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San Diego Wellness Examiner

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Pain relief options part 4

July 14, 9:35 AM

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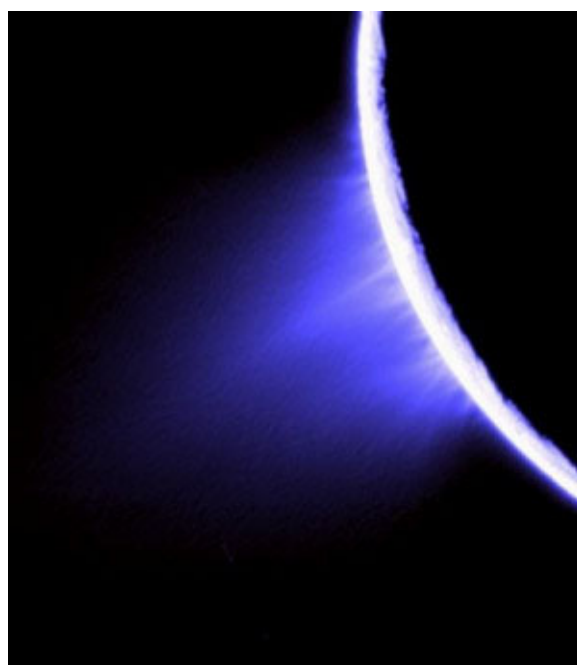


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In this last article in the pain relief options series, we end with energetic and emerging therapies. Energy medicine is defined by National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine ([NCCAM](#)) as being of two types: *veritable* and *putative*.

Veritable energy is defined as mechanical energy such as sound waves and vibrations.

Putative energy (also referred to as "*biofield*") is based on the idea that humans have a refined life energy. So far, measurement of this energy is elusive, although quantum theory in physics may go a ways to define it as well as explain why it's so difficult to measure. **Energy medicine** aims to correct an imbalance of life force (dis-ease) and seeks to integrate body, mind, and spirit to balance (ease).



AP photo NASA

Examples of **veritable energy healing** involves music therapy, Tibetan bowls, magnetic therapy, and light therapy to name a few. **Putative energy healing** modalities include those listed in more detail below and deal with concepts such as qi, prana, resonance, ki, and dosha.

- **Acupuncture:** A 3,000 year old therapy using tiny needles inserted along points in the body that correspond to pathways, or meridians, that are associated with organs. Western medicine claims effectiveness is achieved by stimulating "feel good" neurotransmitters; Chinese medicine practitioners claim to restore balance by manipulating "qi" or life-force energy
- **Awareness and qi gong** help relieve pain through breath and movement ; by moving energy and centering. Is very much a lifestyle practice to keep attention in the moment.
- **Craniosacral therapy** is a biodynamic therapy that focuses on the cerebral spinal fluid flow, and involves holding and release through awareness. It is [a practice](#) that helps guide the body to return to homeostasis
- **Healing touch:** Similar to Reiki in that light or no touch is used to sense tension, energetic imbalance and particular pathways of flow are used to restore balance, especially to the Chakra centers. Many holistic nurses are trained in and use this therapy. Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine in La Jolla has used this for patients before and after cardiovascular procedures to help with pain relief and healing.
- **Homeopathic:**
Discovered by Samuel Hahnemann in the 1800's based on the notion that what creates disease in a material form cures in a diluted form (diluted until no molecules of the original material are detectable). Remedies are chosen by symptom rather than by condition. Here are a few:
 - **Arnica** for bruises, trauma including emotional
 - **Aconite:** shocks sudden onset of symptoms
 - **Belladonna:** hot, red, fiery, fevers
 - **Rhus toxicendron:** pain made better with motion

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- **Ruta graveolens**: pain made worse with motion
- **Apis mellifica**: rashes and skin outbreaks better with cool application
- **Magnesia phos**: muscle strain/pain
- **Calcacera phos**: tooth pains or teething pains in babies
- **Chamomila**: colic, restlessness

▪ **Mental pain and anguish: Relief through flower remedies**

Bach flower remedies: Dr. Edward Bach from England noticed that these subtle homeopathic remedies have a powerful effect on the mind. Unlike homeopathic remedies, Bach flowers (or other flower remedies) work on mental/emotional issues, not physical. Here are a few:

- **Mimulus**: known fears
- **Aspen**: unknown fears rock rose fear/hardness
- **Star of Bethlehem**: shocks
- **White chestnut**: recurring/circular thoughts
- **Walnut**: big transitions of any sort

Advantages: non toxic, do not interfere with other medications/therapies, gentle but effective if right remedy; “X” and “C” refer to homeopathic dilution/potency. The X scale is 1:10; the C scale is 1:100 so the “C” scale is always the more potent dose. lower potencies used for acute conditions; higher potencies used for more chronic conditions

Cautions: may be difficult to choose the correct remedy; sometimes symptoms worsen slightly before getting better; can be confusing to know remedy and dose

- **Reiki**: A Japanese [therapy](#) using “laying on of hands” moving the life force to enhance well being and clear blocks and reduce pain. Upcoming/emerging therapies

Around the corner:

A new drug for those who have cardiovascular disease and arthritis that combines naproxen (an NSAID) and nitrous oxide (NO) shown to relieve pain and inflammation with less cardiovascular harm than has been found in other arthritis pain relievers such as Celebrex, Bextra and Vioxx. An over the counter source of NO is **L-arginine** that has been recommended to help dilate blood vessels and lower inflammation in those with heart disease. [Phytodolor](#) is a European combination preparation of three types of tree bark that has shown in numerous studies to be *as effective as ibuprofen* (an NSAID).

On the horizon:

[Genetic profiling](#) to custom fit drugs/therapies: local San Diego centers include [Scripps](#) research institute; [Pathway Genomics](#)

[Biologic therapy](#) harnesses the power of the immune system to fight changes that cause pain. Current biologic therapies being used suppress the TNF (tumor necrosis factor) that can cause pain and inflammation (Enbrel and Remicade for rheumatoid arthritis). Since these treatments have been introduced, doctors think that the treatment goal in rheumatoid arthritis is remission, not just slowing disease progression.

[Ion channel blocking](#), receptor blocking for neuropathy pain ([ion channels](#) are energy gradients in all living tissue).

For more info:

When it comes to pain relief, you do have options and many times lifestyle shifts will result in enhanced well being and less pain. Use these as discussion guides with your care givers:

[Part 1: Topical methods for pain relief](#)

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