

Kinesiology

As well as keeping your body toned and strong, muscles may reveal hidden ailments and hold the answers to improving wellbeing

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You consider yourself in good health, but quietly put up with niggles such as intermittent neck pain, headaches, tiredness or bloating. You've no idea what the cause is so you battle on, despite your ailments subtly taking the edge off life. Wouldn't it be wonderful, then, if your body could somehow tell you what's going on and how to fix it? That's precisely what kinesiology (pronounced kin-easy-ology) seeks to do. A gentle, hands-on holistic therapy, it aims to find the imbalances that are causing your symptoms. Its unique selling point? It also claims to find the best way to correct them. 'No other system seems to accurately recognise imbalances in your body and identify treatment protocol,' explains London-based kinesiologist Marcia Fletcher.

THE BASIC IDEA

Kinesiology works on the premise that your muscles, organs and systems of the body (lymphatic, nervous and circulatory) are all connected through energy pathways or

circuits. If a circuit is broken, imbalances occur. So assessing how effectively your muscle is working can reveal how well a corresponding part of your body is functioning and how a problem can be best rectified.

According to Fletcher, it's the muscle testing that distinguishes kinesiology from other therapies by 'accessing your hard drive of bodily information'. Kinesiologists believe they can help a seemingly endless list of ailments including asthma, digestive complaints, physical pain, allergies and emotional stress.

Like most complementary therapies, kinesiology acts responsibly, looking for and treating underlying problems such as stress and physical wear and tear that could lead to disease, rather than seeking to diagnose illness or cure life-threatening disorders.

Kinesiology is derived from the Greek word 'kineses', meaning motion, and is sometimes used in medical science to describe the study of muscles and body movement. But in the 1960s, US chiropractor Dr George Goodheart gave kinesiology a new meaning when he discovered that muscles could be treated by



Nutrients are placed on the body to help identify deficiencies

massaging other parts of the body that seemed unrelated. With his knowledge of acupuncture and chiropractic reflex points, he devised the theory of kinesiology, calling it applied kinesiology (AK). To practise AK today, you must be medically trained, so a doctor, dentist, chiropractor or osteopath.

A colleague of Dr Goodheart's was so keen to bring kinesiology to the masses, he soon developed a similar system, Touch for Health, for non-medical practitioners. Today, a plethora of branches have emerged, including creative, educational and health kinesiology. 'All vary slightly in how they restore balance, but all use muscle testing for assessment,' explains Joyce Couper of the Kinesiology Federation. The general term kinesiology is now used to describe all branches.

MUSCLE TALK

So how exactly do kinesiologists test muscles? The basic principle is steeped in physiology. 'When pressure is placed against a limb, it causes the muscle to stretch,' explains Couper. 'If the muscle is stretched too far, cells in the muscle send signals to the brain to contract and hold their position. This indicates a locked or strong muscle. If a muscle can't hold its position against pressure, it appears weak or unlocked.' In kinesiology, it's thought if your muscle stays locked when light pressure is applied, energy is flowing freely through your body, showing you're in good health. If the muscle unlocks and can't hold its position, it's thought to indicate there's a blockage or imbalance that's delaying or stopping this natural reflex.

Confused? Kinesiologists suggest you think about your reaction when you hear some bad news – your legs go weak. This response, they claim, indicates an emotional blockage in the message to the brain. According to Fletcher, the muscle tests can detect problems with structure such as your bones and tissues, emotional states and energy levels and bodily functions such as digestion. The test involves using light pressure to see how muscles react to certain stimuli such as nutrients.

Once the muscle tests have revealed problems and solutions, a kinesiologist will work on restoring balance.

Techniques include massage or light touch on reflex points, gentle structural realignment, emotional balancing and nutritional support.

'In one session, we can balance the body so that major imbalances disappear,' says Fletcher. 'But unless the client carries on the work at home, the balancing may be undone.' This can include dietary changes, nutritional supplements, exercises and general lifestyle changes.

As far as testimonials from clients go, kinesiology works. But the idea that a thought or a food can make a muscle lock or unlock, and that it can indicate an imbalance, has not been scientifically proven.

So what does the research say about its effectiveness? There's only a limited amount of clinical evidence, so many people in the conventional medical world dismiss it. But, as Couper points out, the treatment in kinesiology is always highly individual, so it's not an easy therapy to prove scientifically. However, proof may be on its way thanks to a research tool called MYMOP (measure yourself medical outcome profile) used in the NHS to measure the effectiveness of therapies. And last year, the Kinesiology Federation carried out such a study, and the results were impressive.

'It involved asking the client how they felt before and after treatment in a uniform and measured way,' says the research director

Ken Digby. The improvements in symptoms and wellbeing were similar to those of established therapies, such as homeopathy. The results will soon be published in the

journal *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, and with a larger study now in the pipeline, the future looks bright.

If you see a kinesiologist, make sure they've had the proper training and experience. If they belong to the Kinesiology Federation – an umbrella organisation for all branches in the UK – they'll have both.

'Kinesiology is renowned for uncovering and helping the underlying causes of health problems that are difficult to find by other means,' says Fletcher. So while a session can never replace a doctor's appointment, kinesiologists say it may well find something your doctor misses. [healthy](#)

● To find a kinesiologist near you, call the Kinesiology Federation on 0845 260 1094 or visit www.kinesiologyfederation.org.

● A typical consultation can cost anywhere from £25 to £75.

'She linked all my health problems'

put to the TEST



SUBJECT

Cara Furman

PROFESSION

healthy's art editor

AGE 28

Cara saw classical kinesiologist Marcia Fletcher,

at Natureworks in London.

Cara says: 'I'm generally healthy, but have my share of minor health complaints. When I heard kinesiology sorts out imbalances in your body, I was intrigued. My session started with a detailed chat on my medical and lifestyle history. Suddenly, my minor niggles seemed more major! I've had problems with digestion for nearly 20 years, including IBS, a slight lazy eye since birth and an operation on a knee ligament.'

'Marcia thought there may be a link between my main ailments, as they are all on the right side of my body. As I lay down, she asked me to raise my right arm and resist with the same light pressure she would be using to push my arm downwards. After testing my muscle worked properly, she used this test throughout to assess my imbalances. This included placing little tubes of nutrients on my stomach to discover deficiencies. When I touched my throat, the arm muscle test confirmed a thyroid problem. The tests also confirmed diet and emotional stress had caused a faulty ilio-caecal valve. This usually carries waste from the small to the large intestine, only mine was allowing toxins into my body, contributing to my eye, knee and digestive complaints.'

'Next came the rebalancing, which involved rubbing points on the right side of my body. Marcia then asked me to think of a problem that was bothering me while she rubbed points on my forehead for emotional stress release. The thought completely disappeared!'

'Finally, Marcia summed up the problems she'd found and suggested how I could finish correcting them with dietary changes, supplements and rubbing various points. I was amazed at how she linked all my health problems and will definitely follow her advice.'

● For an appointment, call 020 7629 2927 or visit www.findthecause.com.

