

The Bowenwork® Answer Book

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is Bowenwork?

Bowenwork is hands-on healthcare. It consists of sequences of rolling movements of the practitioner's thumbs or fingers over precisely located sites on the body. These movements serve to signal the body to remember how to heal a variety of health issues.

2. Where did it originate?

Bowenwork came from Australia. Tom Bowen developed it over a period of several decades by working with athletes and injured laborers. It arose from his study and profound understanding of the structural and healing mechanisms of the body and his interest in osteopathic principles. Tom Bowen practiced in Australia from 1958 until his passing in 1982.

3. What brought Bowenwork to the world?

Oswald (Ossie) Rentsch was one of a handful of people chosen to study along side Tom in his work. After he, along with his wife, Elaine, developed a thriving practice, Ossie asked Mr. Bowen if he could "keep the work alive" It is from their tireless efforts that "the Bowen technique, an interpretation by Oswald Rentsch" was developed as a curriculum. It was taught first in Australia and New Zealand and then around the world. The names Bowtech® and Bowenwork® are registered trademarks of their company, Bowtech Pty, which does business as The Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia (BTAA). The United States Bowen Registry, Inc. (USBR) is the United States affiliate of Bowtech Pty.

4. What does it do?

Bowenwork provides gentle and profoundly effective signals to the Brain for healing and recovery through the stimulation of special receptors in the tendons, muscles and ligaments of the body. These stimuli can result in deep relaxation, resetting of muscular tension and range of motion, lymph drainage, pain and inflammation reduction and pain relief.

5. How long does a session last?

A Bowenwork session lasts from 15 minutes to an hour with the client resting comfortably on a massage table.

6. How often and how many times will I need to come?

Initially two Bowen sessions are scheduled a week apart. Clients usually see significant improvement within these two sessions. Additional sessions are scheduled at least a week apart as needed, with most conditions resolving within 3-8 sessions.

7. What are the main objectives of Bowenwork?

Bowenwork helps the Body remember how to heal. The specific objectives may vary, but there is always focus on relaxation, reduction of the "fight or flight response", and engagement of the body's perfect pattern memory for the area that is in pain, contracted or otherwise out of healthy balance.

8. Is Bowenwork safe?

Bowenwork is appropriate for all ages and stages of health from babies to the most frail and elderly, for the extremely fit and the sedentary or debilitated. Bowenwork is so gentle in application, partnering with the body for healing, that there is no possibility of harm.

9. How is Bowenwork different from traditional massage and bodywork?

Bowenwork is distinguished by its effectiveness over in very few sessions. It does not hurt and can bring permanent relief rapidly. The work is performed with the client lying on a table or sitting in a chair. The client remains clothed, and no oil or lotion is used.

10. Why does Bowenwork succeed where other therapies do not?

Bowenwork is effective because, with a minimum of stress on the body, it focuses the innate healing capacity of the body exactly where it is needed to facilitate speedy recovery, pain relief and healing.

11. What is the innate healing capacity of the body?

The innate healing capacity is the powerful combination of body systems responsible for tissue repair, nutrition, waste disposal, muscle length, nerve health and blood flow.

12. What does the innate healing capacity do?

The innate healing capacity takes care of the traumas and injuries, renewing injuries, recovering lost function, feeding and cleansing the body, relieving pain and regenerating tissue. This is done constantly throughout the body to keep us healthy.

13. Why hasn't this capacity worked on my problem?

The innate healing capacity can be sidetracked due to injury, overuse, stress or continuing imbalance in the body. This can result in a local "disconnect" from normal healing and recovery functions.

14. How does Bowenwork know where to work?

We don't know how Tom Bowen discovered the precise locations and sequences of "moves"; but we, and millions of clients around the world, are glad he did! It uses minimal intervention to bring the body's attention to the area needing help. When the body has been alerted to the problem, it can use its healing capacity to the fullest in that situation.

15. What is a Bowenwork “move”?

Bowenwork uses specific sequences of short, gentle, precisely located rolling motions of the thumbs or fingers over specific structures (muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves) of the body. Each series of movements is followed by "quiet periods" that allow the body to integrate each stage of the work.

16. Why are there so few touches to the body?

Bowenwork uses fewer touches because of the precision used with their application. Like a diamond cutter using one blow to create a gem out of a stone, Bowenwork gets the most out of each touch.

17. Why is such light pressure used?

Less really is more in this case. Less pressure brings more results than heavy pressure. That Bowenwork works with such light pressure follows a physiologic law, the Schulze law, which states that the body responds more deeply and positively to low level stimuli than it does to painful strong stimuli. Tom Bowen discovered the principle long before Schulze formulated his law.

18. Do all Bowenwork practitioners work the same way?

Yes, although practitioners may vary some in their technique, all accredited Bowenwork practitioners use the same protocols and address problems in the same way. In fact there are ongoing continuing education requirements including practitioner reviews.

19. Is Bowenwork practiced in American medical institutions?

Yes Bowenwork is being used in some American hospitals. Some physical therapists in Kaiser Permanente in CA and in Ann Arbor, MI have learned the work and apply for their patients. In the Swedish Hospital in Seattle, WA, some occupational therapists are now incorporating Bowenwork in their practice, too. There are several medical doctors who have taken the training and incorporate Bowenwork into their practices.

20. Are the Bowenwork effects due to hypnotic suggestion?

No, the effects of Bowenwork are based solely on the action of the innate healing capacity of the body. No other kind of suggestion or stimulus is needed.

21. Will I have to hurt more before I feel better?

In most cases, pain is not a part of Bowenwork. Bowenwork does not have to cause pain to relieve it. If the problem is of long duration or there has been extensive weakening of the area, there may be discomfort from new movement in a previously "rusty" area or from using a muscle that has decreased strength and stamina.

22. What conditions does Bowenwork address?

While Bowenwork cannot be said to “cure” any condition, many therapists have been successful in addressing problems relating to these and other conditions:

Abdominal pain	Constipation	Migraines
Angina	Diaphragm pain	Neuromas
Ankle pain	Digestive Issues	Pelvic Tilt
Back pain	Deafness	Planter fasciitis
Bed wetting	Dyslexia	Pre and Post-surgical recovery
Bell’s Palsy	Ear problems	Pregnancy issues
Breast Lumps	Elbow Pain	Prostate
Ileo-Cecal Issues	Emphysema	Sacral pain
Incontinence	Frozen Shoulder	Sciatica
Infertility (M&F)	Gall Bladder Pain	Scoliosis
Influenza	Golfer’s Elbow	Shin pain
Jaw & TMJ	Groin Pain	Shin splints
Kidney issues	Hammer Toes	Sinus pain
Knee problems	Hay fever	Rib/sternum pain
Bunions	Headaches	Tendonitis
Bursitis	Heel Pain	Tennis elbow
Calf Pain	Hernia	Thoracic outlet
Carpal Tunnel	Hiatal Hernia	Tinnitus
Cellulitis	High Shoulder	Trigeminal
Chest Pains	Leg cramps	Neuralgia
Cluster Headaches	Liver issues	Vomiting
Coccyx Pain	Lymph edema	
Colic	Meniere’s disease	

23. How soon should I feel relief?

Relief can come very quickly from a session of Bowenwork, sometimes almost instantaneously. There is a great variability in individuals’ ability to heal and the rate at which they do so. Normally results can come within the first week after the initial session; 3-8 sessions spaced a week apart are sufficient for most issues. This number is still a fraction of the amount of visits and time spent in many other forms of care.

24. The relief was short term. Was the session a failure?

First, the fact that there was relief is a sign that you had a good reaction to Bowenwork. There can be several reasons why the relief was temporary. The main reason is that the body may need more than one reminder of good health before it remembers to continue with the pattern. That is why two sessions spaced 5-10 days apart are initially scheduled. Also, if there is muscle weakness, a problem of long duration or re-injury to the area, the problem may return. Another reason might be inadequate hydration, reducing the body’s ability to heal.

25. How long do the effects of a Bowenwork session last?

The effects of a Bowenwork session begin during the session and continue working for at least 3-4 days after the session. This is why we ask for 5-10 days in between sessions---to give the body the best chance to integrate the work before giving it another set of “instructions” on how to heal.

26. Will the problem come back?

The problem may come back if issues of muscle weakness and stamina, and the possibility of re-injury are not addressed. If the client supports their recovery with appropriate activity, good nutrition, hydration, and avoids re-injury, the likelihood of the problem returning is very low.

27. What do I have to do to help my recovery?

Taking a 15 minute walk and drinking 8-12 glasses of water a day are usually suggested to assist recovery by helping move the fatigue products. Other types or restorative movement may be suggested, depending on the issue being addressed.

28. Does Bowenwork have any negative effects?

There can be residual soreness from the release of fatigue products, from positive shifts in the structural alignment of the body, or the return of movement to an area previously unused. These effects are minor and quickly dissipate. Always contact your Bowenwork practitioner with any concerns you have about your condition.

29. Will Bowenwork help a recent injury?

While Bowenwork is helpful in so many situations, it often has its most dramatic effects in addressing recent injuries. The sooner Bowenwork is applied to an injury, the faster and more powerful the recovery can be. Bowenwork helps the Body bypass the unnecessary pain and inflammation reactions and get right to healing.

30. Will Bowenwork help a chronic problem?

Bowenwork will assist the body in recovering its healthy balance even with a chronic problem. Chronic problems may respond more slowly as the Body works to change a familiar unhealthy pattern to a new healthy one.

31. Will Bowenwork reduce stress?

Bowenwork reduces the *effects* of stress immediately. During sessions clients report sensations of calmness. The pattern of shallow breathing, rapid heart rate, and hypersensitivity, so common to highly-stressed individuals, often changes dramatically. Breathing deepens, heart rate slows, jumpiness decreases. Using Bowenwork regularly lays the groundwork for a healthy anti-stress regimen.

32. I was told I must live with pain. Can Bowenwork help?

Thousands have tried Bowenwork as a last resort after having been told "you must live with your pain." Bowenwork practitioners regularly see significant change if not complete recovery in over 70% of our clients.

33. Can I do Bowenwork along with other forms of therapy?

Bowenwork can be used in appropriate sequence with a variety of therapies, with sufficient time allowed for Bowenwork to take effect. Having several sessions of each type of work before switching to another generally yields better results than alternating after only one session of each or spacing the sessions too close together.

34. What about Bowenwork and the medications I'm taking?

Bowenwork has no negative interactions with medications. There may be a long-term benefit of reduced need for medication as a result of Bowenwork. Before reducing or discontinuing any medication, always consult the health care professional who prescribed it to you.

35. What about Bowenwork and chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapy, Rolfing®?

Bowenwork can be effective with any of the mentioned modalities; however, if the treatment is applied too soon before or after a Bowenwork session, it can erase the effects of Bowenwork. There has to be a careful scheduling of the modalities.

36. What about Bowenwork and homeopathy?

Bowenwork and homeopathy are very similar in principle and work very well together. Bowen has been called the homeopathy of body therapy with its gentle application and dramatic results.

37. What about Bowenwork and exercise?

Exercise after a Bowenwork session does not interfere with the benefits of Bowenwork if the exercise is done in a moderate range for the individual.

38. What about Bowenwork and magnets?

In order to evaluate the efficacy of Bowenwork, it is recommended not to use magnets for 5 - 7 days after a session.

39. What are the contraindications for Bowenwork?

Although there are three circumstances in which a specific series of moves is contraindicated, there are no contraindications for a Bowenwork session, as other parts of the body and the body as a whole will still benefit.

40. I have to have surgery. How can Bowenwork help?

Using Bowenwork immediately prior to surgery can reduce complications because Bowenwork can reduce anxiety and relax the body so it better focuses on healing. Administered after surgery, Bowenwork has speeded recovery by calming the body and focusing its innate healing capacity on recovery.

41. If I do an internet search, I find several therapists and instructors that claim they do the Bowen Technique. How do I know I'm getting the "original Bowen Technique"?

Practitioners and students trained through Oswald and Elaine Rentsch are taught by registered Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia (BTAA) instructors. To find accredited Bowenwork Practitioners, go to www.bowtech.com or www.bowenwork.com, click on United States (or the country in which you wish to find practitioners), and use the FIND PRACTITIONERS search tool.