

Reiki

Reiki, pronounced 'ray-key', is a natural form of healing therapy. It is applied through non-invasive gentle touch. This form of therapy aims to increase energy levels and promote relaxation and wellbeing.

The underlying philosophy of reiki is that if a person's 'life force energy' is low, they are more likely to be unwell or stressed. If it is high, however, they are more capable of being happy and feeling well. Reiki will not cure illnesses or disease, but it may help your body to heal itself. Reiki can do no harm.

Reiki is not a religion – there is nothing you have to believe in to use or receive reiki. Reiki is not an 'alternative' therapy – it is a 'complementary' therapy in that it works alongside other medical and therapeutic techniques.

History of reiki

The literal translation of reiki, from the Japanese, is 'spiritual energy'. It is also known in the West as 'universal life force energy', the energy found in all things.

Hands-on healing has been around for millennia and has been known in many cultures. The Usui system of reiki was developed in Japan by Mikao Usui, a Tendai Buddhist monk, at the beginning of the 20th century. It was introduced to the West in 1938 by a Japanese-American woman, Hawayo Takata.

Rebalancing the body's energy flow

Reiki aims to rebalance the body's energy flow. Practitioners explain this by comparing the body's energy to a river. Our energy should flow easily down through the body. Occasionally, a pebble, or even a rock, will fall into that river and make the flow of the water a little more difficult. These pebbles are human worries, fears and anger. Each pebble builds on top of the other. Soon there is only a trickle of water running in that once free-flowing river.

At this point, stress or physical pain may be felt. A reiki treatment aims to help the body rebalance its own energy.

How reiki is used

Reiki can contribute to a person's wellbeing by making them feel:

- Relaxed
- Peaceful
- More energetic.

Reiki procedure

In general, a reiki procedure will involve the following:

- You will be asked to lie on a reiki table or sit in a chair.
- The practitioner places their hands on or just above your body in sequences of positions.
- Unlike massage, a reiki treatment does not involve any form of physical manipulation.
- You do not need to remove any clothing and no private parts of your body are touched.
- During a treatment, you may feel warmth or cold, a tingling sensation, slight twitching or a rumbling tummy, or you may feel absolutely nothing.

- A complete reiki session can last from 60 to 90 minutes.

The reiki practitioner

A professional reiki practitioner is someone who has generally completed at least the second level of a reiki course and is insured as such. A professional reiki practitioner should also have:

- First-aid skills
- Basic counselling skills
- Basic knowledge of physiology and anatomy
- Membership of a professional organisation.

Most countries have professional reiki associations for practitioners. These associations will have a set of standards of practice and codes of ethics that practitioners must abide by.

The best way to find a reiki practitioner is by referral from friends or you can contact the various reiki associations. Many of these have a directory of referred practitioners who meet the required criteria for professional practitioners.

Reiki in the community

Reiki is a complementary therapy. In Australia, it is currently being provided in many hospitals, nursing homes, palliative care hospices and community service settings. The system of reiki works in conjunction with all other medical or therapeutic techniques to support the relief of side effects, reduce pain and promote wellness.

General caution

Reiki is not a treatment for illness or disease. Some reiki practitioners claim they can heal serious diseases, such as cancer. This may prompt a person with cancer to abandon medically proven treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Always be guided by your doctor or specialist. Treat as suspect any reiki practitioner who advises you to abandon your conventional medical treatment.

Where to get help

- Professional reiki organisation
- Registered reiki practitioner.

Things to remember

- Reiki is a natural form of healing therapy, which uses non-invasive gentle touch to promote feelings of wellbeing.
- Do not be afraid to question the practitioner's credentials, training and professional association membership.
- Do not trust any therapist who says they can cure serious illness or asks you to abandon other treatments.

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