

Recovering Your Body

Try this ancient art, and heal your energy. *by Thom Forbes*

Daiken Nelson's hands scan my body from inches above my skin as I lie on a massage table, face up and fully clothed. He is sensing areas that feel blocked in my aura—the field of energy that surrounds all living things.

I am already feeling somewhat blissful from the introductory exercises I've done with Nelson, a Zen priest and former addictions and mental health counselor in recovery, and Melanie A. Chong, a master reiki practitioner who has been tutoring him in the healing art that means “universal life force energy” in Japanese (pronounced “ray-kee”).

Nelson indicates a problem area near the crook of my right arm, which delights me. I have what is known as “golfer's elbow”—pain probably from micro tearing where the tendons of the forearm attach to the knobby bone on the inside of my elbow. The pain associated with it flares whenever I throw a 12-inch-round Clincher softball—one of my beloved pastimes. Chong asks if I would like for her and Nelson to try to alleviate the blockage of energy in my elbow with some reiki and hands-on massage. Open but skeptical, I oblige.

She starts by gently touching my elbow, then moves above my head and cups her fingers around the base of my skull, applying very slight pressure—“the weight of a nickel”—for several minutes. When she is done, she asks how I feel. “Fortunate,” is all I can muster. Blissful, actually.

Two days later, I play in a doubleheader during which I make several strong throws from the left field. My conditioning program has undoubtedly added zip to my arm strength, but I felt fluidity in the process that was on an entirely different level. And no pain.

When I later tell Chong about it, she explains that reiki is about creating overall harmony and integration. “People will say that they can't tell you exactly what it is; all they know is that they feel better,” she says.

Traditionally, there are three increasingly intricate levels to reiki training. And although the first level—an attunement process that opens up the channel that allows a person to be a conduit—takes just a couple of days, Chong would like to see reiki become more accessible and less “mysterious.”

“It used to be that if you made it seem esoteric and sacred, it would be held in its proper place.” But Chong's goal, she says repeatedly, is to “make the intangible tangible.” To that end, she suggests two simple exercises (see sidebar) that, if you're like me, will allow you to feel the energy from the get-go.

“All you need to do,” Chong says, “is be open to the possibility of an experience.” And because people in recovery have generally made a commitment to “learn about the nonphysical sides of themselves,” she believes that we are already well-primed for reiki's benefits on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels. ■

FEEL THE ENERGY

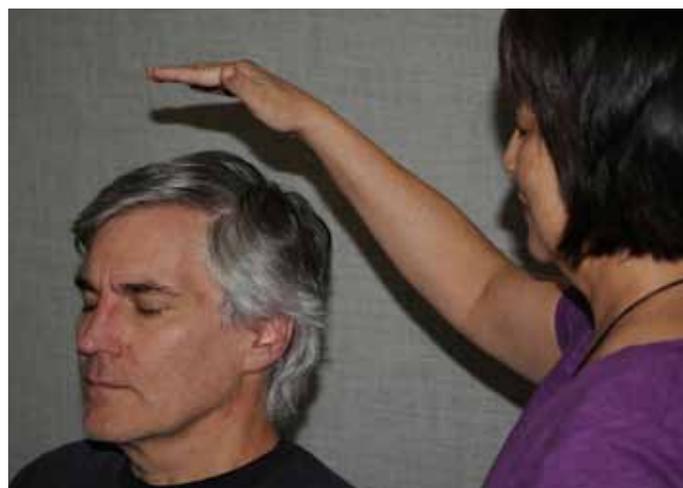
Exercise 1:

Sit comfortably, close your eyes and breathe deeply a few times to let yourself glide into a quiet, meditative state. Begin by placing your hands with the palms facing each other, about 12 to 18 inches apart in front of you. Slowly move them back and forth, bringing your attention to the space between them. Do you notice any sensation? Any resistance as the hands approach each other?

Exercise 2:

If you've felt the energy between your hands and its ability to expand and contract, try to experience the energy field of another person. Some practitioners believe that reiki can only be transmitted through attunements and training of a master, but you should be able to sense other people's life force energy without any formal instruction. At a more advanced level, you may feel tingling or a pulsing, or heat or cold, as you pass over areas of the body where the energy is blocked.

For more information and resources, go to RenewEveryDay.com/RESOURCES/reiki.aspx.



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