

THE POWER OF TOUCH

A treatment that involves touch can revitalise your mind, body and soul.

IN 1915 Dr Henry Dwight Chapin made an important discovery relating to infant mortality rates in orphanages across the USA. He found that although babies were given adequate nourishment and cleanliness, nearly every infant under two years died. The policy at the time was 'no coddling' so he found the only explanation to the almost 100 per cent mortality rate was that the babies died from lack of human touch. Therefore, he surmised, human babies need a loving touch from another to survive.

Touch is not only important to infants and children, it is part of the human condition, as we all need and desire to be touched. The power of touch is immeasurable, because not only is it necessary for the survival of the human race, but it can also provide powerful healing properties. From relieving muscular tension and reducing stress, to promoting flexibility and improving depression, there is a multitude of 'touch' therapies available to treat many conditions. We've listed a few here for you to consider.

Massage

Massage is the most commonly used and widely known 'touch' therapy practiced. There is a style of massage suitable for all tastes and health

concerns. Whether you are seeking relaxation or invigoration, or to release muscular pain, you'd be hard pressed not to find a technique to suit.

Swedish massage is popular for relaxation as it uses long strokes and hand kneading to relax muscles. Essential oils are often used for further stress-relieving effects. Kahuna or lomi lomi massage is a powerful therapy and is great for emotional healing and release. For injuries, there are sports, remedial and deep tissue massages, which can all be quite vigorous and are often used to speed up recovery time after an injury. And, finally, there is Chinese massage that works with the body's energy or chi (qi).

Zero Balancing

Zero Balancing is a powerful mind body therapy that was developed about 40 years ago by Dr Fritz Smith. It uses skilled touch to address the relationship between energy and structures of the body. Finger pressure and gentle traction is used on areas of tension in the bones, joints and soft tissue, thereby creating a point of balance around which the body can relax and reorganise itself. It helps clear blockages in the body's energy flow, contributing to better postural alignment and increased vitality.

Focusing predominantly on important joints of the skeletal system that are important for posture and movement, the treatment can relieve body aches and pain, improve movement, and be helpful with specific goals such as pain relief, eliminating old behaviour patterns and improving concentration.

Reiki

Reiki is a Japanese 'hands on healing' technique that can be self-administered or performed on others to reduce stress and promote relaxation and healing. It is based on the principle of 'life force energy' that flows through us. If we have a low life force energy then we are more prone to sickness or stress. However, if it is high then we are more likely to be healthy more often.

Reiki is a holistic treatment, addressing the body, emotions, mind and spirit with beneficial effects that include relaxation and overall wellbeing. It's simple and safe, and practitioners either gently place their hands on various positions over the body or slightly elevate their hands just above these areas when conducting treatment.

Touch for Health Kinesiology

Who knew that muscle testing could help improve your health and wellbeing? According to 'Touch for Health' practitioners, this type of



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treatment can help determine what foods you should be eating to raise energy levels; enhance physical performance; reduce stress and pain; improve vision and brain function; and improve posture, coordination and learning difficulties.

'Touch for health kinesiology', most often known just as 'kinesiology', tests 42 individual muscles to determine whether or not the muscle is working at its maximum efficiency. If a muscle is found to be inefficient, then either holding the body part or rubbing points on the body corrects the imbalance. This activates the lymphatic system and/or increases the blood flow to the muscle.

Acupressure

Acupressure is an ancient healing art that works on the systems of the body to promote physical and spiritual wellbeing. Using the same meridians or energy channels as acupuncture, the therapist uses fingers to apply a gentle yet firm pressure on the surface of the skin to allow blocked energy to flow.

This treatment is typically used to release muscular tension and promote the circulation of blood and the body's life force (chi or qi) that aids healing and creates deep relaxation. Acupressure is suitable for treating a range of conditions including headaches,

arthritis, indigestion, back and neck pain, constipation and menstrual cramps, to name a few.

This holistic approach to health also initiates long term healing and strengthens the body's resistance to disease.

Tickle Therapy

A new concept spa has recently opened in Madrid, Spain. Named CosquilleArte Spa, which literally means 'tickle art' in Spanish, it is the first tickle spa in the world. It provides a calm and soothing environment, similar to any day spa, yet it is specifically designed so your stress can be tickled away.

This treatment isn't for everyone as it depends on whether you find being tickled annoying or relaxing. However, it's not fingers-jabbing-into-your-sides type of tickling; instead therapists gently brush their fingertips and a feather along the body using a variety of strokes. Clients have been surprised by the results, claiming that it really is relaxing, and if the client happens to be extra sensitive to the touch (i.e., super ticklish), then the therapist just presses harder.

The intent of the treatment is not to apply strong pressure, like you would in a massage, nor is the therapy designed to make the person feel ticklish, instead

the aim is to engage both mind and body simultaneously, in a bid to help the patient relax.

Other touch therapies include:

- + Trigger point therapy
- + Bowen therapy
- + Therapeutic touch
- + Craniosacral therapy
- + Jin shin jyutsu
- + Polarity therapy
- + Network spinal analysis.

Common types of massage include:

- + Neuromuscular
- + Reflexology
- + Rolfing
- + Aromatherapy
- + Therapeutic
- + Shiatsu
- + Hot Stone
- + Swedish
- + Manual lymphatic drainage
- + Anma
- + Ayurvedic
- + Remedial
- + Myofascial release.

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