numerology. This form is difficult to understand and to learn. It, too, is based on mathematical principals and is used to determine a person's fate.

The final school of thought is the Four Pillars. This form is not very common and is based on astrology according to the person's date of birth, right down to the minutes. This form is also used to determine a person's fate.

The Elements of Feng Shui

After determining which school of thought is best for an individual, it is important to also understand the five elements of Feng Shui. These five elements are: Earth, Fire, Water, Metal, and Wood. The elements are capable of destroying each other's energies and forming a continual cycle. Through the use of these elements, balance and harmony can be created in a home. If these elements are used incorrectly, however, the energy can be destroyed or lessened.

Each of the five elements is also associated with a color, direction, and number.

Earth (Brown/Beige) - 2,5,8 - Southwest

Fire (Red/Purple) - 9 - South

Water (Blue/Black) - 1 - North

Metal (Grey/Reflective) - 6,7 - West

Wood (Green) - 3,4 - East

Each of these elements has both a destructive and a productive cycle and must be used carefully.

The productive cycle uses the following pattern:

Water - Wood - Fire - Earth - Metal

Water feeds Wood for it to grow. Wood then feeds Fire and produces Earth. Earth, in turn creates Metal. Metal holds water and, thus, continues the cycle. To keep this cycle flowing, bring into the room the elements before and after the main element.

The destructive cycle reduces energy and can be used in a room where one element needs to be lessened. It follows this pattern:

Water - Fire - Metal - Wood - Earth

Water puts out Fire and Fire melts Metal. Metal cuts Wood down and Wood clogs Earth, while Earth muddies Water.

All rooms in a Feng Shui home should be balanced with these five elements, but different items may weigh heavier than others. For example, a chair might score as three counts of an element while a throw pillow only counts as one because of the difference in size.

Feng Shui can bring both beauty and balance to a home.

Flower Remedies

Flowers are, perhaps, one of the most beautiful types of life on the planet. Throughout history, flowers have been used as medicine for their healing properties. Flowers are still used today in this capacity as people increasingly demand homeopathic remedies that modern medicine cannot offer.

Near the turn of the century, Dr. Edward Bach created several flower remedies that would help heal holistically. Over the course of the last one hundred years, Bach's work has been advanced by many different pioneers. There is no scientific reasoning behind why flower remedies work; however, these remedies represent a type of change in the thought of health care. They do not work directly on symptoms, but help our spirits to heal, which in turn, helps our bodies heal.

Flower remedies are made by finding the best and purest flowers. Flowers are gathered individually, infused with spring water, and eventually preserved in alcohol to create the essence. Before creating an essence, it is important to spiritually cleanse yourself, as you must listen to the language of nature to find the best flowers for the job.

There are many different flower remedies to choose, and it is important to make the right decision. Common problems flower remedies can be used to treat include emotional injuries like grief, abandonment, and anger.

Other things that you can use flower remedies for are to stimulate spiritual growth, develop inner talents, improve your communication skills, and develop richer intuition. Additionally, essences can be combined for increased effectiveness. For example, essences can be combined to help students focus, help ensure success in business, assist with relationships, and help heal your soul after tragedies like divorce and death.

Here are some examples:

Rapa-nui helps to heal past life wounds and create wisdom.

Pink hybrid flowers can help individuals to take joy in being alive.

Purple orchid helps individuals examine deep inside their souls.

Cedar gives stability and strength.

Because different people can have different experiences with the same flower remedy, most people can't choose an essence simply by reading its description. While individuals who trust their intuition can choose the appropriate flower essence, others need to use applied energy dowsing to determine the appropriate essence.

How To Use Flower Remedies

Flower remedies can be used a number of different ways. The most traditional way to use them involves putting two drops under the tongue three times a day for a month. However, to increase the effectiveness of the essence, it can be taken more frequently.

Flower remedies don't have to be taken internally to be effective. Drops can be placed on pulse points or misted over the body or throughout the room with the same level of effectiveness. Some have found their sensitivity so great to flower remedies that simply carrying a glass bottle containing the essence will help. Others wear necklaces of glass beads filled with the appropriate essence.

If you are sensitive to the alcohol used to preserve flower remedies, you can use the essence externally, in the methods listed above, or you can dissolve the essence in a hot beverage, causing the alcohol to evaporate.

Flower Remedies and Meditation

One of the most powerful ways to use flower remedies is just before meditation. Various types of meditation, combined with the correct dosage and type of essence will improve its power. One method is to take a drop of essence under your tongue and sit comfortable. Become aware of your breathing, and then become aware of your thoughts. The essence will excite your deepest thoughts and feelings. You should be a simple observer in this process. Don't judge your thoughts and feelings, just consider them. If you find an interesting or powerful thought, go as far as you can with it. Once you become uncomfortable, let it go, and move on to the next thought. When you feel ready, open both eyes, and you will feel reinvigorated.

It might be helpful to keep a journal to track your progress. Because healing is a slow process, you might not realize how much better you feel until you review your journal entries. As you journal be sure to keep track of your thoughts, feelings, and dreams. Different flower remedies can result in different dreams. For example, the Peruvian orchid can cause incredibly vivid dreams and images.

You don't have to be concerned about taking the wrong essence or overdosing on an essence. An essence may not do any good, but it certainly won't do any harm. Moreover, flower remedies are completely safe. They will not react with any medications or any foods you are eating. Remedies are for personal and spiritual growth only. It is important to understand that they are not to be used to treat any medical or psychological condition.

Hydrotherapy

What is Hydrotherapy?

Hydrotherapy is the method of using water to treat various types of medical conditions. This practice has been part of disease and health condition treatment for thousands of years. Many ancient cultures, including Japan, China, and Rome used hydrotherapy as standard practice. Current uses of this treatment include baths, saunas, wraps, and packs.

Hydrotherapy is typically used to improve muscle tone, help with digestive and intestinal processes, stimulate circulation, improve the immune system, and offer pain relief. Water has the unique ability to eliminate stress and heal the body. It can not only assist the external body parts like skin, it can also soothe the major organs as well as the nervous system.

Hydrotherapy Techniques

There are a number of techniques to use hydrotherapy. Cold rubbing is one unique use of this practice. It is primarily used to invigorate and tone the body. To start, soak a cloth, preferably linen, in cold water. Ring it out and rub the entire body. After this is complete, go to bed until your body is warm and dry.

Another form of hydrotherapy is a douche. A gentle douche can be carried out with a container of water or a source of water like a hose or shower head. The water should never splash the skin, and it should flow in toward the heart. After the douche is complete, shake off the excess, get dressed, and work out. There are a number of types of douches. The knee douche is used for headaches, blood pressure problems, sleep issues, and skin problems like bruising or varicose veins. In this process, the water should move from the toes toward the knee, then back to the sole of the foot. It should be repeated for the other leg.

A thigh douche is very similar. The procedure is essentially the same as above, but instead of stopping at the knee, move toward the upper thigh. In addition to the conditions a knee douche treats, this can also improve circulation. A lower trunk douche is, again, the same procedure, but the entire lower half of your body

should be included. This can help with the swelling of major organs or the formation of gall or kidney stones.

The arm douche is used for anxiety issues, rheumatism, heart difficulties, and headaches. To complete this procedure, take the stream of water from the outside of the hand to the shoulder, then back on the inside of the arm. It should be repeated for the other arm.

The upper trunk douche involves much the same procedure, but does not stop at the shoulder. It continues to the chest. This should help with lung and throat difficulties. It can also stimulate the cardiovascular system.

The face douche, useful for headaches, eye problems, and toothaches, can be completed by starting at the right temple and moving toward the chin, then up to the left temple, and over the course of the forehead, then making circles about the face.

Another form of hydrotherapy is the steam bath. This helps with circulation, heart rate, hormone production, and airway flow. Additionally, steam baths have been known to boost the immune system, relax the individual, and help with depression. It is important in a steam bath to avoid overheating. Do not spend more than fifteen to twenty minutes in a steam bath.

Full and partial immersion baths are also forms of hydrotherapy. For back pain and the common cold, a rising temperature hip bath can be helpful. For fifteen minutes, three times a week, stand in a tub with rising hot water. It should start at the foot and rise to the navel. The eventual temperature should reach one hundred and three degrees. A cold foot bath can assist with varicose veins, headaches, circulation issues, and sleep problems. Place both feet in a bath filled with cold water up to the calf. You should stop when the water no longer seems cold. Wipe off the extra water, then walk or run until you are dry.

A final form of hydrotherapy is the wrap. Wraps are used to treat fever and inflammation. A cloth, preferably linen, should be wet with cold water and wrung out. It should then be tightly wrapped around the part of the body that is ill, but do not constrict that part of the body. Once you have completed this wrap, wrap again with a dry linen cloth. The person receiving the wrap can then relax for an hour. If the wrap is not warm after fifteen minutes, a hot water bottle should be applied. If at any point in time, the person receiving the wrap feels ill, the wrap should be removed.

Iridology

What is Iridology?

Iridology is the diagnostic method used to examine patterns and changes in the iris of the eye that may suggest health issues or disease. It is an alternative method that can be used to analyze a person's health by examining the colors and components of the iris, pupil and sclera of the human eye.

The eyes have often been referred to as the windows of the soul. Some cultures believe that to look into a person's eyes is to steal their soul, and that it is disrespectful to look another person directly in the eye. Quite the opposite of the western view that if you can't look someone in the eye then you must have something to hide.

The eyes can tell us a lot about a person. For instance, a happy person will often have a sparkle in their eyes that communicates their joy without them having to say a word. A person in love has that "look" in their eye that says it all. In the same way, you can tell when someone is tired or depressed because their eyes will lack that sparkle.

Your eyes are also a map to your body. Some people believe that your eye color never changes throughout the course of your life, but this is a myth. Our eyes exhibit noticeable changes as we grow older, or as our health changes. These changes often appear as marks or clouds in the iris, pupil and sclera of your eyes. A trained iridologist can assess a person's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health through an analysis of the iris.

A Brief History of Iridology

The first map of the iris was developed by Dr. Ignatz von Pezceky of Hungary in the early 1800s. When he was a young child, he found an owl with a broken leg, and when he looked into its eyes, he noticed a black line in one eye. When the leg was healed, the black line was replaced with a white mark in the same eye. This started the Doctor on a lifelong involvement in the study of iridology. Since that time, Iridology has been studied by health professionals, doctors, and scientists all over the world.

As more and more people search for alternatives to invasive diagnostic tools such as xrays and blood tests, the demand for iridology has increased. An iridology exam is a safe, painless, and non-invasive way to acquire information about a person's health. When used in conjunction with other alternative methods such as homeopathy, nutrition, vitamin therapy and herbal medicine, it can provide effective relief for a number of health issues.

How Iridology Works

An iridology analysis is conducted through the use of many different charts that map the iris to specific organs and other parts of the body. Each iridologist will have his or her own preference as to which charts they use, but all share the same general pattern.

Charts are designed to divide the iris into different zones that correspond to the parts of the body. For example, the right eye is mapped to the right side of the body, and the left eye is mapped to the left side. The top of the eye represents the upper body, and the center represents the stomach and digestive organs. The bottom of the eyes represents the lower part of the body. Paired organs such as the lungs and the kidneys are mapped to both irises.

Through this analysis an Iridologist can determine specific issues relating to a person's physical, mental, and emotional health, and can make specific recommendations for treatment.

Music Therapy

What is Music Therapy?

Music therapy is a special type of therapy that involves using music to assist in overcoming emotional, physical, social, and cognitive problems in people of all ages. Music therapy can be used to help manage stress, to promote overall wellness, to help in the expression of feelings, to reduce or eliminate pain, to improve memory, to promote rehabilitation from physical problems or disorders, and to better communication.

A music therapist first makes an assessment of the client's overall emotional and physical well-being. The music therapist also takes a look at the client's level of social functioning, cognitive skills, and communication abilities. After making these assessments, individual music sessions are designed for the client. Sessions can, however, also include group music therapy. Music therapy options include listening to music, writing songs, discussing lyrics, performing music, and learning through music.

A Brief History

The concept of music therapy has its roots in ancient times, but really gained attention in the 1940s. At these times, community musicians visited Veterans hospitals and played for veterans who were suffering from physical and emotional trauma brought on by the two World Wars. The patients at these hospitals showed notable improvement from the music. As a result, the doctors and nurses requested that musicians be hired to come to the hospitals.

Over time, it was determined that musicians assisting in hospitals needed specialized training. In 1944, Michigan State University began offering a music therapy degree program. It was the first of its kind in the world. The AMTA was later founded in 1988.

The positive effects of music therapy have been so well recognized that many insurance companies cover it as a form of medical treatment. Medicare and Medicaid cover it, as well, as long as it is prescribed by a physician and the patient shows improvement from the music therapy.

Who Can Use Music Therapy?

An integrated approach to music therapy has been shown to help children and adults of all ages. Music therapy helps those with developmental disabilities and learning disabilities overcome their learning obstacles. It also helps individuals with Alzheimers disease and other age-related conditions regain their memory. In addition, those who have coped with drug abuse or who have suffered from brain injuries can benefit from music therapy. People dealing with chronic or acute pain, including mothers giving birth, can also use music therapy to alleviate pain.

Music therapy is also sometimes used by hospitals to improve the mood of their patients or to counteract depression. They also use music to help encourage patients to move during physical therapy, or to calm patients that need to be sedated or who need to rest. Music therapy is also used in hospitals to decrease muscle tension and to help patients relax.

Schools even use music therapy to help children be more successful. For special education students, music therapy is sometimes used to help these children improve their communication skills or to strengthen their physical coordination, which in turn helps them be more successful in general education classes.

The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) has conducted a great deal of research into the effectiveness of music therapy. Their research has consistently shown the positive effects of music therapy.

Many people mistakenly believe that clients of music therapy need to have musical abilities in order to benefit from music therapy. This is not true. Also, some believe that only one type of music can be beneficial for use in music therapy. This is also untrue. In fact, all types of music can be helpful in helping a client. The type of music used depends on the client's preferences, as well as on the individual circumstances and the purpose of treatment. Also, the client's overall goals from the therapy help determine the type of music to be used in the music therapy.

People who are already emotionally and physically healthy can use music therapy to aid in stress reduction. Drumming and listening to music can help facilitate relaxation. In addition, music can be used to help stimulate physical exercise, as many people are capable of working out longer and harder when the workout routine is accompanied by music. Music therapy is a proven form of treatment for helping people of all ages and genders.

Reflexology

What is Reflexology?

Reflexology works by stimulating and applying pressure to certain parts of the hands, or to the feet. Because hands, feet and ears are very sensitive, pressure on these areas are believed to benefit whole body health. The pressure causes increased circulation and promotes an overall healthier body

Reflexology, also known as “Zone Therapy,” has been used for many centuries dating back to . ancient Egypt, India and China. Evidence of reflexology has even been found in tombs in Egypt... The form of reflexology most commonly used today dates back 125 years to Europe and Russia.

Benefits of Reflexology

Many benefits of reflexology have been reported. This method can reduce stress from work or home and provide an overall feeling of relaxation. This form of massage also serves to reduce and sometimes eliminate pain in the neck, shoulders and lower back. Reflexology also improves circulation in the body. Another benefit of reflexology is that those receiving regular sessions report an overall sense of well-being, better health and a feeling of reduced stress levels.

In addition, reflexology therapy has been reported to reduce the pain or discomfort caused by a wide variety of medical symptoms. Sessions can help back pain, minor headaches and migraines, menstrual cramps, injuries from sprained muscles, sleep disorders and arthritis some patients report that this therapy also helps infertility. Reflexology can also safely and effectively be used on almost anyone including infants and children, pregnant women, the ill and the elderly.

It is estimated that this method can be effective in treating over 93% of sixty-three disorders. Those undergoing reflexology sessions often report increased physical and emotional improvements and feel better with their self-esteem and confidence.

This technique is a natural way to help both stimulate and relax the body at the same time. Many who experience reflexology report an immediate relief of stress or pain caused by medical conditions.

How Reflexology Works

While no one is quite sure how reflexology works, there are some theories. One is the nerve theory. This theory maintains that there is a connection between the body maps used in reflexology on the feet, hands and ears to the rest of the body. When a certain pressure point is massaged, it will affect the part of the body connected. This is the most widely believed theory on how reflexology works.

Another theory is that reflexology is based on the meridian theory. This states that there are at least fourteen energy lines called meridians going up and down in the body. These energy lines have hundreds of pressure points and some of them are in the hands and feet. When pressure is applied to those areas, it creates a sense of well-being.

A third theory on how this technique works is the vertical and horizontal zone theories. These state that the body is divided into either ten wide vertical strips or four horizontal strips. Every part of the body falls into one of the strips. Pressure applied to these areas helps that certain body zone.

Learning Reflexology

Learning the techniques of reflexology can be quite simple and easy. Many people can learn the technique and practice it at home or in the office. On-site classes and classes online are offered in many areas to teach the basics of reflexology. Also, books and videos can offer advice on learning the basics of this technique. Many specialty stores offer socks and gloves that can be purchased with the reflexology maps for the hands and feet.

During a traditional reflexology course, students will usually learn the basics of reflexology techniques as well as hand and ear basics. Students also might learn the anatomy of the lower legs including the bones and muscles. Massage techniques and alignment exercises are often taught as well.

Professional reflexology sessions can last between forty minutes to an hour. The session usually takes place in a chair with the feet raised. The reflexologists will use their hands and thumbs to help stimulate trouble areas in the body. Typically, after a session, the patient will feel comfortable and relaxed. Sometimes aromatherapy and breathing techniques are used to deepen the affects of reflexology. Breathing techniques used in conjunction with reflexology stimulates a deeper relaxation and better circulation.

Reiki

What is Reiki?

Reiki is a system of holistic healing that is used to alleviate pain and elevate relaxation and overall well being. The term reiki (pronounced ray-key) refers to the life force or energy that is channeled through the palms. It is designed to help achieve balance and assist in healing.

During a Reiki session the practitioner will act as a conduit through which the Universal Life Energy is channeled to a recipient using either a hands-on or hands-off technique. The reiki energy flows through the palms of the practitioner at varying rates of speed, which are determined by factors such as the recipient's ailment and their willingness to accept change. Physical contact is not necessary in Reiki healing. I have seen, and experienced instances of Reiki healing where the practitioner and the recipient were not even on the same continent at the time.

The principles of Reiki encourage spiritual development and growth. However, a specific belief system is not required for Reiki to work. Anyone, regardless of gender, religion, intelligence or financial status can use Reiki. It is a gift of vitality and energy that is available to anyone who chooses to accept it.

A Typical Reiki Session

During a Reiki session, the practitioner can perform a ritual attunement. In this, symbols are used in energetic placement in sequential actions to the recipients palms and the crown of the head. Each placement is given at least five minutes of attention to ensure that no body part is neglected. During this time, the recipient may feel sensations of warmth and coolness, or they may feel tingling, throbbing, numbness, itchiness, or even a sense of drowsiness. The one thing you should never feel during a Reiki session, however, is pain.

Reiki is an infinite supply of energy, and will never run out, no matter how much you use it. Even if you are giving a reiki treatment to someone else, you are not using your own energy to do so. You are merely allowing the Universal Life Energy to flow through you. There is also no mental energy require, but if you choose to become mentally involved with the recipient, this can have the effect of

opening a clear route for the energy to move more smoothly to the part of the body that needs it most.

Reiki for Stress Relief

Practising Reiki is a good way to control stress and assist in pain management. Many practitioners praise it for the gift of balance, as well as its relaxing effects. For those who suffer from physical stress, Reiki will introduce the Universal Life Energy into the body, which then helps to balance out any mental or emotional stress.

Shiatsu Massage

What is Shiatsu Massage?

Shiatsu massage is a point-pressure massage technique that is designed to help regulate the flow of energy within the body. Sometimes called acupressure, this type of massage helps to produce a deep relaxation that also increases energy levels and brings balance back to the body.

A Brief History

Shiatsu massage was developed around 530 BC in China, and was later exported to other Asian countries such as Japan and Korea. The principles of shiatsu were incorporated into Chinese medical philosophy and practice. However, it did not become popular in Western societies until the 1970s.

A Typical Shiatsu Session

A typical shiatsu massage can last anywhere from forty minutes to one hour, and usually takes place on a padded mat on the floor. This type of massage begins with gentle stretching and manipulation of the skin to allow the stimulation of energy and relax the muscles. Depending on the need of the person receiving the massage, it can be very gentle and calming or used with high pressure, but should never hurt or feel painful. Acupressure massages are usually given using a rapid circular motion with medium pressure. The massages can last from five to fifteen minutes and include techniques such as rubbing, kneading, percussion, and vibration.

Benefits of Shiatsu Massage

One benefit of Shiatsu massages, or acupressure, is that it helps stimulate circulation in the capillaries of the skin's soft tissues. The massage also serves to stimulate the secretion of the sebaceous glands and keeps skin moist and smooth. This helps give skin resilience and helps prevent wrinkling. A shiatsu massage will help improve the look and glow of the skin with improved blood circulation.

Shiatsu and acupressure massages can also help alleviate the symptoms caused by arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammation of the body's tissue and it attacks the linings of the joints. This disease affects one percent of the world's population. Shiatsu applied to the hands and feet are most effective when suffering from arthritis. Pressure from the massage can also be applied directly to any area affected by Rheumatoid arthritis. Shiatsu can also be used to improve the overall health of muscles throughout the body. Shiatsu helps limber muscles and gives muscles nutrition by improved circulation. It also helps reduce muscular pain.

A third benefit of shiatsu is that by relaxing the body and increasing blood flow and circulation throughout the body, it can aid in the treatment of migraine headaches. Migraines are usually caused by a rapid widening and narrowing of the blood vessels in the brain or head, causing irritation and pain. Common symptoms of migraine headaches include nausea, sensitivity to light and sound, weakness, numbness and vision problems. Migraines are thought to be caused by changes in weather, stress, hunger, foods containing nitrates and sometimes caffeine.

Shiatsu massages have also been used for thousands of years to aid women during monthly cycles to alleviate symptoms such as menstrual cramps and depression. This kind of massage has also been used for years for also for pregnancy as well. Shiatsu has been known to help women in labor and help babies turn in the womb. It can induce labor in women who are overdue and help ease morning sickness and swelling often caused by pregnancy.

Shiatsu massages are also found to help aid the circulatory and digestive system. A gentle massage helps improve circulation and cellular nutrition throughout the body. A massage also benefits the digestive system allowing food to digest more easily and aids in the elimination of waste products. A shiatsu massage also increases stamina by storing energy reserves and assists in fat metabolism and removal.