

Helderberg Health



Monthly Newsletter

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Welcome to the March edition of our newsletter, which will be issued two-monthly from now on.

We hope everyone has survived the recent heat wave.

The South African weather service in Cape Town has confirmed that the high temperature in Cape Town on Tuesday was the highest ever recorded when it climbed to 42°C.



If you know of anyone who could benefit from Bowen, please suggest they try Bowen Therapy in conjunction with any medical assistance they may already be undertaking.

Please feel free to pass this Newsletter on to all your friends that are interested in health related topics.

Good health, harmony and happiness

THE BOWEN HELDERBERG TEAM
Marion, Lauraine and Renate



The Original Bowen Technique

BOWEN for Stress

by Sandra Gustafson

Stress! Just hearing or reading the word elicits an immediate, internal response! We can all relate to it, mostly in a negative sense, of “something” that is undesirable and overwhelming.

Stress responses, in short bursts, are normal reactions that enhance our ability to manage intense situations. Adrenaline, released from the adrenal glands, increases the heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate and blood sugar – all designed to get oxygenated blood to muscles, to either “fight” the offending situation, or take “flight” and get away as quickly as possible. This is known as a Sympathetic Nervous System Response. Once the threat has been overcome or removed, the calming effect of the Parasympathetic Response settles the body back into equilibrium again.



Chronic stress leads to abnormal levels of hormones being secreted into the bloodstream for prolonged periods, mainly cortisol from the adrenal glands, which can adversely affect brain function, particularly memory and sleep. High levels of cortisol also affect two important parts of the brain that control all other hormones in the body – the hippocampus and the hypothalamus, which in turn affects our “Master gland” - the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland controls the thyroid gland, the adrenal gland and kidneys, the sexual glands and many other regulating mechanisms that control healthy metabolism.

Stress can have many long-term effects on the body and one’s sense of wellbeing. It affects mood and energy levels, lowers immunity to infection, accelerates the aging process and inflammation in the body, increases the risk of stroke and heart-attack, stomach ulcers, osteoporosis, and can lead to unhealthy lifestyle behaviour such as poor diet, increased alcohol and medication consumption and cigarette smoking. In addition many stress-affected people find themselves gaining weight, particularly around the middle, despite trying to cut back on calories and increasing exercise – which are helpful counter-measures, but may not be enough to offset the hormonal changes affecting the body’s metabolism.



Bowenwork for stress.

Many stressed-out people feel achy and stiff in their muscles and joints, their posture changes under the burden of their situations, which in turn leads to feeling burned out, and the cycle of pain is exacerbated.

Bowen Technique is a unique and unusual form of soft-tissue bodywork that is very effective in relaxing muscle tension and reducing the body's stress levels. It is a gentle neuromuscular technique that resets the nervous system, helping to restore calmness and deep relaxation throughout the whole body.

By applying light rolling moves over specific muscles and areas of the body, signals are sent, via the nervous system to the brain, to reorganize the dysfunctional tension patterns in the body. Sets of moves are followed by two to five minute delays, where the practitioner leaves the client relaxing on the table and allows for the body to integrate the effect of the work. This leads to deeper breathing, slower heart rate, improved blood circulation to the tissues and the removal of waste fluids via the lymphatic system.



When the nervous system relaxes, the adrenal glands reduce the amount of adrenaline and cortisol they are producing, which in turn sends signals to the brain and the rest of the hormone system to start returning to a point of balance. Pain levels can be reduced significantly and people report feeling more flexible, sleeping better, and are much more energetic for days after a session. The effect of a Bowenwork session can be quite profound and can last far longer than many other bodywork techniques. Many clients only need 2 –3 sessions, one week apart initially, and then a tune up once a month or when they feel the effects of stress returning.

Recent Case Study:

A woman in her mid 50's came to my office for Bowen to help with weight loss, bladder weakness and sleep issues. This lady is an administrative assistant and spends most of her day in front of a computer, working for a demanding boss. When she lay or sat in certain positions, she would get tingling and numbness in her hands. She was about 20 pounds overweight and felt too tired to exercise after work, so physical activities were limited to occasional walks on the weekends. In her 40s, she'd had a total hysterectomy and ever since then, she needed to go to the bathroom at least 3 times during the night, and had occasional incontinence. When I assessed her, she had significant tightness in her neck and shoulders.

In the first Bowen session, I focused on general relaxation and supporting her kidneys and adrenal glands. She was surprised at how she almost fell asleep during the session, even though the amount of work I did on her was minimal with very light pressure.

A week later she returned and reported to me that on the night of the last session, she had slept throughout the entire night! She woke up feeling very energized and was able to take a walk for a couple of evenings after work, and the tingling and numbness in her hands had not bothered her. I did one more Bowen session on her and asked her to keep in touch with me, to let me know how she felt. The next day, she was back to the office, specifically to tell me how much better she was feeling, her bladder problem was gone, and she was not feeling nearly as stressed at work, even though her employer was still demanding.

5 Ways to Simplify Your Life

by Jodie Hebbard

My past two years have been a journey toward leading a much simpler life. I didn't even realize when I started this personal journey that simplicity was even a goal. But as I opened my eyes and followed my heart, knowing that some central thing in my life needed to change, I realized that I was working to shed the unnecessary in many areas of my life.

What I came to realize was that many of the things closest and nearest to me were holding me back. This can be a painful and disarming realization, as it's hard to wrap your head around the fact that you are attached to something that is not serving you.

But it's also an empowering revelation: you and you alone are the designer of your life. It's amazing how we as humans tend to make things so much more complicated for ourselves. Why? It's usually when our egos get involved.

If you look at some of the happiest people in the world, it's not the concrete things that are bringing them joy. It's about a lifestyle and way of being. And this way of being involves recognizing things for what they are, in the present moment, without the need to overcomplicate things.

Once I came to realize that my calling was leading me to *simplify*, everything started to feel so much clearer to me. The irony, however, is that just because something is simple doesn't mean it's a cinch. In fact, the quest to simply requires effort — specifically, the effort to tend away from our human impulse to complicate.

During my time "finding myself," I travelled to Mexico for a few months, and found the simple house on the beach that I had always dreamed of. It was beautiful and all that I desired, but I missed home. I had put pressure on myself to live in a certain way in order to simplify, but realized that real simplicity is about appreciating things the way they are. In the present.



Here are five tips to start radically simplifying your life.

1. Evaluate your relationships and those that are draining you.

Ask yourself how you feel when you are with the people in question. Do they encourage and uplift you, or do they suck your energy and/or make you feel bad about yourself?

In the transition to simplifying your life, it's important to recognize that your friends and others in your network should help you thrive. Your life doesn't have the space for people who are depleting you. Simplify your social life, and you'll find that your relationships serve your life, rather than causing you further stress. That's how it should be!

2. Disconnect — fully — for one hour a day (at least).

I'm talking no phone, no email, no tablet. No distractions. I don't have to rehash all the negative effects that technology is having on our bodies and our society at large. And yet we all still need to be reminded to take a "digital detox." The first and the last thing most of us do in the day is check our email. It's time to disconnect so we can reconnect with our bodies and ourselves.

You can enjoy the digital detox time solo, or go out with friends, but make a commitment to turn it all off and enjoy the life that is happening right now around you, and not through the filter of Instagram.

3. Sweep every corner of your home.

I am not only talking about using a broom, but also the metaphor "to sweep." Take inventory of your home, do a full sweep. Declutter anything that isn't necessary or that isn't actively making you feel comfortable, clean, inspired and happy. If you have things in your home that make you feel sad or bad about yourself, nix them. Your home is your sanctuary. So treat it that way.

4. Get really, really quiet.

I know a lot of people have resistance when they hear the word "meditate." But the list of scientifically-proven benefits of sitting to just *be* continues to grow.

When I first started mediating, I was definitely met with a wall of resistance. Of course, this wall was created for me by my own mind. I couldn't sit still. My back would start to hurt and my thoughts would keep coming, incessantly and aggressively. So I told myself I wasn't good at meditating, and that I should just give it up.

But those judging thoughts completely defeat the purpose of mediating, so I kept trying. Each day I committed to simply sitting still without judgment. Some days were easier than others. But I let my ego go, and I got super still. And with enough practice, I realized how simple (but not easy!) it was.

So start small: commit to just five minutes of silence and stillness each day. Without judgment.

5. Shred your "To Do" list, and make an "I Want" list.

I used to focus solely on my to do list. All day. All night. All of the things — big and small — that I was "supposed to do" tormented me. On my spiritual journey, I suddenly realized: "Why do I need to feel tormented?" It was so simple: I could just get rid of my to do list. This didn't mean I wouldn't do the things I needed to get done. But I could literally choose to remove a huge amount of anxiety from my life.

Instead, I started to take note of those things that made my heart smile, the things that took no effort to make me happy. In lieu of my stressful to do list, I created a list of things I wanted in my life. The mere act of focusing on my desires means that I now dedicate more time to those things.

Be spontaneous and leave the laundry for another day. Today, do something that you love to do instead. It's so simple.

How to Avoid Chemicals in Air Fresheners

Air freshener isn't actually freshening anything at all. Air fresheners work by spraying a whole bunch of chemicals that simply mask the smelly air, while creating a toxic cocktail that potentially seeps into our lungs and skin.

Here are four of the chemicals to watch out for in any of your home or car air fresheners:

1. Fragrance

Fragrance is an umbrella term and can include many, many chemicals that are mixed together, usually to mask the smell of the other toxins in the product. And the kicker? Those individual chemicals don't have to be listed on the label, making it challenging for us consumers to actually figure out what we're smelling or slathering on our skin.

How fragrance harms your health: According to the Environmental Working Group, fragrance is linked to allergies, asthma and other respiratory concerns, hormone disruptions and may be linked to reproductive issues.



2. Formaldehyde

Formaldehyde is a chemical used in many household products and building materials. It's also used as a fungicide, disinfectant and preservative in medical labs.

How formaldehyde harms your health: Immediate reactions might include skin irritations, coughing, burning in the eyes, nose and throat, or nausea. But the long-term effects can be much more grave. The Environmental Protection Agency says that chronic exposure can be linked to allergic contact dermatitis, respiratory lesions and even cancer. More specifically, the National Cancer Institute outlines studies where researchers have found links between formaldehyde and leukaemia.

3. BHT

Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT) is an additive found in a wide variety of processed foods, but it's also used in cosmetics, cleaning products and in petroleum products (um, do you want to eat your jet fuel?).

How BHT harms your health: The David Suzuki Foundation outlines a wide range of effects BHT can have on us. It can potentially damage the liver and kidneys. It can mimic the effects of oestrogen and inhibit male sex hormones, and it can promote the growth of tumours.

4. Acetaldehyde

While this compound is found in nature and is produced by the body, it's also used synthetically in perfumes and dyes, as a preservative in fruit and fish, and as a solvent in the rubber, tanning and paper industries.

How acetaldehyde harms your health: This ingredient, according to the EWG, is connected to allergies, asthma, cancer and skin and respiratory irritation, plus it may cause problems to our reproductive systems.

Nontoxic Air Freshener Alternatives

Of course, as I said, no wants to sit or drive around in a stink pit. There are amazing natural options that won't give you cancer, or impair the reproductive development of your unborn child. Here are just a few:

1. Start where odour starts.

Discover what's making your environment so stinky — dirty laundry, a messy sink, a household pet that rolled around in the mud — and clean it up (using nontoxic cleaners, of course).

2. Crank open a window.

If something is smelly, use nature's air freshener — actual fresh air! You'll be surprised at how a real breeze — not a fake 'Tropical Breeze' can improve odours.

3. Use essential oils.

Many of them are naturally antifungal and anti-bacterial. Pop your favourite into a diffuser and let that goodness circulate in your home instead. If you're in a car, simple adding a few dabs in discreet places like on the dash, under the seats where they won't make direct contact with clothing, or on the roof can be very helpful. Bonus, you can even use oils like peppermint, bergamot or lavender which will freshen the air while also warding off motion sickness. Other awesome oil options would include white fir, pine, cedar, or even lemon grass.

4. Make your own sprayable air freshener:

As you'll often find in yoga studios, you can make your own natural disinfectant surface or air spray. Just add a few drops of your favorite essential oil, mix with water in a spray bottle. Shake before spraying. All good!

5. Get down with baking soda.

Use a good old box of baking soda. Seriously. Place some baking soda in a dish and leave it out. Sodium bicarbonate has the natural ability to pull odours out of the air.

<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/>

