

The Gentlest, Most Effective Pain Therapy Ever!

By Dr. Robert Jay Rowen

*Reprinted with permission from SECOND OPINION (JULY 2003)
Published by Sunview Publications*

If you're suffering from pain in your neck, shoulders, lower back, pelvis or extremities, you can be pain free and experience a full range of motion *instantly!* And you can enjoy this new found relief without drugs, surgery, supplements or painful needles!

Sound impossible? It's not!

In fact, not only is it possible, it's easy and gentle. What you are about to read is probably the most sensational story about pain relief you will ever read!

One year ago at a medical conference in Fort Lauderdale, the last speaker, JoAnn Whitaker, M.D., a soft-spoken older physician, told of instant and dramatic relief of pain and suffering by a technique I had never heard of. Dr. Whitaker explained that the technique was so invaluable and effective for the relief of pain that she long ago gave up all other treatment modalities, therapies and practices. She instead committed her professional life to this method, which, on the surface, seemed so simple that it could not possibly be true.

At the end of her one-hour lecture, she and her colleague invited physicians in the audience to come up to the podium and sample treatments for neck and shoulder problems. I watched as doctor after doctor sat in the chair facing these senior ladies, described their long-term pain or movement anomaly, and received a "treatment."

My jaw hit the floor as the majority of them expressed absolute shock that their pain was reduced or gone. But, even more startling, since the sensation of pain could be subjective, was the instant and dramatic improvement in their range of motion. And all that these two ladies did was just gently "flick" some muscles!

Dr. Whitaker was introducing us to the gentlest therapy I have ever seen. It's called Bowen Therapy, which is named after its discoverer; a humble layman named Tom Bowen of Australia. People in pain somehow found their way to Tom. Claiming his insight was a gift from God, Tom discovered that gently manipulating muscles or tendons could relieve a very large variety of complaints, and not just musculoskeletal, but also organ dysfunction. As the years went by, Tom's fame spread and he had lines of people waiting for his healing hands to give them relief.

Now you're probably very familiar with chiropractic adjustments, where joints are manipulated. But muscles? How can this simple therapy possibly bring about profound effects on conditions such as respiratory infections, PMS, pelvic problems, kidney function and more?

Muscles operate in one dimension – they contract linearly. Three-dimensional movement is made possible by several muscle groups moving a joint, each contracting in a different direction. Muscles and tendons are richly filled with nerve spindles that sense tension and position. They're tied in with the autonomic nervous system for instant regulatory feedback to the whole associated area of the body.

The adjustment of Bowen Therapy is called a "move," which is made *across or perpendicular* to

the muscle or tendon, 90 degrees to its line of fibers. The therapist simply places his/her fingers over the central portion of the muscle belly and then stretches the skin across the muscle to contract it edge. Slight pressure is placed on the edge of the muscle belly (in a 90-degree direction to its line of force) so that the muscle is exposed to a gentle perpendicular stretch. Then on the outgoing breath, the practitioner "moves" his fingers across the muscle to the other edge. This results in discharge of the nerve spindles within the muscle or tendon that can cause instant relaxation of that muscle or other associated muscles.

In Bowen Therapy, muscle moves apparently have the ability to reset the autonomic nervous system. This can result in greater blood flow, oxygen delivery and restoration of cellular activity in the whole distribution of that segment of the ANS (both in muscles and organs). An added benefit is the stimulation of lymph flow, which aids in detoxification and, thus, cancer prevention.

Tom taught groups of moves for specific areas of the body, and above all, taught that more treatment is not necessarily better. Groups of moves are called "procedures," so treating the neck would involve a "neck procedure," treatment of the lower back is a "lower back procedure," and so forth. There may be a few to several muscle/tendon moves for each procedure. Sessions typically take 30 minutes, but sometimes can last up to an hour, depending on the areas of needed treatment, and previous Bowen Therapy preparation of the individual.

I came home from the conference I mentioned at the outset and told my wife about it and our need to learn the therapy. Terri, an acupuncturist/physician, had just heard of Bowen Therapy, as well, and agreed we needed training in this needle-less technique. Amazingly enough, a patient told us there was a Bowen practitioner in our building, Sandra Gustafson, who is originally from Australia. To our great delight, she was a world-class Bowen instructor and was preparing to teach a series of weekend sessions. The timing was perfect!

After just a few weekends, I got my first opportunity to try Bowen Therapy on a patient. Susan, a 35-year old woman, came to me for prolotherapy for her lower back. When I saw her, she was experiencing significant pelvic pain from menstruation. We were unable to do prolotherapy that visit because of a lack of required X-ray studies, so I offered Bowen Therapy instead to try to assist her menstrual discomfort. I "strummed" several muscle groups and tendons in her back and upper legs. To the amazement of the patient, her husband and myself, the menstrual pain almost fully abated on the spot and did not return!

But the incredible results didn't stop with Susan. Ted, a delightful 89 year-old man, came to see me for severe pain in his right hip and was barely able to walk. He was interested in prolotherapy, as conventional treatments had failed. I performed Bowen Therapy doing the lower back and hip procedures, and he walked out of the office ecstatic, scarcely using his cane.

Then there's my father, who at 84 suffered from chronic hard-core general back pain for years. On a recent visit to our home, I performed the "low, mid, and upper back" procedures on him and he was absolutely shocked at the nearly full relief of pain.

One very important observation Tom made is the absolute need to allow the body to adjust to the moves. Hence, after a certain number of moves (usually four) the practitioner stops treatment and leaves the room for two minutes, allowing the nervous system to absorb the information before continuing.

Acute sprains and injuries are easily treated as well. My wife sprained her ankle at one of the Bowen instructional sessions. Sandra quickly performed a few delicate moves on the tendons around her ankle and the pain was reduced by 80 percent!

Back in January, I first introduced you to Bowen Therapy and how I used it to treat a man who

developed spontaneous frozen shoulder. I simply strummed his upper back and shoulder muscles and he regained most of his movement in days – and this was after months of immobility.

Bowen Therapy has procedures for carpal tunnel syndrome, elbow problems, temporal mandibular joint dysfunction (TMJ), and foot problems (including plantar fasciitis). Here are a few of the areas Bowen Therapy can work:

The coccyx procedure, a gentle move along the coccyx, performed after careful preparation in previous sessions, may relieve childhood bed wetting. Gynecological complaints (including PMS, menopause, fibroids, ovarian or uterine symptoms), prostate problems, sciatica, and migraines.

The upper respiratory/TMJ procedure can provide lasting relief for allergies, ear problems (including deafness, Meniere's disease and tinnitus), Bell's Palsy, influenza, headaches, TMJ problems and upper respiratory infections.

The lower respiratory procedure, which moves along the insertion of the diaphragm on the lower rib cage, may relieve lung problems (including infections), and gastrointestinal complaints secondary to liver/gallbladder/pancreas dysfunction. While my wife and I were in India in February, one of the Americans at our facility developed a severe case of influenza/bronchitis with wheezing in her lungs. With nothing available for her by symptom-suppressing drugs, I performed the upper back (prerequisite) and lower respiratory procedure. She approached me daily over the next few days to let me know how much better she felt, and that she was able to participate in the regular activities.

Another friend of mine, Linda (who is 55 years old), had abnormal gallbladder function (white colored stools and gas), yet normal radiological studies. I had her see a Bowen Therapist in her local area, and in one session with "moves" along her upper abdomen, her stools became much darker.

Are there any risks? Hardly. The client may get so profoundly relaxed during the procedure that upon arising from the treatment table, he/she might get momentarily lightheaded. My wife gets so relaxed, that she sleeps better afterward. I also fall asleep on the table. You might hardly notice you are being touched. From my observations, this most gentle and completely safe therapy restores the flow of blocked energy, modulates the ANS, and can correct improper tension in muscles.

Bowen Therapy is brilliant! It's quick, painless, and is easy on the patient and practitioner as well. Usually only a few sessions are needed, with sessions scheduled one week apart. Indeed, Tom Bowen was documented as seeing over 13,000 patients per year, and claimed an 88 percent success rate. That's a whopping number of visits by any standards for any single therapist! And to have a success rate that high is absolutely unheard of in any practice.

Bowen Therapy is not massage, acupressure, chiropractic, energy healing, trigger therapy, fascia release or physiotherapy. It does gently rock the connective tissue (fascia), but the moves stimulate the body to heal itself in its own manner, like a catalyst, rather than force a healing reaction through significant input of outside energy. It's not a cure all and like all therapies, it has failures.

Dr. Robert Jay Rowen (Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Johns Hopkins University; graduate of University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine; internationally known and respected for his work in the field of complementary/alternative medicine, and editor of *Second Opinion*, one of the nation's leading monthly publications revealing new frontiers in medicine.

