

Kinesiology

Kinesiology means 'the study of movement'. The term is also used by complementary and alternative medicine practitioners to describe a form of therapy that uses muscle monitoring (biofeedback) to look at what may be causing 'imbalances' in the body.

The kinesiology approach examines unresolved stress reactions in a person and provides techniques to assist the body's natural healing process.

How kinesiology developed

Kinesiology stems from chiropractics and applied kinesiology. It is also based on the ancient Chinese acupuncture theory of chi energy. Unlike applied kinesiology, where muscles are tested for strength, the more recently developed forms of kinesiology use muscle monitoring as a form of biofeedback to the subject.

How it works

The human nervous system is designed to adapt to change and self-regulate. When we cannot adapt efficiently, the muscles will reflect the stress in the central nervous system. This stress creates specific muscle patterns that kinesiologists can assess using 'muscle monitoring' techniques.

The easiest way to understand this is to think of the signals between the brain and the body as feedback loops. As the brain adapts to the changes in the muscle systems, the muscles – in turn – send signals to alert the brain that the changes have taken place.

This 'muscle monitoring' may indicate a wide variety of possible causes for imbalances in the person's overall wellbeing.

A range of disorders can be treated

Kinesiology therapy aims to stimulate the body's energy so that untapped potential can be released. Kinesiology uses a multilevel approach to treatment. Practitioners look for the subtle, but numerous, imbalances that lie behind physical, mental and emotional problems. Kinesiologists may be able to help treat a wide range of health problems including:

- Stress
- Muscular disorders
- Nervous disorders
- Allergies
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Emotional problems
- Learning and behavioural difficulties.

The procedure

Typically, the practitioner records the client's relevant history (confidentially). The kinesiology session then continues with the client remaining fully clothed and lying comfortably face-up on a massage table. Each session can vary with a number of tests or challenges performed at various times depending on the issue:

- **Physical challenge** – the practitioner tests neuromuscular integrity (biofeedback) by asking the patient to position an arm or leg in a certain way, and then to hold that position while the practitioner exerts gentle pressure against the limb.
- **Chemical challenge** – involves testing the patient's reaction to certain foods or allergens when small quantities of a suspect item are placed on the body. The practitioner gauges the reaction by monitoring the energy relationship between the muscle and its 'corresponding organ'.

- **Mental challenge** – the patient thinks about certain things or focuses on their feelings, while the practitioner performs a specific muscle test. The test may indicate an energy imbalance or stress that needs attention.

The client sees and experiences first-hand all changes that have been made, especially when confirmed through the muscle-monitoring process.

Different techniques are used

Some of the techniques available include:

- Emotional release
- Acupressure
- Lymphatic massage
- Hypertonic muscle release
- Attention to reflex, trigger and body points
- Remedies, such as flower essences and homoeopathics
- Nutritional advice.

Medical evidence is limited

Many nervous system diseases can affect muscle strength. As kinesiology is held to be an energy model of health (not a medical one), little scientific research has been done to test the underlying philosophy and claims of benefit. People who have undergone professional kinesiology sessions, however, have testified that stress is relieved by kinesiology and that they feel their quality of health is improved.

Finding a practitioner

Suggestions for finding a practitioner include:

- Contact a professional association and ask for a list of members in your area.
- Ask your health practitioner for a referral.
- Ask your friends for word-of-mouth recommendations.

During the first visit with your practitioner, ask about their training and qualifications. Do not continue with any practitioner who advises you to abandon your conventional medical treatment; this should only be done in consultation with your doctor.

Where to get help

- Your doctor should be the first point of contact to treat any serious illness
- A registered Australian Kinesiology Association practitioner.

Things to remember

- Kinesiology is a form of therapy that uses muscle monitoring (biofeedback) to look at imbalances that may be causing disease in the body.
- Kinesiology enables people to detect and correct imbalances that may relate to stress, nutrition or minor injuries.
- Kinesiology is not used to diagnose disorders.

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

Australian Kinesiology Association

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