

THE POWER OF THE

Healing Touch

THE BOWEN TECHNIQUE: remarkable results across a comprehensive range of conditions

One of Europe's fastest growing complementary therapies is the Bowen Technique. Developed in Australia and only brought to the UK in the 1990's, it is now increasingly recognised as a therapy which can help with an astonishingly wide range of conditions.

It's difficult to think of another therapy that has been shown to help not only with the muscular and skeletal problems other therapies tend to address - like back, neck and shoulder pain, whiplash, tennis elbow, frozen shoulder and sports injuries - but also with such problems as arthritis, asthma, hay fever, eczema, migraine, IBS, lymphatic drainage, stress and even fertility problems. It can also help babies with colic, children who have glue ear, who bed-wet, or who have suffered trauma or exhibit behaviour problems. Several practitioners now specialise in helping clients with particularly difficult conditions, such as cerebral palsy, autism, ADHD, MS, ME and cancer - with very positive results.

There are numerous examples of the therapy making a significant difference - in reducing or eliminating pain, improving

quality of life, enabling clients to resume their normal active lives or to return to work - when conventional treatment cannot help.

The Treatment

The Bowen therapist, using only thumbs and fingers, makes subtle but dynamic, rolling movements over muscles, tendons and soft tissue at precise points on the body. The pressure exerted is gauged by the practitioner, according to the age and physical condition of the client - very gentle moves for a tiny baby with colic or an elderly client suffering from arthritis, with the option of more robust moves for a well-toned athlete presenting with a sports injury.

A Bowen treatment aims to release tension in the body, in order that healing, realigning and balancing can take place. Some clients become so relaxed that they fall asleep during the session. A treatment normally takes between 45 minutes to an hour, and includes periods of rest, to allow the body to absorb the information it has received and initiate the healing process.

Short-term (acute) injury is usually resolved in 1 - 3 treatments, while long-standing (chronic) conditions may require several more Bowen sessions. Many clients return regularly for 'top-up' treatments, to boost their feeling of health and well-being and to strengthen their immune system.

Evidence!

While there are individuals all over the country who will pay testimony to the way in which Bowen has made a major difference to their lives, there are areas of conventional medicine which refuse to be convinced - about Bowen and most other natural therapies.

The Bowen Therapists European Register (BTER) is the main professional body for practitioners in the UK and in many European countries. For several years now, BTER has organised national studies, including migraine, asthma and frozen shoulder, to try to provide quantifiable, rather than anecdotal, evidence of the effectiveness of Bowen.

The 2008 study focused on shoulder and neck pain. Practitioners across the country





offered special rates for a series of three treatments – spread over a month -- to people of varying ages and lifestyles, who suffered from shoulder and neck problems, but had never tried Bowen. The effects of each treatment were reviewed by the practitioner and the client, and carefully recorded and analysed by BTER. The results have been spectacular. They show that of the clients treated, 86% reported a partial to full recovery after a series of three treatments.

Such dramatic evidence wasn't unusual. The latest project followed two separate studies in 2005 and 2007 into the effects of Bowen on back pain. These both showed that that more than 90% of people treated experienced either complete or significant relief after three treatments. The oldest client was 91 years old and estimated that the condition had improved by at least 80% after three treatments. One client had suffered from back pain for 53 years: after the third treatment, the client reported an improvement of at least 70%!

"The results of each of our surveys are, of course, based on only three treatments," BTER's Christine Burd comments: "The Bowen therapists involved know that their more mature clients – or clients with chronic conditions – are likely to experience even better results after a number of additional sessions."



**CASE STUDY 1
BEAR GRYLLS**

Bowen helps Bear to face the challenge!

Intrepid TV adventurer Bear Grylls uses the Bowen Technique to help him stay at peak physical performance.

Whenever Channel 4's 'Born Survivor' returns from his exploits in hostile environments around the world, he has regular treatments with Sussex based Bowen therapist Sarah Yearsley. "Bowen has helped keep my body together despite the continual bashing it takes," he explains: "It's a vital support in putting right a whole range of new aches and pains, making sure that old injuries don't cause me problems, and helping me fight stress and fatigue."

Bear not only has to deal with injuries and pains caused during specific episodes. He also carries the legacy of a number of problems caused by old injuries. The specific conditions Sarah has helped Bear to overcome include a rotated pelvis, tight and shallow breathing, a strained calf muscle, extreme exhaustion and stress, and a toe injury.

"Bear benefits from the versatility of Bowen," she comments; "It helps him across a full range of conditions – not only alleviating pain but boosting his immune system and helping minimise fatigue. Of course, he isn't a typical patient, but most of his problems are no different from those I treat in people with normal lifestyles."

CASE STUDY 2 AMY AND TOM

Bowen helps bring family fulfilment to Amy and Tom

Bowen treatment provided remarkable results for Amy and Tom, a Cheshire couple whose hopes for a family seemed to have been dashed, and who faced an even bigger challenge. They turned to Sandbach-based Bowen therapist Fiona Forster, and her help brought the following tribute from Amy:

"My husband and I were trying for a baby, but I suffered a miscarriage at an early stage. My periods became very irregular and I felt run down, tired and

depressed. Worse was to come though, as later in the same year I was diagnosed with MS. At this stage Tom and I almost gave up hope of ever having children.

After that diagnosis I started Bowen therapy. Almost straight away I started feeling more relaxed and my periods settled down. Better still, my MS symptoms improved. Amazingly, only three months later I conceived! I continued Bowen therapy through the pregnancy and suffered from minimal morning sickness and minimal backache. Bowen also helped me to stay calm throughout.

I'm now the proud mum of a healthy little boy, something I didn't think possible before I discovered Bowen."

Clearly, therapist Fiona Forster was herself thrilled with the results. "Amy's progress is a wonderful illustration of Bowen's amazing versatility" she comments: "It has helped her in many different ways, and really has dramatically changed her life."

CASE STUDY 3 BABY JAMES SIMS

Bowen helps transform life of asthmatic baby James

The lives of Essex baby James and his family were being made miserable by his asthmatic condition – until his mother Diane discovered the Bowen Technique, "I'm convinced that the therapy has made a major difference to his condition," she says delightedly.

James had been diagnosed as asthmatic at the age of only two months, and was having to use his facial 'pump' up to four times a day – a process that caused him great stress. He seemed to have a permanent cough and cold, was wheezing all the time and regularly suffered from croup.

James first visited local Bowen therapist Rosemary Cunningham when he was 17



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months old. “Even though the session was only about 10 minutes long, immediately there was a vast improvement in James’ health,” his mother explains: “The cough practically disappeared overnight.”

After three treatments the wheezing had completely gone and his facial pump was no longer needed. “James is now a happy, lively boy now and has a peaceful, undisturbed night sleep every night,” says Diane: “We are amazed and very pleased with the results and now recommend Bowen to everyone we meet.”

The results were no surprise to Bowen therapist Rosemary. “As well as helping many adults to lead more active lives and reduce their reliance on inhalers and drugs (under medical supervision), the Bowen Technique has had a particular impact in the area of childhood asthma,” she explains.

Participants required!

This year’s Bowen study, to be completed by June, will look into the impact of Bowen on knee and ankle pain. So if you have problems with your knee or ankle, why not find a local Bowen therapist and volunteer for treatment! The BTER website www.bowentherapists.com has a ‘find a therapist’ facility.

Good for business

Several Bowen therapists have links with local businesses, because the therapy can help employers to reduce the risk of absence through illness. Employees who spend a lot of time standing up, sitting at desks or carrying out manual work, are particularly susceptible to back, neck or shoulder pain, RSI, migraine or sudden strains or sprains. The stress often suffered by staff who are constantly working long hours, meeting tight dead-lines or driving long distances, is also a growing problem for employers. An increasing number of companies are realising that investing in regular Bowen treatments for staff at risk, or already affected by these problems, can help increase efficiency and enhance performance.

Standards

The Bowen Therapists’ European Register helps to ensure a consistently high standard of Bowen practice. Alongside their Bowen training, practitioners accredited by the Register have studied anatomy and physiology to Diploma level, and have a current First Aid Certificate. They are required to attend regular professional development courses to enhance their skills. BTER also provides a code of ethics and practice.

More information about the Bowen Technique can be found on the BTER Bowen website www.bowentherapists.com. It includes details of how Bowen has helped with various conditions, past studies, a video demonstrating the technique, and a list of all BTER members practising in the UK. There’s also a BTER helpline on 0844 561 7173.