

“Unfortunately,” says Victoria Mogilner, Certified Acupuncturist (C.A.) of the East West Rejuvenation Centre, “that’s why most people come. But the thing about Chinese medicine is—it works. It treats the cause and not the symptom.”

Mogilner, who uses acupuncture, says she sees wonderful results for pain, hormonal imbalances, and emotional problems such as anxiety, depression, and stress. Chinese medicine often catches health issues before they become a problem. Mogilner recommends a visit to a Chinese medicine practitioner before conceiving to clear up health problems that might be passed on to offspring.

Mogilner echoes Ritchie’s credo of the classically Ori-

THE TENDER TOUCH THAT PACKS A PUNCH

Some hands-on alternative therapies produce an exquisite state of restfulness similar to hypnosis, but can evoke potent results. In this restful realm, alternative practitioners say the body relaxes enough to release energies that may cause sickness or disease. Even during the tender touches of craniosacral therapy, where the therapist’s hand pressure never exceeds five grams, big things can happen.

“There’s a very strong somato-emotional release component going on,” says Toni Munoz, a therapist at Sedona’s ReSource Physical Therapy (there’s also a location in Cottonwood). “Our body tissue holds energy from past traumas, whether emotional, physical, or spiritual. During a treatment, they can get released.”

Craniosacral therapy works with the body’s bones and connective tissue. As late as the 1970s, physicians believed the cranial bones did not move. However, recent research has found not only that they move, but that the fluid that flows between the cranial sutures and down the spinal cord affects the whole body.

When Tama Anderson, a craniosacral therapist at Tucson’s Miraval Life in Balance Resort & Spa, applied her five-gram-touch to the back of my neck during a treatment, my mind’s eye saw me as a toddler running



Practitioners of craniosacral therapy say it can work well for people with chronic pain, headaches, fibromyalgia, and sinus problems.

away. Then I immediately thought of how my brother used to squeeze the back of my neck to tease me or move me off my spot on his favorite couch.

Anderson acknowledges my experience as characteristic of the therapy. She says clients often enter into an altered state during a craniosacral treatment, as if they were floating. They may swallow often and twitch. Some have visible emotional releases, like crying or giggling. Others may feel nothing during the treatment, then get an emotional release the next day.

Everyone, Munoz says, can benefit from craniosacral work—especially people with chronic pain, headaches, trauma injuries, fibromyalgia, sinus

problems, and attention difficulties.

“It’s a wonderful tool to raise one’s self-awareness,” Anderson adds.

LIFE-FORCE ENERGY

Another therapy that often places clients into a deep state of relaxation, Reiki, which literally means “life-force energy,” does so by working on the body’s energy centers.

This ancient Buddhist system of healing teaches that emotions and stress enter our energy fields and can get lodged in our physical being, contributing to sickness or disease. A Reiki practitioner channels life-force energy by opening the body’s energy centers (often called chakras) and clearing



ental approach of living in the moment: Eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, and rest when tired.

“It’s simple,” Mogilner says. “We need to honor ourselves and our needs. Most important is our attitude—watch what we say, get rid of fear, live in the moment, and tell our loved ones we love them.”

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away negative energy to encourage the body towards emotional, mental, and spiritual restoration. Reiki sessions are said to work well for nervous disorders, liver issues, and releasing toxins, which can benefit those with stress-related illnesses.

“Negative emotions are the most damaging to a body,” says Karen Janusz, fitness supervisor, nutritionist, and Reiki Master at The Boulders’ Golden Door Spa in Carefree. “I can sense energy pulling if a person has an issue in an area. If a person’s not ready to heal or change, chances are nothing will happen.”

During a Reiki session with Janusz, I lie comfortably on my back atop a massage table as she moves her hands to several chakras. As Janusz moves down to my solar plexus, heat radiates from her hands and they slightly tremble. Then my stomach jumps, like an internal hiccup. Janusz later explains this may have indicated an energy release. At the end of the hour-long treatment, I feel centered, more energetic, and perhaps

in better health, thanks to the flip in my stomach.

WATER WORLD

People who enjoy water and don’t have personal-space issues may find their release in Watsu, a form of water shiatsu (a Japanese massage technique) that got its start as a sensual-awakening enhancement discovered by Watsu creator Howard Dull. Dull describes Watsu as a Zen experience that realigns meridians (energy pathways), revitalizes chakras, and enables a back-to-the-womb experience. Watsu is said to help with pain management, fibromyalgia, relaxation, flexibility, and respiration.

“There’s such a deep correlation between human beings and water,” explains Nancy Coggeshall, a Watsu enthusiast and owner of Quantum Aquatics in Sedona. “Watsu clients claim it stirs the soul, and they experience a tremendous emotional release.”

Coggeshall, who likens a Watsu treatment to a floatation tank or floating in



Spas such as those at Golden Door and The Sanctuary offer Reiki, acupuncture, and more.

Alternative beauty treatments

Alternative therapies do not stop at relaxation and/or good health. Some can even improve your looks. Victoria Mogilner’s acupuncture face-lift (in Scottsdale) claims to take 10 years off a face.

“It’s all connected to what’s happening on the inside,” Mogilner says.

Mogilner sticks hair-thin acupuncture needles in strategic spots on the body and face that affect inner organs as well as the face. A gauze mask soaked in a special herbal solution adds to the facial benefits. Mogilner suggests 10 treatments for more thorough effects, but just one can make a remarkable difference.

New in the last year to the US, Europe’s 20-year-old ionithermie therapy claims to melt away inches from the body while clearing out toxins and improving the immune system. The treatment corrects cellulite, improves skin, and tones muscle, often with inch loss.

Skeptics say the treatment is nothing more than a glorified body wrap that depletes body fluid. However, ionithermie has become a very popular anti-cellulite treatment in Europe.

“Ionithermie works on the muscles,” explains Sandy Mackenzie, a spa therapist aboard the Crystal Cruise’s Symphony cruise ship. “It breaks down toxins and pushes them out.”

At this time, ionithermie is available in New York, Los Angeles, and on the Crystal and Celebrity cruise lines.



A Watsu treatment at Sanctuary combines the Japanese massage technique of shiatsu with soothing, warm water.