

A photograph showing a person lying on their back on a massage table, receiving a Bowen therapy massage. The therapist's hands are positioned on the person's lower back. The person is wearing a white towel. The therapist is wearing a dark blue polo shirt. The background is a warm, textured wall, possibly made of bamboo or rattan. A potted plant is visible in the background.

ALTERNATIVE  
MEDICINE

# BOWEN THERAPY

THE BTPA

## THE HISTORY OF BOWEN

The founder of the Bowen Technique, Tom Bowen (1916 – 1982) was born in Brunswick, Australia. He started by treating the injuries, aches and pains of local sportsmen, friends and family and colleagues in Geelong. He had a particular interest in back pain and in the 1960s, he opened his own clinic and developed the therapy.

During the 1970s, the Webb Report (Australian Government Report into Complementary Therapies) found that Tom Bowen was treating 13,000 people a year. The Bowen technique is now being taught to final year university students of Osteopathy in Australia.

## WHAT IS BOWEN?

Bowen Therapy is an alternative complementary therapy which has over the last 20 years become the treatment of choice for people worldwide. The Bowen technique is a drug-free, non-invasive, hands-on remedial therapy which can be administered through light clothing, with the client sitting, standing or lying. Releasing stress at a very deep level, it then stimulates the body to realign, addressing imbalances in functions and chemical composition and, restoring physiological equilibrium. It prides itself on being able to trigger the body's own healing systems. Bowen can help with a wide range of conditions, physical and emotional, and is suitable for all ages, from new-born babies to the elderly and infirm.

## HOW THE TREATMENT WORKS

With primarily fingers and thumbs, the Bowen practitioner makes small, rolling movements over muscles, tendons, ligaments and soft tissue at precise points on the body, using only the amount of pressure appropriate for that individual. No hard-tissue manipulation or force is needed or used.

Rather than 'making' the body change, Bowen 'asks' the body to recognise and make the changes it requires. Between each set of moves, the body is allowed to rest for a few minutes, to allow it to absorb the information it has received and initiate the healing process. Each session lasts between 30-60 minutes, depending on the age of the client and the nature of their condition. Many clients become so relaxed they fall asleep during the treatment.

Short-term (acute) injury may be resolved in one to three Bowen treatments, while long-standing (chronic) conditions may require longer. A gap of five to ten days is recommended between Bowen sessions, so that the body can process the subtle information it has been given. It is advised that clients do not have other hands-on therapies while receiving Bowen, as this can confuse the body's response and inhibit the healing process.

## WHO BENEFITS FROM BOWEN?

This remarkable technique can be quick and effective in helping people that suffer from the following ailments:

- Muscular and skeletal problems in neck, shoulder, hip, knees, ankle and back, including sciatica
- Frozen shoulder, tennis and golf elbow, R.S.I. (Repetitive Strain Injury) and carpal tunnel
- Whiplash and sports injuries
- Problems with posture and body alignment
- Migraine and recurring headaches
- Bell's Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease and the difficulties suffered by stroke victims
- Respiratory, bronchial and related conditions such as hay fever and asthma
- Digestive problems such as IBS
- Arthritis
- Hormonal, pregnancy and fertility problems
- Stress management, ME, fatigue and sleep problems.

The BTPA (Bowen Therapist Professional Association) the principal registering body for Bowen practitioners have carried out a number of studies over the years on the effectiveness of Bowen Therapy.

A study into the effects of Bowen Technique on Knee Pain and Ankle Pain was conducted between June and August 2009. 110 clients received treatments, of which 69 per cent reported a partial recovery and 19 per cent reported a full recovery. The cause of ankle joint pain is often associated with an imbalance in the muscle tensions around the leg or foot. Bowen Therapy is thought to provide a trigger that the body uses to reset muscle spindle length, reducing the tightness within the muscles and tendons, and easing compression on surrounding tissues, such as blood vessels

and nerves. Pain relief occurs as the body's natural healing mechanisms are stimulated.

BTPA also carried out research on migraines over a six week period; each participant received three Bowen treatments. The participants had all been suffering Migraines for at least ten years, some for over 30. The results were very positive; of the 39 participants in the programme, 31 volunteers reported an improvement in their migraine condition.

Bowen can provide fast and effective pain relief and in some cases permanent correction that can last up to two years.

A study into the effect of Bowen Therapy on shoulder or neck pain was conducted in the summer of 2008. 271 clients new to Bowen were treated and of these 86% showed a full or partial recovery after only 3 treatments. Shoulder and neck pain can be particularly debilitating especially where there is restriction as in adhesive capsulitis or frozen shoulder. It can also be linked to emotional problems and where the client is experiencing particularly stressful situations. Shoulder and neck pain can be linked to RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) and carpal tunnel problems which are conditions that can respond well to Bowen Therapy.

Another study into the effects of Bowen Therapy on Back Pain was conducted in June 2007. The outcome was on the whole very satisfying, not to mention revealing, with almost 90% of treatments given resulting in either a complete or partial recovery. By triggering a re-balancing of the muscles around the lumbar and pelvic areas, Bowen Therapy may help to stabilize a weak area, reduce compression around the nerve roots or improve circulation to the spinal discs, muscles and joints. Bowen therapy helps to reduce pain and also improve range of movement throughout the body.

To find a Bowen Therapist in your area, visit [bowendirectory.com](http://bowendirectory.com)

## WHERE TO GO FOR BOWEN?

To undergo Bowen therapy from accredited, trained Bowen practitioner it is best to search for a member of the Bowen Therapy Professional Association. BTPA-approved establishments, have certificates in Anatomy and Physiology and First Aid, have professional insurance and have undertaken continuing professional development (CPD). BTPA has a 'find a therapist' list available to people seeking a qualified practitioner on their website

[www.bowen-therpay.co](http://www.bowen-therpay.co)

## HOW TO TRAIN IN BOWEN THERAPY

There are a number of Bowen Therapy training schools in the UK.

Bowen Training

Telephone: 0700 269 8324

[office@bowentraining.co.uk](mailto:office@bowentraining.co.uk)

[www.bowentraining.co.uk](http://www.bowentraining.co.uk)

The Bowen School for  
Healthcare Professionals

[info@thebowenschool.com](mailto:info@thebowenschool.com)

[www.thebowenschool.com](http://www.thebowenschool.com)

Details of the Bowen Therapy courses can be obtained directly from each of these schools and whichever route a student decides to take. Completion of any of these courses will get them well on their way to being able to join the BTPA register, providing a list of professional, accredited Bowen Therapists to the general public. Full members who have completed all the requirements for the BTPA register will also be eligible to join the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council's (CNHC) register for complementary therapists that are recognised by the NHS.

For further information on Bowen Therapy visit [www.bowen-therpay.co](http://www.bowen-therpay.co)