

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES AND PARKINSON'S

PARKINSON'S^{UK} CHANGE ATTITUDES. FIND A CURE. JOIN US.



This booklet is for people who are interested in using complementary therapies, alongside their Parkinson's treatment, to help them manage their Parkinson's symptoms. Carers, family and friends may also like to find out whether they may benefit from complementary treatments.

Although no treatments or therapies have been scientifically proven to slow, stop or reverse the development of Parkinson's, we have heard from many people with the condition who have had positive experiences of complementary therapies.

As with all treatments for Parkinson's, different things work for different people. So we encourage anyone affected by the condition who is interested in complementary therapies to explore what works for them.

There are many complementary therapies available, too many for us to cover them all. So we have brought together the most popular therapies, chosen by people with Parkinson's and their carers.

The booklet is designed to give you the basic information you need to help you decide which complementary therapies, if any, are right for you. It also details how people use each therapy and where you can go to find out more.

Contents

What are complementary therapies?	5
The evidence about complementary therapies	7
Why do people use complementary therapies?	9
Are complementary therapies safe?	10
Accessing complementary therapies	15
I'm a carer. Would I benefit from using complementary therapies?	16
What are the main complementary therapies used by people with Parkinson's?	17
Acupuncture	21
Alexander technique	23
Aromatherapy	25
Art therapy	27
Ayurveda	29
Bowen technique	30
Chiropractic	32
Conductive education	34
Dance therapy	37
Feldenkrais method	39

Herbal medicine.....	41
Homeopathy.....	43
Kinesiology.....	45
Laughter therapy.....	47
Massage therapy.....	48
Meditation and relaxation techniques.....	50
Music therapy.....	53
Osteopathy.....	54
Pilates.....	56
Reflexology.....	58
Reiki.....	60
Shiatsu.....	63
T'ai chi.....	64
Yoga therapy.....	67
More support and information	69

WHAT ARE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES?

Complementary therapies are treatments used alongside conventional medicine.

The term is often confused with alternative medicine.

To avoid confusion, here are some definitions.

Alternative medicine

This means a replacement for mainstream or conventional medicine. It is based on historical or cultural traditions, rather than on scientific evidence. We would not recommend you to replace medication with an alternative treatment.

Integrated medicine

Some experts use the term 'integrated medicine' to emphasise that all therapies – conventional and complementary – are part of one process.

Complementary medicine

This is the term we use in this booklet. It means therapies that can be used alongside your usual medical treatment.

Conventional medicine focuses on understanding and correcting the problems that are causing symptoms. Complementary therapies tend to take a more holistic approach. So, in other words, they aim to treat the whole person including mind, body and spirit, rather than just the symptoms.

Are complementary therapies beneficial?

There is no simple answer to this question. There are so many types of therapy, it is impossible to generalise.

For some complementary therapies there is evidence (see page 7 for an explanation about evidence) to show they have benefits.

For other therapies, there is no research to prove it has any benefits for people with Parkinson's, yet we hear from many people affected who feel it helps them.

It will also depend on what you expect from complementary therapies. For example, you may not feel a particular therapy is having a positive effect on your Parkinson's symptoms, but you may enjoy the experience. In these circumstances, you may feel this is enough of a reason to continue.

Throughout the booklet we have included comments from people affected by Parkinson's who have tried some of the therapies.

Hopefully, this will give you a better idea of what people are trying and how they have found them. But bear in mind that everyone will have a different experience.

“ I would advise people to try the different therapies available. My wife has Parkinson's and has tried all sorts of different treatments. Some have not been effective for her symptoms, but they have motivated her and inspired her to do something. Parkinson's can make you feel like things aren't worth doing, so anything that gives you positive feelings or hope cannot be a bad thing! ”

Laurie, whose wife has Parkinson's

Please remember these are people's personal opinions – Parkinson's UK does not endorse any particular therapy.

THE EVIDENCE ABOUT COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Conventional medication goes through a thorough testing process before it is made available. It is tested in clinical trials and is required to meet scientific standards to prove it works, it is acceptably safe and common side effects are clearly stated on the patient information leaflet.

Unfortunately, complementary therapies are not as rigorously tested. Some therapies are not medicine based, such as yoga, so it is impossible to test them in the same way.

Instead, researchers will look at a therapy and what practitioners say it can be used for. They then study it to see how effective it is when people use the therapy in this way.

Because each therapy is different, and because some therapies are more popular than others, the way these trials are run (ie how many people are involved, what the researchers are testing and how) differs each time.

This makes it impossible for us to compare therapies and tell you what does and does not work.

Which evidence do I trust?

There is a lot of information about complementary therapies, especially on the internet, that is claimed to be based on scientific evidence. But not all of it is reliable.

To help make sure you're reading information that is accurate and useful, and not misleading, consider:

- where is the research published?
Research should normally be 'peer-reviewed' in professional journals. This means other experts who were not involved in the study reviewed it before the details were released
- how many patients did the study look at? Studies with just a few patients are not as reliable as larger ones
- is this a 'one off' result by one research group or has it been confirmed by other scientists?

If you're still in doubt, you can contact the Research team at Parkinson's UK. They can try to provide more answers on research that relates to the complementary therapy you are interested in. Contact **020 7963 9313** or **research@parkinsons.org.uk**

So why include therapies with no scientific evidence?

The therapies included in this booklet have all been chosen because they are popular with people affected by Parkinson's.

Just because a therapy cannot be proven to work in a medical trial, or there has not been enough research about whether it helps people with Parkinson's, does not mean you won't find it useful.

In fact, we've heard from many people who tell us they have benefited from using these therapies.

For example, some people have told us that therapies can help to manage symptoms, reduce stress, and provide an overall sense of wellbeing.

And many of our local groups organise complementary therapy sessions at their meetings to encourage people to give them a try.

Throughout this guide, we will make it clear what scientific evidence there is to support the use of each therapy.



WHY DO PEOPLE USE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES?

There are many reasons why people may use complementary therapies alongside prescribed medication, including:

- they feel conventional medicine isn't controlling their symptoms
- they view complementary therapy as a way of taking control of their own health
- they enjoy the social aspect of having group therapy sessions, such as yoga classes or they see it as a way of having time to themselves
- they find complementary therapies relaxing. This can be very useful as stress can make Parkinson's symptoms worse

Can I use complementary therapies instead of taking Parkinson's medication?

No, complementary therapies do not work as a replacement for Parkinson's medication.

Stopping or making changes to your Parkinson's medication can be dangerous if it is not done under the guidance of your specialist or Parkinson's nurse (if you have one).

ARE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES SAFE?

Generally speaking, the complementary therapies included in this book are considered safe.

But if you want to take anything by mouth or apply it to your skin, check with your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse first.

This applies to tablets, pills, capsules, teas, creams and drops. This is because some herbs and remedies may have side effects or clash with medications you're already taking.

For example St John's Wort, which is a herbal remedy for depression, can react with some Parkinson's medications.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is the government agency responsible for making sure that medicines and medical devices work, and are safe. For the latest news about safety visit **www.mhra.gov.uk**

Some complementary therapies, such as herbal remedies, may not be safe in pregnancy. So make sure you tell your GP, specialist or Parkinson's

nurse if you are trying for or expecting a baby. You should also tell your complementary therapist, if this is the case.

It is always advisable to talk to a healthcare professional if you are considering a complementary therapy. It may alert them to problems they didn't know about and they may be able to do something to help, such as make adjustments to your medication regime. They may even be able to recommend a therapist, or tell you where to go to find out more.

Knowing what is safe and what isn't can be confusing. Many organisations offering therapy sound official when they are not.

It is important that you check the therapist you are seeing is reputable, insured and, where relevant, belongs to a regulatory body. See page 12 for more details on finding a reputable therapist.

If the government doesn't regulate a particular therapy, does that mean it's unsafe?

No, it does not mean they are unsafe. Some complementary therapies are regulated by statutory law, including osteopaths, chiropractors and art therapists.

This means that, in the same way GPs and specialists have to register with the General Medical Council, these therapists must be registered with a governing body before they can practise.

There are various reasons why other complementary therapists do not have this statutory regulation. And it isn't necessarily because the therapies don't work.

For example, the government looked into regulating acupuncture and decided that acupuncturists were so well self-regulated, government intervention was not needed.

The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council

The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC), was established with government support to regulate some therapies.

The Department of Health in England has recommended that you should consult a therapist registered with the Council, where appropriate.

Some of the therapies regulated by the Council include:

- Alexander technique
- aromatherapy
- Bowen therapy
- massage therapy
- reflexology
- reiki
- shiatsu
- yoga therapy

This is not a full list of therapies covered by the body, these are just the ones we discuss in this booklet. To find out more information and to see the full list of therapies regulated by the Council, visit their website **www.cnhc.org.uk**

Other complementary therapies are gradually moving towards a system of stricter self-regulation. See below for more information on professional associations.

How do I find a good therapist?

You should always make sure you go to a trained, registered (where relevant) and fully insured therapist.

To find a reputable, qualified therapist you may find it helpful to ask:

- someone else with Parkinson's, a friend or family member
- your GP, specialist, Parkinson's nurse or other healthcare professionals who may be able to recommend someone. Many hospitals and GP surgeries now work together with complementary therapists
- your local Parkinson's UK information and support worker who may also be able to help. See page 69 for details of how to contact your local information and support worker

Always check your therapist's credentials. Some complementary therapists use a 'Dr' title, but that doesn't necessarily mean they have studied conventional medicine.

An honest, reliable practitioner will not mind you asking about their qualifications.

Professional associations

Many therapists choose to join reputable, professional organisations.

These organisations can be useful sources of information. Just be wary that some organisations may make claims that are not backed up by good evidence (for more information about what is meant by good evidence, see page 7).

We have included many professional organisations for each therapy in this guide. But if you'd like to do your own research, it may help you to remember that a high-quality professional association requires its members to:

- complete some kind of formal qualification, which will usually include a training programme and an exam

- stay up to date in their field by continuing their professional training and development
- follow a code of ethics and professional conduct
- have insurance
- report side effects when they occur
- any risks associated with your treatment and what steps they take to prevent problems
- what professional organisations they are registered with
- how much they cost and how long the treatment plan will last

When you find a therapist, there are a few things you should ask them, including:

Finally, it's important you find a therapist that you feel comfortable with and who you like. This will help make your therapy a more successful and enjoyable experience.





ACCESSING COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Are complementary therapies available on the NHS or the HSC?

Some therapies are available and some are not. This will depend on the type of therapy you want and the policy in your area.

Some hospitals or GP practices offer a few complementary therapies, such as acupuncture, aromatherapy, massage, osteopathy and chiropractic treatments.

Speak to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse about what is available locally. Your information and support worker may also be able to help you.

There are three NHS hospitals that provide homeopathy, located in Bristol, Glasgow, and London. Their details are listed in the homeopathy section of this guide.

Some GPs have training in complementary therapies. If they cannot provide the treatment themselves, they may be able to refer you to a therapist on the NHS.

How much do they cost?

If you cannot get your chosen therapy on the NHS or HSC, you may have to pay. Costs for complementary therapy will vary, depending on the type of therapy you want, how long you need treatment for and where you live.

Your first session of any therapy may cost more because they often take longer. This is because your therapist will want extra time to get to know you and hear your medical history.

Practitioners usually recommend several treatment sessions. Make sure you ask how much the whole course of treatment is going to cost before you commit to a treatment.

You may also find it useful to ask about when you can expect to feel any improvement – and when to call it a day if you do not see the results you hoped for.

Private health insurance may pay for some types of complementary therapy. Before you book a treatment session, ask your insurer if it is covered by your policy and how payment is arranged.

I'M A CARER. WOULD I BENEFIT FROM USING COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES?

We've heard from many carers who have tried complementary therapies, some of whom have had very positive experiences. Again, it is a personal choice.

If you care for someone with Parkinson's, it is important to look after your physical and mental health. You may find that complementary therapies are a great way to have time to yourself, reduce stress and do something you enjoy.

In some areas, the NHS, local councils and charities offer free or low-cost therapies to carers. Speak to your GP, specialist, or Parkinson's nurse about what may be available in your area.

Our information and support workers can also provide details and links to local services. They provide support for anyone affected by Parkinson's. See page 69 for details of how to contact your local information and support worker.

Find out more: see our booklet *The carer's guide*.



WHAT ARE THE MAIN COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES USED BY PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S?

The rest of this booklet talks about some complementary therapies you may find helpful. Please remember that although we have included them here, we cannot recommend any particular therapy.

To help make an informed decision about complementary therapies, you'll find answers to the following questions for each therapy listed.

- What is it?
- How might it help?
- What about safety?
- Where can I learn more?

Our forum is also a great place to find out what people are trying and how they feel about different therapies. Visit **parkinsons.org.uk/forum**

On pages 18–19 there is a quick reference table, which tells you some of the reasons why people with Parkinson's use particular therapies.

Please remember these are not recommendations from Parkinson's UK. These are just recommendations from people with Parkinson's.

Symbols throughout the book

Next to each therapy we have added an icon to show what people with Parkinson's and their carers use each therapy for. They are:



Pain



Mobility



Relaxation



Speech















Motor symptoms



Sense of wellbeing

What people with Parkinson’s and their carers use and why

Page		 Pain	 Relaxation	 Motor symptoms	 Mobility	 Speech	 Sense of wellbeing
21	Acupuncture	✓					✓
23	Alexander technique	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Aromatherapy		✓				✓
27	Art therapy		✓				✓
29	Ayurveda						✓
30	Bowen technique	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
32	Chiropractic	✓			✓		
34	Conductive education			✓	✓		
37	Dance therapy		✓	✓	✓		✓
39	Feldenkrais method	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
41	Herbal medicine	✓					✓
43	Homeopathy						✓

Page		 Pain	 Relaxation	 Motor symptoms	 Mobility	 Speech	 Sense of wellbeing
45	Kinesiology		✓				✓
47	Laughter therapy		✓				✓
48	Massage therapy	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
50	Meditation and relaxation techniques		✓	✓	✓		✓
53	Music therapy		✓	✓	✓		✓
54	Osteopathy	✓			✓		
56	Pilates		✓		✓		✓
58	Reflexology		✓				✓
60	Reiki		✓				✓
63	Shiatsu				✓		✓
64	T'ai chi		✓	✓	✓		✓
67	Yoga therapy		✓	✓	✓		✓



ACUPUNCTURE



What is it?

Acupuncture is a form of ancient Chinese medicine. It involves a therapist inserting thin needles at particular points on your body.

Traditional practitioners believe that energy flows around your body through channels. When these channels get blocked it can make you ill and they believe acupuncture can unblock them.

Some scientists believe the needles act to stimulate muscles and nerves, which is what causes the effects.

The needles are very fine, so you shouldn't feel any significant pain. They are stimulated manually by using heat, pressure, electrical currents or laser light.

How might it help?

Acupuncture is used to control and relieve pain. This includes headaches, joint pain and neck pain. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) provides guidelines to the NHS. They recommend acupuncture for lower back pain.

“I had a series of acupuncture needles in my neck, shoulders and lower back. The acupuncture wasn't too unpleasant – the next day the areas treated got quite hot but that soon went and the pain did go away. I felt quite good. Unfortunately after only a few weeks the pain returned with no long-term benefit.”

James, diagnosed in 2010

It is also used for depression, anxiety and insomnia. Research has been done to find out how acupuncture can help people with Parkinson's, but at the moment, there isn't enough evidence to say whether or not it is effective.

What about safety?

There can be some small side effects, but these don't tend to last very long. They may include slight pain, bleeding or bruising where the needle has pierced the skin and drowsiness after treatment.

Serious complications such as infections or damage to tissue can happen, but this is rare. Just make sure your acupuncturist is fully qualified and that they use disposable needles at every treatment session.

Acupuncture is not regulated by the government. In 2009, the Secretary of State for Health said the self-regulation of acupuncture was robust and government regulation was not needed.

As acupuncture involves piercing of the skin, all acupuncturists have to register with their local authority for health and safety reasons.

Acupuncturists can also voluntarily register with a number of regulatory bodies, all of which have guidelines and codes of conduct. For details of each of the bodies, see Where can I learn more?

If you decide to use acupuncture, make sure the practitioner is registered and qualified with one of the listed bodies.

Some healthcare professionals, such as doctors and physiotherapists, offer acupuncture to their patients alongside regular medical treatment.

Where can I learn more?

You can contact any of the following organisations to find out more about acupuncture, find qualified practitioners and read about how they regulate their members.

Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists

A professional network for physiotherapists who include acupuncture as part of their physiotherapy treatment.

www.aacp.uk.com

British Acupuncture Council

A self-regulating body for the practice of traditional acupuncture in the UK.

020 8735 0400

www.acupuncture.org.uk

British Medical Acupuncture Society (BMAS)

The British Medical Acupuncture Society is a registered charity. It encourages the use and scientific understanding of acupuncture within medicine. Members are regulated healthcare professionals who practise acupuncture as part of their practice.

01606 786 782

www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE



What is it?

The Alexander Technique teaches you how to change your movements to help you relieve stress and tension in your muscles.

It makes you think about how you move and speak and looks at your posture, balance and ease of movement.

During a class, your teacher will probably ask you to perform some simple movements before guiding your body as you move to relieve tension. Sessions can be provided on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting.

How might it help?

Evidence from one scientific study of fewer than 100 people indicated that the Alexander Technique may help to relieve symptoms of Parkinson's, including pain, speech, tremor, depression and balance.

However, this study has not been repeated.

What about safety?

Alexander Technique lessons shouldn't be painful. Please note that teachers of the Alexander Technique are not regulated by the government, but they can register with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (see page 11 for more information).

Where can I learn more?

You can contact any of the following organisations to find out more about Alexander Technique, find qualified teachers and read about how they assess their members.

Alexander Technique International

A worldwide organisation of Alexander Technique teachers, students and supporters of the Alexander Technique.

UK Regional Coordinator
01727 760 067
ati-director2@ati-net.com
www.ati-net.com

The Complementary and Natural
Healthcare Council

020 3178 2199

info@cnhc.org.uk

www.cnhc.org.uk

Interactive Teaching
Method Association

This organisation exists to promote the Alexander Technique, act as a point of contact between teachers and the public, maintain teaching standards and provide support and continuing professional development for teachers.

www.alexandertechnique-itm.org

Society of Teachers of the
Alexander Technique (STAT)

The Society aims to ensure the highest standards of teacher training and professional practice, promote public awareness and understanding of the Alexander Technique, and to encourage research.

020 7482 5135

office@stat.org.uk

www.stat.org.uk



AROMATHERAPY



What is it?

Aromatherapists use essential oils from plants to treat symptoms such as anxiety, stress, insomnia or depression. The oils are diluted and can be massaged into the skin, inhaled or used in creams or in the bath.

The theory is the oils have chemical properties that can have a positive effect on your physical and mental health.

How might it help?

Many people use aromatherapy to help them relax. There hasn't been much research on how aromatherapy may help with Parkinson's.

Research suggests it can have a mild temporary calming effect for anxiety, but a 2012 study decided the evidence available was not good enough to prove aromatherapy could effectively treat any condition.

Aromatherapy is one of the more commonly offered therapies in

NHS hospitals with complementary medicine programmes.

Speak to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse about availability in your area.

What about safety?

Aromatherapy is generally very safe. But essential oils are highly concentrated, so it's very important not to swallow them. They should also be diluted before they are applied to your skin to avoid irritation. Some people may experience an allergic reaction to some essential oils.

Speak to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse before you use essential oils, especially if you're pregnant, have epilepsy, heart problems, high blood pressure, asthma or diabetes.

Aromatherapists are not regulated by the government, but they can register with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (see page 11 for more information).

Where can I learn more?

The Complementary and Natural
Healthcare Council

020 3178 2199

info@cnhc.org.uk

www.cnhc.org.uk

The International Federation of
Professional Aromatherapists
(IFPA)

There is no single regulatory
body for aromatherapy. However,
The International Federation
of Professional Aromatherapists
can help you find a reliable,
registered and qualified
aromatherapist.

01455 637 987

admin@ifparoma.org

www.ifparoma.org



ART THERAPY



What is it?

Art therapy is different to an art class. Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that uses art as a way of communicating feelings and thoughts. An art class is a hobby that you do for fun.

Sessions can be held in groups or individually and are run by qualified art therapists. Art therapists believe it is a great way of expressing specific emotional or physical issues.

How might it help?

There is evidence that art therapies can be used by people with depression or stress. There is no evidence, however, to suggest art therapy can help people with Parkinson's. But we've heard from many people with Parkinson's who have found that being creative helps them to focus their mind, relax and express their emotions in a positive way.

What about safety?

Arts therapies are regulated by the Health Professionals Council and are available through the NHS.

The Health Professionals Council is a government body which regulates health professionals, in the same way the General Medical Council regulates GPs and specialists. Art therapists must be registered to practise.

Where can I learn more?

You can contact the organisations below to find details of art therapists in your area.

Art classes

Alternatively, some local Parkinson's UK groups offer regular creative sessions, including art classes. Find your local group at **parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups** or call our helpline on **0808 800 0303** for details of your nearest meeting.

You can also help to make the most of creative activities by speaking to an occupational therapist.

Occupational therapists can be contacted directly in some areas through your local social services or social work department, or by referral through your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse.

Find out more: see our information sheet *Occupational therapy and Parkinson's*.

You may also like to enter the Parkinson's UK Mervyn Peake awards, which are designed to encourage and celebrate the creative talents of people with Parkinson's.

The awards are held every year in memory of the late illustrator, writer and poet Mervyn Peake (1911–1968), who had the condition. Entries are welcome from people with Parkinson's of all abilities.

For more information about the awards, call **020 7963 9319** email **mervynpeake@parkinsons.org.uk** or visit **parkinsons.org.uk/mervynpeake**

The British Association of Art Therapists

This is the professional organisation for art therapists in the UK and has its own Code of Ethics of Professional Practice.

020 7686 4216

Info@baat.org.uk

www.baat.org

Health Professions Council

You can check an art therapist's registration by contacting this organisation.

020 7582 0866

www.hpc-uk.org



AYURVEDA



What is it?

Ayurveda is a traditional Indian medical system that is still used today. It is called a system because more than one technique is involved. What technique is used depends on the person being treated.

Ayurveda can combine treatments such as diet and lifestyle advice, herb supplements, and physical treatments such as full body massage and meditation.

The aim is to cleanse the body, reduce symptoms, increase resistance to disease and promote mental calm.

How might it help?

People may use Ayurveda to build and maintain an overall sense of good health and wellbeing.

There have been some small studies of Ayurveda, but so far none of them have been of a good enough quality to prove its effectiveness.

Larger, better-designed studies are needed before we can be sure how effective Ayurveda is.

What about safety?

Some of the therapies used in this treatment may react with certain medications. So it is very important that you talk to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse before you start treatment.

The UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has issued warnings about dangerous or contaminated supplies of Ayurvedic medicines in the past. You may find it helpful to look online at **www.mhra.gov.uk** if you have any concerns.

Currently, Ayurveda practitioners are not regulated by law. You will need to check your therapist is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

Ayurvedic Practitioners Association

This is an independent, professional association of Ayurvedic practitioners. Contact them to find therapists local to you.

01273 500 492

info@apa.uk.com

www.apa.uk.com

BOWEN TECHNIQUE



“One of my main symptoms has been muscle stiffness and soreness in my lower back and pelvis. After about nine sessions of Bowen this has improved considerably and has helped me to walk more easily. We are now working on my posture and balance.”

Dinah, diagnosed in 2010

What is it?

Bowen technique is a very gentle, touch-based therapy. The practitioner aims to restore balance in your body by softly manipulating your muscles and soft tissue.

They will use their fingers and thumbs to make small, rolling movements over precise points on your body. It is a drug-free, non-invasive therapy.

How might it help?

Bowen may be used for a range of physical and emotional conditions, including pain, muscular problems, stress and difficulties sleeping.

Although there have been some studies into using Bowen for pain relief and stress, the studies have been small. A recent review of the evidence said more detailed studies were needed.

There have been no scientific studies to support the use of Bowen therapy in Parkinson's. However, people with Parkinson's have found Bowen useful for helping them with their symptoms.

What about safety?

Bowen therapists are not currently regulated by law, but they can register with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (see page 11 for more information).

Where can I learn more?

The Complementary and Natural
Healthcare Council

020 3178 2199

info@cnhc.org.uk

www.cnhc.org.uk

The Bowen Therapy Professional Association

This is an independent, professional association of Bowen Therapy practitioners. You can contact them to find out more about the Bowen technique, find qualified teachers and read about how they assess their members.

0844 561 7173

ask@bowentherapy.org.uk

www.bowentherapy.org.uk



“ I have been having Bowen technique fortnightly for about 18 months. I find it very relaxing and, after several days, it gives me relief from the pain of stiffness and soreness. I can speak openly and without pressure to the therapist. The pain does return but then I look forward to the next session. ”

Samdog, from our forum

CHIROPRACTIC



What is it?

Chiropractors believe the spine influences all aspects of your health, so chiropractic treatment focuses on bringing your bones, joints, muscles and nervous system into balance. Chiropractors tend to focus on the area around your spine, using spine manipulation.

Typically, your first session will involve an assessment of your health, medical history and a physical examination. The chiropractor will then use manual techniques to manipulate the spine. They may also work on joints, muscles and soft tissues.

Chiropractors may also give you advice on health, diet, exercise and lifestyle.

How might it help?

Chiropractic is commonly used for conditions affecting the muscles, bones and joints. Most people use chiropractic to relieve pain, especially back and neck pain. There is evidence that chiropractic can help with low back pain.

Some chiropractors use the treatment for mental health conditions, such as phobias, depression or anxiety.

There are no studies on the effects of chiropractic on people with Parkinson's.

What about safety?

There is statutory regulation for chiropractic in the UK. This means it is illegal for anyone to practise chiropractic or to call themselves a chiropractor unless registered with the General Chiropractic Council.

Chiropractic is not usually painful, but some people may experience mild side effects after a chiropractic session, which usually stop after about 24 hours. These may include headache, stiffness, pain and fatigue.

There have been reports that some manipulation techniques, mainly those applied to the neck, have caused serious complications, such as spinal injury or stroke, but these complications are rare.

People with weak bones or fractures should not have chiropractic treatment. It is also unsuitable for people with some spinal problems, or if you are taking blood-thinning medicine, such as warfarin.

Where can I learn more?

Chiropractic is available on the NHS in some areas. Ask your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse about availability. Be aware that funding is limited and most people pay for chiropractic if they choose this as a treatment option.

General Chiropractic Council

This organisation regulates the chiropractic profession. You can contact them to find out more about chiropractic, find a chiropractor near you, or to check if a chiropractor is registered.

020 7713 5155

enquiries@gcc-uk.org

www.gcc-uk.org



CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION



“The classes have given me a whole new outlook on life. They have improved my confidence, fitness and, above all, my sense of wellbeing. My fitness has improved to the extent that I have taken part in several challenges, including a 300km cycle ride across Cuba.”

Bill, diagnosed in 2005

What is it?

Conductive education is a rehabilitation system that started in Hungary in the 1940s. As the name suggests, the system takes an educational approach, rather than a therapeutic one.

It aims to teach adults and children with neurological conditions that cause difficulties with movement,

such as Parkinson's, how to overcome everyday problems.

How might it help?

Some people find that conductive education can help control the physical symptoms of Parkinson's, including tremor, rigidity and slowness of movement. Although conductive education is quite established as a treatment for Parkinson's, there is not much medical evidence to back it up. Studies are needed to prove its effectiveness.

Because conductive education teaches strategies to help movement and overcome everyday problems, some people may feel more confident and independent.

What about safety?

Always check your conductor is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

Some local Parkinson's UK groups offer conductive education sessions.

Find your local group at **parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups** or call our helpline on **0808 800 0303** for details of your nearest meeting.

**The National Institute of
Conductive Education
(Cannon Hill House)**

This is a UK charity based at the National Institute of Conductive Education in Birmingham.

0121 449 1569

**nsandford@conductive-
education.org.uk**

www.cannonhillhouse.org.uk

“Conductive education has been useful, but it has to be continued to feel benefits in the long-term. One, two-hour session isn't really enough if you don't have the willpower to carry out the exercises outside the session.”

Leanne, diagnosed in 2011





DANCE THERAPY



“The most important thing I do is to always remain positive and what helps me most is dancing. I have free-danced to music I enjoy for half an hour every day for the last three years. It is excellent exercise, helps keep me flexible, free and balanced, and gives me a buzz. We also have a brilliant Parkinson’s dance class locally.”

Estelle, diagnosed in 2001

What is it?

Dance therapy, as the name suggests, uses dance as a way of treating some physical and mental conditions. Many people enjoy dancing as a form of exercise and as a social activity. But research suggests that some forms of dancing, such as tango, may have specific benefits for people with Parkinson’s.

How might it help?

Although there hasn’t been a lot of research done in this area, studies have indicated that dancing can improve balance and the way you walk. It has also been suggested that dancing can improve your quality of life.

Research is now ongoing to get a better understanding of how and which types of dance and movement are suitable for people with Parkinson’s.

We’ve heard from many people with Parkinson’s who have found dancing

very therapeutic. Some have told us about how it has helped them to move more freely, while others have enjoyed the social aspect of group dance classes.

You may wish to join a dance class or you may prefer to improvise in your own home.

What about safety?

Always check your dance teacher has a valid qualification and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

Some local Parkinson's UK groups offer regular creative sessions, including dance classes.

Find your local group at **parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups** or call our helpline on **0808 800 0303** for details of your nearest meeting.

Your local information and support worker may also be able to tell you about what is available in your area.

See the more support and information section for contact details.



FELDENKRAIS METHOD



What is it?

The idea of Feldenkrais is that by becoming more aware of your own movements, you can improve your mobility and general well-being.

The method is based on martial-arts theory and has been developed to help people with everyday problems, such as difficulties with balance or turning over in bed.

This method is seen as more of an education rather than a therapy. Lessons may involve doing a sequence of movements that involve thinking, sensing, moving and imagining.

How might it help?

There have been studies that show Feldenkrais helps with balance and mobility.

People also use this method to find relief from tension and pain, to improve breathing and performance, and for general wellbeing.

As yet, there have been no studies of the method specifically for the treatment of Parkinson's.

What about safety?

Feldenkrais is generally safe for everyone. But check your teacher is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

[The Feldenkrais Guild UK](#)

This organisation can help you find Feldenkrais teachers and classes across the UK.

07000 785 506

enq@feldenkrais.co.uk

www.feldenkrais.co.uk



HERBAL MEDICINE



What is it?

Herbal medicine is the use of plants and plant extracts to treat illnesses. Herbal medicines can be quite powerful. Many of today's common drugs come from plants or are based on chemicals found in them.

You can find herbal medicines at your local health food shops or chemists. You may also choose to see a herbalist.

Herbalists prescribe often complex herbal mixtures to be taken as drops, capsules or tea.

The herbalist may also recommend diet, exercise and lifestyle measures.

How might it help?

Herbs are used for a wide variety of conditions.

There is some evidence that certain herbs may help with depression and some skin conditions. But there is no good evidence that the complex mixtures prescribed by traditional herbalists are effective.

Small trials have been carried out with plants commonly used in Ayurvedic medicine to relieve Parkinson's symptoms (see the section on Ayurveda on page 29).

Although more research is needed, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that herbs may be helpful in the treatment of Parkinson's symptoms.

What about safety?

It is important to speak to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse before taking any herbal medicines or supplements, even if purchased at a local chemist or health store.

This is because some of them may have serious side effects or may interfere with your usual medication.

For example, the herbal remedy St John's Wort, which can be used for depression, is not recommended for people with certain other health problems, including Parkinson's.

Some herbal medicines should not be taken in pregnancy so, again, check with your GP.

It's important to make sure your herbal medicine comes from a reliable source. The UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has found supplies of contaminated herbs in the past.

You can look online at **www.mhra.gov.uk**. Your GP may also know about any recent alerts, so it may be helpful to ask them.

Herbalists are not regulated by law. Check your herbalist is insured and registered with one of the following bodies.

Where can I learn more?

You contact any of the following organisations to find out more about herbal medicine, find qualified practitioners and read about how they regulate its members.

International Register of Consultant Herbalists and Homeopaths

01594 368 443

office@irch.org

www.irch.org

National Institute of Medical Herbalists

01392 426 022

info@nimh.org.uk

www.nimh.org.uk

Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine

01603 623 994

herbmed@rchm.co.uk

www.rchm.co.uk

Unified Register of Herbal Practitioners

07539 528 857

www.urhp.com



HOMEOPATHY



What is it?

Homeopaths believe symptoms can be cured by giving someone an extremely diluted dose of a remedy that, in large doses, would trigger the symptoms. For example, one homeopathic remedy made from female bees (including the stinger) is used to treat swelling and stinging pains.

They believe the 'like for like' principle stimulates the body's own healing power so it clears itself of any imbalance. The remedies come from various sources, including plants, animals and minerals.

A homeopath will talk to you about your medical history, symptoms and how these affect you. They may also want to find out about your lifestyle, eating habits and preferences, and your personality.

At the end of the consultation they may give you a prescription and advise you on how often you should take the medicine.

Homeopathy is usually taken in pill form, but is also available as a liquid

or powder. You may be prescribed a homeopathic gel or cream for use on the skin as well.

How might it help?

Homeopaths believe homeopathy can help with any condition in which the body has the potential to self-repair. As a result, they suggest homeopathy can be used to treat a wide range of acute and chronic medical conditions.

There have been many studies of homeopathy but none have been conclusive. No studies on homeopathy for Parkinson's have been done.

Despite the lack of evidence, homeopathy is popular. It is available on the NHS as well as privately. There are three NHS homeopathic hospitals in the UK based in Bristol, London and Glasgow. Some GP practices also offer homeopathic treatment.

Speak to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse about whether homeopathy is available on the NHS in your area.

Practitioners

Some health professionals are trained in homeopathy and use it alongside medical treatment. These can include doctors, nurses and pharmacists. They are all regulated by their relevant professional body, for example, GPs are regulated by the General Medical Council.

Some homeopaths are not medically qualified. Currently, there are no national standards of training and accreditation for these practitioners. If you decide to see a homeopath who is not medically qualified, you should check they are insured and registered with a professional body.

What about safety?

Although we could not find any research to suggest homeopathic medicines would react with Parkinson's medication, you should always speak to your GP, Parkinson's nurse or specialist before taking any kind of medication.

Where can I learn more?

Contact any of the following organisations to find out more about herbal medicine, find qualified practitioners and read about how they regulate its members.

Alliance of Registered Homeopaths

01825 714 506

info@a-r-h.org

www.a-r-h.org

British Homeopathic Association

01582 408 675

info@britishhomeopathic.org

www.britishhomeopathic.org

Faculty of Homeopathy

01582 408 680

www.facultyofhomeopathy.org

Homeopathic Medical Association

www.the-hma.org

International Register of Consultant Herbalists and Homeopaths

01594 368 443

office@irch.org

www.irch.org

Scottish Association of Professional Homoeopaths

0141 954 7350

www.scottish-homeopath.org.uk

Society of Homeopaths

0845 450 6611

info@homeopathy-soh.org

www.homeopathy-soh.org

KINESIOLOGY



What is it?

Kinesiology means 'the study of body movement'. There are different types of kinesiology and the treatment you receive will depend on what type of kinesiologist you see.

Kinesiologists believe each muscle is connected to an organ.

Therapists apply pressure to different parts of the body to see how the muscle responds. If the muscle is weak, they believe it means there is a problem with the organ. It is sometimes known as muscle testing.

How muscles respond in tests to gentle pressure reveals how the whole body is functioning and helps locate any imbalance.

At the end of the session you may be advised on lifestyle changes (particularly dietary changes) given specific exercises to do, or recommendations on supplements.

How might it help?

People use kinesiology to diagnose and treat all sorts of health problems. The studies on kinesiology aren't of a good quality and haven't been able to demonstrate that kinesiology is effective.

What about safety?

Kinesiologists are not currently regulated by law. You will need to check your therapist is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

Kinesiology Federation

Contact this organisation to find out more about kinesiology and to find practitioners local to you.

0845 260 1094

admin@kinesiologyfederation.co.uk

www.kinesiologyfederation.co.uk



LAUGHTER THERAPY



What is it?

Laughter therapy is the use of exercise techniques to stimulate the body into laughter. The idea is that these techniques can help to boost your immune system, improve respiration and circulation, encourage positive thinking and help you to relax.

How might it help?

There is little research on the benefits of laughter for people with Parkinson's. But there is evidence to suggest that laughter helps to release 'endorphins' – chemicals that can improve your mood and may relieve pain.

What about safety?

There are no safety issues with this type of therapy.

Currently, laughter therapy is not regulated by law and there are no official qualifications in laughter therapy.

Where can I learn more?

The Laughter Network

This is a non-profit organisation formed to spread and promote laughter. You can contact this organisation to find out more about laughter therapy.

You can also find out about laughter therapists in your area, but please note the organisation does not vet members, who must take full responsibility for their own work, experience, clients and insurance.

info@laughternetwork.co.uk

www.laughternetwork.co.uk

“Laughing has many positive benefits for our health and wellbeing. It makes you feel great and, unlike painkillers, it's free and has no side effects! So invite more laughter into your life.”

Bob, diagnosed in 1998

MASSAGE THERAPY



What is it?

People have used massage for thousands of years to heal injuries, promote relaxation and encourage better movement. There are many different types of massage from traditions around the world.

A massage therapist may use various techniques, including stroking, kneading and rubbing, to manipulate the body using pressure.

Some types of massage may be gentle or can be vigorous, like deep tissue massage. Massages may focus on one area or the whole body.

How might it help?

Research has suggested that massage therapy may help to reduce pain as well as feelings of anxiety and depression.

Research has also suggested that massage therapy, especially abdominal massage, can help with constipation.

Massage may also help to improve movement and flexibility.

Many people with Parkinson's and their carers have told us they find massage therapy useful as a way to relax and to have time to themselves.

What about safety?

Massage therapy shouldn't hurt, although you may experience some discomfort if pressure is applied to injured areas, or where your body is very tense.

Massage may not be suitable for people with certain medical conditions. These include a history of blood clots, or weak or broken bones.

If you have wounds or bruises you should wait until these are healed before you book a massage appointment.

Massage therapists are not currently regulated by law. You will need to check your therapist is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

General Council for Massage Therapies

This organisation is the governing body for massage therapies and all bodyworks and soft tissue techniques in the UK. Contact them to find a massage therapist local to you.



You can also visit the website to find links to other professional organisations for massage therapy.

0870 850 4452

gcmt@btconnect.com

www.gcmt.org.uk

MEDITATION AND RELAXATION TECHNIQUES



What is it?

People have used meditation for thousands of years in cultures around the world. It is often associated with religion and spirituality.

In modern times, more people have started using meditation simply for health reasons.

There are many forms of meditation but they all aim to create a sense of calm. During meditation, the mind is in a state of restful alertness while the body becomes more relaxed.

You can meditate in a group or alone.

A related technique is guided imagery or visualisation (forming pictures in your mind).

This is sometimes combined with muscle relaxation. T'ai chi and yoga are two kinds of exercise that have elements of meditation. (See the sections on t'ai chi and yoga on pages 64 and 67)

How might it help?

People use meditation to relieve pain, stress, depression and insomnia, and to achieve a general sense of wellbeing.

Most studies of meditation have not often been well designed. But there is some evidence that meditation or related techniques can help with pain and anxiety.

What about safety?

People with mental health issues should take professional advice before starting meditation.

Currently, meditation teachers are not regulated by law. You will need to check the therapist is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

There are many different types of meditation classes. It is not possible to list them all here, or suggest which type would be best for you.

In hospitals or community centres that provide complementary therapies, relaxation and meditation are frequently offered.

Ask your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse if they know where you could take a class. Your local council or library may also be able to tell you about nearby classes.

Research has shown that some local Parkinson's UK groups offer relaxation therapies, including meditation.

Find your local group at **parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups** or call our helpline on **0808 800 0303** for details of your nearest meeting.





MUSIC THERAPY



What is it?

Music therapy is the use of music by trained professionals as a treatment for some physical and mental conditions. You don't need to know anything about music to enjoy music therapy.

How might it help?

It has been suggested that music can improve movement and speech and help people to relax or talk about feelings or ideas they have.

Some people with Parkinson's find that listening to strong rhythmic music can improve their walking, prevent hesitations and overcome freezing episodes.

There are several small studies of music therapy in Parkinson's. Some of these studies had promising results. In general, research indicates that music seems to help people with conditions such as Parkinson's by improving their emotional sense of wellbeing.

“As soon as music starts I become completely free and it is though I have nothing wrong with me. It is an incredible feeling!”

Cecilia, diagnosed in 1993

What about safety?

Music therapists are regulated by the government's Health Professions Council and they must be registered to practise.

Where can I learn more?

Music therapy is available in some areas on the NHS. Ask your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse about availability in your area.

British Association for Music Therapy

This organisation has information about music therapy and how to find a music therapist in your area.

020 7837 6100

info@bamt.org

www.bamt.org

OSTEOPATHY



What is it?

Osteopaths stretch, move and massage muscles and joints to treat health problems. They will use their hands to find areas of tenderness, restriction or strain in your body.

How might it help?

Osteopathy is commonly used for conditions caused by problems with the nerves, joints and muscles, such as back and neck problems, joint pain or injuries. The NICE guidelines recommend osteopathy to be considered as a treatment for back pain.

Some osteopaths believe it can also be used to relieve general health problems such as headaches, ear, nose and throat problems or digestive disorders but there is no good evidence that this is true.

What about safety?

There is statutory regulation for osteopathy in the UK. All UK osteopaths must be qualified and registered with the General Osteopathic Council.

Generally, osteopathy is classed as safe. There have been reports that some manipulation techniques, mainly those applied to the neck, have caused serious complications, such as spinal injury or stroke. This is rare. But it's very important to check your osteopath is qualified.

Some osteopathic manipulations are not suitable for people with bone problems, bleeding disorders or other conditions. It is also not recommended for people on blood thinning medication, such as warfarin.

Let your osteopath know about any health problems and medications you are taking. After a treatment, you may feel some mild side effects, such as stiffness, discomfort or tiredness.

Where can I learn more?

Osteopathy is available in some areas on the NHS, though most people will have to pay for private treatment. Ask your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse about what is available in your area.

General Osteopathic Council

The General Osteopathic Council regulates the practice of osteopathy in the UK. The website features information about osteopathy, how to find qualified practitioners and what to expect from a treatment session.

020 7357 6655

www.osteopathy.org.uk



PILATES



“I began having one-to-one Pilates lessons about six years ago. I enjoy it immensely and it makes me feel good. My instructor is always thinking up new exercises to try and keep my brain and body alert. She was able to advise me on what moves I could or couldn't do. She even showed me exercises that I could do at home to help when I was stiff.”

Thelma, diagnosed in 1983

What is it?

Pilates is a gentle exercise that focuses on stretching and strengthening the body to improve balance, muscle-strength, flexibility

and posture. Pilates is suitable for people of all ages and all levels of fitness. You can study Pilates one to one or in a class. You can also do Pilates at home, though we recommend you learn the moves from a qualified instructor first.

How might it help?

People who practise Pilates claim that it can help with your muscle tone, flexibility, core strength and joint mobility, as well as relieve stress and tension.

There isn't much evidence to show any specific benefits of Pilates for people with Parkinson's. However, an article from 2009 argues that exercise such as Pilates can help with the mobility symptoms associated with Parkinson's, although no clinical studies have been carried out.

What about safety?

Pilates is a gentle, low-impact form of exercise. Classes can sometimes be separated into beginners and advanced, so make sure you find a class that matches your ability.

The Pilates Foundation recommends that if you are pregnant you should check with your doctor and speak to the Pilates teacher before starting.

Pilates instructors are not regulated by law, so check your teacher is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

Pilates classes are available throughout the UK at local leisure and community centres, although these may not be tailored for people with health problems. There may also be Pilates-only studios in your area.

The Pilates Foundation

This is a not-for-profit organisation, bringing qualified Pilates teachers together.

All members are accredited and must follow a strict Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

Contact the organisation to find out more about Pilates and to find a qualified instructor in your area.

020 7033 0078

admin@pilatesfoundation.com

www.pilatesfoundation.com



REFLEXOLOGY



What is it?

Reflexology is based on the idea that areas on the feet, hands or ears match up to another part of the body. So a reflexologist uses their hands to apply pressure to the feet, hands or ears to treat the whole person.

One way of thinking about reflexology is to see the feet hands and ears as a potential miniature map of the entire body made up of zones. They may concentrate on the zones that are relevant to your health problem.

How might it help?

Reflexology is often used to promote relaxation, improve circulation, stimulate vital organs and encourage the body's natural healing abilities.

There is no conclusive evidence that reflexology works for any medical condition.

A very small study showed that reflexology may help with the well-being of someone with Parkinson's.

However, a larger study is needed to confirm these results.

What about safety?

Reflexologists are not currently regulated by law. You will need to check your therapist is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Reflexology may not be suitable if you have diabetes, epilepsy, thyroid or foot problems or a blood disorder. Women who are in their first three months of pregnancy should also avoid reflexology.

During treatment, some areas of your foot may feel tender. Some people experience a reaction to the first treatment, such as feeling emotional or needing to pass urine.

Reflexologists are not currently are not regulated law, but they can register with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (see page 11 for more information).

Where can I learn more?

British Reflexology Association

A professional association that aims to promote reflexology in Great Britain and abroad.

www.britreflex.co.uk

The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council

020 3178 2199

info@cnhc.org.uk

www.cnhc.org.uk

Reflexology Forum

This is a developing regulatory body in the UK for reflexology. Contact the organisation to find out more about reflexology and to find a therapist in your area.

0800 037 0130

[renee.tanner@](mailto:renee.tanner@intfedreflexologists.org)

intfedreflexologists.org

www.reflexologyforum.org.uk



REIKI



“I have been attending a reiki master for a year and find my mobility and strength improved in my weak leg back to where it was a number of years ago. Unfortunately, it only lasts for about 30 minutes before it starts to wear off.”

Angus, diagnosed in 1998

What is it?

Reiki was originally developed in Japan. In Japanese, ‘reiki’ means universal life energy.

Practitioners believe that reiki promotes healing by bringing you into harmony and balance.

During treatment, the practitioner channels healing energy to you by placing their hands on or near your body. The whole person is treated, rather than specific symptoms.

How might it help?

Practitioners use reiki to bring comfort and to support healing for a range of conditions. It does not promise a cure and therapists are not trained to make a diagnosis.

A systematic review looked at the evidence for reiki in dealing with pain and concluded it may have a modest effect for pain relief. However, it was recognised that further studies were needed in this area.

Another study was done on the effects of reiki on mood and depression. It was shown to improve mood overall, but again the evidence is limited and needs much further study.

What about safety?

Reiki therapists are not currently regulated by law, but they can register with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (see page 11 for more information).

Where can I learn more?

The Complementary and Natural
Healthcare Council

020 3178 2199

info@cnhc.org.uk

www.cnhc.org.uk

Reiki Council

This organisation has links to several
professional reiki organisations.

amydeane@springtolife.co.uk

www.reikicouncil.org.uk

“ I receive reiki
treatment every month
and find it extremely
beneficial in so far as it is
relaxing and reduces
aches and pains. ”

A person with Parkinson's





SHIATSU



What is it?

Shiatsu is a Japanese form of massage therapy. A practitioner uses touch, comfortable pressure and manipulative techniques to adjust the body's physical structure and balance its energy flow. It is designed to support and strengthen the body's natural ability to heal itself.

How might it help?

Shiatsu is becoming increasingly popular as a treatment for frozen shoulder, which is a symptom that can be associated to Parkinson's. However, there is no clinical evidence to prove shiatsu's effectiveness.

One small study suggested that feelings of deep relaxation, support and increased vitality are common following a shiatsu treatment.

What about safety?

Shiatsu should be avoided if you have weak bones or certain blood conditions. Care is required in early pregnancy. Speak to the shiatsu practitioner before starting treatment if you have any concerns.

Shiatsu therapists are not currently regulated by law. You will need to check your therapist is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

Shiatsu Society

This is a non-profit organisation which represents all styles and the majority of shiatsu practitioners, schools and students in the UK. Contact them to find out more about shiatsu, how they regulate their members and find qualified practitioners.

0845 130 4560

www.shiatsusociety.org

“Shiatsu helped me enormously with my mobility – I used to hobble in but was able to walk back out!”

A person with Parkinson's

T'AI CHI



What is it?

T'ai chi is a Chinese martial art that puts special emphasis on balance and movement. T'ai chi involves moving the body slowly and gently. There's no fast movement or any physical contact.

Practitioners believe that t'ai chi helps a vital energy called qi (pronounced 'chee') flow freely through the body, which helps to promote good health.

T'ai chi is meant to improve the functioning of internal organs, including the lungs and digestive system.

How might it help?

There have been small studies into the benefits of t'ai chi to improve balance, flexibility and fitness in older people. But further, longer studies are needed to confirm these results.

There have been a few studies on t'ai chi and Parkinson's, with mixed results. Some suggest that t'ai chi can help improve balance and prevent falls better than conventional exercise, while others found no benefits.

Larger, more rigorous studies are needed.

What about safety?

Some precautions may be needed for people who have severe osteoporosis, a hernia or are pregnant.

T'ai chi instructors are not currently regulated by law. You will need to check your teacher is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

T'ai Chi Union for Great Britain

This is an association of practitioners of recognised styles of T'ai Chi Chuan. Contact them to find out more about t'ai chi, find qualified practitioners and read about how they regulate its members.

01403 257 918

peterballam@aol.com

www.taichiunion.com

T'ai chi classes may be offered at your local leisure or community centre, so it is worth checking what's available.

Some local Parkinson's UK groups offer regular exercise sessions, including t'ai chi classes.

Find your local group at **parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups** or call our helpline for details of your nearest meeting.





YOGA THERAPY



“I find yoga very therapeutic. I will often arrive at the yoga session feeling weak and tremoring, but by the time the session has finished, I am stronger, very relaxed and my tremor has stopped.”

Jane, diagnosed in 2002

What is it?

Yoga is an ancient form of meditation, diet, lifestyle, breathing and exercise. There are different styles of yoga and some are more gentle than others.

When you do yoga, you place your body into certain positions that are designed to increase your strength and flexibility. You can study yoga one to one or in a group.

What's the difference between yoga and Pilates?

Both yoga and Pilates focus on developing strength, balance, flexibility and posture.

The difference is that the moves in yoga are designed to increase the strength and flexibility of the whole body and improve breathing.

Pilates also focuses on breathing, but its exercises concentrate much more on precise movements to target specific parts of the body.

How might it help?

People may use yoga to develop their general fitness and increase their overall sense of wellbeing. Some people find it also helps to reduce feelings such as stress, anxiety, depression and tension.

There isn't a lot of evidence that shows any specific benefits of yoga for people with Parkinson's.

What about safety?

There are many types of yoga and they all have different levels of difficulty. Speak to the yoga instructor before you begin the class to check it is suitable for you.

If you want to try yoga at home, make sure you learn the exercises properly from an instructor before doing so.

Yoga instructors are not currently regulated by law. You will need to check your teacher is registered with a professional body and is insured.

Where can I learn more?

Yoga is one of the complementary therapies more commonly offered on the NHS. Ask your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse for details on availability.

You will probably find classes at local leisure and community centres, although these may not be tailored for people with long term conditions, such as Parkinson's.

Some local Parkinson's UK groups offer regular exercise sessions, including yoga classes. Find your local group at **parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups** or call our helpline for details of your nearest meeting.

The British Wheel of Yoga

The British Wheel of Yoga is a registered charity and the Sport England recognised governing body for yoga. It is a members-based organisation and accredits other yoga training organisations.

01529 306 851

office@bwy.org.uk

www.bwy.org.uk

“Since I was diagnosed, yoga has been a great help to my confidence.”

Cathie, diagnosed in 2010

MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

We have a range of information resources that are available to order for free (see the inside back cover for details) or to download from our website at **parkinsons.org.uk/publications**

Parkinson's nurses

Parkinson's nurses provide expert advice and support to people with Parkinson's and those who care for them. They can also make contact with other health and social care professionals to make sure your needs are met.

The role of the Parkinson's nurse varies. Each will offer different services, aiming to meet local needs. Some nurses are based in the community, whereas others are based in hospital settings.

Many Parkinson's nurses are independent prescribers. This means they can prescribe and make adjustments to medication, so someone with Parkinson's doesn't always need to see a specialist for changes to or queries about their Parkinson's drugs.

Parkinson's nurses may not be available in every area, but your GP or specialist can give you more details on local services.

You can find out more at **parkinsons.org.uk/nurses**

Information and support from Parkinson's UK

You can call our free confidential helpline for general support and information. Call **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email **hello@parkinsons.org.uk**.

We run a peer support service if you'd like to talk on the phone with someone affected by Parkinson's who has faced similar issues to you. The service is free and confidential – ring the helpline to talk to someone about being matched with a volunteer.

Our helpline can also put you in touch with one of our local information and support workers, who provide one-to-one information and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's. They can

also provide links to local groups and services.

Our website has information about your local support team and how to contact them at **parkinsons.org.uk/localtoyou**.

You can find details of our local groups and your nearest meeting at **parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups**.

You can also visit **parkinsons.org.uk/forum** to speak with other people in a similar situation on our online discussion forum.

Useful contacts

The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council
020 3178 2199
info@cnhc.org.uk
www.cnhc.org.uk

Health Professions Council
020 7582 0866
www.hpc-uk.org

Institute for Complementary and Natural Medicine
www.icnm.org.uk/about

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (USA)
This American website is a rich source of high-quality information on many different complementary therapies.

Here you will find an online guide about various complementary therapies. There are also links to other websites.

www.nccam.nih.gov

NHS Direct (England and Wales)
0845 46 47

You can phone NHS Direct any time, day or night, 365 days a year. You will speak to a trained nurse who can help you find out more about a particular complementary therapy.

NHS 24 (Scotland)
You can contact the Health Information Service from 8am to 10pm, seven days a week through the NHS Helpline on **0800 22 44 88**.

An adviser will tell you where to find more information about complementary therapies with some scientific evidence behind them.

You can also find information about some complementary therapies on the NHS 24 website at **www.nhs24.com**

NHS Choices website
www.nhs.uk

There is a good library of online information about complementary therapies. There are also links to professional organisations, so you can learn more and find a qualified therapist.

NHS National Library for Health www.library.nhs.uk

This is one place to go for the latest research evidence. The site is designed for NHS health professionals but it is also freely available to the public.

The Research Council for Complementary Medicine www.rccm.org.uk

If you are interested in the scientific evidence for complementary therapies, visit this website based at the Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine (part of the NHS).

Your public library

Increasingly, health information is available on the internet. If you do not have access to the internet, you may be able to use it free of charge at your local public library.

Your library may also offer training on how to use the internet. Sometimes the librarian can help you find information online.

Many public libraries now have links to the NHS and other services, so feel free to ask for local information.

If you want to read up on complementary therapies, your library probably has some good books on the topic.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to or reviewed this booklet:

**Rachel Clark, Lead Complementary Therapist (Non Cancer)
Palliative Care Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust**

**Helen Cooke, (MA Complementary Health Studies, BSc)
College of Medicine**

**Professor George Lewith, Professor of Health Research,
University of Southampton**

**Thanks also to our information review group and other people
affected by Parkinson's who provided feedback.**

Thank you to everyone involved for letting us use their photograph. Also, thanks to the Wimbledon Group of Musical Moving, Dance for people with Parkinson's on pages 13 and 36.

Complementary therapies (B102/2013)

Do you have any feedback about this information? Your comments will help us ensure our resources are as useful and easy to understand as possible. Please return to [Information Content team, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ](#), or email publications@parkinsons.org.uk. Thank you!

1. Please choose the option that best fits you.

- ☐ I have Parkinson's and was diagnosed in
 - ☐ I care for someone with Parkinson's
 - ☐ I have a friend or family member with Parkinson's
 - ☐ I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's
 - ☐ Other (please specify) _____
-

2. Where did you get this information from?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GP | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parkinson's nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Parkinson's UK local group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parkinson's UK local adviser | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordered directly from us |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call to the helpline | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |
-

3. Has it answered all your questions?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, completely | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, mostly | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partly | |

4. How easy was it to understand?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very easy | <input type="checkbox"/> Quite difficult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easy | <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | |

Continued over the page



5. Has it helped you manage your condition better, or make choices that have improved your life in some way?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> It helped a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> It didn't help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It helped a little | <input type="checkbox"/> It made things worse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No change | |

6. What is your ethnic background?*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British | <input type="checkbox"/> White British |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> White other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |
-

*We ask about your ethnicity to ensure our information is reaching a broad range of people. However, this question is optional.

Want to hear more from us?

- ☐ I would like a response to my feedback
- ☐ I would like to be a member of Parkinson's UK
- ☐ I'm interested in joining the Information review group, to offer feedback on Parkinson's UK information

If you've answered yes to any of these options, please complete your details below.

Name

Address

Email

Telephone

How would you prefer us to contact you?

- ☐ Email ☐ Post ☐ Phone

We will not pass on your details to any other organisation or third party.
To find out more, read our privacy policy at parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions



Our information

All of our most up-to-date information is available at

parkinsons.org.uk/information-support

If you'd prefer to read one of our printed leaflets or booklets, find out how to place an order at **parkinsons.org.uk/ordering-resources** or by calling **0300 123 3689**.

We make every effort to ensure that our services provide current, unbiased and accurate information. We hope that this will add to any professional advice you receive and help you to make any decisions you may face. Please do continue to talk to your health and social care team if you are worried about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together, including references and the sources of evidence we use, please contact us at **publications@parkinsons.org.uk**

Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's.

If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Services team on **0800 138 6593** or visit our website at **parkinsons.org.uk/donate**. Thank you.

Every hour, two people in the UK are told they have Parkinson's – a brain condition that turns lives upside down, leaving a future full of uncertainty.

Parkinson's UK is here to make sure people have whatever they need to take back control – from information to inspiration.

We want everyone to get the best health and social care. So we bring professionals together to drive improvements that enable people to live life to the full.

Ultimately, we want to end Parkinson's. That's why we inspire and support the international research community to develop life-changing treatments, faster. And we won't stop until we find a cure.

**Together we can bring forward the day
when no one fears Parkinson's.**

Parkinson's UK
215 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 1EJ

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**
(Monday to Friday 9am–7pm, Saturday 10am–2pm).

Interpreting available.

NGT Relay **18001 0808 800 0303** (for use with smart phones, tablets, PCs and other devices). For more information see **www.ngts.org.uk**

hello@parkinsons.org.uk
parkinsons.org.uk

Order code: PKB102

Last updated March 2013. We review our information within three years. Please check our website for the most up-to-date versions of all our information.

© Parkinson's UK. Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).

