



INTRODUCTION TO HEALING ENERGIES

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Introduction to Healing Energies

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Introduction

There are two main ancient healing systems, the Ayurvedic from India, and Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Both have become increasingly studied by scientists in the West, leading them to be accepted as useful forms of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Complementary means they can be used in conjunction with other treatments, such as mainstream Western medicine. Alternative means that Ayurvedic and TCM are being used instead of mainstream Western healing methods.

There is a wide range of CAMs, but several of them have a good deal in common because they can be termed energy work for healing, that is, using the body's own energies in various ways. The main ways are to increase it, balance it, and move it around the body to promote health and healing.

The energy work is done in a range of ways that can include:

Touch

Meditation

Movement

Aids to moving the energy, such as needles in acupuncture or crystals or stones to be placed on the body at various points, such as chakras or meridians

In this guide, we will be outlining several of the main methods of CAM that use energy work. They are well-documented by research and are non-invasive, requiring no medication, herbs or supplements.

Let's get started with a couple of the more familiar ones you've probably heard of, acupressure and acupuncture.

Chapter 1 - Acupressure

Acupressure is similar to massage, but it focuses on energy points in the body known as meridians to help the entire body function better, heal faster and remain stress-free. It is related to acupuncture in the basic concept that pain and problems in one part of the body are controlled and alleviated by meridians in other parts of the body.

The key difference is that acupressure uses massage and the hands, whereas acupuncture uses thin needles inserted into the skin to tap into the energies in the body and balance them.

In TCM, the concept of qi or chi (CHEE) is central to their concepts of health and healing in the body. Qi can be described as the life force within us, which offers health, vitality and longevity. If the qi flows freely, a person is healthy. If the qi is blocked, it can result in built-up pressure and disease, that is, dis-ease. The practices of both acupressure and acupuncture release that pressure and open up the blocked channels to allow the energy to flow freely once more. This will lead to pain relief, better organ function, release of toxins from the body, and more.

Those who practice acupressure study for many years in order to learn exactly where to pinpoint the pressure points associated with locations of pain or illness. They then apply pressure with the thumb, knuckle or the eraser end of a pencil to alleviate pain and reduce the symptoms of any illness the person might be suffering from.

Acupressure is perfect for those who don't like needles, and for anyone who wishes to heal themselves through energy work. You can do it almost anywhere, at any time, once you learn a few basic points to apply pressure to. For example:

Acupoint 1 is located at the fleshy join between the thumb and index finger. Pressing on this can help with many problems of the upper body, including facial pain, toothache, anxiety, and breathing problems. Press each side in turn to keep in balance. Or, press the opposite side for toothache. For example, if your tooth hurts on your right side, press the left webbed area, and vice versa.

Acupoint 2 is located in the middle of the wrist, about two inches below the base of the hand. This pressure point helps with arm pain, stomach pain, menstrual cramps and breathing problems. It can also help with stopping smoking.

Acupoint 10 is at the base of the thumbnail, on the side away from the fingers. It helps with nasal congestion, headaches, arm pain and more.

Used correctly, acupressure can help reduce your stress levels, general aches and pains, ease the symptoms of many illnesses and aid in recovery from injury and surgery. Now let's look at its cousin, acupuncture.

Chapter 2 - Acupuncture

As with acupressure, the idea is to tap into the qi or life force in the body and keep it flowing in order to avoid illness. Any blockages can lead to disease. Acupuncture is a way to manipulate the 14 channels, or meridians, in the locations where they come closer to the surface of the body. Long needles are inserted through the skin into the specific acupuncture locations. Once inserted, a variety of methods can be used to stimulate the qi through the needles, such as by:

- raising and lowering the needle
- twirling the needle
- vibrating the needle
- tapping it
- warming it
- connecting it with other needles or even
- using small electrical charges with the needles.

The patient's complaint dictates which acupuncture method will be used.

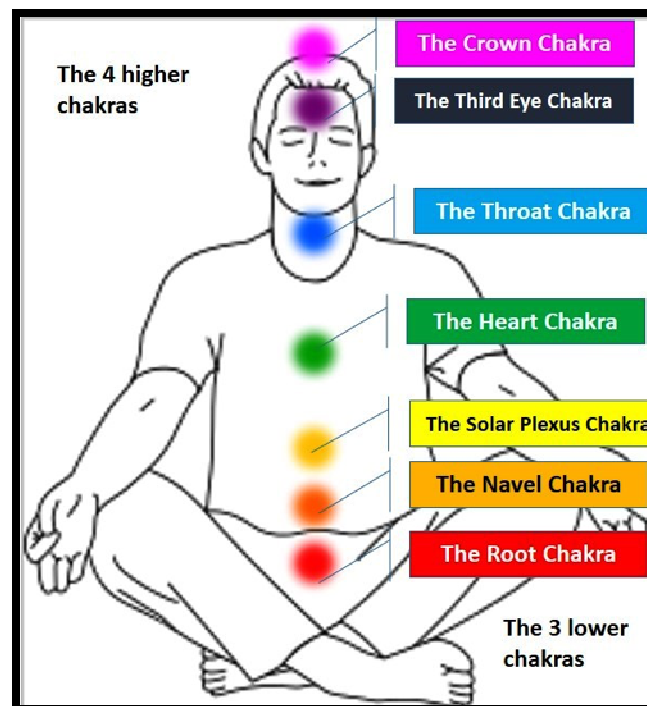
No one is really sure as to why acupuncture is so effective, but researchers suggest a number of reasons beyond simply the placebo affect (patients think it works, so it does). Acupuncture releases a range of hormones in the body that help heal. The needles also seem to release antibodies, stimulating the immune system, and endorphins, 'feel-good' chemicals in the brain. The energy work also improves blood flow. It might also affect the neurotransmitters in our brain, blocking pain.

Acupuncture has been proven useful in treating a number of health issues, including:

- Chronic pain
- Arthritis
- Allergies

- Muscular problems
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Chemical addictions
- and more.

Acupuncture should only be practiced by someone fully trained. Most insurance companies cover acupuncture and acupressure under their CAM coverage, so check your policy and see what the copays are if there are any limits in terms of the number of treatments you are permitted to receive per year. If you are squeamish about needles, try acupressure (see above) or meridian therapy (see below).



Chapter 3 - Chakra work

In TCM, as we have seen, the energy is known as the qi and the energy centers are known as the meridians. In Ayurvedic medicine, the main energy centers of the body are said to be the seven chakras.

The word chakra means wheel or vortex. The chakras are pictured as running along the spine in the center of your body and spinning from front to back. This being the case, you can give yourself a massage on your front or have someone do it along your back in order to balance or increase the energy of a particular chakra.

Each chakra has a color and particular kind of energy. Starting from the base of your spine, and working to the top of the head, the chakras are:

1. The Root Chakra
2. The Navel, Sex or Sacral Chakra
3. The Solar Plexus Chakra
4. The Heart Chakra
5. The Throat Chakra
6. The Third Eye Chakra
7. The Crown Chakra

Let's look at the energy of each of these in turn.

1-The Root Chakra-red

It is located around the area of your anus and its energy is the desire for safety, stability, and all important needs being met, such as food, water and shelter.

2-The Sex Chakra-orange

This is the seat of procreative and reproductive energy.

3-The Solar Plexus Chakra-yellow

Think of solar, like the sun. The word plexus means network. It is in the middle of your body, at the area where your ribs separate. This is the seat of willpower and

a great deal of energy. The secret is to move the energy from the lower chakras to here, and then from here to the upper chakras, to stay balanced and fulfilled.

4-Heart Chakra-green

The heart chakra is in the center of your chest and is associated with love and compassion. A balanced chakra helps with a harmonious life and connects your body, mind and spirit.

5-Throat Chakra-blue

This is located at your throat and controls communication and connection with others. It allows you to speak your deepest truths and be understood by others, and well as giving you the ability to understand them.

6-Third Eye-indigo (purplish blue)

Located between your eyebrows, this is the center of your intuition and helps you perceive the world around you with greater clarity.

7-The Crown Chakra-purple

This is located at the top of your head and is an energy center that connects with all your chakras within, and connects with the universe outside.

If you have trouble remembering them, they are the colors of the rainbow, with red at the bottom on up to purple at the top of your head.

Chakra work can be done with hands, such as massage; with crystals and stones (see below); and with chanting and meditation as well. It can also be done via movement, specifically Kundalini yoga, a centuries-old form of yoga designed to balance the chakras and harness their energy for various healing purposes.

The energy in the body isn't called qi, but Kundalini, which means 'coiled' like a snake or a spring. It refers to both the energy itself, and the potential you possess within you that you can fulfil if you are able to tap into this energy.

Chapter 4 - Crystals and Stones

Crystals and stones are believed to be a bit like magnifying glasses, enhancing the energy of a particular area of the body to promote health and healing. Touching anything places focus on it. Touching it with a crystal or stone can increase the energy, or alter it depending on the properties of the one used.

For example, there are crystals and stones associated with each of the 7 chakras:

1. Root chakra: bloodstone, tiger's eye, agate
2. Sacral chakra: carnelian, moonstone, coral
3. Solar Plexus chakra: malachite, calcite, topaz
4. Heart chakra: jade, green calcite, green tourmaline
5. Throat chakra: lapis lazuli, turquoise, aquamarine
6. Third eye chakra: amethyst, purple fluorite, black obsidian
7. Crown chakra: clear quartz, amethyst, diamond

You can invest in a full set of chakra stones, or buy one good quartz crystal to lay over any area you wish to balance or enhance. Crystals are also beautiful to look at and improve mind and spirit as well as body.

Chapter 5 - Meridian Therapy

Meridian therapy is an alternative procedure for reducing stress and freeing your body from toxins. It is similar to acupuncture in its applications. Meridian therapy releases blocked energy for total body health.

The name of the therapy refers to the lines of energy that run throughout the body. There are twelve meridian lines that run along the body, six on each side. There are also two unpaired meridian lines: one along the front midline and one along the back midline of the body, for a total of 14.

According to TCM, your qi runs along these lines. If the flow of qi is unobstructed, the person is healthy. If it is obstructed, the person becomes ill in body and even mind.

Blocked qi usually manifests itself as headaches, intestinal trouble, tiredness, depression, back ache, aches and pains, or a general feeling of fatigue, like a 'flat battery'. Only by unblocking the meridians with therapy can balance and health be restored.

Meridian therapy works on each of the 14 pressure points along these meridians to unblock the energy flow in the body. Each meridian corresponds to certain organs in the body and they can be reached through pressure on the meridian. A meridian therapist learns how to touch and apply pressure to the exact point that will unblock the qi. This is similar to acupuncture, but they might use other methods as well, including crystals, stones, or even magnets.

Meridian therapy focuses on the organs a good deal to help keep them functioning optimally. Malfunctioning organs are also seen to be responsible for emotional and mental imbalance in the patient. A sluggish liver, for example, can cause short-temperedness, while an overactive one can be associated with depression and crying spells.

Magnets are used in meridian therapy to trace the meridian lines and to see which way they are flowing. If the qi is flowing in the opposite direction, this can signal that there is an infection or some other illness in the body.

Meridian therapy can be a useful CAM if you find a trained practitioner and journal about your health before, during and after treatment to make sure that it's working well for you. If you have a pacemaker, defibrillator, or any other medical device that might be shut off by exposure to a magnet, avoid meridian therapy, or tell the practitioner not to use magnets on you.

Chapter 6 - Qigong

Qigong (also spelled Ch'i Kung and pronounced CHEE gung) is a powerful system of healing that is part of TCM. It also uses the life energy of the body, the qi or chi, to transform body, mind and spirit. The word gong means attainment, accomplishment, skill or practice.

Therefore, qigong is the practice or skill of being able to work with the life energy in the body. It is a combination of breathing methods, meditation and movement to cleanse, strengthen and circulate the life energy in order to bring the body back into balance and promote good health.

Breath work helps you take in life-giving oxygen and breathe out harmful toxins. Meditation can free the mind of toxic thoughts and improve mental clarity, focus and ability to concentrate.

The most familiar aspect of qigong for most people will be the movements, which are tai chi. Some people practice tai chi alone as just an exercise rather than as a healing path, but the results should be the same: you can move the energy around your body to improve your health and vitality. Even seniors can do qigong and tai chi, which has been attributed to a longer life with better health and flexibility no matter what your age.

Chapter 7 - Reiki

Reiki, (pronounced RAY-key), also works with qi or ki in Japanese. It is derived from TCM. Reiki helps to release the flow of these forces, effectively healing many types of illnesses within the body. The principals of Reiki have been used for thousands of years but were developed into a system in Japan in the late 1800's by Dr. Mikao Usui. Mrs. Hawayo Takata brought the practice of Reiki to the United States after WWII, and it has grown in popularity ever since.

Reiki is similar to acupuncture in that the hands are used for healing. However, the hands are not placed on the meridians, but rather, over certain areas of the body. You can heal yourself using certain hand movements and heal others with a different set of hand movements.

There are three levels to reiki, Level 1, Level 2, and master. A reiki practitioner first receives their 'power' through a ceremony known as attunement. Once they receive this and instructions on how to start, they can heal themselves.

When giving or receiving any reiki treatment, it's important to wash yourself, remove all jewelry, and calm the mind with meditation. Reiki works with the qi in the body, but also the auras. The practitioner begins by smoothing out the patient's aura.

This is important because your aura can be picked at throughout the day by other people until it is uneven or has holes in it like a Swiss cheese. A Swiss cheese aura will make it hard to stay healthy and on track with all of your life goals as a person of integrity, that is, an integrated human being.

Sitting next to the patient with one hand on their own sacrum (the small of the back), and the other held several inches above the patient's body, the practitioner begins to slowly move his hand from head to foot. The practitioner returns his hand to the patient's head by following a circular path along the side of their body. This is repeated several times until the aura is healed and restored.

The treatment can be for healing and relaxation for the body as a whole. Or, you can focus on certain locations in the body, such as the head, chest, abdomen and back, wherever you feel things are out of balance. You or the practitioner can then focus on balancing the qi within that particular area of the body.

Some of the health conditions helped by reiki include:

- Sinus problems
- Allergies
- Colds
- Nausea
- Heartburn
- Gastrointestinal difficulties
- Problems with metabolism
- Sexual problems
- Weight issues
- Back pain

and more.

Using reiki during an illness or following an operation will result in an increase in the body's ability to heal itself. It can also decrease pain and will increase calm and relaxation. Studies have shown that using reiki regularly can boost the immune system and help people bounce back more quickly when they've been ill. It has also been associated with relief from depression, anxiety and other mood disorders.

Reiki stimulates the qi to maintain your aura and harness the life force's healing properties for overall health and well-being. Best of all, it is non-invasive and can even be done on your own once you learn how.

Conclusion

There are other forms of energy work to promote health and healing, but these are best-known and documented modalities. If you've been feeling like a flat battery, or stuck in certain areas of your life, one or more of these forms of energy work could help.

Or, if you wish to live your best life and achieve your goals and aspirations, energy work can help you harness the power within, for transformation in whatever area of your life you wish to work on.

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