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# **“DISCOVER THE *POWERFUL 22* ALTERNATIVE HEALTH METHODS THAT YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT!”**

## **A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO ALTERNATE HEALTH TECHNIQUES...**

**TO LEARN HOW TO LIVE A LONGER, HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER LIFE...VISIT:**

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### **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	2
1. Yoga and Health: An Alternative Form of Exercise .....	2
2. You are Getting Sleepy: Hypnosis as Alternative Treatment.....	3
3. What’s the Buzz? Apitherapy.....	4
4. What is Polarity Therapy?.....	5
5. What is Light Therapy?.....	5
6. What is Homeopathy?.....	6
7. Touches that Heal: Therapeutic Touch.....	7
8. Sweet Sounds: Music Therapy.....	7
8. Stand Straight! The Alexander Technique.....	8
9. Smelling Healthy: Aromatherapy.....	9
11. On Pins and Needles: Acupuncture for Your Health.....	10
12. Mind and Body Movement: The Trager Approach.....	11
13. Massage for Health.....	12
14. Magnets: Not Just for Your Refrigerator.....	12
15. Herbs for Health.....	13
15. Healthy Eating: More Complicated than You Thought.....	14
16. Feeling the Rainbow: What is Color Therapy?.....	14

17. Crystals and Gemstones: Not Just for Decoration.....	15
18. Controlling the Uncontrollable: Biofeedback.....	16
19. Bending the Body: Chiropractic as Alternative Medicine.....	17
20. Amen: Prayer for Health.....	17
21. A Massage that Cures: Acupressure.....	18
22. A Japanese Kind of Cure: Reiki.....	19

## Introduction

If traditional medical treatments are not helping you recover from or prevent illness or pain, you may wish to consider an alternative form of treatment to take the place of traditional options or to use in conjunction. Alternative therapies are now being widely studied, as many people are having amazing results with them. Within the alternative medical world, there are a number of choices for treatment and choosing a medical treatment plan can be difficult, so research the many options carefully before choosing any kind of alternative therapy treatment.

There are many types of therapies you can learn about and most of these are discussed in this report. The most commonly known alternative medical option is chiropractic. Acupuncture and acupressure are also very widely known and accepted ways of treating illness and pain. In the place of medications, herbal remedies and homeopathic remedies can be used, and a detox diet is also the cause of medical well being for many people who wish to stop using medicines, which contain many harmful chemicals and can increase risks and cause side effects.

Some types of alternative therapies focus specifically on the sense of touch. These include massage, Rolfing, reiki, and therapeutic touch. There are also alternative therapy treatments that involve your other senses. Aromatherapy is triggered by sense of smell; color therapy and light therapy both have to do with your sense of sight, and music therapy involves your sense of hearing.

If none of the aforementioned alternative medical options strike your fancy, you can also try prayer, meditation, yoga, hypnosis, magnetic therapy, polarity therapy, apitheraphy, or biofeedback techniques, which are all discussed here. There are many other kinds of alternative therapies as well, and your doctor should know a little bit about all of them. Use this report as a basic starting point to narrow down the list and then *research* each to choose what is best for your body.

Once you have chosen an alternative therapy option, you must next find a professional for treatment. Be wary of anyone not certified. Most alternative therapies have certification programs or are practiced by medical doctors. In many cases, practicing without certification is illegal. Certification programs help you feel at ease with your professional. Shop around for the best prices and ask your regular doctor for recommendations. Word of mouth is a great way to find medical professionals, so talk to friends, family members, and co-workers about the local businesses. You can also read reviews online and contact the Better Business Bureau for more information. Your health care is important, so make the best decisions possible.

### 1. Yoga and Health: An Alternative Form of Exercise

Yoga has long been used as an alternative form of healthy exercise. Today, a variety of yoga schools have become popular, so if you want to try this technique of healing and preventative

health, research them all before signing up for a class. Yoga can be very helpful if you are suffering from pain or disease, but, as always, discuss this change in your exercise regimen with your doctor before you begin so that you can be sure yoga will work for you.

Iyengar is the yoga of props and slow pose progression. Correct form is important, and so your instructor will stress this. It is an extremely useful kind of yoga for beginners to try, and people with disabilities or physical restrictions can also use Iyengar yoga. Props that are used help people overcome back and joint problems. Iyengar yoga, in short, teaches the fundamentals, and so this is an important kind of yoga to use if you are new to yoga.

Power yoga, or Ashtanga yoga, is the most athletic form of yoga and used by those who want a difficult workout. Flexibility, stamina, and strength are all heavily stressed with this form of yoga, and meditation is not as important and usually not taught at all. A warm temperature is beneficial to this style to lessen muscle strain, so power yoga can also be combined with hot yoga, which is a highly physical workout done in temperatures of 100 degrees F or even more in some cases. Breath control is important here, and the progression is swift to maximize athletic benefit. Ashtanga yoga is not as beneficial for beginners and can be especially difficult for those who are not accustomed to exercising. Hatha yoga can be viewed as the opposite of this, and is a more relaxing kind of workout that is concerned not only with physical well being, but also with mental and spiritual healthiness. Most types of yoga include aspects of Hatha yoga, and these techniques are important for beginners to learn.

Kundalini is a more spiritual type of yoga exercise, and includes chanting, guided relaxation and meditations, and visualizations. It can be done by anyone of any religious practice, although yoga first began with Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Kundalini heals the body, emotions, and mind. Posture and breathing is important in this type of yoga, and those overcoming addiction have found Kundalini especially helpful.

Other kinds of yoga may also be beneficial to you and your health. Be sure to choose a routine that is not too easy or, on the other hand, too difficult. Talk with your doctor or a yoga instructor for more information.

## **2. You are Getting Sleepy: Hypnosis as Alternative Treatment**

One form of alternative medical treatment that can be used for treating a large number of illnesses and medical conditions is hypnosis. The exact dangers and benefits associated with the practice of hypnosis are still being studied, but many patients have had great success with this technique. If you suffer from an illness that you think hypnosis could help you overcome, talk to your doctor or a mental health care professional for more information. Research the hypnotic option carefully and thoroughly before making any decisions about its validity in the medical world.

Medical hypnosis, or hypnotherapy, can be used to treat a variety of conditions. Hollywood has caused a number of stereotypical misunderstandings to shadow the world of hypnosis, but the fact is that most hypnotists do not cause their patients to perform funny or embarrassing acts. These hypnotists, who often travel doing comical performances, represent a very minute number of hypnotists in the world and do not accurately represent how hypnosis can help someone.

Hypnotherapy is not done on a stage, but in a doctor's office. Hypnotism is natural - if you've ever been driving and suddenly reached your destination without remembering the drive or if you've ever been so engrossed in a book that you didn't hear someone talking to you, you've hypnotized yourself. Hypnotism doesn't cause you to sleep or becoming unconscious, it simply

opens up your subconscious mind to the power of suggestion.

Hypnotism is usually done with verbal guidance, in which a licensed professional will ask the patient to visualize certain things. The mind then opens in a unique way so that the hypnotist can plant suggestions into it. Hypnotism is, therefore, especially useful for those battling alcoholism or drug addiction. A therapist can also reach a person's memory at a deeper level when the person is hypnotized, so it is useful for patients with mental disorders.

Some people are more easily hypnotized than others, so it is not a treatment for everyone. After treatment, the patient usually feels very calm and rested, but it affects everyone differently. Consult your regular doctor before beginning to see a hypnotist to make sure this option is healthy for you and your body. Although it is still being studied by many skeptics in the medical field, many people have found great success with hypnotism when other treatments have failed.

### **3. What's the Buzz? Apitherapy**

New treatment options for old diseases and pains are being explored every day. While you may have heard of some of the major alternative medicine treatment options, like hypnosis and acupuncture, one you may not have heard about is called apitherapy. Apitherapy is the use of bee products to cure your pains, prevent serious medical conditions, or make life more comfortable for those suffering from chronic illnesses. Most people do not know about this technique, but you should explore it with your regular doctor to see if it may help you.

Apitherapy has been used in a number of ways to treat hundreds of illnesses, including heart disease, allergies, pneumonia, kidney and liver diseases, arthritis, insomnia, back pain, influenza, sore throat, acne, hair loss, sexual dysfunction, diabetes, lymphoma, stomach ulcers, malaria, schizophrenia, and alcoholism. As you can see, it is *believed* to treat a very wide variety of medical conditions, ranging from more serious diseases, to uncomfortable but less threatening conditions (like hair loss). Your doctor can tell you more about the different diseases apitherapy can be used to treat.

Bee products can be introduced to your system in a variety of ways. First, you can take them orally. Pollen and honey can be made into capsules, powders, and liquids for your use. For the past few years, bee products have also been made into creams and ointments to apply to the skin. Eye and nose drops can be made with bee products as well.

Apitherapy can be used (and most often is used) in conjunction with other medical practices. For example, your massage might include an application of warm honey to the massaged areas or your dentist can use a bee product to rub on your gums, teeth, cheeks, lips, and tongue.

There are some health concerns with apitherapy, especially bee venom injection. It is illegal for anyone other than certified doctors to inject bee venom, so be sure that you are visiting a trained professional. Also, they can react with other medications, especially those for heart conditions, so tell your doctor what other medications you are taking before being injected. There are also specific doses that you should take to best treat your condition if you choose to pursue oral apitherapy, so speak with your doctor to regulate these doses correctly. He or she can help you use bee production in this unconventional way, and when paired with other medical treatments, this can be very effective in fighting your pain.

## **4. What is Polarity Therapy?**

Polarity therapy is a technique that is based off the human energy field, which is comprised of the electromagnetic patterns expressed in mental, emotional, and physical responses. When someone is sick, it is said that their human energy field is in bad condition, and thus needs to be repaired through polarity therapy. Using energy-based bodywork, exercise, dieting, and self-awareness, polarity therapy is said to give the body a strong human energy field, and thus make it healthier.

Polarity therapy was first practiced by Randolph Stone, who published a total of seven works by 1954 that spoke of his findings in his research into using energy in the healing arts. He found that the human energy field is affected by touch, diet, movement, sound, attitudes, relationships, life experiences, trauma, and environmental factors. He applied his findings and theories during his medical career in Chicago and had tremendous success with the majority of his patients. After his retirement, some of Stone's students carried on his work and in 1984 the American Polarity Therapy Association was formed. Ever since then, polarity therapy has become an increasingly used form of medicine and has also become more diverse than when it was first thought up.

The energy of a person is supposed to flow smoothly and clearly. When it does so, a person is said to be healthy. However, blockages in the flow of energy can occur due to stress or other factors. When this happens, a body will become less healthy and pain and illness will occur. Polarity therapy looks for these blockages and attempts to get rid of them, allowing energy to flow freely once again and for health in a person to be restored. A typical polarity therapy session takes anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half. During this time, various forms of touch and verbal interactions occur. The practitioner will use all degrees of touch on the client, whether it is light or firm, in order to help muscles relax, which is a great stress fighter. Also, the practitioner will try and make the client more self aware of the energy in his or her body, allowing the client to try and make the energy flow more smoothly himself.

Polarity therapy has been an excellent cure for many people, and often has great success in the realm of stress relief. After a therapy session, a person will generally feel more relaxed and happier. It's a great way to relieve tension and bring about a stronger sense of self-being.

## **5. What is Light Therapy?**

Back in the days before modern medicine, it took a lot longer to heal from wounds and sickness. Now that may be an obvious point, but it should make one wonder just how those ailments were cured at all. The answer may be simpler than anyone would think. That answer would be light. Sunlight especially was and still is a great cure for sickness and wounds, although it is rarely used in treatment today. Still, those who practice alternative medicine are looking to light therapy as a new, natural cure for many different types of sicknesses, both physical and mental.

Today's average person is a whole lot busier than people back in the day when sunlight was a major part of medicine. It wouldn't make sense for someone to spend hours in the sun just to heal something that can be cured in no time just by popping a pill. However, it is possible to be cured by light, especially sunlight. Spending an hour or so in the sun can cure a headache for example, and longer exposure could help protect a wound from becoming infected.

Using this knowledge, current alternative medicine practitioners are harnessing the healing power of light in order to help people with physical and mental sickness. There are a couple different techniques that are used, depending on the condition and the severity of it. Some therapists, for example, simply put a set of fluorescent bulbs next to the patient and have them sit by it for up to a few hours. While doing this, the patient is told to do something like read, so they don't focus all their attention on the lights. Another technique used to cure aches and pains in specific areas of the body is to take an intense light with a smaller beam and shine it on the part of the body that is hurt.

Light therapy is known to be a cure for several disorders, but the most common is known as winter depression or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Just like the name states, this is a mental and physical condition of depression that occurs during wintertime. It is theorized that this depression comes about because of the lack of sunlight in many places during the winter months. Exposure to light will make up for this lack and therefore get rid of winter depression. This is just one example of how light therapy is reworking the ideas of medicine today.

## **6. What is Homeopathy?**

Alternative medical options are becoming increasingly popular in our modern culture, since people are wary of what goes into their bodies. Traditional medical options often introduce harmful chemicals into the body or otherwise are at an organic disadvantage. However, most forms of alternative healthcare are safe and gentle on the body's systems, so many patients prefer these options. Countless studies are now being completed to show the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of these alternative health options. One such practice being studied that many people are using is homeopathy.

Classical homeopathy is believed to help with a number of illnesses and pains including, but not limited to AIDS, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, headaches, PMS, dyslexia, insomnia, infertility, depression, digestive disorders, autism, and asthma. Your doctor or a professional who specializes in homeopathy should be able to help you learn more about the many varied adverse medical conditions with which homeopathic medicine can help. It is important to speak with your regular doctor before beginning any kind of homeopathic treatment so that you can be sure this option will work well for you and not further damage your body.

Homeopathic doctors look at disease and pain in a different light. With normal medical treatment, you go to the doctor who then diagnoses your condition and gives you medicine to heal the symptoms. Homeopathic professionals, however, assert that treating the symptoms leaves the underlying problem unattended. In short, your pain will return over and over again, because you are not fixing the root problem. This is a view on medicine that is shared by other alternative health professionals, such as acupuncturists and acupressurists.

Homeopathic appointments begin with a total assessment of mental and physical health. The first appointment will try to understand your state of well being in as complete of a way as possible, so it is important to know your health history as well as be completely honest about your current state of health. Natural remedies are then prescribed to help the entire system, rather than simply treating specific pains and other symptoms. These remedies are made from minerals and plant matter and are very organic, so harmful chemicals are not introduced into your body. Homeopathic medicine is used in very small amounts and is meant to help the body heal itself.

If you believe that homeopathy can help you overcome disease, speak with your doctor for more information. However, there is still a lot of debate with regards to its effectiveness, and many

research studies have found it to be of no benefit, so do your research before giving it a try.

## **7. Touches that Heal: Therapeutic Touch**

The world today is seeing a resurgence in alternative medicine and therapeutic approaches to battling stress and disease that were not the mainstream over fifty years ago. Many of these techniques involve the idea of a person having their own energy, and if that energy is clogged and not allowed to flow freely throughout a person, it will experience pain and illness. Therapeutic touch is a form of “laying on of hands” that involves the exchange of energy from one person to another. This will allow one person to give his or her own energy to a person who is sick or in pain, therefore helping to cure that person.

Dolores Krieger developed this technique in the 1970’s while she was a professor of Nursing at New York University. Together with Dora Kuntz, a well-respected “natural” healer and someone who Krieger thought of as a role model, the two developed the healing form known as therapeutic touch. They made it easy to learn, to teach, and to implement so that it would be able to easily work its way into both society and medicine. To this day, Krieger is continuing to research therapeutic touch around the world in order to make a more useful medical technique.

Therapeutic touch is currently taught to over 100,000 practitioners, although only about half of those who are trained in it actually practice the technique. Therapeutic touch involves four steps, beginning with the “centering,” a meditative process that is said to align the healer with the patient’s energy levels. Next is the ‘assessment,” where the healer uses his or her hands to detect the energy from a patient and any other forces as well. After the healer has assessed the energy situation of the patient, he or she uses the hands to get rid of excess energy in order to prepare the patient for the final step. This final step is actually where the healer transfers his or her own excess energy into the patient. There is a form of non-contact therapeutic touch that works the same way, though the hands are held a few inches away from the patient, rather than laid on top.

Therapeutic touch is becoming more and more popular with many therapists and patients alike. With the emergence of more natural ways of dealing with disease, it is one way to get a holistic and all-natural therapy session in. Although it is a technique that is more debated than some of the other energy-related alternative therapies, it is still held in high regard by many of its practitioners and patients.

## **8. Sweet Sounds: Music Therapy**

In 1950, the National Association for Music Therapy was formed, bringing music therapy into the realm of professionalism. Using music as a cure for a person’s physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing has been practiced for centuries, although it was never referred to as a professional science. Even though everyone does not consider it so, music therapy still makes up a significant part of alternative medicine.

A physician, a psychologist, or a social worker often refers music therapy to someone, though there are many parents who turn to music therapy to help their children. For whatever reason

someone comes under the care of a music therapist, they will always be in good hands. A music therapist is an extremely qualified individual with extensive education and training. Music therapists often work with the physically handicapped, the abused, the elderly, the terminally ill, or mentally retarded.

The techniques used in music therapy are varied, but all pretty much deal with expression of emotions and the calming of the body. For example, a music therapist may tell a patient to sing in order to express unspoken emotions that need to be released. Others may use piano playing as a way to increase fine motor skills, and some others may use instruments to help a patient illustrate his or her feelings. There are numerous applications for music therapy, making it an exciting and interesting field.

Although patients and clients involved in music therapy are sure to increase their skill in using an instrument or in other aspects of music, it is not the main focus. Rather, music therapy focuses on other areas, such as communication, and the fine-tuning of motor and social skills. All of these areas can be impacted through the use of music, which has been proven by music therapists time and time again.

While music cannot cure or even aid in all types of disabilities or sicknesses, it is a useful tool for those willing to spend the time involved in it. Music therapy is used in many hospitals, rehab centers, and retirement homes as well as to help children with social problems in school. In fact, with the results music therapy has been getting in these fields, it wouldn't be surprising to see more music therapists popping up, and music therapy become more popular in the years to come.

## **8. Stand Straight! The Alexander Technique**

Imagine this: You are in a profession in which you regularly use your voice. Overtime, it begins to be strained, which, unfortunately, effects your work. Looking in the mirror one day, you notice that your posture is not the best, and upon correcting it, you suddenly hear and see improvements in your speaking as well as in your overall health.

This is exactly what happened to Shakespearean actor Frederick Alexander. His technique, now known as the Alexander Technique, can be used not only to improve voice quality, but also to relieve back pain, improve posture, treat depression and anxiety, deal with stress-related illnesses, enhance performance capabilities for actors and dancers, and prevent strains from repeated activities. Other conditions, most in the mental and physical realms, can also be treated with the Alexander Technique.

An alternative medical treatment, the true effect of the Alexander Technique is still being studied and will be sure to attract skeptics for decades to come, as do other forms of alternative medicine, such as acupuncture, meditations, light therapy, and prayer. Studies have shown, however, that the Alexander Technique can work, so it is an option you should be sure to research and consider if you are looking for new treatment methods. Your doctor can teach you more about this technique.

The Alexander Technique is usually taught to clients who are treated with a series of half-hour- to hour-long classes. First, the patient is asked to lie on a table with knees bent, and the professional adjusts posture so that everything is correctly aligned. The treatment is then continued as the patient stands. A number of movements are preformed and the practitioner continues adjusting the client's posture so that eventually it seems like second nature. The goal of these sessions is to make movement free and as minimal and effortless as possible so that these

techniques can then be employed in everyday life. It corrects your posture as you stand, sit, and lie down and can help you with everything from general posture to more specific alignment, such as the way you hold your head.

Of course, the Alexander Technique is not for everyone, and it depends on your current health condition. If your doctor believes that this technique will work for you, seek a licensed professional to help you learn the technique. He or she will teach you the skills you need to improve specific problems as well as your overall health, with posture.

## **9. Smelling Healthy: Aromatherapy**

Aromatherapy is the use of plant oils as an alternative from of medical treatment. Although its exact uses are still being explored, you should pursue this treatment if you want new and safe options to treat your medical condition. Aromatherapy can be used to treat a variety of physical and mental illnesses, so it is becoming more popular for people who are not having success with traditional medical options.

Essential oils are most commonly used in aromatherapy procedures, although this term is often used as an umbrella term that includes true essential oils and absolutes. Essential oils, it is important to note, are very different from fragrances, which also come in oil form many times. Some of the most common essential oils used in aromatherapy include sweet almond, cocoa butter, jojoba, olive, peanut, shea butter, and sunflower. Essential oils are purely produced with the plant of their name, and are highly concentrated. This differs from perfume oils and fragrances, which contain chemicals and are often diluted with water. Since there are no regulations, some companies incorrectly label perfume oils “essential.” Check the label to see the ingredients to be sure you are using true essential oil.

Not all essential oils are good for aromatherapy, and some may even be hazardous to your health. Stay away from bitter almond, onion, garlic, rue, sassafras, camphor, wintergreen, and horseradish. There are other dangerous essential oils as well, so be very careful if you are attempting home therapy. It is best to seek professional help instead. He or she many use some of the aforementioned essential oils in very small doses, but aromatherapists are trained in how to use them correctly.

There are many benefits to aromatherapy. The smell can be drawn into your lungs to provide a multitude of physical and mental benefits, and the oils can be applied directly to your skin for other useful advantages. Carrier oils are used to dilute essential oils, since their power is so strong. When used improperly, because of their strength, essential oils can be very dangerous, so be sure you understand how to use them properly.

There are many aromatherapy products on the market that can be used in your home. Before purchasing, be sure that the company is not just claiming that their products are good for aromatherapy use, but that they actually do work. Sometimes other chemicals are used to give a pleasant smell, but this may be a fragrance and nothing more. This will not help you medically. One such product that you may often use in your home is the citronella candle, which has essential oils in it that act as a mosquito repellent. Other products can be used in your home in a similar way to benefit your health. Research this option fully to find out if aromatherapy can help you.

## 10. Rolfing: A Modern Type of Stress Relief

Rolfing is a physical technique that involves the manipulation of a body's soft tissues. Another term for this technique is structural integration. Rolfing organizes the relationships of soft tissues to each other in order to bring about a harmonious body structure and freer movement patterns. This is said to enhance a person's well being. It is currently being used in many circles of alternative medicine and is thought to be an excellent process for helping a person relieve stress and move more freely.

Ida Pauline Rolf is the woman responsible for creating this technique, which has been rightly named after her. In the 1950's Rolf used her knowledge in biochemistry to develop a method which involves a body's structural realignment in relation to gravity. She called this process Structural Integration of the Human Body. Ever since the 1970's, Rolfing has been used as a technique to realign the body and create a more harmonious state of well-being.

The process of Rolfing involves touching the skin of a person in order to find any imbalances in the tissue structure of a body and to separate what Ida Rolf called fascial layers that adhere and muscles that have been pulled out of position due to strain or energy. Rolfing is a massage-like technique that works to alleviate these tissues of any stress that may have caused them harm. Also, according to Rolfing, all parts of the body aligned, including ankles, pelvis, hips, knees, shoulders, etc. It is only in this way that the body will be balanced with gravity and thus in a state of deep relaxation and happiness. When a body is aligned, gravity is supposed to enhance a person's personal energy and bring about happiness and health.

Learning these techniques is hard to do, and a certified Rolfing therapist spends a few years studying the technique, which costs about \$10,000. There is only one school, in Colorado, which teaches this technique, although there are a couple other schools that teach similar techniques called structural integration rather than Rolfing. Although they are different in name, the techniques are generally the same.

There is some skepticism given to Rolfing, though therapists using the technique have found it to be successful and many clients have said to be relaxed and happy when they leave a Rolfing session. Using tissue therapy and the natural force of gravity, Rolfing is continuing to grow and is becoming a more commonly used technique throughout the world.

## 11. On Pins and Needles: Acupuncture for Your Health

If you've tried various traditional types of medical treatment for an illness, but none have worked to your liking, consider an alternative form of treatment. One such alternative health method is acupuncture, which has been used since ancient China to cure everything from back pain to headaches to infertility. Today, doctors are learning more and more about the many real health benefits of acupuncture, so the practice is becoming widely accepted when it was once considered a primitive kind of treatment. Talk to your doctor so that you can fully understand if acupuncture can help you.

Acupuncture works by stimulating certain points on the body to heal you. A certified professional will first do an analysis by asking you questions about your health history and your current condition. He or she will also look at your skin color, tongue appearance, and dental health, as well as other things about your body.

Your acupuncturist will then decide on the best course of action. Traditionally, acupuncture looks for the root of the problem and fixes that rather than simply treating the symptoms. All health problems stem from the dysfunction of energy flow in the body. The acupuncturist will stick small needles into your body at specific points to relieve the stress placed on this energy flow and hopefully correct it. These points are in places all over your body, but the process should not hurt or otherwise feel uncomfortable. If you are still wary about acupuncture, you can do a special type that involves only points on your hands. This hand acupuncture can still treat illness throughout the body.

When done correctly, acupuncture is safe and can be extremely effective. Your acupuncturist should be certified and have a legitimate business, so that you are sure that things stay safe. As with any technique that involves needles, make sure that your acupuncturist uses tools that are sterile. Your regular doctor should be able to direct you to a high-quality acupuncturist in your area so that you explore this treatment option. Acupuncture works best when used in conjunction with other forms of treatment, and can be used as a preventative method as well, so even if you are not currently suffering from any afflictions, you can use acupuncture to prevent medical conditions.

Although it is still a kind of treatment that is met with much skepticism, acupuncture has proven itself in today's medical world. Pursue this option when nothing else has worked, and remember to keep an open mind about it and about all forms of alternative medical treatment.

## **12. Mind and Body Movement: The Trager Approach**

The Trager Approach was developed by Dr. Milton Trager over a lifetime. This technique, which combines therapeutic touch, massage, yoga, meditation, and other kinds of alternative medical practices, has been used effectively by millions to relieve pain and illness. Although Dr. Trager at first had a difficult time starting his medical career and promotion of this technique, an institute was founded in the 1980's especially for this practice, and it now offers certification in The Trager Approach.

The Trager Approach is a gentle and long-lasting type of therapy. Practitioners stress that the results are cumulative - meaning that the more times you see a professional, the better you will feel. The technique involves both mind and body, providing patients with a relaxing kind of treatment. To begin a session, patient and practitioner use a practice called the "hook up" that is similar to meditation. Here, touch is very important, as the professional will use touch and movement of your body to communicate with your physical and mental health needs.

The Trager Approach has two parts. The first part, done at a practitioner's office, is the "table work." Here, you lie on a padded table, similar to what you would do during a massage or acupuncture treatment. You can be fully clothed or partially clothed during table work, depending on your comfort level. The Trager Approach professional will then move your body in a number of natural ways to increase movement and better your health.

The second part of the Trager Approach is called "Mentastics" and can be equated to yoga. You will learn a variety of free-flowing Mentastics movements, which will allow you to explore your body's limits and feel more relaxed. Mentastics is taught in group classes, or you can find a personal coach, much in the same way as someone doing aerobics can search for a personal trainer. Mentastics techniques, once mastered, can then be practiced at home.

Many conditions can be treated with The Trager Approach. Commonly, it is used to treat

back pain, stress, diseases causing limited movement, headaches, muscle spasms, depression, sports injuries, and emotional trauma. The Trager Approach can be used to treat both the physical and emotional sides of disease, so it is preferred by those having trouble coping with pain and illness. Your doctor can tell you more about The Trager Approach and direct you to professionals in your area that can teach you the technique.

### **13. Massage for Health**

Many people get massages because they feel nice, but did you know that a massage session could also benefit your health? Massage techniques, when done properly, can not only decrease stress and relax your muscles, but they can also improve your immune system, relieve pain, cure headaches, help injuries heal faster, and retain your muscle and joint mobility. If you are having difficulties in any of these areas and traditional medical procedures are not working, talk to your doctor about alternative therapy options, including massage.

There are a number of different kinds of massages, and a professional usually practices one or two specific kinds, so be sure to visit someone who can meet your needs. Traditionally, people get Swedish massages, which are focused on relaxation, or deep tissue massages, which are focused on loosening muscle tissues.

Some massages specifically target certain areas of the body. Cranio-Sacral massages focus on your neck, head, and spine and work to properly align this area and loosen tightened muscles in this area. Chi Nei Tsang is a type of massage that focuses on your abdominal organs and can help greatly with digestive pain or illness. If your joints are the problem, try The Trager Approach. These kinds of massages can help improve your life when done correctly, and you can also use them in conjunction with Swedish massage or other massage techniques to directly target the problem and then relax the entire body.

Other kinds of massages that are meant to relax or relieve stress, such as the Rosen Method, but all massages should leave you feeling physically and mentally better. A few types of massages, like a deep tissue massage, can be slightly painful and should only be used if your doctor specifically recommends them to help your condition. Rolfing is one such technique, as it works to align your tissues correctly and straighten the spine. However, even after this massage, you should feel better, not worse. If your condition worsens, talk to your doctor and masseuse immediately.

There are varied ways to use these techniques so research them all further before choosing to schedule an appointment. You can also learn how to perform simple massage techniques on yourself to improve your comfort levels or purchase a massage chair for home use. Your doctor or a massage professional can help you choose which options are best for you and your body's specific medical condition.

### **14. Magnets: Not Just for Your Refrigerator**

Alternative health therapies have become popular in recent years because people are seeking non-intrusive and safer forms of treatment for pain and illnesses. Among new ideas that are being studied for effectiveness is the use of magnets for relief from the pain of various forms of arthritis and other painful illnesses. Although study results about their effectiveness are varied, some people

believe strongly in the use of magnetic therapy. This option should be explored and considered if you too suffer from arthritis.

It is believed that magnets, when held against the skin, relax blood vessels, allowing more blood to flow to painful areas and, in consequence, stop the pain faster and more thoroughly. It is also said that the magnetic field prevents muscle spasms and interferes with the nerves reaction to pain. Skeptics do not believe that muscles prevent or cure pain, but that the effect is simply that of a placebo - you think that you are being cured so you mentally believe that it is true. Mind over matter is the phrase associated by skeptics speaking about many alternative medical treatments.

Magnets may work for you, but there is no telling until you try. You can purchase magnets in a variety of shapes and sizes, but most therapists and companies that promote their use suggest magnetic jewelry, belts, and straps that can be worn on the body at the inflicted area. Prices range from at little as five dollars to as expensive as several thousand, depending on size and number of magnets and quality of workmanship on the product. Choose a magnetic that is fairly strong. Magnetism is measured in gauss, with a typical refrigerator magnet being at about 100 gauss, and this strength is too weak to penetrate the skin. 450 gauss is the lowest strength that should be used for medicinal purposes, and magnets advance in strength as they get pricier. Stronger magnets, however, will work better, so you get what you pay for in most cases.

Magnets used for health can either be placed directly over the point of the pain or over the acupuncture point associated with the pain. A professional can help you determine placement. Arthritis is the most common affliction healed with magnetics, but they can also be used for back pain, headache, tennis elbow, and foot pain, as well as a number of other aches and pains. Your doctor can give you more information on their use if you decide magnetic therapy is right for you.

## **15. Herbs for Health**

Many people use herbs in their cooking for added flavor, but did you know that herbs can also be used in a medicinal way? Herbs have long been used as an alternative from of treatment. Patients taking various medications can benefit by using herbs that can achieve the same effects. If you are looking for a different kind of way to treat some of your medical conditions, ask your doctor for more information about how herbal supplements can work for you.

Pharmaceutical drugs can have a harsh effect on the body. Herbal supplements, on the other hand, provide gentle care and side effects are less common. You can also get most herbal supplements without a prescription, making it easier and more cost effective for those who do not have health insurance. Many herbal remedies are made by a number of companies and not all products are of the same quality. Your doctor should be able to provide you with a list of the best herbal drugs as well as ones to avoid. Check the labels to be sure that there are not chemical additives or diluting agents in your herbal supplements so that you are getting what you pay for.

The Chinese have especially worked at developing herbal medications for use in the place of more traditional medications for a pharmacy. Herbal teas, powders, and pills are commonly used in conjunction with other traditional Chinese Medicine, or TCM, such as acupuncture. A variety of herbs are used here, and you may drink tea or take a supplemental pill before, during, or after your procedure to best benefit your body. You can also purchase specialized herbal mixtures from many TCM professionals, which are mixed directly in the practitioner's office. Be sure you only purchase herbs from licensed professionals.

Herbs can be as dangerous as prescription medications if you use them incorrectly. It is most

important to follow your doctor's instructions, as overdosing can cause adverse side effects. Also be sure to tell your doctor about any other medications or herbal supplements you are currently taking, since herbs can react with one another in various ways. It is best to always be safe and talk to a professional about herbal care rather than purchasing the supplements on your own. A doctor can do a better job at regulating your doses and combining the many herbs available in the most productive way for your body. Herbs are a great way to feel healthier and relieve pain, but only if used in the correct way.

## **15. Healthy Eating: More Complicated than You Thought**

Many people pursue alternative health treatments when traditional medical procedures are not being as effective as they are needed to be. Some, such as rolfing, acupuncture, and chiropractic procedures should only be done with a professional in the field. However, other kinds of alternative medical practices can be discussed with your doctor and then practiced in your own home. One such alternative type of therapy that you can do without the help of a medical professional for daily or weekly treatments is the detox diet.

Traditionally, the detox diet is used for those who are struggling to quit drug or alcohol abuse. There are now many other known ways in which this can help a person's health as well. Detox diets include more than simply removing addictive substances from your menu - and the diet itself is quite complicated if you do not first research and understand the food that you should be avoiding in your daily diet. Your doctor can help you plan your detox diet so that you are eating the most beneficial foods possible. Be sure to discuss this treatment with him or her before you begin, so that you can be sure it is a healthy diet for your specific medical condition.

Detox stands for detoxification, and generally these diets are ones that remove harmful environmental toxins from your body by eliminating the source - poor food choices. First, you should minimize and eventually stop eating foods that contain harmful additive chemicals. Organic food is substituted instead. Next, add foods to your diet that promote healthy detoxification by providing the nutrients your body needs. Lastly, foods that are high in fiber and water are very important so that toxins can be drawn out of your body quickly and regularly.

Detox diets can be used to help with skin problems, digestive diseases, addiction, and other health concerns. It is important to be sure that you are eating in a way that is healthy for your body, so if you have other conditions, such as an eating disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, cancer, heart disease, ulcers, or low blood pressure, check with your doctor before beginning this new type of diet. It is also not suggested for those who are pregnant or nursing. If you have an adverse side effect, such as diarrhea, stomach pains, or drastic weight loss, talk to your doctor. When beginning a detox diet, you may experience headaches or be tired. This is normal, but if it does not improve, see your doctor.

## **16. Feeling the Rainbow: What is Color Therapy?**

Believe it or not, colors affect the way we think, act, and feel more than most people would like to admit. Scientists have proven that various colors bring out different emotions in a person, affecting mental and biological processes in ways that we are only beginning to understand. In fact,

some practitioners of alternative medicine have turned to colors as an answer to the health problems affecting some people. Color therapy, or chromotherapy as it is called in scientific circles, is the use of colors to affect and change moods and both physical and mental conditions.

Those who practice color therapy are few and far between, but there has been a long history of the use of colors in medical practices. Dating back to ancient Egypt, people have turned to colors to help them balance themselves and make them feel happier in their lives. In fact, the whole scheme of color therapy revolves around balance. Practitioners of color therapy use different colors to help move the energy of a person to wherever it is needed so that there is balance, allowing the person to feel at peace with him or herself. This involves all aspects of a person, whether it is mental, emotional, or even physical.

The way color therapy works is based on vibrations. Every cell in the body is composed of energy which gives off a certain vibration. It's when these vibrations are imbalanced that negative reactions begin to take place within the body. Scientists have found that colors give off vibrations as well. In fact, every color gives off a different and specific vibration. When a body is put into contact with the vibrations of a certain color, its own vibrations are then shifted. A skilled color therapist can use these vibrations to bring balance in a body, thus healing it.

How do you find out what vibrations are necessary to bring about balance? The reaction of a person to a certain color can indicate where the problem lies and what color could then help bring this balance. One way to test this is by using Luscher's Color Test. In this test, you pick colors on a screen at random, then after a couple minutes, you do the same thing, choosing first colors that appeal to you the most and moving on from there, ending with the color that appeals to you least. It's this test that gauges a person's emotional and physical state, giving the color therapist a place to start.

Although it is often viewed with skepticism, color therapy has definitive scientific information backing it up. Since we are still only beginning to understand how color affects us, color therapy is bound to grow and expand and possibly become used more often in society. Already, color is taken into account when designing rooms in a hospital, for example. Only colors that have been known to soothe people are used in decorations there. It is applications such as these where color therapy begins to break new grounds in alternative medicine.

## **17. Crystals and Gemstones: Not Just for Decoration**

Alternative health practices have become more and more popular in the past few decades because of their many health benefits. They often heal the body in more natural ways, since chemicals are not introduced into the system. However, there are also many skeptics of alternative medical treatments who believe that these techniques do not work, and it is simply a matter of healing through the power of suggestion and a positive attitude. Whatever the case may be, studies show that some alternative therapies work, so you should explore these options with your doctor. One such option that is being studied more often is the use of crystal therapy to relieve pain and illness.

This technique uses crystals and gemstones on the body in the belief that they encourage the healing process. There are a number of ways in which you can do this, and professionals have specific techniques that they use in conjunction with spiritual and physical healing. However, you can also use this type of therapy in your own home by purchasing gemstones and crystals for your own use. In the end, the process may not help you, but it cannot hurt you, so it is worth the try for

those suffering from pain and disease.

A number of different stones can be used for many different purposes. Apatite is said to ward off viruses. Blue Aventurine helps clear congestion. Cape Amethyst is used to relieve arthritis pain. Citrine uplifts the spirit and physical body, so it can be used on people who have spinal problems. Emeralds promote healing and are thought to be very strong. Jade can be used for relaxation, like massage. Black Onyx helps you change bad habits and can therefore be useful for people trying to cope with alcoholism or other kinds of drug abuse or addiction. Sugilite can be used to gain energy. A number of other stones can also be used for spiritual and physical well being, and a professional can help you discover these properties.

When buying a gemstone, make sure that it is real, as glass can often look like the true thing. Also, metal greatly effects gemstone therapy. Purchase stones that are free, in the form of beads for example, instead of using jewelry in which the stone is encased in metal. Always be sure that you are buying high quality stones as well, as these will have a larger effect on your body—the stones should have few inclusions, chips, or other faults and the larger the stones are, the more healing powers they emit. Choose stones that are undyed for the best results and as you use the gemstones, record your feelings. Everyone reacts differently to crystal therapy, so find what works best for you.

## **18. Controlling the Uncontrollable: Biofeedback**

A new field within the alternative health field is that of biofeedback, which was first studied in the 1960s and was brought to the attention of the public by Drs. Barbara Brown and Elmer Green, and Joe Kamiya. Biofeedback is a process in which people control seemingly uncontrollable body functions, such as heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing by using feedback from electronic devices. Today, biofeedback is still being studied and used for a variety of health reasons.

A variety of illnesses and medical conditions can be treated by using biofeedback techniques. These include insomnia, twitching eyelids, constipation, ring ears, irritable bowel syndrome, headache, stress, Raynaud's disease, tennis elbow, high blood pressure, attention deficit disorder, back pain, muscle spasms, asthma, and hyperactivity. It is especially useful for those suffering from stress-related mental illnesses or diseases that cause loss of muscle control. Your doctor can give you more information about the many medical conditions that can be treated with biofeedback, so speak with a professional if you want to know how it can help you.

Biofeedback is a simple process. First, electrodes are stuck to the skin in specific places so that your reactions can be closely monitored. They measure skin temperature, muscle tension, heart rate, and brain activity. A patient, once hooked up to a machine with these electrodes, will then be instructed to meditate, do visualization exercises, or perform other relaxing techniques. The electrodes measure response to this relaxation and over time, you can see a pattern in your body's response to specific techniques. You can then use these very specific techniques, such as visualizing a certain person or thing, to achieve the result you want most, such as lower blood pressure.

Biofeedback is still being highly studied in the medical world. Its exact effectiveness is unknown, but it is a procedure in which many are finding success. If you suffer from any of the aforementioned conditions, talk to your medical doctor about how participating in biofeedback sessions can help you. He or she can provide you with a clearer understanding of cost, technique, and side effects as well as direct you to professionals who can perform the biofeedback sessions. Also check with your health insurance to be sure that the procedure is covered, since some alternative health treatments are not covered with tradition health insurance. When considering treatment options in the alternative health realm, remember that biofeedback can be extremely

useful.

## **19. Bending the Body: Chiropractic as Alternative Medicine**

Chiropractic is an alternative health option that has become mainstream and widely used. This year, millions of Americans, as well as people all over the world, will visit a chiropractor's office for help with pain and illness, most often times back pain. Chiropractic procedures can be used on just about anyone and will help in a variety of ways with multiple kinds of pain, so if you want to try an alternative to traditional medical treatments that has been proven to work, ask your doctor about more information regarding chiropractic.

Chiropractors treat a patient with a hands-on technique. Using a number of motions, chiropractors align the spine and other joints in a manipulation kind of strategy, known as adjustment in the business. Chiropractic teaches that the body can heal itself under the correct conditions. Basic health is strongly related to body structure and its function, stemming from correct spinal alignment and radiating to other parts of the body.

This process is not a new one, and chiropractic teachings have been written down since the time of the ancient Greek civilization. It was brought back to the health world in the late 1800s and has grown in popularity every since. Each chiropractor has a different theory and belief system regarding how the procedures work, so it is important to be sure that you and your chiropractor feel comfortable together. Be sure to also visit someone who is a licensed professional, as bone alignment (especially spinal manipulation) can be dangerous if the person doing the aligning is not properly trained. Your medical doctor should be able to suggest some popular and effective chiropractic professionals in your area, or you can search the Internet for offices and reviews.

During your initial visit, a chiropractor will ask you questions about your health history and current state of well being. He or she will also do a physical examination and choose the best course of action to treat your condition. A variety of techniques can be used to achieve the desired results, and they may also combine their techniques to other nontraditional forms of treatment. These include mobilization, the use of heat and ice, acupuncture, homeopathy, and magnetic therapy.

Before you begin treatment, be sure to review your state's chiropractic guidelines and take care that your professional follows the correct and legal procedures. Also check if your health insurance covers this form of treatment—many do, but some do not. Lastly, spread the word if you have received excellent care. Chiropractors and other alternative health care professionals rely on you to help them gain a good reputation.

## **20. Amen: Prayer for Health**

The vast majority of people belong to one religion or another. In fact, about 95% of the American population believes in God. Therefore, when sick or in pain, it is common to pray for health and well being. Does it work? Studies today are focusing on the validity of prayer for health. The alternative to traditional treatments can be used to help a person both physically and spiritually, but studies are now looking at whether prayer can be used in place of other medical procedures or if it is simply something to use in conjunction with traditional treatment options.

Logically, it is undeniable that prayer can help your with mental conditions. Overall, the belief in a higher power and heaven gives you a more positive outlook on life and your current medical situation. Stress is relieved and the mind is cleared to make better health decisions. Those who pray are also joining a larger support group of others who are also religiously inclined, so it brings a sense of community to the person who prays. All of these things can, and in most cases do, improve health.

The question remains, however, if prayer can actually physically bring healing. Studies have been done in which patients were split into three groups - one group received no prayers from a large congregation, one group received these prayers and was told about it, and the last group received these prayers but was told they may or may not receive them. This blind study was largely inconclusive, and because it could not be determined whether the patients themselves were praying or whether outside friends and family members were praying, it was impossible to control such studies.

As with many alternative therapy options, however, advocates will simply say that it can't hurt. This is true. Prayer costs nothing and takes little time, so when used in conjunction with typical medical procedures it can only improve the situation if only through the placebo effect. The medical field began in ancient times as a branch of religion, with many doctors and the nursing staff being religious leaders. Today this is not the case, but most hospitals still employ members of the clergy to visit patients if wanted.

Because studies are inconclusive, it may be very unproductive to use prayer in place of other medical treatment. Discuss with your doctor and religious leaders the best course of action for you and your medical situation, and if praying makes you feel more positive about your condition, continue the practice.

## **21. A Massage that Cures: Acupressure**

When most people think of traditional Chinese forms of medical treatment, acupuncture comes to mind first and foremost. Acupressure is another form, however, that is very similar to acupuncture and can also help in relieving pain and discomfort. Acupressure is especially good for people who fear or are otherwise skeptical of sticking needles into their bodies. Related to massage, you should explore acupressure as a treatment option. Although it is still not considered valid by many traditional medical doctors, studies are beginning to be done, and these show that the technique is very effective.

An acupressure session will start much in the same way that an acupuncture session begins. The professional, who should be certified in traditional Chinese medicine will assess your health situation and determine the cause of your problem. The root of all medical pain and suffering is poorly flowing energy in the body. An acupuncturist and an acupressurist stimulate points on the body to help correct this energy flow. These points are, in many cases, not at the place of your pain, but instead found throughout the body.

A common kind of acupressure used is called cupping, although many other forms are also popular. In this technique, the professional uses fire and small cups to create suction to the body at specific points. This treatment has been used not only in ancient China, but also in other ancient civilizations, such as Greece. Today, practitioners as well as those who have been helped by acupressure are seeking to help it become better known and to have people take the technique more seriously.

Acupressurists are usually acupuncturists who have learned acupressure skills as well. Always visit an established business for these needs, and be sure that your acupressurist is certified. The office should be clean and be sure that his or her tools are sterile before treatment. Your regular doctor should be able to direct you to an established acupressurist in the area, or you can call the Better Business Bureau to find out more about local TCM businesses. Your regular doctor can also tell you more about how acupressure can be used not alone, but rather in conjunction with traditional medical treatment like exercise and medication. This is the best course of action and most effective. Don't discount nontraditional forms of treatment, like acupressure, when planning with your doctor - these could end up being most effective for you.

## **22. A Japanese Kind of Cure: Reiki**

There is a theory circulating the medical world that says every person walking the Earth is composed of energy. In Japan, this is known as Ki, or spiritual life force energy. It is said that when a body runs low on life force, it becomes more susceptible to disease, stress, and harm. In order to promote happiness and a healthy way of life, a body will need to be restored with energy. This is where Reiki comes in. Reiki is a Japanese technique that relieves stress and brings about well-being in a person through the manipulation of life force energies.

The word Reiki is made up of two separate words in Japanese: Rei and Ki. Rei translates to "god's wisdom" or "the higher power," while Ki, once again, translates to "life force energy." Thus, Reiki means "spiritually guided life force energy." It's based on the idea that the power to control these energies and change them around within a person is a gift bestowed by a higher power. Yes, many practitioners of Reiki believe that a higher power allowed them to perform Reiki, but this is not a technique that is thought to be religious in nature by all. In fact, Reiki is not tied to any religion at all, though it does give many people a sense of a stronger tie to whatever religion they are part of. Reiki is not powered on belief in any one deity or even in itself. It is a natural remedy for disease and emotional turmoil that will work whether someone believes in it or not.

Reiki works by laying your hands on another's body and increasing its life force energy. Once taught this technique, someone who practices Reiki is supposed to have an unlimited supply of life force energy to transfer to people. This may sound like a complicated procedure, but it's really quite simple. In fact, it can be easily taught to anyone, no matter how spiritually devoted the person is to anything.

If you're thinking about learning this technique yourself, you'll need to go through a class that is known as an "attunement." This is where the teacher will pass on the ability to perform Reiki to his or her students. It's a rather simple process that does not take into account a person's intellectual or emotional state at the time. In fact, Reiki has been taught to people of all ages, shapes, and sizes. If Reiki interests you, look up a nearby Reiki master and take a class. It's easy to learn and believed by many to be a great all-natural stress reliever.

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