

Treating Sciatica with Bowen Technique - Part A

Sciatica can be a very painful and persistent condition. In many cases the client who has Sciatica may have been to other physical therapists to have this condition corrected.

A Bowen practitioner skilled in advanced procedures offers the Sciatica sufferer a release from this condition.

What is Sciatica?

Sciatica is a type of neuritis characterised by severe pain along the path of the sciatic nerve or its branches. Inflammation or injury to the sciatic nerve (common peroneal portion) and its branches results in deep pain that may extend from the buttock down the posterior aspect of the leg and lateral pain in the lower leg.

Other symptoms may include foot drop, an inability to dorsiflex the foot and loss of sensation over the lower leg and foot. Sciatica usually affects only one side of the leg and can alternate from one leg to the other.

Sciatic Nerve Distribution

The origin is from L4-S3. This sciatic nerve is actually two nerves - tibial and common peroneal - bound together by a common sheath of connective tissue. It splits into its two divisions, usually at the knee. As sciatic nerve descends through the thigh, it sends branches to hamstring muscles and adductor magnus.

Aetiology

Causes of Sciatic Nerve Injury include:

- Lumbar disc herniation (slipped). This is probably the most common cause.

An intervertebral disc has an outer wrapping of tough fibrocartilage (annulus fibrosus) which envelopes a soft centre (nucleus pulposus). Pain occurs when the soft centre core extrudes through the fibrous wrapping and the bulge puts pressure

on the nerve root. It is most common in the lower Lumbar region L4-L5-S1.

- Degenerative disc disease. The normal process of disc degeneration (thinning and drying out) can cause pain along the sciatic nerve as the inflammatory proteins from the disc can become exposed and irritate the area.
- Osteoarthritis Degeneration of the lumbosacral spine or bony spur growth in the lower lumbar spine (L4-L5) can cause pressure on the nerves as they exit the intervertebral foramen.
- Piriformis syndrome. This occurs when the sciatic nerve becomes irritated because of excessive piriformis muscle tension. The sciatic nerve can be as thick as a finger in this area. In some people the sciatic nerve passes through the piriformis muscle.
- Pregnancy - pressure from the uterus.
- Improperly administered intramuscular injection.

Assessment & Testing

The individual will have deep pain in the butt or gluteal region, they may stand with the affected leg in slight rotation or experience some difficulty to outwardly rotate and adduct the hip. Pain and tenderness will be in the mid-buttock region when palpated. The client may experience a loss of sensation in the lower lateral leg. A simple test will give a better indication if there is damage to a disc.

The leg - raiser test

This test is performed with your client supine, hip medially rotated and knee extended, raise the leg carefully until the client notices pain. Lower the leg slightly until the pain is relieved. Ask the client to flex their neck onto their chest while dorsi-flexing the foot. This is called the Hydman's sign; increased pain

may indicate lumbar disc dysfunction in the dura mater of the spinal cord. Pain that does not increase with neck flexion or dorsiflexion indicates tight hamstrings.

The Bowen Technique (Bowenwork™)

The technique was developed by Tom Bowen (1916-1982) in Geelong Victoria. The technique is a very gentle form of natural healing and is model of simplicity - it produces maximum results with a minimum of intervention.

We respect the body as capable of healing itself; the single intention of the work is to encourage the body to respond by stimulating its own innate healing ability. Following treatment the body continues to respond over the next 3 to 5 days.

Mr Bowen was extremely busy in his Geelong clinic, performing about 13,000 treatments per year. This was verified in 1975 by the Victorian government inquiry into alternative health care professionals.

Considering the treatments were 7 days apart and most people needed only one to three treatments, an amazing number of clients passed through the clinic and benefited from the Bowenwork. Mr Bowen held free of cost clinics for children, people with disabilities and community service workers.

In 1974, Mr Bowen invited Mr Oswald Rentsch to study the work. This continued for two and a half years, ultimately authorising Ossie to document the technique.

Mr Bowen had no notes, charts or manuals; these were produced over time to ensure the technique would not be lost.

Honouring Mr Bowen's request to teach the work after his death, Ossie and his wife Elaine held their first Australian seminar in 1986.

The technique is now taught in 24 countries with accredited practitioners in 32 countries.

Holistic Healing and Relaxing

The Bowen technique embodies a truly holistic approach to healthcare. When used correctly the technique is revolutionising the field of health. It treats specific conditions addressing the entire body, via the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS controls over 80% of bodily functions and is very susceptible to external stressors.

A Bowen treatment is very relaxing. It is usually performed with the client on a treatment table, sofa or bed or in a chair, depending on the age and mobility of the client. It is appropriate to use Bowen on individuals of all ages and in all conditions of health. Many of the "procedures" can be made through light clothing.

Acute Injuries

Bowen can be effective when used on acute injuries. The practitioner

may address only the traumatised parts of the body because there has not been time for the injured body to begin compensating for and accommodating the injury.

Background

This study was undertaken to assess whether The Bowen Technique as taught by The Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia would provide relief for sciatic pain.

A quantitative study was designed to provide some results that could be assessed.

John Stephens
Qld.

The Methodology, Results, Summary of Findings and Conclusions will be printed in the next issue.

2006 International Bowenwork Conference

Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut, USA
From June 16-18

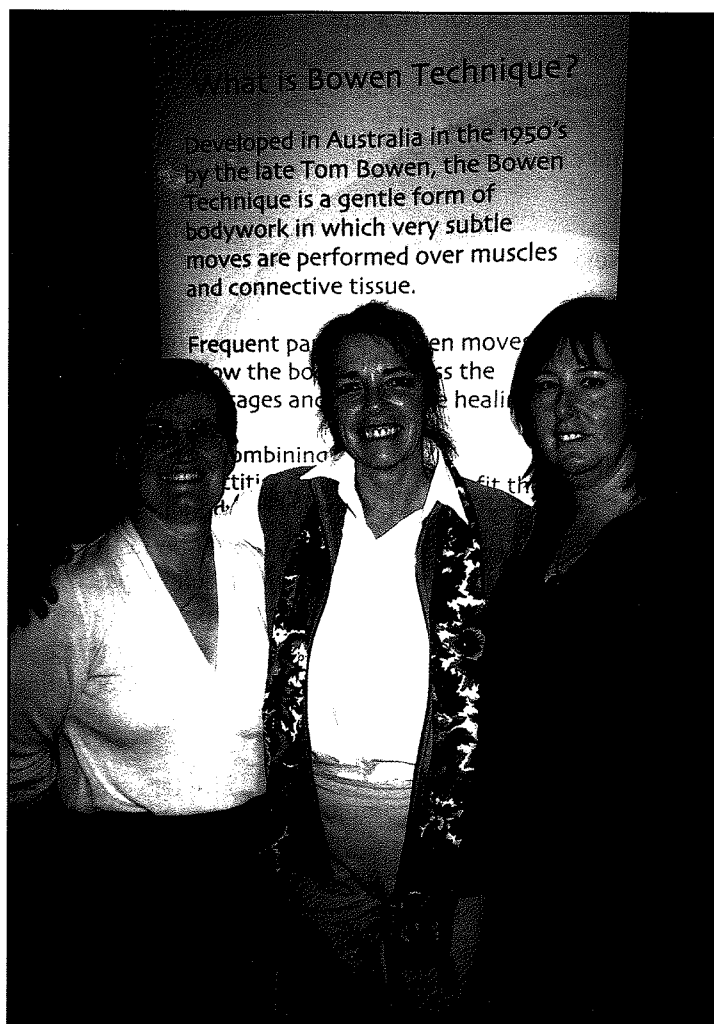
Anne Winter is conducting a Spiritual Tour to Peru, high in the Andes and has connected this trip with a link to enable Bowen People to travel onwards to the Conference. Let's travel together!

Enquiries to Anne Winter
anndapl@bigpond.net.au
Phone 0419 306 429

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departs 31.5.2006



New Zealand instructor Annie Montgomery with her son Scott at the class in Rotorua, New Zealand



L to R: Tina Spurling, CCMRT Instructor; Alison Goward, EMRT Director/Instructor and Carolyn Prior, Administration Manager Equus College of Learning & Research