

Soothing Elements

Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork
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Reiki

Gentle therapy reduces stress and pain

Reiki is one of the best-loved types of energy work. Massage therapists, nurses and other Reiki practitioners have seen it reduce people's stress and pain again and again. The particular beauty of Reiki is that it can be used on anyone no matter their condition, from infants to those healing from surgery or wounds to people in hospice care.

Where did Reiki come from?

Reiki was founded in the early 20th century by a Japanese man named Mikao Usui. An accomplished practitioner of the martial and meditative arts, he gave healings with light touch, and taught some of those who received these treatments. These students called what he did "Usui Hand Healing." One of them developed the system further and began calling it Reiki (from *Rei*, meaning universal, and *Ki*, meaning life energy).

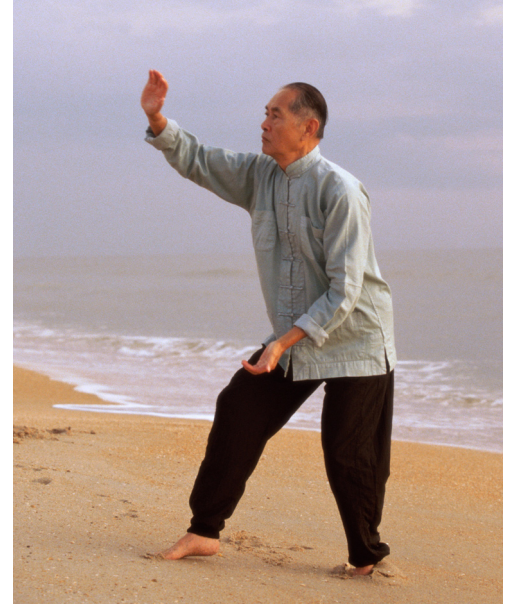
What is Reiki like?

During a Reiki session, the practitioner will place his or her hands in 12 different positions on the head, the front of the body and the back. Practitioners may also place the hands on a site of injury or pain. The

practitioner's hands don't have to actually touch the body, and the receiver does not need to be awake.

Reiki life energy seems to soothe, or balance, the nervous system. It can be adapted for almost any use, and can even support conventional medical procedures. Hospital and other medical staff see that Reiki calms and reassures patients in pain and distress, and they enjoy giving it because it reduces their own stress as well.

Since it can help people relax no matter what their situation, Reiki is often taught to patients and families to practice on themselves and family members. In fact, it is easy and inexpensive for almost anyone to learn Reiki for treating oneself, friends and family. ❖



Ki or chi is said to be brought into balance with movement practices such as tai chi or qigong.

What is ki?

Simply put, *ki* is the Japanese word for energy. Also known as *qi* or *chi* in Asia, *mana* in Hawaii and *prana* in the yoga tradition, healing practitioners sometimes refer to it as "subtle" energy. Subtle energy provides life with its vitality — in fact, it is what distinguishes life from death. Though it may be subtle, it has a great impact. Consider the atom — tiny, but when its energy is released, it's extremely powerful.

There are different kinds of *ki*, and we absorb it from different sources — food, sun, water and air. We also give it to and receive it from other people, which is where healing techniques that work with the flow of energy come into play. To maintain health and well-being, there should be a balance of *ki* circulating through and around our bodies.



Reiki can be used with anyone to soothe and nurture, no matter their age or situation.

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What is energy work?

Healing mind and body

Practitioners of energy work have daily and remarkable encounters with its therapeutic effects. But what is it? Energy work, or energy “medicine” is a phrase you may hear from family, friends or in the office of your massage therapist or chiropractor. It refers to kinds of therapy that impact energy fields thought to surround and penetrate the human body. Reiki, qigong, tai chi, yoga, acupuncture, Polarity Therapy and Therapeutic Touch are some better known energy work techniques.

Energy moves through and around the body

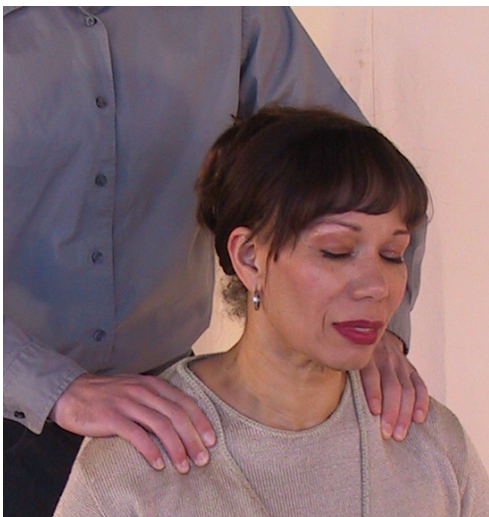
The idea of energy moving through and around the body is not as strange as it may sound. For example, researchers discovered years ago that organs in the body produce electrical fields that can be detected on the skin, leading to the development of clinical

tools such as the electrocardiogram (EKG) and the electroencephalogram (EEG) which doctors commonly use to diagnose conditions of the heart and brain. In another example, we know that the nervous system works by the transmission of nerve impulses, and this process is observed by measuring the electrical fields associated with it.

Relieves stress, calms the mind

Practitioners and recipients of energy work feel that it encourages the body and mind toward relaxation, allowing our marvelous self-healing abilities to come into play. Put simply, reducing stress and calming the mind enhance the healing process.

Energy work techniques rarely, if ever, cause any harm, and the body of evidence for the effectiveness of the work is growing. Because of these things, an increasing number of hospitals and their staff members are integrating energy work into patient care, in addition to offering classes in energy work to patients and community members. ❖



Receiving energy work relaxes our bodies and enhances our innate self-healing abilities.



While we're living, we share the energy that makes everything, from a blade of grass to an elephant, grow and live and then inevitably wear out and die. This energy, this life force, creates the whole world.

—Pema Chodron,
author of Start Where You Are