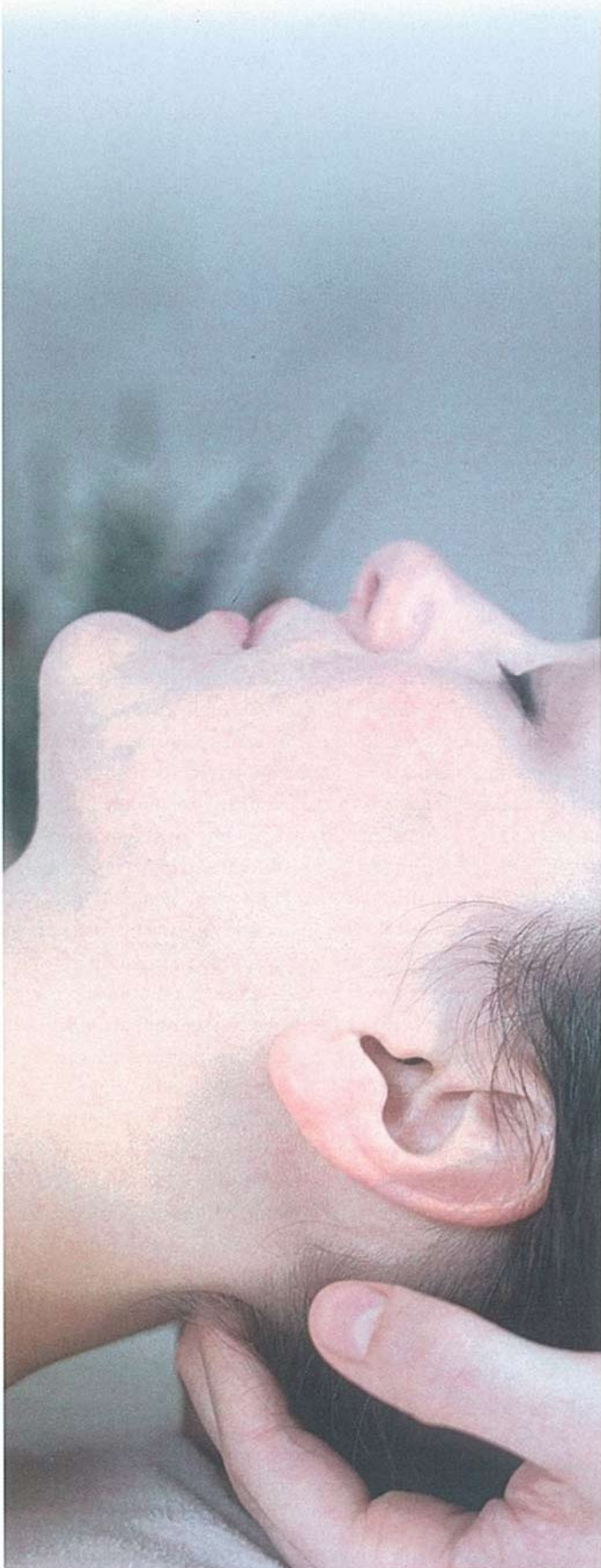


Bowen Technique

by Brian Murphy



The Bowen Technique is a natural, holistic therapy pioneered by Thomas Bowen (1916–1982), who devoted his life to developing and refining the method in Geelong, Australia after the Second World War. By the early 1970s he was treating around 13,000 people a year, and practitioners trained by him introduced the technique into Britain during the 1990s.

WHAT DOES THE BOWEN TECHNIQUE INVOLVE?

The therapy consists of a series of rolling 'moves' over muscle and connective tissue using light touch. Touch is used in a very different way to other forms of hands-on therapy, such as massage, and is only applied briefly at precise points on the body. These careful 'moves' prompt the body to redress physical imbalances and heal injuries, promoting relief from pain and renewal of energy. The body normally responds quickly to the therapy, making it a clinically effective and cost effective treatment. Even long-standing complaints can disappear, often after only a single session.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT DURING A TREATMENT SESSION?

A Bowen Treatment session will usually last about an hour. No oils are used, and the patient can choose to be fully clothed during the session, although many prefer to change into a T-shirt and shorts or thin material trousers (tight clothing or clothing with thick seams/back pockets should be avoided).

The aim of the treatment is to establish a comprehensive

profile of the overall health of the patient, as well as addressing the patient's specific complaint, so the first consultation should include a discussion of the individual's lifestyle, sleeping patterns, medical history, stress levels, and history of any injuries.

During treatment, pauses of several minutes punctuate each series of 'moves'. These short breaks are important to allow the body to absorb the effects of the gentle manipulations. At this pace, the body is given time to effect the subtle adjustments which will help to initiate the healing process.

Unlike with most other therapies, it is the patient's body that takes the initiative in healing, not the therapist. During and after treatment a patient may experience deep relaxation, a feeling that they can retain for days.

Ideally treatments should be one week apart. However, when treating certain conditions – such as recurring sports injuries, or complaints during pregnancy, when changes in the body occur frequently – the treatments may be carried out at shorter intervals.

Usually two or three treatments are required to

bring about long term relief. However, many people experience relief after just one treatment, either immediately after the session, or within a matter of days. This may be relief from conditions that have caused them misery for years!

WHAT CAN BOWEN THERAPY TREAT?

The world over, Bowen Practitioners have found an ever-increasing number of conditions that respond extremely well to the treatment, including: acute/chronic back pain, shoulder pain/frozen shoulder, whiplash, stiff neck, sports injuries, sciatica, migraine, infant colic, fibromyalgia, ME, stress, MS, digestive problems, hayfever, sinusitis, facial pain, menstrual problems, knee/ankle problems, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Repetitive Strain Injury.

One of the most exciting areas emerging with Bowen Therapy is how extremely effective it is in treating asthma, particularly childhood asthma.

The treatment for asthma in young children and babies is simple and consists of a few gentle 'moves' on the child's back and abdomen.

Alastair Rattray, a Bowen Therapist who is currently carrying out research into the use of Bowen Therapy in the treatment of childhood asthma, reports: 'The Bowen Technique is highly effective on children with asthma. Time and again the symptoms disappear very quickly, leading to less and less medication being needed. The anxiety suffered by both the children and their families is relieved, often in the first week or so.' For more information on Alastair's work visit www.relieve-childhood-asthma.com

Research has also been carried out into the efficacy of Bowen Therapy in treating frozen shoulder, fibromyalgia and migraine. In these studies, Bowen Therapy was shown to produce statistically-significant improvements in the health of those suffering from these particular complaints.

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CASE STUDY

BACK PROBLEMS AND WHIPLASH

J's chronic back problems began following childbirth when she was 25 years old. When she was 36 she was in an accident injuring her neck from whiplash. When she came for her first Bowen Therapy treatment, she was 42 years old and had, therefore, suffered back problems for 17 years and a painful neck restriction for the last six of those years.

J. had constant nagging pain in her lower back and, because of her neck injury, was unable to turn her head to the left. To make matters worse her back would frequently 'go' completely, without warning, causing agony. Painkillers were not much help and she was unable to sleep or walk during these periods. To gauge how painful her back pain was, J. was asked to mark it out of ten. J replied 'Generally, around 4 out of 10 but when it goes – 17 out of 10!'

The day after her first treatment J. was astonished to realise

she could 'look both ways', and for the first time in six years could move her neck freely without pain. During the week following the first treatment, J still noticed a dull ache in her back, whilst her neck remained pain-free. During the second treatment J. reported feeling a tingling sensation around the point in her back where she experienced the pain. (This tingling sensation, and localised feelings of heat, are very common responses during therapy.) After the treatment she felt her back improve immediately. The pain subsided, and in her own words she 'felt straighter'. That was over two years ago and J. reports that she has not had any problems with either her back or her neck since.

