

ENERGY THERAPIES

REIKI

What is Reiki?

Reiki is an ancient practice that is based on the belief that there is a “life-force” or “spiritual energy” in each of us. It is thought that disease can result if our spiritual or emotional wellbeing is decreased. The goal of Reiki and other “energy” therapies is to increase health and wellbeing by replenishing and rebalancing flow of our “life-force”.

The word “Reiki” means “Universal Life Energy” in Japanese. Practitioners of other “energy” therapies use terms such as “life-force”, Qi, or Prana. In the West, we have adopted the term “energy” for this “life-force”. This is obviously a misnomer; the “life-force” described by Practitioners of these therapies does not have properties of energy. Despite this, the term “energy” therapy is commonly used.

Practitioners of Reiki consider the “life-force” to be of a spiritual nature. Many practitioners report that they use Reiki as a method of praying, expressing their healing intentions, and channeling a Divine healing energy to their client.

When is Reiki Used?

Reiki is becoming increasingly popular. Clients report that it helps them manage a variety of conditions and health concerns, such as:

- Pain
- Anxiety and stress
- Recovery from surgery
- Side-effects of radiation and chemotherapy
- Depression
- Symptoms of fibromyalgia
- Symptoms of arthritis

Reiki is used in many settings and is becoming quite common in hospitals, where it is provided to help patients relax and to help them manage anxiety and pain.

Practices such as “laying-on-of-hands” and prayer services have existed in the world’s major religions for thousands of years. In Cleveland, the major schools for training Reiki practitioners are run by traditional religious organizations. Reiki or other forms of “laying-on-of-hands” services can be found in many places of worship for those in need of healing.

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What Happens During a Reiki Session?

The client receives this 30-60 minute intervention while lying, fully clothed, typically on a massage table. During a Reiki session, the Reiki Practitioner places his or her hands in a variety of locations on the body, or just above it.

A major belief of this practice is that the positive, prayer-like intentions of one person can affect another. The Reiki Practitioner calls upon a Higher Power, tapping into the “Universal Life-Force” available to all of us and consciously directing it, through the palms of their hands, to the client, with the intention of rebalancing energy flow. It is thought to be a form of the “laying-on-of-hands” and similar practices present in many of the world’s major religions.

What Does it Feel Like?

Sensations of warmth or tingling during a session are considered normal. Some individuals may not feel anything.

Is There Scientific Evidence That Reiki Works?

Although few rigorous studies have been performed, there are studies showing that a Reiki session can help clients relax, inducing physiological changes associated with decreased anxiety and pain.

However, such studies do not show whether it is the “energy” therapy itself that is beneficial or if it is the relaxation, expectation, touch, or interaction with a caring practitioner that provides benefits. Further research is needed to understand exactly how Reiki produces its effects on the mind and body.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is now funding research into Reiki and other “energy-based” therapies at major scientific centers. It is also looking into the effects of touch and caring interactions. Information on the NIH-funded trials is available on their web site: <http://www.nccam.nih.gov>

At The Cleveland Clinic Foundation, we have grants from the NIH to study the effects of Reiki on atherosclerosis, stress and anxiety, and prostate cancer. Our research is designed to investigate whether any benefits of Reiki sessions are the result of relaxation, expectation, touch and interaction with a caring healthcare provider, or other aspects of Reiki.

For additional information or to participate in research studies,
please call (440) 391-1708

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