

Natural Treatments for Pain



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Since 1973 I have cared for patients with severe pain. First, those in the hospital setting after surgical procedures and now, in a complementary medicine facility. I have gone from giving Demerol injections and oral pain medications, to now providing cranial sacral therapy, acupuncture, homeopathic recommendations, lymphatic drainage, and manual lymphatic drainage. Although Demerol and pain relieving drugs helped with the relieving the pain, and was necessary at the time, it was a temporary treatment, as are many other conventional drugs. We do need our conventional methods, but we can explore other methods that can help prevent addiction and the development or intensification of symptoms over time.

Over the last thirty years I have seen massage and bodywork methods eliminate pain and promote improved mobility. It increases circulation and helps the collagen return to the cells, for moisture in the soft tissue sites, that had become compacted -- as a result symptoms and flexibility improve. In addition, I have worked with an orthopedic massage therapist and certified guided stretch therapy practitioners, that have improved joint function and increased range of motion with their specialized treatments.

When a client presents with a difficult pain complaints, I recommend the addition of homeopathy to the bodywork therapy sessions. Homeopathy, relieves pain, increases circulation, and reduces inflammation. When circulation improves and inflammation is reduced pain relief follows.

I believe that natural practitioners need an arsenal of methods to help control pain and to assist in the healing of the client. One powerful method is lymphatic drainage. This technique is provided by those licensed health practitioners with post graduate continuing education training and certification in lymphatic drainage, such as massage therapists, physical therapists, and nursing personnel. Lymphatic drainage manual therapy is a specialized body work technique that applies repetitive pressure at lymph node sites and a stroking technique along lymph vessels, that stimulates the movement of lymph fluid. This therapy assists with post surgical swelling and inflammation due to numerous health complaints such as sinusitis, arthritis, gastritis, back pain, neck pain and more. Within the process of the lymphatic drainage session, inflammation is released off of the nerves and the technique sends a message to the brain to relax the nervous system, thereby reducing stress and pain.

Some clients have reported an elimination of pain just after one session. Repeat sessions may be needed based on the client's personal history. Lymphatic drainage reduces the millivolts produced by the nerves thereby decreasing the pain.

Lymphatic drainage practitioners may practice the method in various ways due to the different schools of thought. Some methods use a dry technique that uses repetitive pressure at lymph node and vessel sites throughout the treatment session, and some may use directional gliding strokes in a massage like fashion with pressure at lymph node sites, while using a lotion or oil.

The Washington Institute practitioners offer 60 to 90 minute lymphatic drainage sessions by way of using the gliding method. Institute clients have reported that the lymphatic drainage therapy, in some cases, has been

even more powerful than standard massage techniques. It can also be combined with acupressure, reflexology, cranial sacral therapy, and energy work with even more profound results.

In addition to massage and lymphatic drainage, clients may also find positive responses to 60 minute Cranial Sacral Therapy, Acupressure, Reflexology, Glymphatic Drainage, and Guided Stretch Therapy sessions.

Prior to treatment, it is important to have a diagnosis from a medical doctor to insure that there is nothing seriously affecting the client, that may need conventional medical attention. Also, please be aware that natural therapies augment conventional care.

The Washington Institute of Natural Medicine has a variety of natural therapies that can assist with conventional medications and therapies. Please feel free to contact the Institute for further question or details.

Conditions Causing Pain

Pain may be caused by many types of injuries and ailments such as Falls, Dehydration, Circulatory System Difficulties, Muscle Weakness, Limited Range of Motion or Stiffness, Lack of Exercise, Fibromyalgia, Peripheral Neuropathy, Trigeminal Neuralgia, Myofascial Pain Syndrome, Spine Conditions, Dental Conditions, and Arthritis.

Conventional and Complementary Medicine

It is important to see your dentist, medical doctors, and nurse practitioners for conventional evaluation and treatment. In addition natural health care methods can also improve health and augment conventional care.

Once you know you have a condition resulting in pain, you can work with your conventional medical and complementary medicine practitioners to treat the condition.

Complementary Medicine Evaluation for Pain Management

When working with conditions related to pain at the Washington Institute of Natural Medicine we provide the Natural Wellness Evaluation. This exam evaluates function rather than using the diagnostic techniques offered by Medical Doctors. This evaluation complements the conventional medical care provided by practitioners such as MDs and Nurse Practitioners. Conventional practitioners provide a diagnosis and medical treatment. Complementary practitioners search for imbalances.

In regards to treating pain related conditions naturally, the practitioner assess the body with natural theories, recommends natural remedies to treat the condition and focuses on the filtration mechanisms of the body through the kidneys or liver. Although conventional medical techniques may show there are no abnormalities in the filtration systems, the natural health care evaluation reveals sub clinical weaknesses that do not show up on conventional tests. This is based upon function rather than disease.

Holistic Methods and Therapies for Treatment of Pain:

When selecting a natural health care method for conditions resulting in pain, it is important to illustrate that natural medicine does not replace conventional care, but rather augments it. In this process the client seeking natural support treatments, needs to have the proper assessments with conventional medicine and natural health care practitioners.

The types of natural methods that can help with pain are: Natural Remedy Recommendations by way of the Natural Health Evaluations, Lymphatic Drainage, Glymphatic Drainage, Acupressure, Cranial Sacral Therapy, Guided Stretch Therapy, Range of Motion, Life Coaching, Organ Flushing, Reflexology, Geriatric Bodywork, Oracle Healing (Reiki Energy Healing), Hypnotherapy, Guided Meditation, Oracle Healing (Reiki Energy Healing), Emotional Freedom Technique, and the Ayurvedic Health Evaluation.

Below you will find further details regarding these methods.



Natural Health Evaluation

When a natural health care assessment is completed through a natural health care evaluation, the practitioner uses a variety of skills that help the practitioner understand what organ systems need support and healing. This is a holistic approach including emotional, physical, nutritional, and detoxification care.

The natural wellness evaluation is a comprehensive study of the human body using observation skills from the Orient and Europe. It is a preventative approach focusing on organ system efficiency and cleansing. Its goal is to heal the internal workings of the human body, rather than just treating symptoms. By improving the condition of the organs and tissues, symptoms will begin to dissipate, and as a result the body becomes stronger.

The natural health evaluation looks for imbalances prior to and during a disease state. These imbalances point the practitioner in the proper direction for healing the areas of concern. It also helps with disease prevention. These methods augment conventional medical care. It is not a medical diagnosis. For a medical diagnosis see your Physician or our Nurse Practitioner.

The components of a natural health evaluation provided at the Washington Institute are: Client History, Hara Study, Iridology, Pulse Reading, Visual/Face Observation, Kinesiology, Bio-Energy Field Testing, Remedy Testing/Selection, Homeopathic, Herbal, Aromatherapy, or Supplement Recommendations. Assessments vary slightly by practitioner.

After the completion of the Natural Health Care Evaluation the practitioner will recommend physical methods and oral product such as herbs and homeopathics for the underlying conditions, and the pain that is caused by it. Aromatherapy may also be recommended.

There are many homeopathic sublingual liquid remedies that can be taken orally for pain and healing, as well as a topical pain spray that can be used very effectively.



Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD)

Lymphatic drainage manual therapy is a specialized body work technique that is provided by advanced trained licensed/certified health care practitioners such as Nursing Personnel, Massage Therapists, Aestheticians, and Physical Therapists, that have been additionally trained and certified in Lymphatic Drainage. This therapy applies repetitive pressure at lymph node sites, and a stroking technique along lymph vessels, that stimulates the movement and removal of fluid.

MLD can be an adjunct to the natural health care evaluation and conventional medical treatment. It

improves the function of the lymphatic system by stimulating the removal of stagnant body fluids. It also stimulates the immune system and reduces inflammation in the head region, thereby allowing the brain to function more efficiently. MLD's detoxifying, immune-balancing, and relaxing effects can help cleanse the body, and reduces inflammation in soft tissues and joints. It treats arthritis, and conditions with inflammatory components and pain.



Cranial Sacral Therapy

CST is a holistic healing assessment and technique that uses light pressure and gentle energetic touch to balance the cranium, spine, and sacral area which includes the nerve ganglion sites, cerebral spinal fluid, and soft tissues of the central nervous system. This therapy helps the spine become more limber and causes cerebral spinal fluid to move more freely thereby balancing the central nervous system. It treats neck pain, headaches, sinus pressure, brain fog, stiffness, back pain, TMJ, sciatica, stress, memory loss, and more. This is an energetic, light to moderate touch therapy, performed on a fully clothed individual, and can also be incorporated with other bodywork techniques.



Acupressure

Acupressure uses light to moderate pressure which is applied to acupuncture points with the thumb, fingers, palms, forearms and elbows. Acupressure helps to bring the body into balance, improves mobility, reduces pain, and decreases stiffness.



Glymphatic Drainage of Head

This is a method that uses a combination of lymphatic drainage techniques, cranial sacral therapy techniques, and Chinese and /or Ayurvedic pressure points in the head and neck region, in order to reduce swelling, brain fog, facial and head pain, sinus congestion, inflammation around the brain, and flushes the Glymphatic System the brain. This Head Drainage therapy with Cranial Sacral Holds, reduces inflammation in the head, promotes circulation, and assists with cerebral spinal fluid movement to the brain, as a result helps reduce pain in the head face and neck.

Glymphatic Drainage of Head with Ultrasound of Sinuses

Using a combination of lymphatic drainage techniques, cranial sacral techniques, Chinese and or Ayurvedic pressure points, along with ultrasound over the sinuses, in order to reduce swelling, brain fog, facial and head pain, and decrease congestion in the sinus. This Head Drainage Therapy with Cranial Sacral Holds reduces inflammation in the head, promote circulation, and assist with cerebral spinal fluid movement to the brain, as a result helps reduce pain in the head face and neck..



Ayurvedic Health Evaluation

The Ayurvedic Health evaluation is a comprehensive study of an individual using ancient India's Ashtavidha Pariksha - The Eight Methods of Clinical Evaluation. It is a method that uses a variety of visual inspections, touch (e.g., pulse observation) and questioning to help identify symptoms and manifestations of imbalance. For each client, the exam consists of a combination of alternative modalities, such as Dosha and Agni Evaluation, Tongue and Pulse Studys, Facial Observation, and Ayurvedic diet and lifestyle recommendations.

The practitioner will make recommendations for treatment after the completion of the evaluation.



Organ Flushing Detox Therapy

Organ flushing is a light to moderate touch therapy, applied over the abdomen, which helps remove toxins and stagnant fluid from the organ systems in the abdomen, joints, and soft tissues, thereby reducing pain.



Reflexology Foot and Hand Therapy

Reflexology is acupressure on the feet and hands that balances energy, and reduces pain and stiffness.

Foot Reflexology with Lymphatic Drainage

A therapy for foot pain, inflammation, and peripheral neuropathy.



Geriatric Bodywork

A type of touch therapy that uses gentle and light application of bodywork techniques with oils or lotions that permit the body to be worked on without excessive friction to the skin. It has been shown to reduce pain, relieve anxiety and provide comfort, especially to those touch-deprived.



Guided Stretch Therapy

GST is a specialized bodywork technique performed on a fully clothed individual, that assists with improving stiffness, tightness, decreased range of motion, and pain.

Guided Stretch Therapy has been proven to enhance:

- Range of Motion
- Flexibility
- Recovery from Injuries
- Recovery from Sports

It slows down the progression of muscle aging, improves the nervous system's ability to relax, reduces pain, and aides in the ability to get better sleep.

Range of motion techniques are added when needed with this method.



Life Coaching

A method used to focus on what we have the power to change: our own thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Life coaching can reverse years of negative self-talk and self-limiting choices thereby reducing stress and pain.



Reiki

The study of healing and directing the body's energy via spiritual or universal energy. The practitioner applies a light touch to the client or provides it through remote healing. It is very relaxing and as a result reduces pain.



Hypnotherapy/Hypnosis

Hypnosis can help individuals and groups stop smoking, lose weight, sleep better, and deal effectively with stress and other emotional disorders.

During a hypnosis session the client experiences a trance state which is similar to meditation. In this state the innate powers of the human mind, which are usually untapped, flow freely and enhance every area of life. Emotional blocks that a client may not even be aware of are released during a session.

The Hypnotic state is completely normal. Hypnosis is experienced everyday by every person. It happens while watching TV or driving a familiar route. It is a narrowing of attention, thereby shutting out distractions, resulting in focused awareness. It is not mysterious but rather a state that every human being can easily reach, with very few exceptions.

The conscious mind, which is the rational and analytical mind, is in a relaxed state for a time, while the subconscious mind, which holds all emotions, memories and creativity, is more fully accessed to provide resources not usually available.

Hypnosis is a powerful tool that can alter your perception of pain, reducing its intensity and has impact on your life.



Oracle Healing (Reiki Energy Healing)

Oracle healing is a form of in-person or distant healing that involves the healer working with the Seven Rays of Reiki. Also known as the Seven Rays of Creation, these healing rays are high vibrational energies overseen by Seven Archangels. The Archangels serve people of all faiths and also those who don't come from a faith tradition.

During the healing, the oracle healer receives a "God's eye view" of your soul self, along with blessings, channeled messages, and intuitive insights as to what's going on with your chakras, and

what limiting self-beliefs need to be shifted and cleared. As a result stress and pain are reduced.



Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) – is an alternative treatment for physical pain and emotional distress. It's also referred to as tapping or psychological acupressure. EFT allows the body to dissolve emotions from the body easily and effortlessly. Great for healing the heart from old relationships, anger, insomnia, anxiety, pain and so much more!



Guided Meditation - is a process by which one or more participants meditate in response to the guidance provided by a trained practitioner or teacher. Guided imagery has many uses. It is used to promote relaxation, which can lower blood pressure and reduce other problems related to stress. It can also help you reach goals (such as losing weight or quitting smoking), manage pain and promote healing.

About the Author: Victoria Goldsten, HD, PhD, LPN, LMT

Victoria has been caring for the sick since 1973. Her first health care experience was in nursing at several local hospitals and health care facilities. She later studied and received certificates in: homeopathy, Reiki, acupressure, lymphatic drainage, neural therapy, hypnotherapy, Holistic Nursing, and Complementary and Alternative Medicine Nursing. She has a diploma in Nursing and a Doctorate degree in Homeopathy and Holistic Health. She is licensed as a nurse and massage therapist in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. She is currently working as the Director and an Integrative Homeopath/Holistic Doctor, Complementary and Alternative Medicine Nurse, and a Lymphatic Drainage Massage Therapist at the Washington Institute of Natural Medicine.

* Several Practitioner of the Washington Institute assisted with the contents of this article.

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Further information can be seen on the Washington Institute's Web site.

www.NaturalHealthDC.com