

## Bowen therapy

Bowen is a holistic remedial body technique that works on the soft connective tissue (fascia) of the body. Bowen therapy can be used to treat musculoskeletal or related neurological problems including acute sports injuries and chronic or organic conditions. It is gentle and relaxing and does not use forceful manipulation. This makes it safe for people of all ages.

Bowen therapy helps the body's own healing resources to achieve balance and harmony. This can result in rapid and often long-lasting relief from pain and discomfort, often where other modalities and treatments have not been effective. Benefits may be seen and measured after the first session.

### Integrated body response

Bowen therapy is performed on the superficial and deep fascia. The fascia, or soft tissue, is the part of the connective tissue that envelops, separates and influences every organ and tissue in the body. It has been called the 'endless web' – recent studies have shown it to be the largest and richest sensory organ in the body, having a profound effect on the body's physiology and function.

The Bowen technique is safe to use on anyone, from newborns to the elderly and for any musculoskeletal or related neurological complaint. It is a holistic treatment that treats the whole person and aims to treat the cause of problems, rather than the symptoms.

As well as providing rapid and often long-term pain relief, Bowen can help to improve:

- Circulation
- Lymphatic and venous draining
- Assimilation of nutrients
- Elimination of toxins
- Joint mobility
- Posture
- Normalisation of cellular physiology and tissue integrity.

### The procedure

A Bowen treatment consists of sequences of small moves at varying pressures, each at a specific site on the body. The treatment is pleasant – therapists use light, cross-fibre manoeuvres of muscle, tendon or ligament with no forceful manipulation.

A treatment will typically last between 30 minutes and one hour. It can be provided through a layer of light clothing, although you may be asked to remove heavy or thick garments. During this time, the therapist may leave the room for periods of 2–5 minutes at a time. This allows time for your body to respond to the treatment and for the necessary changes to occur in your body before commencing the next sequence of moves.

During the treatment, the therapist will discuss possible side effects from the treatment that show that the body's self-healing process is working. They will emphasise the importance of body hydration (drinking plenty of water) and will recommend any other exercise, environmental or lifestyle changes necessary to maintain your wellbeing.

### What you can expect

Bowen is not an ongoing therapy. In most cases, the recipient can expect substantial relief after just the first session and significant resolution or recovery within three sessions. However, chronic or long-standing conditions or repeat injury may require additional treatments. Some clients have periodic Bowen therapy sessions to maintain body integrity and balance and to prevent the onset of problems.

## **Bowen can help a range of disorders**

Bowen balances the physical, mental and emotional planes of the body (this is called 'body balancing'). Some conditions that have responded well to Bowen include:

- Sports and accident injuries
- Frozen shoulders
- Stress disorders
- Neck and head tension
- Whiplash
- Musculoskeletal pain and imbalance
- Respiratory and asthma complaints
- Acute and chronic fatigue
- Stroke
- Bed wetting
- Digestive problems
- Menstrual complaints
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Colic
- Fatigue
- Hormonal disorders
- Hyperactive disorder
- Learning difficulties
- Sciatica
- Scoliosis.

## **Special advice after your treatment**

It is strongly advised that you do not have any other physical therapy or other forms of manipulation – such as massage, chiropractic, physiotherapy, acupuncture or kinesiology – for one week after the treatment. These things may undo the balance achieved through the Bowen treatment.

For the first week after treatment, you should also:

- Avoid excessive heat or cold to areas that have been treated.
- Stop using an electric blanket or hot water bottle.
- Have lukewarm, not hot, baths.

Your therapist may also advise you to:

- Avoid sitting for any longer than 30 minutes on the day of your visit without moving around. Lying down is alright.
- Walk as much as possible for three days (at least 15 minutes a day).
- Drink as much pure water as is comfortable (at least five glasses a day) to help flush toxins from the body.
- Avoid stimulating substances like coffee (pain-killers and anti-inflammatory medications are okay, if necessary).

Reactions that may be experienced include hot and cold flushes, emotional releases, headaches and body aches. These reactions are a positive sign that the healing process is working.

## **Choosing a Bowen therapist**

It is best to choose a registered therapist. The Bowen Therapist State Associations and Federation only register members who have adequate training at accredited institutions and hundreds of hours of clinical practice. These therapists must maintain their level of expertise by completing continuous study and workshops each year. Before they can renew their membership with the Association, they must also have current Senior First Aid and professional indemnity insurance.

## Buyer beware

Some alternative therapies do not have specific evidence to support their claims. Seeking alternative therapies for non-threatening complaints will do no harm, but it would be irresponsible to abandon medically proven treatments if you are suffering from a terminal or chronic disease. Sometimes, the two have been known to complement each other. Speak to your doctor and potential therapists about your condition. They can offer advice and provide testimonials.

## Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia Tel. 1300 4 BOWEN (1300 4 26936)
- Find a therapist [www.bowen.asn.au/therapists/](http://www.bowen.asn.au/therapists/)

## Things to remember

- Bowen is a holistic technique that works on the soft connective tissue (fascia) of the body.
- A Bowen treatment consists of sequences of small moves, each at a specific site on the body. It can be done through light clothing.
- Bowen therapy may help relieve a range of disorders.
- Make sure you use a registered therapist.

**This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:**

Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia

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