

## Reiki Offers Relief to Alzheimer's Patients



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***By Ilona Udvari***

Reiki is a natural, gentle, powerful, yet non-invasive method of healing that is passed from practitioner to client by means of gentle touch. This ancient Japanese healing art originated many thousands of years ago and was brought to this country in the early 1900s by holy man and scientific scholar Mikao Usui. Since that time, Reiki has grown rapidly in popularity as an excellent form of complimentary and alternative medicine.

The results of a recent IARP survey (International Association of Reiki Professionals) of American hospitals indicated that many major hospitals are now using Reiki for its therapeutic benefits both pre- and post-surgery, and for patients suffering from stress and other disorders such as anxiety, sleeplessness, pain, nausea, and fatigue. Reiki has been found to be extremely beneficial in every aspect of healing, not only on a physical level, but also on psychological, emotional, and spiritual levels as well. Utilizing life force energy, the component of which we are all made, it enhances the body's natural power to heal and maintain itself. Not only can it be used to promote healing of virtually any illness, it has been used to mend bone and tissue and aid with the side effects of anesthesia, radiation treatment, and chemotherapy. It has also been found to reduce the need for medication and shorten hospital stays. Because this diverse energy is such an effective, integrative medical tool, it is being used in many major hospitals, clinics and other health care facilities around the world with great success.

Many nurses, physicians, and outside practitioners have begun to provide Reiki services to enhance patient care. Patients who are

emotionally stressed or terminally ill and their families have reported a deep sense of relaxation and inner peace when their care was facilitated with this versatile treatment. Further, Reiki has been extremely beneficial in calming patients with dementia, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's disease.

Therese Silva Johnson is a certified gerontologist (the study of the phenomenon of aging) who was the owner-operator and administrator of a six-bed, 24-hour care home that specializes in the care of Alzheimer's (dementia) patients. Johnson notes that initial symptoms begin subtly. An individual may show signs of personality change, memory loss, poor judgment, mood swings, or agitation. Initiative lessens and the ability to learn new things becomes difficult. As the disease progresses, victims develop difficulties with speech and communication, movement and coordination. In the latter stages total confusion and disorientation result in the patient having to rely completely on a caregiver for daily function. The brain continues to degenerate and ultimately results in great difficulty walking, talking, swallowing, controlling bladder and bowel function, etc. As a result, victims can become quite frail and prone to infections such as pneumonia. These conditions of course, are extremely distressful not just for those afflicted, but for caregivers as well.

Johnson began employing short Reiki treatments lasting roughly 10 to 20 minutes. She would administer them as needed, for example at mealtime to facilitate feeding and cooperation with caregivers. She found patients became compliant and relaxed. As she experimented with these treatments she noted that although the disease progressed, her patients did not have to suffer the traditional degree of symptoms of anxiety, agitation, pain, and physical discomfort. Pacing and wandering were drastically reduced. Paranoia began to subside. The mere placing on of hands allowed patients to become completely relaxed, more present, and lucid. Wounds healed in half the time with daily 5-10 minute Reiki treatments. Johnson found that even those patients who normally resisted different kinds of touch (bathing, dressing, grooming, etc.) welcomed and even asked for Reiki. Reiki can even be given as a long distance treatment for those with special needs.

Excited by the successful results Johnson was obtaining, she decided to spread the news of the Reiki technique by developing an Alzheimer's Reiki research program. She presently is practicing Reiki full-time to develop a concise Reiki therapy plan

to be used by Alzheimer's caregivers. The purpose of this plan is to benefit Alzheimer's patients and those who care for them by reducing or eliminating deleterious symptoms to extend the integrity of the afflicted. In this way, a higher quality of life is created for both patients and caregivers. With the use of Reiki therapy, Johnson has already enjoyed a great deal of success in reversing and/or arresting Alzheimer's disease in a select number of patients. For Alzheimer's patients, her research is dedicated to fostering the kind of care that will increase independent living and include the return of cognition, mobility, and socialization. Johnson also found that the limitlessness of treating with Reiki can also be useful to individuals who may suffer from similar symptom such as those who are challenged by obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, or mental illness. Being attuned to give Reiki treatments is a powerful pathway to helping others and maintaining one's own optimal health. The attunement itself takes only a few minutes, and with a little instruction, the student may begin using Reiki immediately. Whether you are a health care provider or you are just an individual committed to living your own life in a health conscious way, consider being attuned to Reiki. There is no better medicine than one that is preventative, restorative, and natural.

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