

The Truth About Reiki

Can this Japanese form of alternative healing improve your well-being? **Maya Calica** gets a hands-on experience

In a world where there's an ointment, tablet or booster shot for every pain or disease, a treatment that requires only a pair of hands and good intentions is a hard pill to swallow. But that's how Reiki works. Rediscovered by Dr. Mikao Usui in Japan in the late 19th century, Reiki translates to "universal life energy force"; healing with Reiki works on the principle that the spiritual force of energy that moves in the universe can help restore imbalances in one's body through the laying-on of hands. While practitioners are quick to say that Reiki should not be used to replace a doctor's diagnosis or medication, this treatment is becoming popular for treating everything from headaches to cancer. I attended a two-day seminar at SoulCentre Singapore, where Reiki master Sally Forrest initiated me into the world of hands-on healing. Here are five things you ought to know about Reiki.

How Reiki works A Reiki practitioner acts as a channel for the energy, which is felt in his or her palms when placed on a person's body. Done correctly, it is believed Reiki can soothe pain, hasten healing, stop minor bleeding, relax, and rejuvenate. "When my friend, who

does Reiki, laid her hands on my forehead, my headache went away," shares Tara, 31. After undergoing chemotherapy for lymph node cancer, Paula, 32, opted for Reiki as a supplemental therapy. Now, she is in remission.

The mind-body connection According to Reiki, disease in the body has its roots in the emotions. Which explains why applying Reiki energy over certain body parts can cause emotional issues to bubble up to the surface. When Reiki was applied over my tummy, I started to cry for no reason. Forrest told me the stomach is the seat of emotions, and that I may tend to hold my emotions in. By applying Reiki and finding a healthy way to express myself emotionally, she said I could get better.

What a Reiki treatment feels like As a receiver of Reiki, you may feel a variety of feelings. "Reiki is sometimes experienced as ice-cold water pouring in," says Anil Bhatnagar, author of *Transform Your Life with Reiki*. But it can also be warm and tingly. "The warmth experienced with Reiki is distinct – it often gets too hot to be confused with body heat," he adds. Still, Forrest suggests going to a healing session or Reiki seminar with no expectations.

Reiki is positive energy Which means it can only be used for noble and good ends – to heal. And the more you use Reiki, Forrest says, it's as if you are nudged towards good things. In her case, her initiation into Reiki led her to leave her highly-stressed corporate job to build an orphanage in Thailand. "I always tell my students to get ready for great change after Reiki, and to really enjoy life," she says.

How to find a reputable Reiki teacher Reiki is not achieved; it is acquired. The only way to acquire Reiki is to be initiated by a bona-fide Reiki master, such as Forrest, who conducts regular Reiki seminars at SoulCentre. When looking for a teacher, find one who lives the principles of Reiki, and is locally based so that he or she can support you even after the course is over. Ultimately, listen to your intuition. "If you feel comfortable talking to this person, if they are loving, open and kind, then trust your gut," says Forrest. ♀

