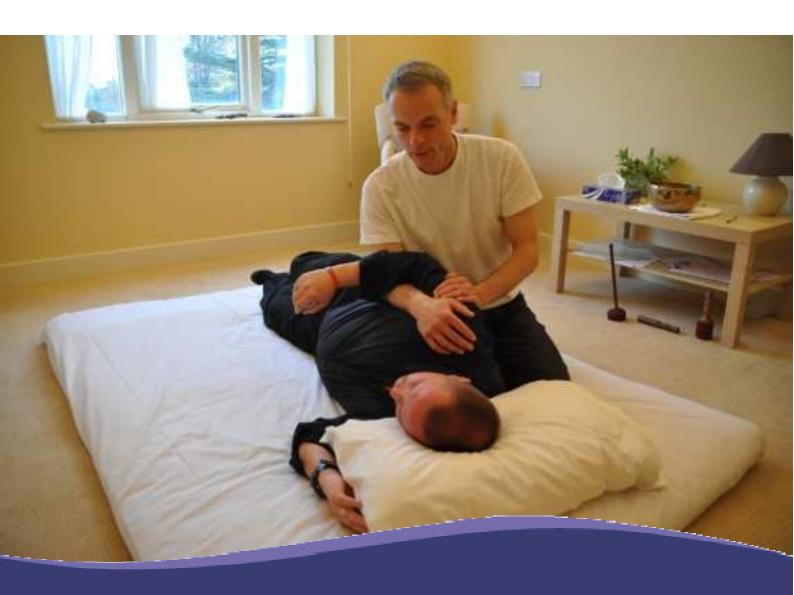


Shiatsu



Shiatsu is an Asian body work therapy from Japan that uses the principles of acupressure. This is where the practitioner applies pressure to points around the body to release blocks in the flow of "energy" ("Ki", "Qi") through the meridians (also known as "energy pathways") of the body. Shiatsu is offered to people with cancer to enhance wellbeing and mood, and.

to reduce stress, anxiety, pain, nausea and vomiting. People with cancer who have had shiatsu report enhanced wellbeing and better symptom control. Shiatsu has also been shown to reduce anxiety in a small study. Shiatsu is safe for people with cancer if practiced by a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner.

Information on shiatsu

This evidence based information sheet aims to provide clearly sourced and reliable information to help you make informed choices about the services that we offer. If you would like more information on how to access the range of services we provide, please contact the helpline at the end of this information sheet. All services are free and not for profit.

Penny Brohn Cancer Care Opinion

We support this therapy and include	We support this therapy, but do not	We do not support this
it as part of the Bristol Approach	offer it as part of the Bristol Approach	therapy



Practitioner Perspective:

"At Penny Brohn Cancer Care we appreciate that life can sometimes appear too complicated and may seem overwhelming. We use shiatsu to encourage clients to connect more directly with themselves and how they truly feel. The quality of touch and stillness helps clients to acknowledge their emotional or physical pain returning them to a place of simplicity and space. As well as clients feeling deeply relaxed and peaceful, their symptoms and side effects may be relieved and a sense of hope restored. During these times there is a great potential for insight and transformation."

More information: What is shiatsu?

In Japanese shiatsu means finger (shi) pressure (atsu). Shiatsu has its roots in ancient Japanese massage techniques and involves finger pressure, palm pressure, massage, stretching and other manual techniques targeted at 'acupoints' on the body. Shiatsu is similar to acupuncture in that it stimulates acupoints lying along the body's network of "energy pathways" (or meridians). However, it uses manual pressure rather than the needles used in acupuncture. The concept behind shiatsu is that "energy", referred to as "Ki" or "Qi" (pronounced "chi") should flow freely around the body along pathways known as meridians. If this flow is blocked, disease may occur. Shiatsu aims to unblock the flow of "Qi" around the body by stimulating the acupoints.

Shiatsu was developed from the ancient Japanese technique of Tui Na in the early 20th Century and was first introduced to the west in the 1970s. It falls within a wider category of 'Asian body work' techniques which use the acupressure points to manipulate the flow of "Qi" around the body. There are a number of branches and new forms of Asian body work and shiatsu which incorporate other techniques such as breathing, meditation and stretching. Some examples include:

Acupressure - a manual form of acupuncture

Helpline: 0845 123 23 10

Tui Na - dating back 4,000 years, from which modern shiatsu is derived. Very similar to shiatsu, but using massage-like manipulation of soft tissue in addition to acupoints. Tui Na massage is also used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)

Ohashiatsu - formulated by Ohashi in the 1970s, shiatsu with the addition of exercise and meditation

Watsu - developed in the 1980s, watsu is shiatsu practiced in warm water to support the joints and aid relaxation.

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What happens in a shiatsu session?

- A shiatsu session is usually an hour in length.
- For the first visit the shiatsu therapist will ask questions about medical history, health, diet and lifestyle.
- Treatment is generally carried out on a futon-style mattress which is low down on the floor. If clients cannot lie down then shiatsu can be practiced sitting up.
- Clients keep their clothes on throughout the session and are advised to wear loose-fitting comfortable clothes.
- During the session therapists may apply pressure to the body using their thumbs, palms, fingers, knees, elbows and feet.
- At the end of a session clients are advised to drink water and relax for a while before returning to normal activities.

What are the providers' claims?

The central concept of shiatsu is to enable "energy" to flow around the body more easily and to support the body in its ability to rebalancing. Shiatsu is given to treat the whole person rather than treat specific symptoms in isolation. Practitioners may offer shiatsu to people with cancer to enhance wellbeing and to cope more easily with the side effects of cancer and its treatment.

What do people who have had shiatsu say about it?

people, but more research would be needed to see if these results

One descriptive (qualitative) study looked at shiatsu offered through a palliative day care centre. Some of the participants were people with cancer. Participants were asked to describe the effects of shiatsu. Overall, people were very positive reporting increases in energy levels, better relaxation, increased feelings of confidence, better symptom control, better mobility, improved clarity of thought and a restoration of wellbeing. Some participants concluded that shiatsu can be a valuable treatment to help those in palliative care "claim back their life" and manage the symptoms of their disease. This study gives a very good insight into the experience of shiatsu for a small number of

Are there any legal issues?

represent the general population.

Shiatsu in the UK is not centrally regulated and practitioners are not required by law to hold any qualification. However, a number of professional organisations offer training and accreditation, and the General Shiatsu Council (for contact details see below) is working towards a common set of standards for training and regulation of shiatsu therapists.

How much does it cost?

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Shiatsu therapy can cost between £25 and £60 per hour. Some UK hospitals and cancer care centres offer shiatsu free of charge eg Penny Brohn Cancer Care.

What is the evidence?

In comparison to other complementary therapies shiatsu is poorly researched. There are no Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) and only one very small controlled clinical trial of nine people, which concluded that whilst physical symptoms were not reduced significantly in this trial, it did greatly reduce anxiety levels.

More research has been done in the wider field of Asian body work. A high quality Cochrane review of RCTs found that stimulation of the P6 point on the wrist helped

relieve nausea and vomiting. Also, a recent Cochrane review has found some weak, but positive results for the use of acupressure for relieving breathlessness in advanced stages of cancer. However, this research is not an investigation of shiatsu as a whole and clearly more research is needed before a conclusion can be reached. A full list of references used to write this sheet, including the research literature, is available upon request from our helpline.

Is shiatsu safe?

If practiced by a suitably trained therapist who is experienced at working with people with cancer, shiatsu is considered to be safe. Those with the following conditions are advised to check with their GP before receiving shiatsu: low platelet count, osteoporosis, fever, or those in the first three months of pregnancy.

Other sources of information

Organisations that offer support and information for people with cancer

Cancer Research UK Tel: 0808 800 4040 www.cancerresearchuk.org

NHS Direct Tel: 08 45 46 47 www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support Tel: 0808 808 0000 www.macmillan.org.uk Other organisations who offer information on complementary therapies

NHS Evidence www.evidence.nhs.uk

CAMLIS www.cam.nhs.uk

National organisations that represent shiatsu

General Shiatsu Council Email: info@generalshiatsucouncil.org

From here you can find links to reputable organisations that certify shiatsu therapists

Contact us:

Helpline 0845 123 23 10 (Weekdays 9.30am to 5.00pm, 24-hour answerphone)

Email: helpline@pennybrohn.org

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Statement

Our information and research is designed to help you make informed choices about the services that we provide. From time to time, for illustrative purposes, we may make reference to commonly available products (such as relaxation CDs and popular self-help books). We do not endorse or advertise the use of any specific product.

Disclaimer:

While we make every effort to use up-to-date and reliable sources, we cannot accept liability for errors in the sources that we use and also cannot guarantee to find all the information relevant to your enquiry or request. All responsibility for interpretation of and action upon that information rests with you. This information and advice is offered on the understanding that if you intend to support your treatment with complementary or alternative approaches then it is advisable to consult your medical team to ensure that they have a complete understanding of your situation and the complementary or alternative approach that you are considering.

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Certified member

This organisation has been certified as a producer of reliable health and social care information.

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