

craniosacral therapy for depression

Craniosacral Therapy for Depression: A Gentle Approach to Emotional Wellness

craniosacral therapy for depression is gaining attention as an alternative or complementary treatment for those seeking relief from the heavy burden of depressive symptoms. Unlike conventional treatments that primarily focus on medication or talk therapy, craniosacral therapy offers a hands-on, holistic approach that aims to restore balance within the body's subtle rhythms, potentially easing emotional distress in a gentle yet profound way.

Understanding Craniosacral Therapy and Its Connection to Depression

Craniosacral therapy (CST) is a type of bodywork developed by osteopathic physician John Upledger in the 1970s. It involves light touch techniques applied to the skull, spine, and pelvis to influence the flow of cerebrospinal fluid and enhance the function of the central nervous system. This therapy focuses on releasing restrictions in the craniosacral system, which encompasses the membranes and fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

But how does this connect to depression? Depression isn't just a chemical imbalance—it can also be influenced by physical tension, trauma, and disruptions in the nervous system. CST aims to promote relaxation and reduce stress by encouraging the body's natural healing processes. By gently easing physical restrictions, craniosacral therapy may help balance the autonomic nervous system, which governs the body's stress response. This, in turn, can create a sense of calm and emotional stability, which is crucial for those battling depression.

How Craniosacral Therapy Works for Emotional Healing

The power of craniosacral therapy lies in its subtlety. Practitioners use delicate palpation, often no more than the weight of a nickel, to sense the rhythm of the craniosacral system. When restrictions or imbalances are detected, the therapist applies gentle pressure to facilitate the release of tension. This process can lead to profound relaxation, improved circulation of cerebrospinal fluid, and enhanced nervous system function.

Many people report feeling a deep sense of peace and emotional relief during and after sessions. This relaxed state is conducive to reducing the symptoms associated with depression, such as anxiety, insomnia, and feelings of overwhelm. By supporting the body's inherent capacity to heal, craniosacral therapy can complement other therapeutic approaches, offering a holistic pathway toward emotional wellness.

The Role of the Nervous System in Depression and CST's Impact

One key reason craniosacral therapy may be effective for depression is its influence on the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS regulates involuntary functions like heart rate, digestion, and respiratory rate, and it has two main branches: the sympathetic nervous system (responsible for the "fight or flight" response) and the parasympathetic nervous system (which promotes "rest and digest").

In people experiencing depression, the sympathetic nervous system can be overactive, leading to chronic stress and heightened anxiety. Craniosacral therapy encourages activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, helping

to calm the mind and body. This shift can reduce stress hormones like cortisol and foster a more balanced mood state.

Integrating Craniosacral Therapy with Conventional Depression Treatments

It's important to recognize that craniosacral therapy is best used as a complementary treatment rather than a standalone cure for depression. Many individuals find that combining CST with traditional therapies such as psychotherapy, medication, or lifestyle changes yields the most effective results.

Mental health professionals often encourage a multi-modal approach because depression is multifaceted, with biological, psychological, and social components. Craniosacral therapy can help address the physical and energetic aspects of depression, providing a nurturing environment that supports emotional recovery.

What to Expect During a Craniosacral Therapy Session

If you're curious about trying craniosacral therapy for depression, it helps to know what a session typically looks like. During your appointment, you'll lie fully clothed on a massage table as the therapist gently places their hands on various areas of your head, neck, and back.

The touch is very light—often barely perceptible—and many clients describe the experience as deeply soothing, sometimes even meditative. Sessions usually last between 30 to 60 minutes, and some people notice immediate relief, while others experience gradual improvements over several visits.

Tips for Maximizing the Benefits of Craniosacral Therapy

To get the most out of craniosacral therapy for depression, consider integrating these supportive practices into your routine:

- **Maintain open communication:** Share your emotional state and any physical sensations with your therapist to help tailor the treatment to your needs.
- **Practice mindfulness:** Engaging in mindfulness or meditation can enhance the calming effects of CST and deepen emotional awareness.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water after sessions helps flush out toxins and supports overall healing.
- **Combine with healthy lifestyle habits:** Adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, and gentle exercise complement the therapeutic effects of CST.

Scientific Perspectives and Research on Craniosacral Therapy for Depression

While craniosacral therapy is increasingly popular, scientific research on its effectiveness for depression is still emerging. Some studies and clinical observations suggest that CST can reduce anxiety, improve mood, and enhance overall well-being. However, more rigorous, large-scale clinical trials are needed to confirm these findings definitively.

Despite the limited research, many individuals report subjective improvements

in their depressive symptoms after CST sessions. This highlights the importance of considering patient experience alongside scientific evidence when evaluating complementary therapies.

Potential Risks and Considerations

Craniosacral therapy is generally considered safe, as it is non-invasive and uses gentle touch. However, it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider before beginning any new treatment, especially if you have neurological conditions, recent head injuries, or other serious health concerns.

Additionally, craniosacral therapy should not replace prescribed medication or professional mental health care but rather serve as an adjunct to comprehensive treatment plans.

Exploring the Holistic Benefits Beyond Depression

Beyond the scope of depression, craniosacral therapy has been reported to aid with other emotional and physical conditions, such as:

- Chronic stress and anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Headaches and migraines
- Sleep disturbances
- Physical tension related to emotional trauma

By fostering a deep state of relaxation and promoting the body's self-correcting mechanisms, CST supports overall mental and physical health, making it a versatile tool in holistic wellness.

A Personal Journey: What Practitioners and Clients Say

Many craniosacral therapists describe their work as helping clients "find stillness within" and "release held trauma." Clients often share stories of feeling lighter, calmer, and more connected to their emotions after a course of treatments.

These personal accounts reinforce the idea that healing from depression is not just about managing symptoms but about nurturing the whole person—mind, body, and spirit.

Incorporating Craniosacral Therapy Into Your Wellness Routine

If you're considering craniosacral therapy for depression, start by consulting a licensed or certified CST practitioner with experience in mental health. Many therapists offer initial consultations to discuss your goals and develop a treatment plan tailored to your needs.

Remember, healing is a journey that often requires patience and openness to different methods. Craniosacral therapy invites you to slow down, listen to your body, and embrace a gentle path toward emotional balance.

Ultimately, craniosacral therapy offers a unique and compassionate avenue to explore alongside other treatments, opening doors to renewed hope and well-being for those facing the challenges of depression.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is craniosacral therapy and how is it used for depression?

Craniosacral therapy is a gentle, hands-on method that involves light touch to manipulate the craniosacral system, which includes the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It is used for depression by promoting relaxation, reducing stress, and potentially improving emotional well-being.

Is there scientific evidence supporting craniosacral therapy for treating depression?

Currently, scientific evidence supporting craniosacral therapy for depression is limited and mixed. Some small studies and anecdotal reports suggest benefits in reducing symptoms, but larger, well-controlled clinical trials are needed to confirm its effectiveness.

How does craniosacral therapy differ from traditional depression treatments?

Unlike traditional treatments such as medication or psychotherapy, craniosacral therapy is a complementary approach focusing on physical manipulation of the craniosacral system to enhance the body's natural healing. It is often used alongside conventional treatments rather than as a replacement.

Can craniosacral therapy be used as a standalone treatment for depression?

Craniosacral therapy is generally recommended as a complementary therapy rather than a standalone treatment for depression. It should be used alongside evidence-based treatments like psychotherapy or medication under the guidance of a healthcare professional.

What are the benefits of craniosacral therapy for people with depression?

Potential benefits include reduced anxiety and stress, improved mood, better sleep quality, enhanced relaxation, and a greater sense of emotional balance, which may contribute to alleviating depressive symptoms.

Are there any risks or side effects associated with craniosacral therapy for depression?

Craniosacral therapy is considered safe for most people when performed by a

trained practitioner. Side effects are rare but can include mild headaches, fatigue, or emotional release. It is important to consult with a healthcare provider before starting therapy.

How many craniosacral therapy sessions are typically needed to see improvement in depression symptoms?

The number of sessions varies depending on the individual, severity of symptoms, and treatment goals. Some people may notice improvements after a few sessions, while others may require ongoing treatment over several weeks or months.

Can craniosacral therapy be combined with other treatments for depression?

Yes, craniosacral therapy can be safely combined with other treatments like psychotherapy, medication, and lifestyle changes to provide a holistic approach to managing depression.

How do I find a qualified craniosacral therapist for depression treatment?

To find a qualified craniosacral therapist, look for practitioners certified by reputable organizations such as the Upledger Institute. It's also advisable to check their experience with depression treatment and consult your healthcare provider for recommendations.

Additional Resources

Craniosacral Therapy for Depression: Exploring an Alternative Approach to Mental Health

craniosacral therapy for depression has garnered increasing attention as a complementary treatment option for individuals grappling with mood disorders. As depression continues to affect millions worldwide, with the World Health Organization estimating over 280 million people living with depressive disorders, the search for effective, non-pharmacological interventions remains a priority. Craniosacral therapy (CST), a gentle, hands-on technique developed within the realm of osteopathy, purports to influence the central nervous system by manipulating the craniosacral rhythm—subtle movements of the cranial bones and spinal fluid. This article delves into the potential of craniosacral therapy for depression, examining its theoretical foundations, clinical evidence, and practical considerations.

Understanding Craniosacral Therapy

Originating in the 1970s through the work of John Upledger, craniosacral therapy is built upon the premise that the body's craniosacral system—which includes the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord—maintains a rhythmic pulsation essential for neurological health. Practitioners use light touch, often no more than the weight of a nickel, to detect and encourage the flow of cerebrospinal fluid, aiming to release

tension and improve physiological function.

Unlike more invasive manual therapies, craniosacral therapy is characterized by its subtlety and patient-centered approach. It is often sought for conditions involving chronic pain, stress, and emotional imbalances, including anxiety and depression. The technique's proponents suggest that by enhancing the nervous system's regulatory capacity, CST may help alleviate symptoms associated with mental health disorders.

Theoretical Foundations Linking CST to Depression Relief

Depression is a multifactorial disorder influenced by neurochemical imbalances, chronic stress, trauma, and psychosocial factors. Craniosacral therapy theorizes that restrictions within the craniosacral system can contribute to impaired nervous system function, affecting emotional regulation centers in the brain such as the limbic system and hypothalamus. By promoting fluid movement and relieving fascial restrictions, CST aims to restore homeostasis and reduce the physiological stress response.

Moreover, CST's gentle touch is believed to activate the parasympathetic nervous system—the branch responsible for rest and relaxation. Considering that depression often correlates with heightened sympathetic activity (the “fight or flight” response), interventions encouraging parasympathetic dominance could theoretically improve mood and reduce anxiety.

Evaluating the Evidence: Efficacy of Craniosacral Therapy for Depression

The scientific community remains divided regarding the efficacy of craniosacral therapy for depression, largely due to the paucity of large-scale, randomized controlled trials. While some studies and clinical reports suggest beneficial outcomes, methodological limitations such as small sample sizes and lack of control groups temper enthusiasm.

A 2010 pilot study published in the *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies* assessed the effects of CST on depression and found a reduction in depressive symptoms following treatment sessions. Participants reported feeling more relaxed and experiencing improved emotional balance. Nevertheless, these findings require validation through more rigorous research designs.

In comparison to established treatments like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or antidepressant medications, craniosacral therapy lacks robust empirical support but may serve as a complementary modality. Its low-risk profile and non-invasive nature make it appealing for patients seeking adjunctive relief without the side effects associated with pharmaceuticals.

Comparative Features and Considerations

When juxtaposed with other manual or body-centered therapies—such as massage therapy, acupuncture, or mindfulness-based stress reduction—craniosacral

therapy offers unique attributes:

- **Gentleness:** CST's light touch distinguishes it from more forceful manual interventions.
- **Focus on the nervous system:** Emphasizes modulation of cerebrospinal fluid and neurological function rather than muscular manipulation alone.
- **Session structure:** Typically lasting 30 to 60 minutes, CST sessions provide a calming, meditative experience.
- **Accessibility:** Requires trained practitioners, often osteopaths or licensed massage therapists with specialized CST certification.

However, some critics argue that CST's theoretical framework lacks anatomical plausibility, citing the minimal movement of cranial bones in adults. This skepticism underscores the importance of ongoing research to clarify its mechanisms and clinical value.

Integrating Craniosacral Therapy into Depression Treatment Plans

For patients and clinicians interested in exploring craniosacral therapy for depression, integration should be approached thoughtfully. CST is rarely recommended as a standalone treatment for moderate to severe depression but may complement psychotherapy, medication, and lifestyle interventions.

Practical Guidelines for Patients

- **Consult mental health professionals:** Before initiating CST, individuals should discuss their depressive symptoms with psychiatrists or psychologists to ensure a comprehensive treatment strategy.
- **Seek qualified practitioners:** Verify credentials and experience in craniosacral therapy, particularly with mental health applications.
- **Set realistic expectations:** Understand that CST may contribute to symptom relief but is not a cure-all.
- **Monitor progress:** Keep track of mood changes and overall well-being to assess therapy effectiveness.

Potential Benefits and Limitations

Patients report several subjective benefits from craniosacral therapy sessions, including:

- Reduced anxiety and tension
- Improved sleep quality
- Enhanced emotional clarity
- Increased sense of relaxation and well-being

Conversely, limitations to consider include:

- Lack of standardized protocols
- Variable practitioner skill levels
- Potential placebo effects influencing outcomes
- Insufficient evidence for long-term efficacy

Future Directions and Research Opportunities

As mental health care continues to evolve, interest in holistic and integrative therapies like craniosacral therapy is likely to grow. Future research endeavors should focus on:

- Conducting randomized controlled trials with larger participant pools
- Elucidating the neurophysiological mechanisms underlying CST's effects
- Comparing CST outcomes with other complementary therapies
- Assessing cost-effectiveness and patient satisfaction

Such studies would offer clearer guidance to practitioners and patients considering craniosacral therapy for depression management.

Ultimately, craniosacral therapy represents a promising yet still exploratory avenue within the broader landscape of depression treatment. Its emphasis on gentle manipulation and nervous system regulation aligns with growing recognition of the mind-body connection in mental health. While definitive conclusions await further investigation, craniosacral therapy may offer a valuable adjunct for those seeking holistic, patient-centered care.

Craniosacral Therapy For Depression

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researched resource on complementary and alternative therapies in rehabilitation. This renowned text, now in its Fourth Edition, relates the updated scientific evidence and the clinical efficacy of integrating what have now become well known complementary and alternative therapies in rehabilitation to successfully improve patient outcomes. This text has been developed to accompany university courses in complementary and alternative therapies, as a reference manual for clinical practices, and as a resource for those interested in the science behind holistic therapies. Holistic therapies are those therapies not commonly found in allopathic medicine that are intended to stimulate a therapeutic response from both the body - neuromusculoskeletal and cardiopulmonary systems - and the mind. Integrative Therapies in Rehabilitation, Fourth Edition by Dr. Carol M. Davis is particularly designed for those health professionals who want to understand the scientific foundation and peer reviewed research supporting complementary and alternative therapies. The Fourth Edition is divided into two parts. The beginning chapters describe the latest cellular biology science and explain the theories put forth on the overall mechanisms of action of the effect of these various therapies on the soft tissue, fascia and nervous systems. The first part also chronicles the advancement of scientific research in the various therapies since the 1980's to explain, in cellular physiology terms, the outcomes observed by using a number of holistic therapies. The second part presents various therapies commonly integrated with allopathic therapies in rehabilitation - body work therapies, mind/body therapies, and energy work therapies. The text describes each therapy with a history, cellular mechanism of action, and an up-dated reference section of the evidence of efficacy for the therapy as reported in the literature, often concluding with a case example. Integrative Therapies in Rehabilitation, Fourth Edition will be the go-to resource for health professionals to understand the scientific evidence and efficacy of complementary and alternative therapies for rehabilitation and improving patient outcomes.

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collects papers of a number of clinical psychiatrists all over the world, giving their contribution to the comprehension and clinical management of anxiety disorders. Following the previously edited book on anxiety, this new one will focus on some specific clinical issues such as PTSD, psychosomatics, and complementary approaches to anxiety management themes which were not discussed in the previous book.

craniosacral therapy for depression: *Craniosacral Therapy* Felicity Paulman, 2023-07-11 Have you ever experienced a feeling that you were bearing the burden of the entire world on your shoulders? Do you experience persistent pain or stress on a regular basis? If so, you're not alone. There are a lot of people who battle with mental or physical problems that might lower their overall quality of life. Craniosacral therapy is a method that is both compassionate and successful in its approach to resolving these issues and fostering healing from the inside out. Craniosacral therapy, in contrast to other forms of treatment such as talk therapy or touch therapy, is intended to function in conjunction with the natural healing processes of the body. This indicates that it may be useful in the treatment of a wide variety of conditions, ranging from persistent pain and stress to anxiety and depression. Additionally, it is risk-free for individuals of every age, from infants to senior citizens. But what exactly is meant by the term craniosacral therapy, and how does the treatment itself take place? This guide will help you out in those situations. We have compiled an extensive resource with the goal of assisting you in gaining an in-depth understanding of craniosacral treatment, including its origins, the underlying theory that underpins it, as well as its practical uses and possible advantages. In this Guide, we will talk about the following: What is Craniosacral Therapy? Benefits of Craniosacral Therapy Advantages and Disadvantages of Craniosacral Therapy Side Effects How Craniosacral Therapy Works Common Techniques Used In CranioSacral Therapy Use Cases Step Guide To Getting Started Craniosacral Therapy Session What to Expect During Craniosacral Therapy Things To Do and To Avoid After Craniosacral Therapy Craniosacral therapy could be just what you've been looking for if you've been looking for an approach to healing that is both non-invasive and holistic. This therapy can assist in the reduction of pain, improvement of mobility, and promotion of overall well-being by drawing on the body's innate capacity for healing. Continue reading to find out more information about craniosacral therapy and the benefits it may have for you. This book will provide all the facts you need to make an informed decision about whether or not craniosacral therapy is suited for you, regardless of whether you are completely unfamiliar with it or have been thinking about giving it a shot for some time. Therefore, take a cup of tea, make yourself comfy, and allow me to guide you through an introduction to the field of craniosacral treatment.

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chapters and the latest advances in neuroscience. - Comprehensive reference offers a thorough understanding of all aspects of neurological rehabilitation. - Expert authorship and editors lend their experience and guidance for on-the-job success. - UNIQUE! A section on neurological problems accompanying specific system problems includes hot topics such as poor vision, vestibular dysfunction, dementia and problems with cognition, and aging with a disability. - A problem-solving approach helps you apply your knowledge to examinations, evaluations, prognoses, and intervention strategies. - Evidence-based research sets up best practices, covering topics such as the theory of neurologic rehabilitation, screening and diagnostic tests, treatments and interventions, and the patient's psychosocial concerns. - Case studies use real-world examples to promote problem-solving skills. - Comprehensive coverage of neurological rehabilitation across the lifespan — from pediatrics to geriatrics. - Terminology adheres to the best practices, follows The Guide to Physical Therapy Practice and the WHO-ICF World Health model. - NEW! enhanced eBook on Student Consult. - UPDATED! Color photos and line drawings clearly demonstrate important concepts and clinical conditions students will encounter in practice. - NEW and EXPANDED! Additional case studies and videos illustrate how concepts apply to practice. - Updated chapters incorporate the latest advances and the newest information in neurological rehabilitation strategies. - NEW and UNIQUE! New chapter on concussion has been added. - Separate and expanded chapters on two important topics: Balance and Vestibular.

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rapid growth in childhood developmental disabilities (DD) treatments. It reviews current evidence-based treatments for common psychopathologies and developmental disorders and evaluates the strengths of the treatments based on empirical evidence. Spanning infancy through the transition to young adulthood, chapters provide definitions, etiologies, prevalence, typical presentation and variants, assessment and diagnostic information, and age considerations. Chapters also review established and emerging psychological approaches and pharmacotherapies for cognitive, behavioral, emotional, medical, academic, and developmental issues as diverse as mood disorders, the autism spectrum, memory problems, feeding disorders, Tourette syndrome, and migraines. The wide range of topics covered aids practitioners in working with the complexities of young clients' cases while encouraging further advances in an increasingly relevant field. Topics featured in this handbook include: An introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis. Parent training interventions. Treatment strategies for depression in youth. Assessment and treatment of self-injurious behaviors in children with DD. Treatment approaches to aggression and tantrums in children with DD. Interventions for children with eating and feeding disorders. The Handbook of Childhood Psychopathology and Developmental Disabilities Treatment is a must-have resource for researchers, graduate students, clinicians, and related therapists and professionals in clinical child and school psychology, pediatrics, social work, developmental psychology, behavioral therapy/rehabilitation, child and adolescent psychiatry, and special education.

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how to reduce toxic overload from mercury and chemicals • Includes life wisdom and coping strategies from others who suffer with MS Judy Graham is an inspiration. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when she was just 26 years old, 35 years later Judy Graham is still walking, working, and has successfully birthed and raised a son who is now an adult. In this totally revised and updated edition of her groundbreaking Multiple Sclerosis, first published in 1984, she shares the natural treatments that have helped her and many others with MS stabilize or even reverse the condition. Beginning with the effects of diet, she explains that many people with MS have been eating the wrong foods and shows which foods are “good” and “bad,” how to recognize food sensitivities, and how to correct nutritional deficiencies using dietary supplements. She also looks at reducing the body’s toxic overload, whether from mercury amalgam fillings, chemicals, or medications. She presents the exercises with proven benefits for MS she has found most reliable and appropriate, such as yoga, pilates, and t’ai chi, and explores alternative therapies that provide relief and support to the body’s efforts to control MS, including acupuncture, reflexology, shiatsu, reiki, and ayurveda. Most important are the insights she provides on the effects of negative thoughts on MS. She demonstrates how a positive mental attitude can actually slow down or even reverse the progression of this disease. Judy Graham is living proof that, as devastating as a diagnosis of MS is, life can still be lived to its fullest.

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craniosacral therapy for depression: Handbook of Complementary, Alternative, and Integrative Medicine Yaser Al-Worafi, 2025-06-17 The 52 chapters of Volume 5 focus on the evidence-based Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Medicine practice in terms of efficacy and safety for the management of most common diseases and conditions. Key Features: Describes the efficacy and safety of evidence-based Complementary, Alternative and Integrated Medicine from a disease-focused approach Presents up-to-date information on efficacy and safety of Complementary, Alternative and Integrated Medicine on the management of the most common diseases, which cover the whole body system such as psychiatric disorders, oncologic disorders and others Describes the efficacy and safety of evidence-based Complementary, Alternative and Integrated Medicine for special populations, services and care

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beginning to end, this book takes us on an entertaining romp through the many bodymind avenues, separating the woo-woo from real science and pointing the way toward using new paradigm therapies, detoxing our food and environment, forgiving and healing our relationships, understanding depression, staying young, and creating the reality we want to experience. Consciousness, mind, emotions, and God are all factored into the mix, resulting in a lot of beneficial advice and self-development insights that will empower us toward health, well-being, and feeling . . . Go(o)d.

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has no advantageous purpose to being closed. Open minds to the possibilities that bliss between medical science and naturopathic science have to offer is a freedom. Freedom is the knowledge of knowing what freedom is in order to attain it. One must open their mind to accept knowledge; discernment of that knowledge is a choice. Throughout this journey, you, accompanied by well documented medical science and naturopathic relief will be given great insight on Fibromyalgia, its symptoms and management to the fruition of freedom. You will learn about medical advancements in the study of Fibromyalgia inclusive of symptom and pain management techniques. You will learn the benefits of chiropractic care, acupuncture, deep tissue massage, tension point massage, reflexology, and more within the power of touch. You will learn the many forms of meditation that will help you to quiet brain chatter and relieve stress, how to mentally relieve muscle tightness and fatigue and how to use your mind to over-ride the tensions that seem to be a precursor pain. James Allen authored a wonderful well known book: As a Man Thinketh of which "so shall he become" follows the title. John Maxwell lends the visionary qu

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