

# ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES

*and*

# THERAPIES

NATURAL HEALTH  
AND HEALING



# Alternative Medicine and Therapies

Disclaimer .....	3
Introduction.....	4
What Is the Definition of Alternative Medicine?.....	5
Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) .....	6
Alternative Medical Approaches .....	7
Alternative Therapies.....	8
Acupressure .....	8
Balneotherapy .....	9
Biofeedback .....	9
Electromagnetic Therapy .....	10
Herbal Medicines .....	11
Hypnosis Therapy.....	12
Qigong .....	12
Reiki .....	13
Tai Chi .....	13
Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) .....	15
Conclusion .....	16

## Disclaimer

We hope you enjoy reading this publication, however we do suggest you read our disclaimer. All the material written in this document is provided for informational purposes only and is general in nature.

Every person is a unique individual and what has worked for some or even many may not work for you. Any information perceived as advice by must be considered in light of your own particular set of circumstances.

The author or person sharing this information does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy or outcome of your use of the content.

Every attempt has been made to provide well researched and up to date content at the time of writing. Now all the legalities have been taken care of, please enjoy the content.

## Introduction

‘Alternative medicine’ is a perspective, looking from the viewpoint of what is considered traditional western medical practice.

For many cultures, there is nothing alternative about them at all, and many of the so-called ‘alternative’ disciplines form the basis of their therapies. Many of them also have time on their side – they have been supporting health for thousands of years longer than ‘traditional’ medicine has existed.

It is not too long ago that anything outside the twin pillars of pharmacy and surgery was dismissed as alternative. Now, many doctors acknowledge the healing powers of some of these alternatives, such as massage, chiropractic and others.

There are still plenty who rigidly reject anything that qualifies as alternative medicine, but ongoing studies often prove the benefits of many of them. Plus, there is a huge weight of anecdotal evidence from those who have been cured, or had their symptoms better managed by these therapies when western medicine failed them.

An added, huge, benefit is that almost always, the alternative option will be less invasive and result in fewer undesired side effects.

This eBook gives some insight into some of the options available beyond traditional medicine, there are plenty more for your consideration.

## What Is the Definition of Alternative Medicine?



The medical definition of alternative medicine is:

*“...any of various systems of healing or treating disease (as homeopathy, chiropractic, naturopathy, Ayurveda, or faith healing) that are not included in the traditional curricula taught in medical schools...”*

MedicineNet.com defines alternative medicine as ...

*"... the term for medical products and practices that are not part of standard care. Standard care is what medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy, and allied health professionals, such as nurses and physical therapists, practice."*

This website goes on to mention that examples of alternative medicinal practices include chiropractic, acupuncture, homeopathic and others. They make a point to note that complementary medicine is not the same as alternative medicinal practices.



### **Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)**

Complementary medicine is used in conjunction with conventional, modern medical techniques. Whereas, alternative medicine truly embraces the definition of alternative, as it provides a substitute or replacement for modern medicine.

In many cases, modern medicine recognizes these complementary but alternative approaches as being worthwhile. For example, if you have a soft tissue tear, like a torn ligament, a doctor may recommend acupuncture in addition to whatever traditional medicines and care approaches are recommended.

### **Alternative Medical Approaches**

There are literally hundreds of alternative treatment disciplines. Here is a list of some of the popular treatments:

- Acupuncture
- Acupressure
- Aromatherapy and essential oils
- Ayurveda
- Balneotherapy
- Biofeedback
- Bodywork Therapies
- Chiropractic
- Electromagnetic Therapy
- Herbal Medicines
- Homeopathy
- Iridology
- Massage Therapy
- Meditation
- Naturopathy
- Osteopathy
- Reflexology
- Reiki
- Shiatsu
- and many more!

## Alternative Therapies

Here is some additional detail on ten alternative therapies.

### Acupressure

Acupressure, like many of the alternative healing methods on this list, has been around for more than 2,000 years. It is a common healing protocol used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which we will take a look at later.



It involves "turning on" your body's natural healing mechanisms through the massage and manipulation of energy pathways called meridians.



This stimulation relaxes your muscles, and clears up any blocked channels so your Qi (known in TCM as vital energy) can flow freely. Acupressure works to balance your Yin and Yang, relieving illness and pain.

Frequent acupressure practices can return a person to a healthy energy state that prevents mental and physical health problems.

### **Balneotherapy**

This alternative medicine includes the use of hot water with natural minerals which promote health. This can take place in natural springs, but is more often found as an indoor spa treatment. Balneotherapy is used to treat a wide variety of illnesses.

Aside from relaxing your muscles and relieving stress, benefits which are most commonly associated with a hot water bath, this ancient medicine has been used effectively to treat dermatitis and psoriasis, depression and anxiety, insomnia and cardiovascular disease, as well as acne and osteoarthritis.

### **Biofeedback**

Biofeedback therapy is relatively new as an alternative medicine. This is because it requires the use of electricity. Electronic monitoring and manipulation of your bodily functions is used to train your brain so you can control a specific function. There are usually no drugs included in this alternative approach to healing.

The tension of your muscles, your heart rate and blood pressure, your body temperature, brainwave activity and other health metrics are measured through electrodes placed on your skin.

Through simple trial and error, biofeedback therapy can identify physiological processes which are causing health problems. Also, this process reveals techniques the patient can use to regulate certain bodily functions. With training, this effectively allows the patient to heal themselves.

## Electromagnetic Therapy

Have you seen the clothing and jewelry on the market that incorporates copper and metal in its construction? This type of wearable health care is based on the idea that magnets and metals can be used to alleviate illness.



Also referred to as magneto therapy, electromagnetic therapy uses stationary magnets to manipulate the natural electromagnetic field in the human body.

This idea of using magnets for healing is based on the premise that imbalances in your electromagnetic field often cause health problems. Electrical devices combine with magnets to treat a variety of symptoms. This field of alternative medicine is also called magnetic field therapy and bioelectricity.

The modern medical community considers this a pseudoscientific form of medicine that uses electromagnetic radiation to eradicate disease and illness.

## Herbal Medicines

People have been using herbs to prevent and heal disease and illness for thousands of years. Herbalism is sometimes referred to as herbal therapy or herbology. As the name implies, this is the use of plants and herbs for medicinal purposes.



Medical treatments include external, topical applications of tinctures, salves, poultices and ground herbs, as well as internal consumption. In China, Africa, Indonesia and India, traditional herbal medicine techniques have been used for centuries.

They are still alive today, and often prescribed by modern doctors and healing professionals. In the United States and other westernized countries, herbalism is not recognized by the traditional medical community.

Some forward-thinking doctors understand your diet highly dictates whether you will or will not develop disease and infection. They may recommend a plant-based diet which includes a lot of healing herbs.

However, for the most part, a modern-day doctor will not officially endorse the external or internal use of herbs for healing.

Some of the more common herbs used in this alternative healing practice include turmeric, cinnamon, rosemary and ginger.

### **Hypnosis Therapy**

You have probably seen, or heard about, a Hollywood hypnotist/entertainer that makes people do funny things once those people have been hypnotized. Hypnosis is the practice of placing someone under a state of consciousness in which they voluntarily give up control of their actions and willpower.

In hypnotherapy, it is believed that putting someone in a hypnotic state allows you to create positive health results.

Hypnosis therapy is frequently used to help someone break a bad habit, such as smoking, drinking or engaging in unhealthy eating behaviors. Hypnotherapy has also proven successful for stress and anxiety relief, and for treating depression.

### **Qigong**

Pronounced 'chee kung', Qigong is a combination of two Chinese words. Qi (chee) is your life force energy. It is believed in Traditional Chinese Medicine that it runs through all things on the planet, as well as throughout the universe.

Sometimes your energy gets blocked. Unblocking clogged energy channels, your literal life force, allows negative energy to flow out of your body, and creates positive health and wellness from head to toe.

Gong (kung) is the Chinese word that refers to accomplishment. It can also mean "skill that is cultivated through steady practice." Put the two words together, and you get a system of healing that works to cultivate energy through a consistent and regular practice.

That definition comes to us from the National Qigong Association, an organization who knows a thing or two about this ancient Chinese healing art.

They tell us that when Qigong is practiced regularly, it can help prevent illness, sickness and disease. It is a holistic approach to health maintenance which can also be used for healing, if some physical or mental health problem arises. Qigong combines breathing techniques, specific physical poses and focused intent to deliver health rewards.

This alternative medicine includes styles which can be classified as either medical, spiritual or martial, and all Qigong practices will combine breathing, mental focus and physical positions.

## **Reiki**

Reiki is based on the principle that a Reiki healer or therapist can use his or her own personal energy field to heal someone else. This happens via a means of touch, or hovering hands just above the patient's body, to channel healing energy into that person's body. It is thought this natural, holistic, drug-free healing process awakens a stifled healing ability in the body of the patient.

This ancient Japanese healing system is often used for stress-reduction, and operates on the same life force energy premise as acupressure, acupuncture, and many Traditional Chinese Medical approaches.

## **Tai Chi**

You may think of tai chi as a martial art. It is definitely that. What you may not know is that many of the martial arts were created as a way to improve physical

and mental health, not only as a way to protect yourself against physical attack, which is the common belief.



There are tai chi competitions which set competitors against each other, but the type of tai chi referred to here is more therapeutic and calming.

The graceful, slow-moving tai chi is excellent for senior citizens and others who cannot undergo the pounding, stressful, and physically jarring movements of traditional exercise. Through deep breathing and focused, slow movements, tai chi helps to deliver the following health benefits ...

- Relaxation and relief from anxiety, stress and depression
- Mood enhancement
- Stronger and more defined muscles
- Increased, natural energy
- Boosted stamina levels and aerobic capacity
- Better agility, balance, flexibility and mobility

## **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)**

There are 4 key principles to Traditional Chinese Medicine. They are ...

- Prevention of disease is better than treatment.
- You have the ability to heal yourself.
- You are connected to nature, so the time of day, your age, natural makeup and even annual seasons can influence your well-being.
- Your mental, spiritual and physical beings are intimately connected and integrated.

Traditional Chinese Medicine is not just one healing protocol. It is a wide range of medical healing and prevention practices which include herbalism, massage, dietary conditions, acupuncture and other ideas.

Using a holistic approach, TCM works to improve your body, mind and spirit balance, which TCM practitioners say leads to wellness and harmony in all areas of your life.

## Conclusion

Alternative medicine focuses on not only healing, but also creating a state in the human body and mind which prevents disease and infection.

Many alternative medicines not only keep you from developing a certain health condition, but they also treat that condition and help your body heal naturally.

This is large part of the conceptual difference between traditional western medicine and alternative medicine. Western medicine focuses on trying to fix the specific symptoms of ill-health and disease, often by surgical or pharmaceutical means.

'Alternative' therapies all have a goal of maintaining and supporting health, so that problems are less likely to occur. When problems do arise, they tend more to approach the problem holistically.

They recognize that all parts are connected, affecting and affected by one another, so they are more likely to seek out the imbalances that have caused the problem, instead of only seeking to defeat the symptoms.

The ongoing success and increased awareness mean that they are becoming less and less 'alternative' every day.