Select Your Location: Western Washington | Willamette Valley, Oregon

Connecting those aware... with those who care
Natural Choice Directory™
"The Healthy Yellow Pages®"
Click the Headings below for Goods and Services in your area

GREEN RESOURCES | HEALTH SERVICES | NATURAL ORGANIC FOODS | REMEDIES AND PRODUCTS | MIND AND SPIRIT

Search our directory... GO

Home
Articles
Glossary
Farmers Markets
Distribution
Order Listing
Media Kit
Design Services
Restaurant Reviews
Community Events
Environment News
Earth Activism
Green Your Home
Organic Farms
About Us
Local Authors
Local Artists
Contact Info

Newsletter Signup

Name:
Email:
Submit

Bowenwork: The Miracle Healer? Amanda Baltazar

Bowenwork: The miracle healer?

We reset our clocks when they lose or gain time; we flip the thermostat switch when our home is too hot or cold; and we defrag our computers. But what do we do when our body needs resetting?

Now, we can turn to Bowenwork.

Developed in Australia by the late Tom Bowen, Bowenwork helps the body to renew its natural balance. It concentrates very light movements on points throughout the body, each designed to reach a core part of the nervous system. It's believed that these touches to ligaments, muscles and tendons help the body to balance itself and heal.

Bowenwork can help most problems—from osteoarthritis and migraines to sports injuries, asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome and fibroids. Ongoing treatment usually isn't required. Some patients need just one visit with a Bowenwork practitioner before they see an improvement, but three to eight sessions is typically the most that's needed.

Anyone can experience Bowenwork, from babies to the elderly and infirm, and patients typically wear loose, comfortable clothing, although some moves are performed on bare skin. In a session, the practitioner places his or her hands on precise points in the body and applies gentle, rolling pressure, perpendicular to the line of fibers. This gives the muscle a gentle stretch, which relaxes nerves and can cause either that muscle to instantly relax, or to relax associated muscles around it.

When muscles are affected like this, they are able to reset our body's natural nervous system, leading to enhanced blood flow and oxygen delivery, and improved cellular activity. Another bonus is that the lymph flow is stimulated, aiding in detoxification.

After each move, or set of moves, the practitioner leaves the room to allow the body's energy to work uninterrupted. Sessions typically last from 15 minutes to an hour. Some practitioners may do longer sessions, but most agree that less is often better since Bowenwork is powerful and gives the body a lot of information that it needs to process. Similarly, once a week is generally considered plenty for Bowenwork sessions, so there's not too much messaging.

What Bowenwork is basically doing, is resetting the body and banishing any bad habits it has formed. The body reacts to trauma such as an injury or a posture misalignment by compensating for it, which can have a compounded effect through various organs and structural tissues.

Bowenwork, therefore, is very natural, and can be seen simply as an aid to the body. Each of us is naturally made to heal, as can be seen by cell regeneration, the mending of broken

bones, and so on. But sometimes the body can't access this healing, and Bowenwork holds out its hand to help.

Because it works on the nervous system, returning it to a place of balance, it can also help patients before and/or after surgery since it balances the body so it can heal faster.

Tom Bowen, who lived in Geelong, Australia, developed Bowenwork in the 1950s. Almost all (80%) of Bowen's patients needed two or fewer visits to regain their health, and his numbers weren't low: According to a survey by the Australian government, he treated some 13,000 patients a year. That's not a bad success rate for someone who had no formal medical training.

Before his death, Bowen allowed several people to observe his work, although he believed only six of them truly understood. One of these students, Oswald Rentsch, promised Bowen that he would make his life's work known globally. And he did his job well: First he set up the Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia in the mid-1980s, and now Bowenwork is practiced in more than 30 countries, including the United States, where there's also the Bowenwork Academy USA.

The good news for Americans considering Bowenwork is that it is often covered by medical insurance since it's a manual therapy and is becoming more commonplace, especially since Swedish Hospital in Seattle introduced it to its Pain Clinic in the fall of 2006.

Nancy Pierson is the president of the Bowenwork Academy USA and one of ten Bowenwork instructors in the U.S. Her involvement with this practice happened very serendipitously: "I had a session and it blew me out of the water," she said.

A massage therapist, Pierson quickly trained in Bowenwork and started introducing it to her practice.

"Usually people come to Bowenwork when they've exhausted every other therapy, because Bowenwork is still relatively unknown," she explained. There's quite an education process with the practice, she added, and patients need to know about what the movements do, and why the practitioner leaves the room.

Bowenwork is a resolution for most problems, said Pierson, which can be dealt with in just a session or two, although some problems, such as multiple sclerosis, are long-term and systemic, and need regular visits. "You're not going to get a reversal of a condition like MS, but it's going to make sufferers' lives easier," she said,.

And most people who try Bowenwork are surprised. A problem they've been suffering for years, and visiting other types of practitioners about, suddenly clears up literally overnight.

Of course, said Pierson, there are things that Bowenwork can't treat, but she's not yet come across them. "Its not a silver bullet, but it's the most effective thing I've found."

Instead, she's found many success stories. She alleviated the mental suffering of a woman grieving for her son who had died a year earlier; she saw a man who'd suffered from sternum pain for a year be completely cured of it; and she eliminated one woman's problems related with irritable bowel syndrome.

"Bowenwork is so honoring of the body. We allow the body to work around how it is naturally," said Pierson.

Despite its obvious success, even Bowenwork practitioners are not completely sure exactly how this technique works. It balances the nervous system and induces relaxation, but it also links the body and the brain so they can work together. It is believed that touching the skin, our biggest organ, which connects our entire being, sends messages from one part of the body to another.

Some may liken Bowenwork to acupuncture, but there's nothing similar, said Pierson. "the only thing that's similar is that there's energy. We put in cues to the body and the body will

take that energy and do what it will with it. Bowenwork gives cues; acupuncture leads."

Many people find it difficult to believe in Bowenwork at the beginning, said Pierson, but this does not hinder the healing process, and she's treated skeptical patients whose results have been positive.

Nancy Clark is one of a growing number of people who practice Bowenwork in the Northwest. Her clients in Marysville and La Conner generally come to her first because they have a problem, but when they get educated and see results they come back for tune-ups because they're out of balance and want to give their body a reminder of how it should be.

"People are very skeptical about light touch but it's about feeling it," she explained. "It's light and gentle work but it's very powerful. It's about understanding how it affects the muscular system, the neuromuscular system and the nervous system.

"Many of us are in survival mode from our go-go-go lives and the body can't heal when it's in that mode When we're always operating in a stressed mode, or in a fast-pace mode, our nervous system is not in a place where it can rest and restore itself and heal. So rapid technology and busy lifestyles are not necessarily supportive of our bodies."

It's the balance that comes from Bowenwork that everyone should be seeking—what Clark called the "rest and digest mode," as opposed to our body's "fight and flight mode."

Clark said that some of the reactions she sees are priceless. "When you see the light bulb go off in people's heads, and you see they don't have pain any more, it's all worth it," she explained. "It's about when people are thrilled."

Among Clark's patients have been a woman who had suffered from sciatic pain for nine years. Her suffering was relieved in one treatment, and eradicated in three or four. There was a similar scenario with a woman suffering from fibromyalgia, who was pain-free in just a few sessions.

"With diseases like these, there's chronic pain all over the body and there are not a lot of answers for it," said Clark. "But Bowenwork treats it well because it's going back to the source rather than treating the symptoms of the problem."

Bowenwork can also be effective for something as simple as a sprained ankle, and the sooner the practitioner can get to the injured body part, the better. "If you correct it immediately the body doesn't go to the trauma place and get used to being there. The body doesn't start adapting to negative patterns," Clark explained.

The hard part is educating people. "I want to convince people, but you can't do that. So I have to keep [myself] educated." The more she keeps up with new discoveries, she said, the more comfortable she is educating others.

The public is slowly learning more, too, said Clark. "People's attitudes are starting to change, and when the populace starts hearing from their doctors about it, they revere doctors. I see that happening more."

It's not just about what happens in the Bowenwork session, but also the days following it. Patient are advised not to participate in vigorous exercise; to suspend all other therapies, which can disrupt the body's neural ability to change; to drink lots of water; to avoid ice or heat packs, hot baths and tubs; and to cut back on caffeine.

Depending on the patient's specific problem, practitioners may also give them some simple exercises to practice daily at home. These facilitate the body changing, help it to rebalance itself, and help the neural repatterning, explained Clark.

After a session, patients can expect to feel an overall sense of wellbeing and relaxation. Other troubles may be alleviated and they may feel pain reduction and/or increased movement. There may be some aches, said Clark, as certain patterns and toxicity are released from the muscles.

- end -

© 1996-2007 Natural Choice Directory: All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission of the Natural Choice Directory.
4957 Lakemont Blvd SE, Suite C4-20, Bellevue WA 98006 | Phone: (425) 373-1987 | Email
Green Resources | Health Services | Natural Organic Foods | Remedies & Products | Mind & Spirit