

Introduction to Alternative Healing Practices



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Energy Healing 101

Everybody wants to be healthier and feel better and some of us are willing to try anything. But, have you heard of “energy healing?”

Energy healing is the basis of many ancient medical and mystic techniques in the Indian and Pacific regions. It’s easy to get into and hard to master.

The Basics of All Energy healing

Energy healing is based on the idea that the human body is, in a sense, powered and sustained by energy. This energy has different names in different traditions but most readers today might best understand it as the soul, or as “life.”

This energy concentrates in certain parts of the body, usually called “chakras.” Most of the major chakras are lined up from the top of the head to the bottom of the pelvic region but there are also more minor chakras spread throughout the body, usually at the sites of joints. Energy flows between these chakras along various channels.

All energy healing works on the basic idea that if energy is allowed to concentrate in one area, or if it doesn’t flow properly along the predefined channels, the human mind and body can be affected. Where the major schools of energy healing differ is in how they approach this energy.

Chakras and Acupuncture

The concept of chakras and the related concepts of acupuncture are at least vaguely familiar to most people, and so they make a good place to start.

The basics of these studies come from the religious texts of ancient Indian civilizations. As mentioned above, they involve the concept of energy centers and channels that circulate energy throughout the body. Each of the chakras is associated with a different emotion or trait set. None of the tendencies or traits are bad on their own but if energy is not circulating between the chakras the way that it should be, it can result in a surfeit or deficit of otherwise healthy emotions or traits. This can lead to mental health, or even physical health problems. These can be cured by redirecting the energies back to their proper distributions and courses.

If an individual is healthy enough and aware enough to notice their own problems, they can often attempt to realign their own energies through meditations. If their condition is too advanced, they may visit a practitioner who uses acupuncture needles placed at intersections of energy channels to realign the flow of energy and relieve symptoms. Ideally, however, the individual will maintain healthy energy flows by maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle including regular meditation and physical activity.

Despite being an ancient "pseudo-science," acupuncture has never been discredited, though it has also never been explained to the satisfaction of "western" science. As a result, it is somewhat widely available and may even be diagnosed to deal with symptoms like chronic pain. Similarly, ancient practices to maintain the energies, like yoga and tai chi, are gaining popularity around the world and have been found to have certifiable benefits to emotional and physical health.

The Ancient Art of Reiki

Another form of energy healing, called "Reiki" starts from a similar place of understanding but moves in a slightly different direction.

Reiki practitioners believe that energy concentrates in chakras and that that energy must freely flow through the appropriate channels. They believe, however, that the energies flowing through different people can interact with one another. As a result, a person who understands the energy and has healthy energy themselves can then manipulate the energies of unhealthy people to restore them to health.

Reiki practitioners do not enjoy the popularity or respect of acupuncture therapists in most parts of the world, though they can be found and some people do stand by their ability to heal. Whether or not you believe in the more spiritual aspect of Reiki, some credit it as being one of the precursors to modern chiropractic medicine.

Crystals

The final form of energy healing that we will discuss today has to do with crystals. It is probably a later development in the long history of energy healing, as crystals were more important mystical artifacts to Western Europeans than to other cultures. However, crystals have along the way collected much of the basic understanding of healing that come from the Indo-Asiatic traditions.

Crystals are believed by many to generate, absorb, and otherwise conduct energy. By holding a crystal near an energy center, or by moving the crystal between energy centers, the energy of the body can be redistributed or realigned.

Healing with crystals has less medical or scientific backing than acupuncture, or even reiki, and remains very much an occult practice. That doesn't mean that there isn't a wealth of information on the practice available in bookshops or online. Many communities of even modest size also have shops where crystals can be purchased specifically for energy healing, should anyone be interested in giving it a go. Be careful, however, as many "crystals" sold in more careless shops and online are actually plastic or glass and the wise healer will quickly learn to tell the difference and establish trustworthy sellers.

Not everybody believes in energy healing. However, it's not at all dangerous – provided you don't let just anybody stick you with pins. So, good luck with your entrance into the fascinating and arcane world of energy healing!

10 Benefits Of Energy Healing

We are all impacted by spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental influences. Which is why energy healing is such a powerful practice, it addressed the whole body, your whole person, rather than just a set of symptoms. Energy healing can help relieve the symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as improving your mood. Additionally, it can boost your affection and contentment, it can help you release any fear, hostility or anger that you've been holding onto. When it comes to the physical benefits, your heart rate will return to normal, which will help you reduce your blood pressure. Ultimately, energy healing brings you inner peace and empowerment. It sounds great, doesn't it? Well, there's more - here are five clear benefits of energy healing.

1. Stress Management

Energy healing isn't just about dealing with stressful situations, it's also about attracting fewer stressful situations. The stress isn't just the situation itself, it's how you react to it. The way you deal with a situation has more to do with unresolved feelings from your past. Any type of situation where you were left feeling powerless, unloved, worthless or shamed can become lodged in your cells' memory. While not every trauma will stick with you, the ones that do will influence your future experiences. Energy healing will clear that memory, it's like a hard reset.

2. Improved Self-Care

People tend to take a bit better care of themselves when there is good energy flowing through their body. That's what you get when you use energy healing. You feel good about yourself, you feel good about your wants and needs. More importantly, you feel empowered. It's that empowerment that leads you to practice self-care properly, with smarter diet choices, exercise, and overall respect for yourself.

3. Improved Relationships

It might not be something that you are aware of, but we allow our past to cloud how we interpret the actions and words of others. It might be a previous relationship that has made you wary or, it could be childhood experiences. For example, you fight with your partner about things a previous partner did. When they do certain things, you immediately go back to the hurt from that previous relationship. You struggle to get with your boss because your boss is too similar to your parent. When your boss offers a critique, it feels as though that parent is hurting you all over again. Energy healing releases all of that.

4. Improved Productivity & Creativity

Where does creativity truly come from? It isn't your mind, your mind is just the tool where inspiration is received, interpreted, and put into action. Creativity comes from believing that you are worthy. You first have to understand and truly believe that you are capable. You need to be free to create and you need to believe that your creativity is important. Important enough for you to give it the attention and time it requires to come to fruition. Even though other people will want your attention and time.

Energy healing will release any feelings of unworthiness or judgment and allow you to produce on your creativity.

5. Happiness

This one should come as no surprise. With all of the benefits listed above, happiness is inevitable. It will be your default. You will likely notice that your outlook is more positive and that you are quick to smile. You can now manage your stress more effectively, you are more creative and productive than ever before, your relationships are improving, and you are truly taking care of yourself. Of course, you're going to be happier! Additionally, things tend to come more easily to you because you expect them to. This is enlightenment.

6. Better Digestion

One of the greatest benefits of energy healing is how it influences your cells. Ultimately, if your cells are happy, then your organs and digestive tract will operate optimally. That's good news for your whole body. Just think about the issues that come with poor digestion – you may have bowel issues such as constipation or deal with indigestion and heartburn. We underestimate just how important our digestive tract is to our overall health and wellness. Constipation leads to mood swings and headaches, while heartburn can impact your ability to sleep at night.

7. The Law of Attraction

It's all about making yourself a manifestation magnet. When you achieve balanced energy, your soul will be fully aligned with yourself. This healing opens you up to attract the good in the world and repel everything else. Energy healing is the key to the law of attraction. If your mindset and experiences attract the same back... then it's vital that your energy is positive, otherwise, you are unknowingly attracting negative energy and events into your life.

8. Improved Intuition

Every one of us has built-in intuition. How connected we are to it is an entirely different story. When you talk about your instincts or your gut talking to you, it's your intuition. Self-awareness is the key to hearing and understanding the inner voice that is guiding you. Energy healing will help you do that, as well as create an open mind and allow you to get in touch with your intuition on a deeper level.

9. Weight Loss

When your body functions properly maintaining your weight is a cinch. This is because your body naturally releases toxins, but when you have blockages... it isn't as simple as that. Energy healing can purge those blockages to clear trapped feelings and emotions that drive your cravings. Clear those blockages and you will avoid overeating. It's easy to understand why you're carrying extra baggage when you experience blockage clearance through energy healing.

10. Pain Relief

Energy healing practitioners work with your body's energy to clear residual tension. The energy at the core of your body will shift and release all of those tensions and blockages, thus relieving your pain. You might just be surprised by how many blockages and how much tension you have stored in the tendons, muscles, and joints of your body. Energy healing is one of the most effective ways to purge that tension and restore your body to balanced bliss.

Naturopathy 101

Whether you have a condition that established medicine can't touch or whether you want to understand how to make yourself healthy without always going to a hospital, you may be interested in trying our various... lesser practiced medical studies.

If modern science seems too modern and energy healing seems too "out there," there is another school called "naturopathy" that might be just right for you.

What is Naturopathy?

"Naturopathy" comes from the word "nature" and the ancient Greek suffix "-pathy," which originally meant "suffering" but here means something more like "a condition."

Naturopathy may sound – and may be intended to sound – much older than it is. The truth is that naturopathy really only came about in the late twentieth century. That doesn't mean that it isn't an old or studied practice, it just means that people didn't used to have – or need -- a word for it.

Naturopathy is the belief that modern society creates its own health problems through unnatural problems, which it then relies on unnatural medicine to solve. The major tenant of Naturopathy is that most conditions can be avoided without the use of institutionalized medicine provided the individual practice their own routine of a healthy diet and adequate physical activity.

Now you can see why it only recently had a name put down. Throughout the vast majority of human history, most people lived naturopathic lives without trying to or without needing to call it anything. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, most people lived lives that we would now consider physically demanding – or at least physically active. Up until the mid-twentieth century everyone had diets that we would not consider "organic" or "farm-to-table." For most of us, however, life has become a bit more complicated since then.

Should I Follow This Lifestyle?

It's hard to argue against naturopathy in most cases. After all, the leading cause of death in the United States according to the Center for Disease Control is heart disease, which you're far less likely to get if you have a healthy diet and regularly exercise. Diabetes, another disease largely caused by poor diet and lack of exercise also makes the top-ten list.

Many of today's health problems are caused by processed foods which are high in sugar, high in simple carbohydrates, high in unhealthy fats, high in artificial ingredients like colors and preservatives, and shockingly low in just about everything else. While many people scoff at those working for more availability of "organic" foods, there are few who would argue that we would all be much better off if we ate food that was closer to nature.

Similarly, diabetes and heart disease can also be largely prevented by regular exercise which keeps weight off, keeps blood pressure health, and keeps our hearts and lungs healthy.

Should I Be skeptical of this Movement?

Unfortunately, the basics of naturopathy can be a little short-sighted. There are many causes of disease and death that can't always be kept at bay by a good diet and regular exercise. That CDC list of common causes of death also includes cancer, respiratory diseases, strokes, Alzheimer's, influenza and pneumonia, and other conditions that can occur naturally to otherwise healthy people.

Similarly, many of the worst scourges of the pre-industrial world are held at bay not by organic foods and jogging but by vaccines, antibiotics, and other medical interventions. Minding your diet and exercise can certainly help you to live a happier and healthier life but living a naturopathic life shouldn't keep you from going to your healthcare provider for vaccines, checkups, and treatments for serious illnesses – though you will probably need to see them much less often by people who don't bother with the naturopathic way of life.

This duality is testified to by the fact that the leading organization for naturopathic medicine, The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, is made up not of hippies and millennials but of medical practitioners who believe that you can live a happier and healthier life by being more considerate of what you eat and how you spend your time.

Acupressure 101

Acupressure is an amazing alternative medicine technique that releases stress, anxiety, negative energy and built-up tension in your body. It's very simple to practice on yourself, or someone else, once you know the basics because it depends only on applying pressure to specific points on your body. Of course you can also visit a qualified therapist who can perform the procedure for you.

Each of these points aptly referred to as 'pressure points', are assigned to different parts of your body. There are two types of points; local and trigger. Local points are the area where there is actual pain or discomfort. Trigger points are connected to the area where the pain exists. For example, if you apply pressure to the crease found on the back of your knee, this can alleviate lower back pain and release tension from your lower vertebrae.

The theory behind this ancient Chinese treatment is that these chosen points stimulate the meridians, which are pathways through which our life-energy, or 'chi', flows. There are about 14 meridians running throughout our bodies.

When these pathways are energized through pressure, it brings relaxation and calmness. It also enhances circulation and flexibility by activating the body's hormonal, lymphatic, and circulatory systems, as well as boosting the immune system.

Benefits

Acupressure can help treat and prevent many types of illnesses. Through its relaxing technique, acupressure can bring relief from the following:

- Stress and anxiety
- Insomnia
- Achy joints and muscles
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Chronic pains and illnesses

How it's Done

The basic way to apply pressure is by using your index finger, thumb, or side of your hand. Certain types of tools can also be used such as, for example, the acuball, the energy roller, the foot roller, the power (or 'pyramid') mat, and the spine roller.

Once you've chosen your application method, locate the pressure point, then press down for a good 1 - 3 minutes. When you press down, you, or the person you're applying pressure to, should feel a good type of pain where there's a bit of tenderness, but also a feeling of relaxation starting to emanate.

Breathe

A big part of acupressure is breathing. Both the person applying the pressure and the one receiving it should control their breathing using full and deep breaths. This helps unleash tension and pain, unclench muscle knots and stimulate healing energy allowing to flow throughout your body. It also allows the person receiving acupressure to help regulate the amount of pressure being used with each inhale and exhale. On the other hand, the person applying pressure should also use controlled, deep breathing to enhance their focus on the task at hand.

Safety measures

While it's easy to try out acupressure on yourself or someone else, there are several precautions you should be aware of before starting.

- Avoid applying pressure in a jerky or bouncy way.
- Avoid applying pressure on the abdomen, thigh or leg in pregnant women.
- Avoid applying pressure on areas where are recent scars or broken skin. What you could do, however, is apply pressure on the opposite side of the body which may result in what experts refer to as 'reflex effect'. This is when applying pressure to one side affects the same area but on the other side because they're both affected by the same set of nerves from the spinal cord.

Acupressure has been practiced for thousands of years and has proven its ability to energize and stimulate your body, mind, and soul resulting in a calmer, stronger you. Talk with your doctor about trying acupressure, and, as with everything, start slow, take your time and enjoy the process.

Acupuncture 101

This ancient Chinese healing technique has been practiced for thousands of years. It can be accompanied with herbal remedies or modern Western medicine for the treatment of many disorders which the World Health Organization (WHO) has amounted to nearly 47, such as neck and back pain, arthritis, sports injuries and headaches.

How does it work?

Acupuncture requires inserting fine, hair-thin, hygienic, disposable, individually-wrapped needles into specific parts of your body to stimulate healing. The needles are painless, but what may cause slight discomfort is the use of damaged or faulty needles, or the inapt placement of needles.

Once the special needles are inserted correctly, you may feel slight pressure, tenderness, or numbness in various areas - it's completely normal. These sensations are the needles energizing the sensory receptors under your skin at precise acupuncture points.

Acupuncture points have a high concentrated number of nerve endings, lymphatic vessels, capillaries and mast cells which all have the power of triggering physiological and biochemical changes in the body. When one of these points is triggered via an acupuncture needles, a chain reaction is set off:

1. Sensory receptors are stimulated.
2. Activated sensory receptors spark nerve endings.
3. Nerves transmit impulses to a network of hormones and glands, known as the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system.
4. Neurotransmitters and endorphins (a major component of the hormonal system and the body's natural pain-killer) are released, helping treat and moderate many illnesses.
5. Serotonin (one of the body's natural 'feel good' hormones) is also released, allowing the body to relax, boost its circulation and reduce inflammations.

Acupuncture is a holistic treatment, meaning it deals with the body as one entity; mind, body and spirit. So, instead of focusing on the back to treat back ache, acupuncture delves deeper to find the source of the pain, and treats the whole body, not just the back.

This procedure helps regain the body's natural energy, Qi (pronounced chee), and re-calibrate the meridian system, which consists of 12 energy passageways that run throughout the body, creating a system of connections.

When your energy doesn't flow freely or the meridians are blocked or out of balance, you experience pain which can manifest itself physically, mentally or emotionally, making you more prone to diseases, injuries and mental anguish.

Who can benefit from acupuncture?

Acupuncture is for everyone, regardless of age or health history. If you're suffering from any type of disease or illness, acupuncture can help alleviate aches and soreness, and if you're not suffering from anything, it can help you maintain your good health. It's also proven itself to reap a wide assortment of beauty benefits, such as clearer skin, minimized wrinkles and fewer breakouts.

Basic acupuncture sessions last from 45 minutes to a full hour. While the number of sessions may vary according to each individual's case, basic cases require 2 treatments no more than 7 days apart.

Whatever your ailment, there are positive side effects to be gained from acupuncture. Your sleep will improve; you'll have more energy, better cognitive functions, and better digestion and reduced stress.

Choosing a certified acupuncturist

Acupuncturists need to complete a minimum of 2000 hours of training in both Traditional Oriental Medicine and Western medicine from an accredited school of acupuncture before acquiring a license to practice, followed by a written and practical exam. The highest degree is the doctoral degree, the Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (D.A.O.M.).

When deciding on an acupuncturist, don't be afraid to ask questions regarding their training and work experience. Since acupuncture is a complementary healing technique, it's not meant to replace a physician's treatment, nor will it interfere with it.

Part of their training is knowing how to collaborate with MDs to integrate treatment for the best possible outcome, so discuss it with your doctor and acupuncturist for getting the right treatment for you.

Meditative Movement And Your Wellbeing

Meditative movement is helpful for a wide variety of illnesses, but at its core – its ability to relieve stress is key. Stress can impact every facet of your health and wellbeing so, learning how to manage it will help you improve your overall wellness. We live harassed lives, with family to look after, full-time careers, and self-care just a part of everything the world throws at us. Even our children are touched by stress, with social media pushing competition in a way that we didn't experience in our youth.

The Goal of Meditative Movement

It doesn't matter where you are in life. At any stage, the point of the meditative movement is to get in touch with your inner silence, purge your body of stress and access calm from the well of tranquility within you. The benefits that you will reap include being your best self, enjoying optimum wellness, and just feeling better overall.

Meditation Methods

There are all different types of meditation before we explain meditative movement, let's take a look at the other options.

- A seated position – you can do it in a chair, on the couch cross-legged on a cushion or the floor.
- Focused meditation – this requires something to focus on, which might be a mantra, a breath or perhaps a candle.
- Sleep meditation – this requires a guide. It's referred to as sleeping meditation because you lay on the floor as you are led into a deep state of relaxed awareness.
- Walking meditation – you can do this on the move, any time and absolutely anywhere.
- Meditative movement – it can be any type of movement, there isn't one specific recommendation here. You can meditate while doing any type of physical activity or you can opt for the more traditional methods which include Tai Chi, yoga, and Chi Kung. The movements that you practice here are slow and deliberate, much like the process of meditation. So, the meditative movement is a two-for-one, where you can enjoy the benefits of meditation, as well as the exercise you have chosen to pair with it.

Moving in Meditation

- Your breath is the guide to your movement. In yoga, your inhale should direct you to your pose with the exhale allowing you to settle into it.
- As you move, you should bring your mind to the present. For example, if you choose running as your meditative movement, every step that hits the ground can help you maintain focus on the present.
- It might be helpful to choose an activity that you know and love, at least as you get started. It can be challenging to get all of the pieces to fit when you're starting a brand new physical activity. Just imagine how difficult it would be to quiet your mind when you're just learning all the moves to successfully execute a pose.

Push any negative thoughts that you have directly out the window and find a positive thought to repeat in its place. Or, simply put it aside and breathe through it. If you are struggling to get into it you may want to look for a local class, at least until you get comfortable with the process. Most people meditate in their home where they are comfortable and there are apps and websites that offer free guided meditations. You may need to try more than one style to find the one that truly works for you. The key is to do it daily and make it a part of your normal routine.

Life can be tough and it's difficult to make changes that will improve our wellbeing. However, these alternative healing techniques could be your first step.



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