



BODYWORK

The term *bodywork* refers to a wide range of therapies, such as massage, deep tissue manipulation, movement awareness, and bioenergetic therapies, which are employed to improve the structure and functioning of the body. The benefits of bodywork in all its forms include pain reduction, relief of musculoskeletal tension, improved blood and lymphatic circulation, and promoting deep relaxation.

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Massage

Websites: www.alternativemedicine.com

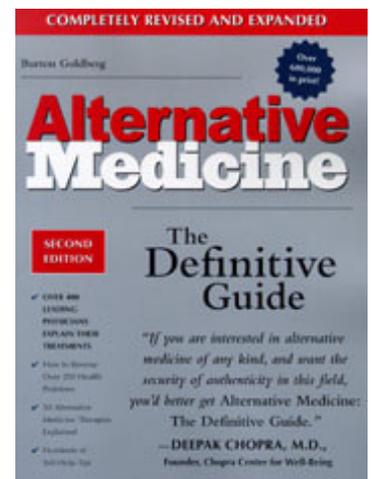
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BODYWORK

Source: [Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide](#) (119-137)

FOR CENTURIES, the therapeutic use of touch has been applied to heal the body and reduce the tensions of daily life. Today, there are over 100 schools of bodywork, from therapeutic massage to structural bodywork therapies like Rolfing and Hellerwork that employ deep tissue techniques to restructure the body. Movement therapies, such as the Feldenkrais Method and the Alexander Technique, help realign the body through the correction of postural imbalances to promote more efficient function of the nervous system. Pressure point therapies apply pressure on various areas of the body to relieve pain and restore proper energy flow. Bioenergetic systems of bodywork, such as acupressure, polarity therapy, Therapeutic Touch, and Reiki, help balance energy in the body and bring about enhanced health and well-being. Bodywork approaches within the field of somatic psychology focus on the interrelationship between body (soma) and mind (psyche). The majority of bodywork practitioners employ a combination of bodywork methods.

Therapeutic Massage

Within the past two decades, an overwhelming accumulation of scientific evidence has supported the claim that massage therapy is beneficial.¹ According to John Yates, Ph.D., author of *A Physician's Guide to Therapeutic Massage*, massage can benefit conditions such as muscle spasms and pain, spinal curvature (lordosis, scoliosis), soreness related to injury and stress, headaches, whiplash, temporomandibular joint (TMJ) syndrome, and tension-related respiratory disorders (bronchial asthma or emphysema). Massage can also help reduce swelling, help correct posture, improve body motion, and facilitate the elimination of toxins from the body.² Lymphatic massage, for example, can move metabolic wastes through the body to promote a rapid recovery from illness or disease.

Other studies show that massage can be used as an adjunct in the treatment of cardiovascular disorders and neurological and gynecological problems and can often be used in place of pharmacological drugs.³ Other conditions for which therapeutic massage has shown benefit include arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, gastrointestinal disorders, and insomnia.⁴ According to the Quebec Task Force on Spinal Disorders, massage is the most frequently used therapy for musculoskeletal problems and is particularly useful in controlling pain.⁵



Because of its many benefits, therapeutic massage is an increasingly popular part of physical therapy practices, nursing practices, and sports medicine clinics. It is also the most commonly used form of

bodywork in the U.S., used by an estimated 20 million Americans each year.⁶ In addition, a survey of conventional primary care physicians and family practitioners conducted in 1998 found that 54% encouraged their patients to pursue therapeutic massage as a treatment.⁷

Gertrude Beard, R.N., R.P.T., former Associate Professor of Physical Therapy at Northwestern University Medical School, in Chicago, Illinois, summarizes the findings of numerous research studies on the therapeutic effects of massage. Studies indicate that massage:

- Has a sedative effect upon the nervous system and promotes voluntary muscle relaxation.
- Is effective in promoting recovery from fatigue produced by excessive exercise.
- Can help break up scar tissue and lessen fibrosis and adhesions, which develop as a result of injury and immobilization.
- Can relieve certain types of pain.
- Provides effective treatment of chronic inflammatory conditions by increasing lymphatic circulation.
- Helps reduce swelling from fractures.
- Affects circulation through the capillaries, veins, and arteries, and increases blood flow through the muscles.
- Can loosen mucus and promote drainage of fluids from the lungs by using percussive and vibratory techniques.
- Can increase peristaltic action (muscular contractions) in the intestines to promote fecal elimination.⁸



Researchers have also found that certain massage techniques can trigger reflex actions in the body to stimulate organs. Beard adds that these should only be applied under the direction of a knowledgeable physician or physical therapist.

How Massage Releases Tension and Promotes Relaxation

Muscle tension, whether from normal activity or from awkward movement or stress, contributes to muscle fatigue and pain by compressing nerve fibers in the muscle. Prolonged contraction interferes with the elimination of chemical wastes in the muscles and surrounding tissues and can cause frequent nerve and muscle pain. If not properly addressed, these body tensions have a tendency to build into chronic patterns of stress.

Prolonged tension can often cause pain in other parts of the body. For example, headaches are often caused by overly tense muscles in the neck, shoulders, and lower back. Even contracted abdominal muscles can trigger headaches in certain people (a common complaint of women with menstrual difficulties).

For these tension-related conditions, Robert D. Milne, M.D., of Las Vegas, Nevada, an expert on headache relief, finds that massage can break up muscular waste deposits and stimulate circulation. He adds that accumulated metabolic wastes often form "trigger points" within muscles. These are specific areas that are painful to the touch. "They feel like knots or rope within the muscle and perpetuate muscle tension," explains Dr. Milne. By applying deep pressure to these points, the tension or spasm can often be eliminated.

Common Types of Therapeutic Massage

Swedish Massage—Swedish massage is the most common form of massage therapy in the U.S. Swedish massage therapists use a combination of stroking, kneading, and friction techniques over the full body, working specifically on the superficial skin layers of muscles. Practitioners and clients determine which areas of the body to focus on and which elements to employ. The primary benefits of Swedish massage are numerous: it promotes general relaxation, improved circulation, relief from muscle tension, restored flexibility, and the elimination of waste products in the tissues. Sessions usually last an hour and can be done in conjunction with hydrotherapy to enhance the benefits. [See **Hydrotherapy**.]

Deep Tissue Massage—Deep tissue massage employs more direct pressure on deeper muscle layers. Therapists use slow strokes and friction techniques as they work against the grain of the muscles. Although clients often feel sore immediately following sessions, deep tissue massage is highly effective on lower back pain and on chronically tight muscles.

Sports Massage—Sports massage is no longer the luxury of elite athletes. Today, it is an effective way to remain healthy and injury free whether you are a professional athlete or just a weekend exerciser. Sports therapists are readily available in health clubs, spas, and exercise facilities, as well as on college campuses. Sessions combine deep tissue with Swedish massage techniques. Sports massage has many benefits, from easing muscle aches and pains to enhancing performance before sporting events. It can also restore muscle tone and mobility after vigorous workouts and eliminate the buildup of lactic acid, which causes pain and stiffness.

Lymphatic Massage—Lymphatic massage focuses on improving the circulation of the lymphatic system, a body-wide network of vessels and lymph nodes. By stimulating lymph flow by lightly stroking the primary areas of the body through which lymph fluid is filtered (neck, armpits, upper torso, and groin), practitioners help prevent lymph congestion, thereby ensuring that the body's cells receive adequate levels of life-enriching oxygen. Some massage therapists may also employ energy devices, such as the Light Beam Generator, to further stimulate lymph flow. [See **Energy Medicine**.]



Caution: Therapeutic massage may be contraindicated for certain forms of cancer, some forms of heart disease, infectious diseases, certain skin conditions, and phlebitis. If you suffer from such conditions, consult with your physician before receiving massage therapy.

Bodywork: A New Approach to Awareness and Physical Health

The contemporary systems of bodywork are as concerned with relaxation and physical therapy as are the traditional schools of massage. Designations such as neuromuscular therapy, connective tissue massage, myofascial therapy, trigger point massage, and soft tissue manipulation further distinguish these contemporary systems. However, most are based on one or more of the following principles or



techniques:

- + The use of pressure or deep friction to alter the muscular and soft tissue structures
- + The use of movement to affect physiological structure and functioning
- + The use of education and awareness to change or enhance physiological functioning
- + The use of breathing and emotional expression to eliminate tension and to change physiological functioning

By addressing tension, stress, and structural imbalances in the body, bodywork can be an important part of a health maintenance program and can reduce long-term health costs.

The following categories of bodywork represent some of the most influential practitioners, theories, and techniques in the field today.

Movement Reeducation Therapies

Bodywork approaches in this category can help improve body function by addressing the way habitual movement patterns (walking, standing, sitting) impact health. By training people to become more aware of their bodies and the way they move, practitioners help to improve posture, balance, and ease of movement, resulting in enhanced feelings of well-being.



ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

[Books: <http://www.alexandertechnique.be/English/bibliography.htm>]

Frederick Matthias Alexander was one of the first people to notice how faulty posture in daily activities (sitting, standing, moving) is connected with serious physical and emotional problems. Alexander pioneered a simple, effective approach to rebalancing the body through awareness, movement, and touch. A Shakespearean actor, Alexander began to experience a recurring loss of his voice while on stage. When he studied himself in a mirror, he discovered that he unconsciously and habitually moved his head back and down, tensed his neck and throat, and sucked in his breath whenever he thought of using his voice. From his observations, Alexander developed a method that used his breath to alter this habitual muscular response, and he eventually recovered his voice. This marked the beginning of the Alexander Technique.

Alexander was aware that the correct relationship of one's head, neck, and back is essential for proper movement and functioning. He observed that people habitually misuse their bodies for such mundane activities as sitting or standing, and Alexander helped his students become conscious of these faulty habits and postures. He taught how to interrupt or inhibit familiar postural "sets" that corresponded to these recurring habits so that the body could be guided to allow improved motion, balance, and posture. "Most people have lost good use of their bodies by the time they are past early childhood," states Wilfred Barlow, author of *The Alexander Technique*.

Poor or inhibited use of the body can contribute to many diseases, including debilitating curvatures of the spine, rheumatism, arthritis, and a variety of gastrointestinal and breathing disorders.⁹ According

to Barlow, all of these can be positively affected by learning how to properly hold and use the body.

Most people have lost good use of their bodies by the time they are past early childhood.

In the early 1970s, experiments conducted by Frank Pierce Jones at Tufts University, in Boston, Massachusetts, concluded that the Alexander Technique could effectively interrupt or inhibit habitual and learned responses that interfere with proper body functioning. By doing so, it allows for a restoration of natural balance and responsiveness during movement.¹⁰ In a more recent study, women over the age of 65 who were taught the Alexander Technique showed improved balance, leading researchers to conclude that it could help reduce the incidence of falls in women of that age group.¹¹

Preliminary research also indicates that the Alexander Technique is useful in helping patients cope with Parkinson's disease. In one study, seven patients with Parkinson's received an average of 12 sessions of instruction in the Alexander Technique. Following their training, all of them reported that they were significantly less depressed. In addition, they had "a significantly more positive body concept and had significantly less difficulty in performing daily activities."¹² Other research has shown that the Alexander Technique is beneficial for treating chronic back pain when incorporated as part of a multidisciplinary approach that also includes chiropractic, acupuncture, and psychological intervention.¹³ [See **Acupuncture, Chiropractic.**]

In a typical session, a student may lie on a table, sit on a stool, or remain standing. The student may be given instructions such as "Let your head move forward and up to allow your torso to lengthen and widen. "While saying this, the teacher gently prevents the old habit and encourages a new improved response of the head/neck/back relationship. During this time, the student is told to "do nothing"—the student simply thinks about the instruction given by the teacher. Eventually, the student constructs a new body image and by doing so retrains and reorganizes the way he or she moves.

AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT

Ralph Strauch, Ph.D., a certified Feldenkrais practitioner in Los Angeles, California, suggests the following simple method taken from a typical Awareness Through Movement lesson. This particular lesson is designed to improve how the neck and head turn.

- Sit comfortably with your body upright and your feet on the floor. Close your eyes and turn your head slowly to the right until it stops. Notice if the movement is smooth and fluid or somewhat stiff and jerky. Open your eyes and notice how far you turned and then bring your head back to the center.
- Slowly repeat the movement another 20-25 times. Do not turn as far as you can and do not "try" hard to do it; simply move slowly and easily, noticing what you feel. Pay attention to the parts of your body that take part in the turning; be aware of how far down your spine you feel the movement. Let your eyes move in unison with your head, looking to the right then coming back to the center. Allow your shoulders to take part in the movement as well.
- Now sit quietly and notice how you feel. After a few moments, close your eyes and again turn your head to the right. Does it go farther this time? Has the quality of the movement changed? Turn your head to both the left and the right and notice any differences in movement or ease. Most people will notice an improvement in the quality of movement to the right. The process of watching the movement, not the movement itself, produces this change. It is an increase in awareness that allows the movement to improve.

To test this, try the following: Close your eyes and imagine doing the same movement to the left. Imagine the movement becoming smoother and easier over 10-15 times. Feel the imaginary movement in the spine, the shoulders, and the eyes, just as if you had done the actual movement. Now actually turn the head to the left and the right and notice how the movement has improved.

Although the number of instructors trained in the Alexander Technique is comparatively small (fewer than 2,000), its popularity has spread around the world, including Australia, Europe, South America, South Africa, Canada, and Israel, in addition to the U.S. In Europe, there are many Alexander Technique teachers at various colleges, particularly in the departments of drama, speech, dance, and music. Athletes find the Alexander Technique helpful for improving their performance skills and for relief of chronic pain. Many well-known actors have also received training in the Alexander Technique because of the benefits it provides.

FELDENKRAIS METHOD

Moshe Feldenkrais was a physicist involved with nuclear radiation research and antisubmarine technology in France and England. Like Alexander, personal trauma in the form of a sports-related injury drove him to explore the functioning of the body. Rather than submitting to the recommended surgery, he sought an alternative solution through the study of the nervous system and human behavior. Applying his experience of martial arts, physiology, anatomy, psychology, and neurology, Feldenkrais succeeded in reversing his impairment and taught himself how to walk without pain.

The notion of "**self-image**" is central to the theory and technique of Feldenkrais and his method. According to Feldenkrais, "Each one of us speaks, moves, thinks, and feels in a different way, each according to the image of himself that he has built up over the years. In order to change our mode of action, we must change the image of ourselves that we carry within us."¹⁴

Feldenkrais viewed the human organism as a complex system of intelligence and function in which all movement reflects the state of the nervous system and is also the basis of self-awareness. We become accustomed to our movements, good or bad, and this can lead to physical and emotional problems. Feldenkrais reasoned that if the negative habitual patterns of movement are interrupted, the body will learn to function with greater ease, fluidity, and motion. This improves one's self-image and simultaneously increases awareness and health.

Feldenkrais recognized the **importance of breath** and viewed it as an integral form of movement. Poor movement and poor functioning impairs breathing and improper breathing interferes with the proper functioning of the body. He found that even the movement of the eyes could seriously interfere with how other parts of the body function.

Feldenkrais developed two approaches for working with students and clients: one implements group lessons (called *Awareness Through Movement*) and the other focuses on individualized hands-on touch and movement (called *Functional Integration*). Participants of Awareness Through Movement are guided through a slow and gentle sequence designed to replace old patterns of movement with new ones. As the client learns how to listen to these lessons, he or she develops an awareness of subtle changes in habit and movement. Feldenkrais wrote that the lessons are designed to improve mobility, "to turn the impossible into the possible, the possible into the easy, and the easy into the elegant."¹⁵

With Functional Integration, learning occurs through touch. The practitioner actively directs the client's body through movements individualized to their particular needs. The Feldenkrais Method differs from most other schools of bodywork in that there is no attempt to structurally alter the body. Instead, it is through touch that the practitioner attempts to communicate to the person a sense of improved self-image and movement. Feldenkrais viewed forcefully imposed "posture" as rigid and

inflexible and shunned the idea of imposing rules of proper form and function. His teaching imparts a sense of exploration, experimentation, and innovation that allows each person to find the optimal style of movement.

The Feldenkrais Method helps people move more easily and is also useful for those who have limitations of movement caused by stress, accidents, back problems, or other physically debilitating illnesses, including stroke. It has also been shown to **reduce perceived stress** and **lower anxiety levels associated with multiple sclerosis**.¹⁶ "But, adds Ralph Strauch, Ph.D., a certified Feldenkrais practitioner, "Our primary concern is with the person, not the disorder." Performers and athletes have praised Feldenkrais for improving their levels of performance and many have utilized the work as a means of enhancing personal growth.

THE TRAGER APPROACH

Beginning in 1927, Milton Trager, M.D., developed this intuitive and playful approach to movement reeducation that uses a method of gentle, rhythmical touch combined with a series of movement exercises.¹⁷ Although the techniques are very different from Feldenkrais work, the purpose is largely the same: to help the client recognize and release habitual patterns of tensions that are present in posture and movement. He established the Trager Institute with Betty Fuller in 1980.

The Trager Approach uses no specific techniques of movement or massage. Instead, the practitioner is taught to feel how the client is holding his or her body and, by applying various rocking, pulling, and rotational movements to the client's head, torso, and appendages, the therapist gently loosens tense muscles and stiff joints.

"The concern of the Trager Approach is not with moving particular muscles or joints per se," says Deane Juhan, an instructor at the Trager Institute, "but with using motion in muscles and joints to produce particular sensory feelings, namely positive, pleasurable feelings that enter the central nervous system and begin to trigger tissue changes by means of the many sensory-motor feedback loops between the mind and the muscles."¹⁸ These gentle movements provoke a sense of deep relaxation and help increase flexibility and range of motion in the joints and limbs. Dr. Trager believed that the unconscious mind will always mimic movements that result in an improved sense of pleasure and freedom, and that it is the practitioner's responsibility to help plant this sense of well-being in the person's body. As he said, "The Trager Approach consists of the use-not the laying on-of the hands to influence deep-seated psycho/physiological patterns of the mind and to interrupt their projection into the body's tissues."¹⁹

Mentastics is a term coined by Dr. Trager to mean "mental gymnastics." These exercises are free-flowing, dance-like movements designed to increase awareness of how the body moves for the purpose of learning how to move more effortlessly. An exercise may be as simple as letting the arms or legs drop to one side or adding a small shaking or swinging motion to a foot and leg while walking. Dr. Trager designed the exercises to reinforce the relaxation awareness established from hands-on bodywork.

Dr. Trager took a particular interest in applying his approach to people suffering from severe neuromuscular disturbances resulting from injury, disease, and aging, including disorders such as polio, muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis. In addition, many athletes have found that the work has increased their efficiency of movement and stamina.

Structural Bodywork

Bodywork in this category is concerned with improving physical functioning by releasing musculoskeletal tensions, misalignments, and imbalances caused by the effects of gravity and habitual patterns of stress-reaction.

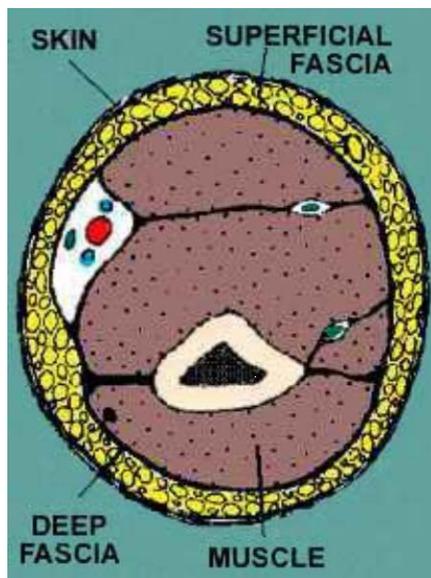
ROLFING

Biochemist Ida P. Rolf, Ph.D., gained her first exposure to therapeutic manipulation when, as a young woman, she was successfully treated by an osteopath for a respiratory condition. The doctor performed manipulations to reposition a rib that had been displaced by a kick from a horse. Dr. Rolf began to glimpse the operating premise that would become the cornerstone of her work: the body's structure profoundly affects all physiological and psychological processes.

Dr. Rolf was also influenced by her exposure to yoga, which led her to the principle that "bodies need to lengthen and be balanced, and a balanced body will give rise to a better human being."²⁰ She founded the Rolf Institute for Structural Integration in 1970, which has since trained bodyworkers from around the world in her methods.

[See Yoga.]

Rolfing, the popular name for **Structural Integration**, is based on the idea that human function is improved when the segments of the body (head, torso, pelvis, legs, feet) are properly aligned. Most people are not aware if and when their bodies are out of balance.



For example, when standing, many people put most of their weight on their heels, but doing so throws the balance backward. In order to compensate, the upper body must lean too far forward, throwing the pelvis out of alignment. In addition, in order to see, the head has to be tilted back. To hold this position, the muscles of the neck, back, and legs must remain overly contracted and stressed. After maintaining this posture for months or years, the fascial tissues (fibrous layers covering muscles) of the body have to compensate to hold everything in this out-of-balance position. Movement becomes impaired and this reduces mental clarity and increases emotional stress.

Dr. Rolf believed that manually manipulating and stretching the fascial tissues could reestablish balance and poise. The **fascia** is a thin, elastic, semi-fluid membrane that envelops every muscle in the body and unites the skin with underlying tissue. Fascia also plays an integral role in maintaining posture and proper movement. Dr. Rolf defined fascia as "the organ of change" and stated that injury, chronic stress, or other trauma can lead to its deterioration. According to Dr. Rolf, when fascia becomes increasingly more solid, rigid, and sticky, it begins to restrict the movement of muscles and joints.

Practitioners of Structural Integration, known as "**Rolfers**," use pressure applied with the fingers, knuckles, and elbows to release fascial adhesion. Doing so helps to reorganize the tissue back to its proper geometric planes by lifting, lengthening, and balancing the body segments. Balance is an

essential fact in Rolfing. "If the head is supported and balanced by the shoulders, the shoulders by the chest, the chest by the pelvis, and so on, then gravity can only reinforce balance," noted Dr. Rolf.²¹ Typically, Rolfing sessions are spaced one week apart for a period of ten weeks, resulting in significant, noticeable improvement in posture, musculoskeletal alignment, and overall well-being. Clients also have the option of receiving four or more advanced sessions, which are usually offered one to two years after the initial sequence.

Depending on the depth and degree of tissue adhesion, pain may be felt when pressure is applied. Dr. Rolf pointed out that it could hardly be expected that profound tissue changes such as changes in position or tone could be accomplished without a dramatic reaction. "People often call this reaction pain, but it is not the pain we associate with injury or hurt," she stated.²²

Over the years, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the physical manipulations, a system of movement education called **Rolfing Movement Integration** has developed. Weekly sessions allow the teacher and client to explore the possibilities for developing free, more balanced movements. These movements can then be applied to all aspects of daily living: sitting, standing, breathing, running, and housework.

Valerie Hunt, Ed.D., and Wayne Massey have conducted research on the effects of Rolfing at the Department of Kinesiology, University of California, at Los Angeles. The study concluded that: movements were smoother, larger, and less constrained; there were less extraneous movements; body movements were more dynamic and energetic; carriage was more erect; and there was less obvious strain to maintain a held position.²³ A similar study conducted at the University of Maryland indicates that Rolfing reduces chronic stress, promotes changes in body structure, and enhances neurological function. In addition, those who suffered from lordosis, or sway back, experienced a reduction in the curvature of the spine.²⁴

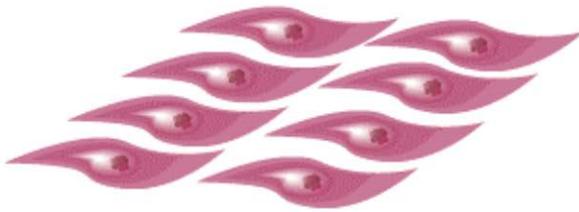
[See Applied Kinesiology, Craniosacral Therapy, Osteopathic Medicine.]

Dr. Rolf's work has profoundly influenced contemporary bodywork. Her research into fascia and the role of gravity in determining balance has added tangible credibility to the structural approach to body therapy. Nearly everyone can benefit from Rolfing, and those who suffer from pain and stiffness related to mechanical imbalances and poor posture will be particularly rewarded.

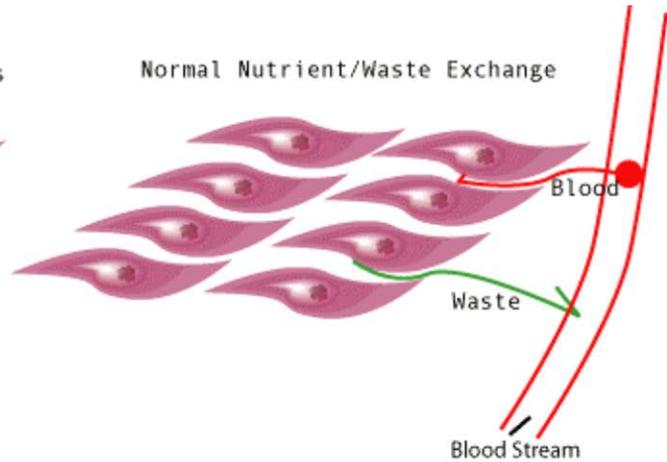


Caution: Rolfing is contraindicated for anyone suffering from acute pain related to bone weakness (fracture, osteoporosis) and is also not advisable for conditions such as cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, acute skin inflammation, and chronic addiction.

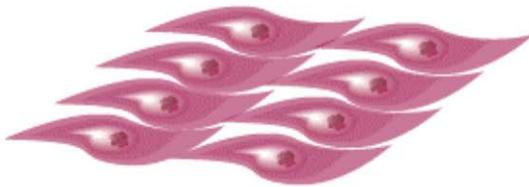
Healthy Organization of Cells and Fibres



Normal Nutrient/Waste Exchange

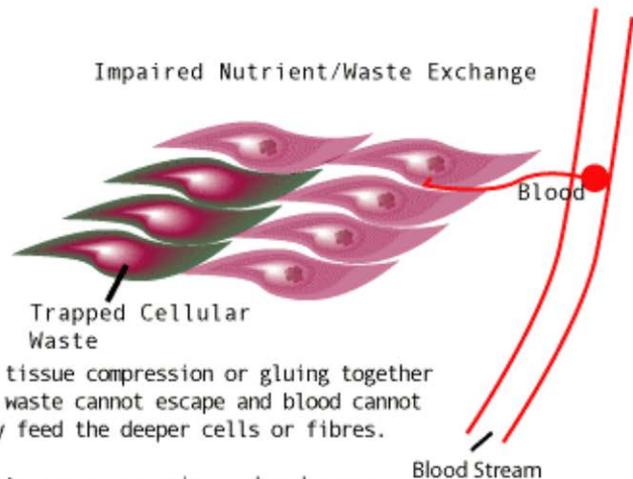


Tight or Damaged Tissue



May be caused by trauma, repetitive strain, ineffective or misguided posture, over or under- use.

Impaired Nutrient/Waste Exchange



Due to the tissue compression or gluing together of fibres, waste cannot escape and blood cannot effectively feed the deeper cells or fibres.

Trapped waste can cause pain, reduced range of motion, resistance and therefore weakness and exhaustion will be common.

MYOFASCIAL RELEASE

This form of structural bodywork, developed by physical therapist John Barnes, takes a whole-body approach to healing. Like Rolfing, Myofascial Release attempts to improve body structure by releasing tension in the fascia and the muscles. Practitioners work with their fingers, the palms of their hands, and elbows to apply slow, deliberate strokes to the body lasting between 90 seconds and three or more minutes. Individual sessions are 30-90 minutes, with initial sessions occurring with short intervals between visits in order to achieve maximum benefit. Tension and chronic pain relief, improved body alignment, and faster recovery from injury are the most common benefits of Myofascial Release. Over 20,000 health-care providers from the fields of medicine, physical therapy, and therapeutic massage employ Myofascial Release as part of their practice, making it one of the most common forms of structural bodywork.



Caution: Myofascial Release is contraindicated for cases of aneurysm, rheumatoid arthritis, or malignant tumors, and practitioners should avoid areas of the body with bruises, fractures, or wounds until they have healed.

ASTON-PATTERNING

Several years after completing her graduate studies in dance and fine arts at the University of California, at Los Angeles, Judith Aston was involved in back-to-back car accidents that left her with debilitating injuries. After conventional medical treatment failed, a physician recommended that she see Dr. Rolf. As a result of Dr. Rolf's technique, Aston's condition improved dramatically. Because of her background in teaching dance, and her ability to train people to see and perform movements, Dr. Rolf asked her to develop a movement education system for Rolfing to help maintain the structural alignment achieved in the treatment sessions. This system was called Rolf-Aston Structural Patterning. Aston began training people in 1971 and, during the next seven years, she trained Rolfers in movement analysis and the basics of movement education.

She went on to develop Aston-Patterning in its current form in 1977. Unlike Dr. Rolf's model and its focus on body symmetry and alignment, Aston noted that all movement is naturally asymmetrical and that a healthy body develops asymmetrically through adaptation to the kinds of work, recreation, sports, and other daily activities it performs. In addition, Aston focuses on how to distinguish what is changeable and what is a true asymmetrical limitation. Aston's work also has an individual focus since, as she says, "people aren't recipes." Aston also teaches students a technique she calls "spiraling" to work the deep tissues without pain.

Aston-Patterning work focuses on four areas: movement reeducation, massage and soft tissue bodywork, fitness training, and environmental "design" (for example, altering the height of an office chair and furniture to suit a particular body). Participants learn to integrate Aston's principles of movement with specific methods for strengthening and stretching the body.

Neshama Franklin, a health journalist, describes a demonstration session she received from an Aston Patterner. "We started with an evaluation of the way I walk. The practitioner noted that my weight distribution was off balance—heavy on the heels with my feet pointed at different angles. Then, she explored my body with massage. Any resistance or tension was dutifully marked on a chart. I liked the specific, graphic way the chart helped me see the patterns of tension in my body. After the massage, we returned to walking and I explored ways to distribute my weight more evenly. The result was a new stride that felt springy and light. Six months later, I could still recapture that ease of movement when I focused on what I learned at the demonstration session."²⁵

Aston-Patterning can be used to develop better movement and coordination or for managing painful conditions such as backaches, headaches, and tennis elbow. Physical therapists also use Aston-Patterning as an adjunct for those suffering from neck and back pain and for working with adolescents with postural dysfunction.²⁶

HELLERWORK

Developed by Joseph Heller, the first president of the Rolf Institute, Hellerwork combines deep touch, movement education, and verbal dialogue. This approach works to structurally realign the body as well as facilitate an awareness of the mind/body relationship. Hellerwork specifically addresses the interwoven complexity of the mechanical, psychological, and energetic functioning of the human body.

The mechanical aspect of Hellerwork, patterned after Rolfing, is designed to properly align the body with the Earth's gravitational field. Heller felt that the physical changes achieved by manual manipulation were not sufficient to bring about permanent change in the body. He incorporated a

thematic approach to each of the 11 Hellerwork sessions in order to provide a basis for organizing the emotional content of the work. For example, the first Hellerwork session is designed to unlock tension and unconscious holding patterns in the chest to allow for more natural breathing. The practitioner engages the client in a dialogue intended to call attention to emotions and attitudes that affect the physiological process of breathing.

Hellerwork uses movement and awareness to teach clients how to sit, stand, walk, run, or lift in ways that are appropriate to the natural design of their bodies. The process is designed to minimize mechanical stress and create more efficient use of the body's energy. In a unique experiment, Hellerwork was administered to the staff of a computer software company in Portland, Oregon. At the completion of the series, employees were surveyed regarding their experiences. Every employee reported a reduction in physical stress and an improvement in posture. Additionally, 84% noticed less back pain, 81% felt that their job effectiveness had increased, and 94% experienced an improvement in their work relationships and an improved ability to communicate.²⁷

Hellerwork can improve body alignment and flexibility and can offer increased vitality and greater emotional clarity and freedom of expression. It is beneficial for anyone suffering painful and stiff muscles due to structural imbalances or for conditions that may be the result of injury, emotional trauma, or sustained stress.

BARRAL VISCERAL MANIPULATION

Developed by French osteopathic physician Jean Pierre Barral, D.O., the goal of Barral Visceral Manipulation is to release restrictions and tensions in the body by gently manipulating the internal organs and their connective tissues. According to Zannah Steiner, CM.P., R.M.T., of the Soma Therapy Centre, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, the therapy enhances organ function and mobility, improves fluid circulation, increases hormonal secretion, strengthens immune function, eases muscle spasms, and can also facilitate the release of unexpressed emotions.

Dr. Barral developed his technique following years of research, which showed that the internal organs have a distinct biological rhythm of 5-8 cycles per minute. Each organ moves, or rotates, subtly with respect to the orientation it originally had when it was developing in the fetus, which Dr. Barral defines as the organ's "embryogenic axis." When tissue surrounding the organ becomes damaged, fixed, or adhered, it becomes a point of chronic irritation that can interfere with the organ's mobility and visceral rhythm.

According to Steiner, if an organ, such as the liver, cannot "move" with respect to its surrounding tissues, it will start working contrary to neighboring organs (in this case, the gallbladder or stomach) as well as the surrounding muscles, membranes, fascia, and bones. For example, adhesions around the lungs or a thickening of its tissues can eventually destabilize vertebrae in the spinal column.

Practitioners of Barral therapy use "light, precise, mechanical force" to relieve these abnormal tissue tensions. This rebalances the affected organ on its desired axis, thereby correcting its dysfunction. Because of its ability to improve the function and mobility of all major organs in the body, Barral Visceral Manipulation can provide benefit for a wide range of disease conditions.

BOWEN THERAPY

Bowen therapy was developed in the 1950s by Thomas Bowen, a lay healer from Australia, who possessed a keen knowledge of human structure and nerve function and their relationship to health. Over time, Bowen developed a reputation for being able to "cure the incurable" and, at one point in his career, he was treating over 13,000 patients per year, most of whom required only two or three sessions with him in order to become well. Although little known in the U.S., Bowen therapy is a popular form of bodywork in Australia, New Zealand, and western Europe.

Jo Anne Whitaker, M.D., F.A.A.P., Director of the Bowen Research and Training Institute, in Palm Harbor, Florida, describes Bowen therapy as "a unique, gentle, hands-on therapy that has minimal side effects and works on the whole person-body, mind, and spirit." Dr. Whitaker's research indicates that Bowen therapy's ability to relieve the pain of a wide range of acute and chronic disease conditions is due to its ability to stimulate the body to balance the autonomic nervous system (ANS). "The ANS regulates 80% to 90% of our physiological and emotional functions and governs such things as digestion, respiration, heart and circulatory function, blood pressure, muscles, glands, immune function, and motor skills," she explains. "Bowen therapy, because of its ability to positively effect the ANS, allows the body to adjust physiologically and psychologically to bring itself into a balanced state."

Unlike other forms of structural bodywork, Bowen therapy is extremely gentle and noninvasive. "A typical Bowen session involves an interview to assess the person's history and problems," Dr. Whitaker says. "The technique is performed on a padded table or bed with the person initially lying prone and fully clothed. The treatment involves a series of moves consisting of pulling the skin away from an underlying muscle or tendon, applying gentle pressure against its side, then holding and releasing it while allowing the underlying structure to spring back to its normal position." The moves are performed in a specific pattern and the basic treatments involve three sets of moves on the lower back, upper back, and neck. Other moves, specific to the client's health problem, can also be added.

A typical treatment lasts 20-45 minutes. Following treatment, the client is assisted to a sitting position, then to stand, putting weight equally on both feet, before walking briefly around the room to help the body absorb the full effect of the changes that have been made. "Post-treatment instructions include drinking plenty of water, not sitting for longer than 30 minutes without walking around for a short time on the day of treatment, and avoiding other therapies for 5-7 days," Dr. Whitaker says.

The effects of treatment can be immediate or may occur over the next few days. "Occasionally, clients experience a residual soreness or flu-like symptoms on the day following treatment, but that will subside with more water intake and walking," Dr. Whitaker says. "Emotional release may also occur during treatment or afterwards." In the majority of cases, client symptoms are completely relieved in one to three sessions, according to Dr. Whitaker, although chronic conditions may require more long-term therapy.

Among the conditions for which Bowen therapy can provide benefit are acute and chronic pain; arm, shoulder, back, neck and cranial problems; digestive and gastrointestinal disorders; acute and chronic fatigue; frozen shoulder; fibromyalgia; headaches and migraines; leg problems, including hamstrings, knees, and ankles; respiratory conditions; sports and work-related injuries; stress; and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) syndrome. In addition, clients typically report greater energy, enhanced positive moods, and improved cognitive function, as well as reduced feelings of anger, depression, and tension.

In 1995, a variation of Bowen therapy known as Neurostructural Integration Technique (NST) was developed by Michael Nixon-Livy, based on his desire to systematize the techniques Bowen developed into a training format that could be easily and quickly learned by health professionals. It works in much the same way as Bowen therapy and provides essentially the same benefits.

Pressure Point Therapies

Pressure point therapies apply pressure on various areas of the body to relieve pain and restore proper energy flow. Some of these therapies are based on the concept of vital life energy, or *qi* (see Quick Definition), which flows through energy channels, called meridians, running throughout the body.

Qi (pronounced CHEE) is a Chinese word variously translated to mean "vital energy," "essence of life," and "living force." In Chinese medicine, the proper flow of *qi* along energy channels (meridians) within the body is crucial to a person's health and vitality. There are many types of *qi* classified according to source, location, and function (such as activation, warming, defense, transformation, and containment). Within the body, *qi* and blood are closely linked, as each is considered to flow along with the other. *Qi* may be stagnant (non-moving), deficient (partially absent), or excessive (inappropriately abundant) from a given organ system. The manipulation and readjustment of *qi* to treat disease and ensure maximum health benefit is the basic principle of acupuncture and acupressure, although other remedies and therapies can be used to influence *qi*.
[See Acupuncture, Qigong and Tai Chi, Traditional Chinese Medicine]

ACUPRESSURE

Over 5,000 years ago, the Chinese discovered that when certain points on the body are pressed, punctured, or heated, certain ailments are relieved. The beneficial effects are thought to be due to the release of energy blocks in the meridians. As the art developed, more and more points were discovered that not only alleviated pain, but also influenced the functioning of internal organs and body systems.



Whereas acupuncture uses needles, acupressure uses the pressure of the fingers and hands. Acupressure is older than acupuncture and, once learned, can serve as an effective self-care and preventive treatment for tension-related ailments. Its underlying theory considers symptoms as an expression of the condition of the whole person and focuses on relieving pain and discomfort. It is also concerned with responding to tensions and toxicities in the body before they develop into illnesses.

Two types of self-acupressure techniques are **AcuYoga** and **Do-In**. Acu-Yoga utilizes the whole body for breathing, finger pressure, yogic postures, meditation, and stretches. *Do-In* also incorporates body awareness, stretching, and breathing, but focuses on vigorous techniques that stimulate the body through the acupoints and meridians.

Acupressure massage techniques and practices (referred to as *Tui Na* in China and *Amma* in Japan) use rubbing, kneading, percussion, and vibration to **improve circulation** and to stimulate stale blood and lymph from tissues. Acupressure provides many of the same health benefits common to acupuncture treatments. Recent research has found that it is effective as a preventive measure against post-operative nausea and vomiting, both of which are common side effects of general anesthesia. In one

randomized, double-blind study, involving 200 otherwise healthy patients who required short surgical procedures, 108 patients were supplied with acupressure bands (to apply pressure to a specific acupoint on the forearm) prior to the application of anesthesia and kept in place for six hours following surgery. The remaining 92 patients served as a control group, with bands placed inappropriately on a different part of the forearm. In the first group, only 23% of the patients experienced nausea or vomiting as a result of receiving anesthesia compared to 41 % in the control group.²⁸

ORIENTAL BODYWORK

Oriental bodywork has developed primarily through a combination of instinct and hands-on experience. Its principles and healing techniques integrate acupressure techniques with breathing meditation, herbal remedies, and massage. Contemporary practitioners continue to incorporate these traditional principles along with the discovery of new treatment protocols and bodywork styles. While traditional acupoints are common to all styles of Oriental bodywork, each style has distinctive characteristics that incorporate unique ways of touching and interacting with clients. These systems can positively regulate and harmonize the body and can be used to relieve pain and muscular discomfort, correct imbalances, and prevent illness.

The following descriptions focus on the primary styles or methods currently in practice:

- *Shiatsu* means "finger pressure" in Japanese. This well-known method uses a firm sequence of rhythmic pressure held on specific points for 3-10 seconds and is designed to awaken the acupuncture meridians. Michael Reed Gach, Ph.D., Director of the Acupressure Institute, in Berkeley, California, recalls a highly athletic patient, who often complained of pain in his back and leg muscles. He had found no relief with massage therapy, but *shiatsu* produced excellent results on his back and legs, the deep pressure releasing the stiffness and improving the muscle tone and circulation.
- *Jin Shin Jyutsu* was developed in Japan by Jiro Murai, who rediscovered the ancient *qi* flow in his own body and mapped a powerful system of healing points, which he then used to cure himself of a lifethreatening illness. Combinations of points are held with the fingertips for a minute or more, usually with the clients lying on their back. Various schools of the *jin Shin* style have evolved, including *jin Shin Do* and *jin Shin acupressure*. *jin Shin Do*, meaning "the way of compassionate spirit," was developed during the 1980s by psychotherapist Iona M. Teegarden, M.A., L.M.F.C.C. This gentle system is a synthesis of acupuncture/ acupressure techniques, Taoist breathing exercises, and Western psychotherapeutic theory. A typical 90-minute session focuses on applying the appropriate finger pressure to acupoints in and near tension areas of the body while the client lies fully clothed on a massage table. As physical and emotional tensions are released, clients often experience deep relaxation close to euphoria.

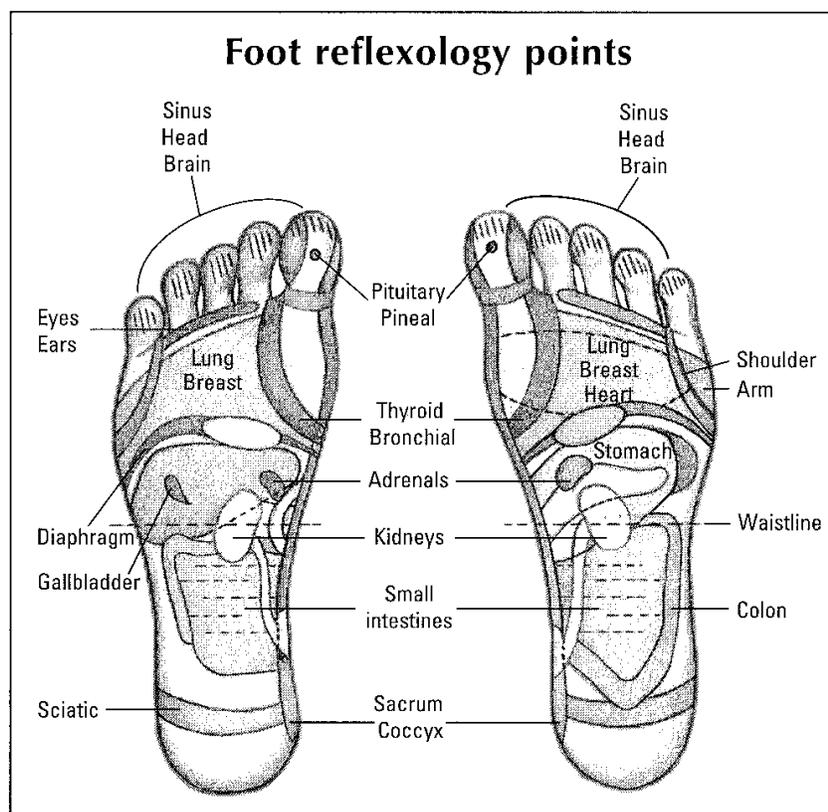
REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology states that there are reflex areas in the hands and feet that correspond to every part of the body, including organs and glands, and that these parts can be affected by stimulating the appropriate reflex areas. Reflexology is used to relieve stress and tension, stimulate deep relaxation, improve the blood supply, and promote the unblocking of nerve impulses to normalize and balance the entire body.

Reflexology evolved out of an earlier European system known as zone therapy and was introduced to

America by William Fitzgerald, M.D., a laryngologist at St. Francis Hospital in Connecticut. Dr. Fitzgerald discovered he could induce numbness and alleviate certain symptoms in the body by applying finger pressure to specific points on the hands and mouth. Eunice Ingham, a physiotherapist, used Dr. Fitzgerald's work as the basis for what is known today as reflexology. Ingham mapped organ reflexes on the feet and developed techniques for inducing a stimulating, healing effect in those areas.

Reflexologists apply precise pressure to release blockages that inhibit energy flow and cause pain and disease. This pressure is believed to affect internal organs and glands by stimulating reflex points of the body. Practitioners often target the breakup of lactic acid and calcium crystals accumulated around the 7,200 nerve endings in each foot. "Perhaps this is why we feel so much better when our feet are treated," writes Ray Wunderlich, Jr., M.D., of Florida. "Nerve endings in the feet have extensive interconnection through the spinal cord and brain to all areas of the body." Dr. Wunderlich believes that even though reflexology is medically unproven, it still deserves wide usage as a valuable adjunct to the medical care of patients in need.²⁹



Modern reflexologists continue to witness startling effects from their treatments. Bill Flocco, founder of the **American Academy of Reflexology**, in conjunction with Terrence Oleson, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Research at the University of California, at Los Angeles, **conducted a study** of the effects of reflexology in alleviating **premenstrual syndrome (PMS)**. Results indicated a 62% reduction in the PMS symptoms of those undergoing reflexology treatment.³⁰ Dr. Wunderlich notes that reflexology is also helpful for people with hypertension, anxiety, or painful conditions of the body.

One study examined the effects of reflexology on anxiety and pain in 23 female patients suffering from lung or breast cancer. All of the patients were also regularly receiving medications. After

receiving 30 minutes of treatment by a certified reflexologist, researchers observed that all of the women experienced a significant decrease in anxiety and that the women with breast cancer also experienced a significant decrease in pain. Based on their findings, the researchers concluded that reflexology has a place as a self-care protocol alongside conventional medical care for such patients.³¹

Another study found that reflexology can be effective as a treatment for **chronic migraines** and **tension headaches**. In the study, 220 patients who suffered from frequent headaches or migraine attacks received reflexology treatments for up to six months. A follow-up survey of the patients conducted three months later found that 81% were helped by the treatments or completely cured. In addition, 19% of patients who previously had to take medication to control their headaches or migraine attacks were able to discontinue their use.³²

BONNIE PRUDDEN MYOTHERAPY

Bonnie Prudden is a leading authority on physical fitness and exercise therapy. Her research helped create the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports in the 1950s. From her experience, she developed a technique for relieving pain that is simple enough to be taught to a child.

Prudden's work is based on the application of manual pressure to sensitive spots known as "**trigger points**." Her work grew out of the pioneering medical discipline called trigger point injection therapy, developed by Janet Travell, M.D., in which sensitive and often painful muscular spots are injected with a saline or procaine solution. In 1976, while working with Desmond Tivy, M.D., another advocate of trigger point injection therapy, Prudden discovered that a relatively deep pressure applied to these same points for 5-7 seconds could relieve pain for roughly 90% of all muscle-related cases, without the use of invasive and often painful injections. "At first, we worked mainly with backs," Prudden writes. "Instead of taking weeks to get rid of pain with exercise and injections, it was taking only a few sessions, often only one. Arm, shoulder, and neck pain all surrendered. We even had several stroke patients who had severely contracted arm muscles. Soon, they too were free of pain and their limbs free of contracture."³³

Trigger points can be caused by trauma at any age, including prenatal injury, accidents, childhood and sexual abuse, sports injuries, the repetitive motions connected with work or hobbies, and any invasive procedure, from injections to surgery. Trigger points are often exacerbated by disease, substance abuse, and aging. They are highly irritable spots that may lie quietly for years within a muscle and can be "fired" as a result of certain physical or emotional conditions. Muscle spasm is the result. This, in turn, causes more pain and creates a spasm-pain-spasm cycle.

To relieve the pain, the cycle must be broken. Although medication can interrupt the cycle, the underlying cause—the resident trigger point—remains. Once medication wears off, another bout with physical or emotional stress can reactivate the painful cycle. This is the cause of most recurring or chronic pain. Once a trigger point is created, others often form in the immediate and surrounding area. For treatment to be successful, these satellite points must also be addressed.

Prudden's books on pain, *Pain Erasure* and *Myotherapy*, include charts for locating the major trigger points. These points can be found easily by touch, as pressing on a trigger point may be relatively painful. Press each muscle with your finger at one-inch intervals. When a tender spot is found, apply pressure until the first sign of discomfort. Because the tension underlying these trigger points is of a chronic nature, several sessions will be needed to eliminate the trigger points and their satellites. This

specific exercise, designed to reeducate the muscle to return to normal function, is the key to success with Bonnie Prudden Myotherapy. It is also important to do three-minute sessions five times a day to prevent old tensing habits from taking over. After the session, stretching exercises are needed to retrain the muscles to relax.

Bonnie Prudden Myotherapy can be effective in relieving muscle pain, strains, sprains, dislocations, tension headaches, and migraines. Numerous pain clinics now use the technique. It also treats TMJ syndrome and neck, shoulder, arm, hand, back, chest, and abdominal pain. Hemorrhoids, spasms in the muscles surrounding the prostate, as well as impotence and incontinence (when resulting from spasms in the muscles of the pelvic floor) can also benefit. Myotherapy is invaluable in knee and foot pain and leg cramps caused by aging. Diseases such as arthritis, lupus, and multiple sclerosis also respond, as they all affect muscles that house trigger points.

Bioenergetic Systems of Bodywork

Bodywork therapies in this category are based on an underlying philosophy which recognizes that the physical bodies of all living beings are surrounded by an invisible bioenergy field and that health depends on the coherence of this field and the proper flow of vital energy throughout the body's bioenergetic pathways (meridians). Bioenergetic healing approaches have been a part of religious and indigenous healing traditions worldwide for millennia and, in recent decades, a number of modern techniques based on these ancient methods have also been developed. All such "laying on of hands" methods of energy medicine involve a process of transferring healing energies from one individual to another. [See Energy Medicine.]

THERAPEUTIC TOUCH

Therapeutic Touch (TT) was developed in 1971 by Dolores Krieger, Ph.D., R.N., Professor Emeritus of New York University (NYU) Graduate School of Nursing, and her mentor, the late Dora Kunz, a widely respected healer. Together, they originated a nonreligious, secular form of healing that combined the laying on of hands with a number of other ancient bioenergetic techniques, which was initially taught at NYU as an extension of professional nursing care.

During a TT session, there is generally no physical contact between patient and practitioner, although touch may be employed when treating fractures and parts of the body affected by physical trauma. TT practitioners begin each session by quieting themselves through a process known as "going on center." This enables them to become better aware of and more deeply connect with the specific bioenergetic needs of their patients. A brief assessment period follows in which the practitioner places his or her hands 2-6 inches away from the patient and, using slow, rhythmic hand motions, locates blockages in the patient's **biofield**. The practitioner then works to replenish the flow of subtle life force energy where necessary, while releasing any congestion or obstruction that may be present. This is accomplished by smoothing the biofield itself, using hand motions, usually beginning at the crown of the patient's head and moving toward the feet, while the practitioner visualizes the biofield's energies becoming more coherent and organized. Sessions typically last 20-30 minutes and patients commonly report a variety of benefits, including noticeable feelings of relaxation, improved energy levels, pain reduction, diminished stress, and general well-being.

John Zimmerman, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Colorado, has conducted studies to measure the body's magnetic field during TT sessions. Dr. Zimmerman was able to quantify several distinct changes in the biofield-signals up to several hundred times larger than background

noise appeared while the practitioner worked. Other researchers have documented additional physiologic changes within the human body and in animals during TT treatments, including changes in brain wave patterns.³⁴

Today, Therapeutic Touch provides the greatest amount of credibility for bioenergetic forms of energy medicine. An estimated 40,000 doctors, nurses, and other health professionals in the U.S. and throughout the world use Therapeutic Touch as an integral part of their practice. It is also included as a viable technique in a number of nursing textbooks. According to Dr. Krieger, TT is also available in over 200 hospitals and taught in more than 100 fully accredited colleges and universities nationwide, as well as in over 75 other nations.³⁵

TT has proven effective in treating a variety of medical conditions. The proper use of TT can **decrease anxiety, reduce pain**, and ease problems associated with autonomic nervous system dysfunction.³⁶ TT has been shown to alter enzyme activity, increase hemoglobin levels, and accelerate the healing of wounds.³⁷ However, the technique is primarily known for its ability to relieve pain and reduce stress and anxiety.³⁸ Studies have shown that patients receiving Therapeutic Touch experienced a significant reduction of headache pain.³⁹ Further evidence supports the use of TT technique to calm crying babies, ease asthmatic breathing, reduce pain in postoperative patients, and reduce fever and inflammation.⁴⁰ It is now commonly practiced and taught in Lamaze classes, due to its ability to reduce anxiety and discomfort among pregnant women.⁴¹

HEALING TOUCH

A variant of Therapeutic Touch, Healing Touch was developed by Janet Mentgen, R.N., in 1981. Like TT practitioners, practitioners of Healing Touch seek to assess and then rectify bioenergetic blockages and disruptions. Besides employing TT methods, practitioners use a number of other bioenergetic techniques that are mastered over four certified levels of training. Healing Touch is used by a growing number of holistically oriented nurses and, since 1989, has been sanctioned by the American Holistic Nurses Association (which also endorses TT), due to its ability to hasten the healing process, relieve pain, reduce anxiety, and improve overall well-being.⁴²

REIKI

Meaning "**the free passage of universal life energy**," Reiki involves transference of energy between Reiki practitioners and their clients in order to restore harmony to the biofield and bolster the body's inherent healing processes. Reiki practitioners claim that its principles evolved from ancient Tibetan Buddhist healing practices that were transmitted from teacher to disciple. **Dr. Mika Usui**, a Japanese scholar and Christian minister, is said to have rediscovered these principles in the late 1800s. One of his pupils, Saichi Takata, then introduced Reiki to the U.S. in 1937.

Reiki treatments vary according to individual need and are generally administered with clients lying down as the practitioner lays hands on various areas of the body. Prior to becoming a practitioner, students of Reiki undergo a number of training levels in which they are initiated by a "Reiki master" and attuned to healing symbols, which are then focused upon as Reiki practitioners send healing energy to their clients. Although Reiki has not received the same degree of scientific study as Therapeutic Touch, evidence of its efficacy does exist. In one published study on the adjunctive use of Reiki to manage pain, it was found that when Reiki treatments were administered by a Reiki therapist

to patients who were also receiving conventional pain medication, there was a "highly significant reduction in pain following the Reiki treatment. "The study involved 20 volunteers who were experiencing pain for a variety of reasons, including cancer.⁴³ In the last decade, Reiki has become popular as a form of bioenergetic healing, and there are an estimated 200,000 Reiki practitioner worldwide.

POLARITY THERAPY

Randolph Stone, D.C., D.O., N.D., who was deeply interested in the electromagnetic energy currents of the human body, developed polarity therapy. Dr. Stone explored the world's healing systems for an understanding of their underlying essence. He based his work on the Eastern concept that illness originates from blockages in energy flow.

Polarity hands-on techniques include manipulation of pressure points and joints, massage, breathing techniques, hydrotherapy, exercise, reflexology, and even simply holding pressure points on the body. Both hands are used—one is considered electromagnetic positive, the other negative—to release energy blockages in the body and help to restore a natural flow. Polarity bodywork is both invigorating and rejuvenating and can result in positive changes on the physical, mental, and emotional levels.

The stretches and other exercises used in polarity therapy are simple techniques that anyone can employ to release energy blockages and restore a balanced energy flow in the body. These techniques, combined with dietary and nutritional counseling based upon traditional Chinese medicine, as well as emotional balancing work, help clients achieve a heightened level of well-being. The benefits of polarity therapy may include improvement in physical health, increased energy, and a deeper understanding of oneself.

Polarity therapy is taught by individuals and at various schools worldwide. In 1984, the **American Polarity Therapy Association** was formed to assist in networking, research, maintaining quality of practice, and to certify practitioners.

Somatic Psychology

Bodywork approaches within the field of somatic psychology focus on the interrelationship between body (soma) and mind (psyche). While this notion of a connection among mind, body, and emotion began in many of the ancient healing traditions of the Greeks, Chinese, and Indians, modern somatic psychology derives its theories from Wilhelm Reich, M.D., a former student of Sigmund Freud, who coupled his own interest in the movement of energy throughout the body with Freud's concepts of psychology and theorized that psychological disorders are directly caused by suppressed energy in the body. [See Mind/Body Medicine.]

REICHIAN THERAPY

People who undergo bodywork often experience powerful emotional releases. Dr. Reich, the founder of Reichian therapy, realized that feelings and emotions are reflected in the body posture and behavior of the individual. During the first half of the 20th century, he developed a system of bodywork and breathing that is capable of bringing these often buried emotions to the surface. Unlike Freud, who was more interested in the concepts that led him to develop psychoanalysis, Dr. Reich's

primary interest was in how and why energy in the body became blocked. Based on extensive research, he came to view psychological disorders as the direct result of blocked or suppressed vital energy (which he termed *orgone*), which over time caused habitual patterns of muscle tension and postural misalignments. Dr. Reich called such chronic patterns "armoring." Although he used his techniques for the purposes of psychological intervention, Dr. Reich's work left a deep impression on many who later developed their own bodywork techniques, including Dr. Rolf.

Dr. Reich's techniques were deceptively simple, foremost being the act of breathing. By asking his patients to breathe deeply and continuously, he was able to unlock chronic physical tensions and release pent-up and unconscious feelings and memories. The power of the breath has led many bodywork practitioners to incorporate deep breathing techniques into their work. Dr. Reich also paid close attention to how patients held themselves and would occasionally apply deep pressure to tense muscle groups in the face, neck, back, torso, and legs. Additionally, he would ask his patients to kick, hit, or move in various ways that were designed to release the musculature and free hidden emotions.

Today, many other bodywork systems have adapted Dr. Reich's techniques in some form into their own theory and practice. Psychotherapists also recognize the importance the body plays in maintaining psychological health and many have integrated bodywork and massage into their practices.

BIOENERGETICS

Developed by Alexander Lowen, M.D., a former student of Dr. Reich, Bioenergetics, an offshoot of Reichian therapy, similarly employs breathing and physical exercises to alleviate stress and resolve emotional armoring patterns.

In Dr. Lowen's view, there are five distinct patterns of armoring, each of which can be determined by observing a person's physical structure and movement. Bioenergetic practitioners help their clients become more conscious of their emotions and beliefs and how they influence musculoskeletal constrictions.

During sessions, clients perform various exercises developed by Dr. Lowen, which enable them to become aware of where and how they store tension in their bodies. In the process, repressed feelings may surface, accompanied by the release of muscular tension. Typically, clients are shown how to breathe deeply and continuously throughout the exercise process in order to further facilitate the healing process. Massage and deep tissue work is sometimes employed as well, and clients may also be encouraged to vocalize the emotions and memories that surface during the course of treatment.

Although the primary intent of Bioenergetics is psychotherapeutic, many clients also report that the therapy results in the resolution of a variety of physical conditions. These include headaches and migraines, gastrointestinal disorders, insomnia, respiratory conditions, and stress-related ulcers.

HAKOMI

The word *hakomi* comes from the Hopi language and means "Who are you and how do you stand in relation to these many realms?" Developed by Ron Kurtz, Hakomi combines various body-centered psychotherapeutic methods with systems theory and Eastern concepts of mindful awareness and nonviolence. It is a noninvasive technique that employs touch, massage therapy, structural alignment, movement exercises, and energy work.

Throughout each Hakomi session, clients are taught how to maintain self-awareness and be alert to what is occurring in their bodies, which can result in a heightened state of consciousness and vulnerability. While in this state, the Hakomi practitioner uses positive statements, or "probes," intended to evoke insights, memories, emotions, and personal issues relevant to the client's life. Typically, as this occurs, the client will fall back on the habitual coping mechanisms (armoring, postural shifts, voice inflections) he or she normally employs to manage such experiences. As the coping mechanisms surface, the practitioner encourages them through a process called "taking over," offering verbal or physical support for their further unfoldment. The end result, according to Kurtz, is that clients find themselves relaxing their coping mechanisms, gaining deeper insights and feelings of greater security. They also learn to recognize physiological clues (posture, breathing, movement, tone of voice) related to their core beliefs. Hakomi is characterized by its compassionate, spiritual approach to healing.

THE ROSEN METHOD

Developed by German physical therapist Marion Rosen, the Rosen Method employs breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, massage, and psychotherapy to resolve chronic tension due to limiting, and usually unconscious, belief patterns and memories stored in the body. The client lies on a massage table while the practitioner uses light, gentle touch to locate areas of chronic tension, paying close attention to changes in body tone and breathing patterns. As the unconscious patterns that have contributed to their condition are detected, clients are taught how to release them. To enhance the work and help clients retain their gains, movement and stretching exercises specific to the Rosen Method may also be employed. Benefits of the Rosen Method include reduced anxiety and physical tension, improved circulation, and greater self-awareness. It may also help with certain physical conditions, such as joint immobility and dementia.

RUBENFELD SYNERGY METHOD

The Rubenfeld Synergy Method was developed by somatic psychology pioneer Ilana Rubenfeld, who has spent the last four decades refining it. An outgrowth of Rubenfeld's background as a former practitioner of Gestalt therapy, Ericksonian hypnosis, Alexander Technique, and the Feldenkrais Method, the Rubenfeld Synergy Method incorporates touch and movement therapy with verbal expression and is concerned with healing and integrating all aspects of a person's being. Synergists, as practitioners are called, regard the body, mind, emotions, and spirit as part of a dynamically interrelated whole and view awareness as the first key to positive change.

During a session, the practitioner employs a variety of gentle touch approaches in order to determine where tension is being held in the client's body. As each area is uncovered, the Synergist will often speak with their client, helping him or her to better understand the tension's underlying causes. At times, focus may also be placed on the client's breathing or movement patterns and, when appropriate, the Synergist may also employ Gestalt therapy or visualization techniques to further clarify for the client the issues related to their distress.

The Rubenfeld Synergy Method is a gradual process and primarily concerned with leading clients to greater levels of self-awareness as they begin to integrate their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energies into a greater expression of wholeness. Depending on the needs of each client, treatments can range from six weeks to several years. Commonly reported benefits of the Rubenfeld Synergy Method include greater self-esteem and self-confidence, improved levels of relaxation, and an overall reduction of tension-related physical symptoms. [See Mind/Body Medicine.]

ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY METHODS

The newest approach to healing in somatic psychology is known as "energy psychology." Central to the therapies that comprise such methods is the theory that mental and emotional dysfunctions, as well as addictive behaviors, are due to stored or blocked energetic patterns in the individual's subtle energy field. Practitioners of energy psychology employ specific sequences of acupoint tapping to access and release these blocked energies, often resulting in complete relief of long-standing psychological issues, phobias, and self-destructive behavioral patterns in as little as a single session. Certain therapies in this category also make use of applied kinesiology and breathing techniques. Among the therapies in this category are Callahan Thought Field Therapy, Energy Diagnostic Treatment Methods (EdxTM), Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Neuro-Emotional Technique (NET), and Quantum Emotional Clearing.

Numerous systems of bodywork have been reviewed in this chapter. Some are based on the physical manipulation of body structures, while others focus on the manipulation of the body's energy fields. Others use awareness and learning as the basis for improving body movement and functioning. Importantly, most recognize the value of emotions and have integrated a mind/body philosophy into their practice.

According to Michael Murphy, author of *The Future of the Body* and co-founder of the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, these disciplines, when properly applied, have the potential for bringing about transformations of the human personality. He suggests that these systems of bodywork "promote attributes beyond those to which they are primarily addressed. "These include increased somatic awareness and self-regulation, improvement of communication abilities, increased vitality, and an improved sense of self. "Somatic disciplines can contribute to balanced programs for growth," Murphy maintains, leading ultimately to extraordinary functioning and then to the possibility for self-transcendence. This, says Murphy, is the future of the body.⁴⁴

RESOURCES: Where to Find Help

If you live in a large community, you should be able to find publications that list sources for bodywork and massage therapies. Holistic practitioners are also a good source for referrals. Many massage therapy schools also offer training in various bodywork techniques and are a good source for information and referrals. Check your bookstore for literature on massage techniques.

Massage

American Massage Therapy Association

820 Davis Street, Suite 100

Evanston, Illinois 60201

(847) 864-0123

Website: www.amtamassage.org

Offers comprehensive information on most areas of massage and bodywork, including an extensive review of scientific research. They also publish the Massage Therapy Journal, available at many newsstands and health food stores.

American Bodywork and Massage Professionals

28677 Buffalo Park Road

Evergreen, Colorado 80349

(800) 458-2267

Website: www.abmp.com

For information, referrals, and training.

Esalen Institute

Highway 1

Big Sur, California 93920

(408) 667-3000

Website: www.esalen.org

Offers weekend and more extensive programs in holistic health. Many of the systems mentioned in this chapter were introduced and popularized at Esalen, which, under the direction of Michael Murphy, offers a unique training program in integrative body therapy.

Movement Reeducation Therapies

American Society for the Alexander Technique

P.O. Box 60008

Florence, Massachusetts 01062

(800) 473-0620

Website: www.alexandertech.com

For information, referrals, and training in the Alexander Technique.

Feldenkrais Guild of North America

3611 S.W. Hood Avenue, Suite 100

Portland, Oregon 97201

(800) 775-2118

Website: www.feldenkrais.com

For information, practitioner training, and certification in the Feldenkrais Method.

The Trager Institute

3800 Park East Drive, Suite 100, Room 1 Beachwood, Ohio 44122

(216) 896-9383

Website: www.trager.com

For practitioner directory, information, training, and certification in the Trager Approach.

Structural Bodywork

International Rolf Institute

205 Canyon Road
Boulder, Colorado 80306
(303) 449-5903
Website: www.rolf.org

For information, practitioner training, and certification in Rolfing.

The Aston Training Center

P.O. Box 3568
Incline Village, Nevada 89450
(775) 831-8228
Website: www.AstonEnterprises.com

The center trains health-care professionals and laypeople to become certified Aston-Patterning practitioners.

Hellerwork International

3435 M Street
Eureka, California 95503
(800) 392-3900
Website: www.hellerwork.com

For information, referral directory, training, and certification in Hellerwork.

International Alliance of Healthcare Educators (IAHE)

11211 Prosperity Farms Road, Suite D-325
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida 33410
(800) 311-9204
Website: www.iahe.org

For information, referrals, and training in Barral Visceral Manipulation"

Bowen Research and Training Institute, Inc.

P.O. Box 627
Palm Harbor, Florida 34682 (727) 937-9077
For information, referrals, and training in Bowen Therapy.

Pressure Point Therapies

Acupressure Institute

1533 Shattuck Avenue Berkeley, California 94709 (800) 442-2232
Website: www.acupressure.com
For information on acupressure, career training, and mail-order catalog.

American Oriental Bodywork Therapy Association (AOBTA)

Laurel Oak Corporate Center, Suite 408
1010 Haddonfield-Berlin Road
Voorhees, New Jersey 08043
(856) 782-1616

Website: www.healthy.net/associations/pa/bodywork/aboutl.htm

For information on acupressure and Oriental bodywork, professional membership, practitioner directory, and referrals.

The International Alliance of Healthcare Educators (IAHE)

11211 Prosperity Farms Road, Suite D-325 Palm Beach Gardens, Florida 33410
(800) 311-9204

Website: www.iahe.com

For information on Oriental bodywork, professional membership, practitioner directory, and referrals.

International Institute of Reflexology

5650 First Avenue North
P.O. Box 12462
St. Petersburg, Florida 33733
(727) 343-4811

Website: www.reflexology-usa.net

For information on reflexology, seminars, publications, and referrals.

Bonnie Prudden Pain Erasure

P.O. Box 65240
Tucson, Arizona 85719
(800) 221-4634

Website: www.bonnieprudden.com

For a list of certified Bonnie Prudden myotherapy practitioners and clinics where myotherapy is offered. Offers programs for babies, children, nursing homes, industry, and for the handicapped.

Bioenergetic Systems of Bodywork

Nurse Healers-Professional Associates International

3760 South Highland Drive, Suite 429
Salt Lake City, Utah 84106
(801) 273-3399

Website: www.therapeutic-touch.org

For information, referrals, and training in Therapeutic Touch.

Healing Touch International

12477 W. Cedar Drive, Suite 202
Lakewood, Colorado 80228
(303) 989-7982

Website: www.healingtouch.net

For information, referrals, and training in Healing Touch.

International Center for Reiki Training

29209 Northwestern Highway, Suite 592
Southfield, Michigan 48034
(800) 332-8112
Website: www.reiki.org
For information, referrals, and training in Reiki.

American Polarity Therapy Association

P.O. Box 19858
Boulder, Colorado 80308
(303) 545-2080
Website: www.polaritytherapy.org
For information on Polarity Therapy, publications, and referral directory.

Somatic Psychology

The Naropa Institute

Somatic Psychology Department 2130 Arapahoe Avenue
Boulder, Colorado 80302
(303) 444-0202 or (303) 546-5284
Website: www.naropa.edu
Provides information and training in various somatic psychology approaches.

The Hakomi Institute

P.O. Box 1873
Boulder, Colorado 80306
(888) 421-6699
Website: www.hakomiinstitute.com
For information, referrals, and training in Hakomi.

The Rosen Method

Website: www.rosenmethod.org
Provides links to the various regional Rosen centers throughout the Us., plus further information on the Rosen Method.

The Rubinfeld Synergy Center

(877) 776-2468
Website: www.rubinfeldsynergy.com
For information, referrals, and training in the Rubinfeld Synergy Method.

Recommended Reading

Bodywork. Thomas Claire. New York: Quill/William Morrow, 1995.
The Future of the Body. Michael Murphy. New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1992.

Massage

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Massage for Common Ailments. Sara Thomas. New York: Fireside, 1989.

Alexander Technique

The Alexander Technique. Wilfred Barlow. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

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Feldenkrais Method

Awareness Through Movement. Moshe Feldenkrais. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

The Potent Self: A Guide to Spontaneity. Moshe Feldenkrais and M. Kimmey. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1992.

Trager Approach

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Rolfing

Rolfing: The Integration of Human Structures. Ida P. Rolf. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

Aston-Patterning

Aston Postural Assessment Workbook. Judith Aston. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation, 1999.

Hellerwork

Bodywise. Joseph Heller and William Henkin. Berkeley, CA: Wingbow Press, 1991.

Acupressure and Oriental Bodywork

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Acupressure Way of Health: Jin Shin Do. Iona M. Teeguarden. New York: Kodansha International, 1978.

Acu-Yoga: The Acupressure Stress Management Book. Michael Cach. New York: Kodansha International, 1981.

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Reflexology

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Body Reflexology: Healing at Your Fingertips. Mildred Carter. West Nyack, NY: Parker Publishing, 1986.

Hand and Foot Reflexology: A Self-Help Guide. Kevin and Barbara Kunz. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987.

Bonnie Prudden Myotherapy

Myotherapy. Bonnie Prudden. New York: Ballantine, 1985.

Pain Erasure. Bonnie Prudden. New York: Ballantine, 1985.

Therapeutic Touch

Accepting Your Power to Heal: Personal Practice of Therapeutic Touch. Dolores Krieger. Santa Fe, NM: Bear and Company, 1993.

Living the Therapeutic Touch: Healing as Lifestyle. Dolores Krieger. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1988.

Therapeutic Touch: A Practical Guide. Janet McCrae. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.

Reiki

Reiki: Universal Life Energy. Bodo Baginski. Mendocino, CA: LifeRhythm, 1988.

Polarity Therapy

Esoteric Anatomy: The Body as Consciousness. Bruce Burger. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1998.

A Guide to Polarity Therapy: The Gentle Art of Hands-On Healing. Maruti Seidman. Boulder, CO: Elan Press, 1991.

Your Healing Hands: The Polarity Experience. Richard Gordon. Santa Cruz, CA: Wingbow Press, 1978.

Hakomi Method

Body-Centered Psychotherapy: The Hakomi Method. Ron Kurtz. Mendocino, CA: LifeRhythm, 1990.

Rubinfeld Synergy Method

Listening Hands: Self-Healing Through the Rubinfeld Synergy Method of Talk and Touch. Ilana Rubinfeld. New York: Bantam, 2000.

Somatic Psychology

Getting in Touch: The Guide to New Body-Centered Therapies. Christine Caldwell. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1997.

Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking. Thomas Hanna. New York: Freeperson Press, 1997.

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