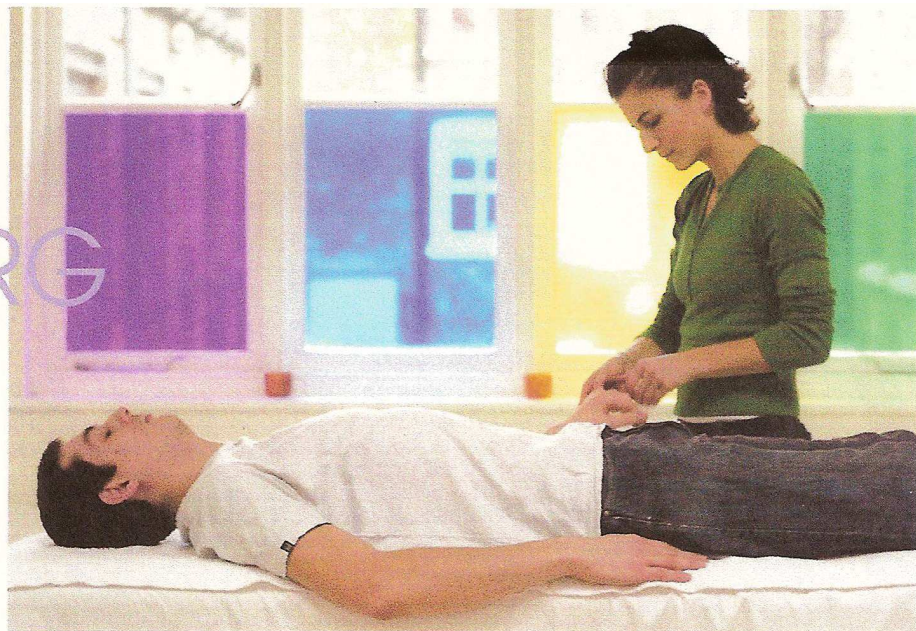


THIS MONTH WE TRY...

THE GRINBERG METHOD

Your feet could be the key to explaining your health niggles, discovers **Margaret Bartlett**



Did you know your feet can tell the story of your life and explain your state of health? A preventative therapy new to the UK, the Grinberg Method, aims to uncover ingrained habits and reactions – both physical and behavioural – that may be at the root of your health problems, through foot analysis, then touch, breathing, movement, and exercises.

At your first session, the practitioner uses foot analysis to discover what attitudes and habits – past and present – are influencing your health. The foot is said to represent a map of the body, as different parts of the foot correspond to organs, bodily systems and even temperament. The aim is to help you become aware of how you use your body, so you can change unhelpful patterns. For example, underlying fear could be causing you to tense up and be contributing to asthma symptoms. Grinberg aims to ease health niggles that cause fatigue, lethargy and loss of motivation.

I went along to see Grinberg practitioner Victoria Oldham at triyoga in London. I normally hate my feet being touched, but felt instantly at ease with Oldham. Noting the texture of my feet as I sat on a treatment table, she said a dry area of skin on the sole of my foot told of problems in the lower belly, and asked if I have digestive problems; I have suffered on and off with IBS-like symptoms since my early 20s. Other lines on my foot showed I breathe shallowly and hold tension in my stomach area. Tough skin on

one big toe indicated I often don't express myself until my anger explodes; Oldham asked if I could be repeating patterns of the people around me in childhood. She also sensed I have a fear of other people's emotional outbursts, and noted my sensitivity to loud noises, and a high level of anxiety.

I was reeling from these revelations, but Oldham said I didn't need to talk about any of the issues if I didn't want to. She later told me some people become emotional during the first session, as light is shed on past events.

Then she asked me to choose a health issue I'd like to work on, so we could start a course of sessions, or a 'process' of six to 12 sessions, depending on the extent of the problem. There may also be exercises to do at home.

I wanted to solve my digestive problems, so she put her hands lightly on my belly area, then gently moved my legs as I lay down, to see where I was holding tension in my hips and back. At the end of the session I felt peaceful and light, but thoughts were whirling in my head about issues brought up during the foot analysis. This is a fascinating therapy – the potential for self-growth, healing and greater self awareness is huge.

HISTORY

After studying bodywork and healing techniques since the early 1970s, Avi Grinberg launched The Grinberg Method in the late 1980s. First trained as a military

paramedic, Grinberg was later influenced by reflexology, yoga, Alexander Technique, Swedish massage, Traditional Chinese Medicine, rolfing, acupuncture and Gestalt, among other healing methods.

EVIDENCE

No scientific research has been done on the Grinberg Method, although some clinical studies into problems including high blood pressure, kidney function and PMT have shown wellbeing benefits from foot zone therapy or reflexology.

WHO SHOULD USE IT?

The method is especially good if you're stressed and tense, and is said to help those with chronic pain, migraines, backache, constipation, rheumatism and allergies. The method can boost energy, alertness and concentration, and result in a sense of calm, better sleep and improved flexibility.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

It's not suitable if you are fighting a life-threatening illness, such as cancer, or if you're dependent on drugs or alcohol. People of all ages can be treated, as well as pregnant women and those recovering from accidents or surgery. A preventative therapy, it's not intended to replace conventional medical treatment.

COST

A one-hour session at triyoga costs £60. All-day Grinberg Stress Management group workshops cost £60 per person.

RESOURCES

■ Victoria Oldham is at triyoga in London once a month. To book, call **020 7483 3344** or visit www.triyoga.co.uk. The next Grinberg Stress Management workshop is on June 24 at triyoga Soho.

■ See www.grinbergmethod.com.

'It worked for me'

Anna, 35, from London, first went to Victoria Oldham on the recommendation of a friend. 'Four years ago, at the age of 31, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I'm free of it now; I had the lump removed and then chemotherapy. But at my first visit to Victoria six months ago, she said if the scar is still red, complete healing hasn't taken place – that the body is still trying to cope with the trauma. I now see her once a month and she uses subtle movement techniques, moving my arms or using gentle massage. She has worked on the scar itself, and on my back and arms; the scar is now noticeably faded. She has really helped me tune in to myself and listen to my body.'