



What is Healing Touch?

Healing Touch (HT) is an energy therapy in which practitioners consciously use their hands in an intentional way to support and facilitate physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and healing. The gentle touch by the practitioner encourages the body's own self healing abilities, by balancing the energy field and bringing a deep sense of relaxation.

Energy therapies are based on the premise that the body is a complex energy system and that a trained practitioner can help balance and open blockages in the field so that the body can heal itself. The National Institute of Health calls it a "biofield therapy". Blockages can be caused by a physical or emotional trauma that has been left unresolved, which can contribute to illness. Stress and anxiety get in the way of optimizing the body's potential for healing.

A HT session can be given anywhere, from a chair in a client's home to the bed in a hospital room to a treatment table in a clinic. During a session, the practitioner's hands are gently placed on or above the person's fully clothed body to assess the energy field. Other techniques may also be used to assess the biofield. Soft music may be played and the lighting may be subdued for relaxation. The practitioner chooses a HT technique that is appropriate for the person's needs and goals. This may include light physical touch or sweeping hand motion above the body. The average session lasts 20-60 minutes and is followed by a feedback discussion.

People have many different responses to HT. There is a high likelihood that the relaxation response is experienced. Some clients feel nothing at all. Others describe sensations of moving energy, twinges or muscle twitches, deep relaxation, feelings of being supported and nurtured, or visions of images and colors. Some people experience an emotional release such as tears; some have what they consider to be a spiritual experience or they may develop insight into specific areas of their lives.

Recent research studies suggest that HT is effective for physical and mental relaxation, pain management, anxiety, and stress reduction. It also enhances the immune system, provides support during chemotherapy, radiation and surgery and reduces effects from trauma and chronic pain. Clients of HT typically report positive experiences that have helped them better cope with illness, medical treatments and depression. Hospice caregivers use HT to ease the dying process as well as provide support for family and friends. Many people experience a deeper sense of spiritual connection.

HT is complementary to medical care and can be used in conjunction with traditional therapies. The goal of HT is to restore harmony and balance in the human energy system by creating an optimal environment for the body's innate tendency of healing to occur.



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What is Energy Medicine?

In the burgeoning field of health care Energy Medicine is composed of two branches. One branch is a bio-mechanical intervention utilizing electrical and magnetic equipment which images, stimulates (treats), or is diagnostic in nature. The second branch is referred to as bio-field energy therapy and there are multiple disciplines of bio-field energy practices in allied healthcare today.

All matter has a field of energy associated with it and in particular biological matter has multiple unique energy signatures and frequencies. It is these unique energy signatures that allow for diagnostic information to be gathered in the form of MRI's, CT's and Radiographs (in the biomechanical branch) and as "congestion" or "stillness" (in the bio-field branch). Nursing diagnosis includes 'energy field disturbance' to include energy assessments.

The human energy field can express congestion in the form of a "distorted" or "changed" energy signature (this is what allows for analysis by MRI's, CT's, X-ray, etc.) and appears as congestion in the bio-field branch of Energy Medicine. A changed energy expression can be caused by environmental changes such as trauma and can also be due to unexpressed/unprocessed emotional/spiritual experiences. Change to congested energy is a movement toward wholeness and wellness.

Since all humans are composed of this energy, a trained practitioner (anyone can learn this) can support a healing process by centering on a clear and vibrant expression of their own energy and allow for a healing environment that the client can resonate with. This is like moving a ringing tuning fork into the field of a "still" tuning fork. The silent fork will acoustically couple at the same frequency and begin to "sing". A trained practitioner permits for a similar response in a client who is experiencing illness, stress, or undergoing a surgical process. This can allow for quicker healing from surgery; less trauma, less bruising and blood loss, faster recovery, as well as a decrease in the stress response and increase in immune function.

Much research is being conducted in the bio-field arena and there is ongoing mapping of these energy signatures. It is these signatures that are addressed in Chinese Energy Medicine as well, commonly known as acupuncture. One particularly academic practice of bio-field energy therapy currently being taught to many nurses and physicians is the Healing Touch Program.

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