Earthing/Grounding Therapy: Possibly the most important health (re-) discovery ever!

For millions of years, humans have lived and evolved, physically connected to the Earth. In ancient times, our ancestors lived in an intimate relationship with Mother Earth and her natural frequency and energy. They lived on the ground, slept on the ground, ate on the ground, hunted and gathered on the ground, danced on the ground, prayed and performed sacred rituals on the ground…. you get the idea. Prior to the inventions of synthetic soled shoes and elevated beds and structures that insulate us from the ground, we were in physical contact with the earth all the time. (except when we were levitating!) In these modern times, we have lost this intimate connection with the earth and it is not surprising that we as a species are dealing with the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual maladies that we experience. Is it any coincidence that as we have spent less time physically in contact with the Earth (due to wearing non-conductive footwear and spending more time in insulated structures and cars) that our health, physical and otherwise, continues to decline, despite all of the medical knowledge and technology we now have? If I told you that that there was a practice that would help you sleep better, reduce your stress and pain, accelerate healing of wounds and help you recover more quickly from intense physical activity and can potentially protect you from harmful environmental electromagnetic fields and more, and was easily accessible and free you would want to know about it and try it, right?

What is Earthing/Grounding?

Earthing, or grounding as it is also called, is the act of your body coming into direct contact (through your skin) with the earth, usually by standing barefoot on it (or swimming in natural bodies of water such as the ocean, lakes or rivers). When you make this contact, your body is able to access the natural electrical field/conductivity of the earth's surface, which is absorbed by your body and you then immediately become 'grounded' . In my opinion, this grounded state is our natural state, in tune with the earth, and it provides enormous health benefits.

We are bio-electrical beings living on an electrical planet. The earth is basically a six-sextillion metric ton battery that is continually being replenished by solar radiation, lightning and heat from its molten core. This natural energy source gives off an unlimited supply of subatomic particles called free electrons. These electrons have a negative charge so the surface of the earth is negatively charged. Anytime you have two conductive objects and they make contact, such as your bare feet and the ground, electrons will flow from the place where there is more to the place where there is fewer. The electrical potential of the two objects will then equalize. Because our bodies contain electrolytes like sodium, potassium and chloride ions, this makes our bodies good conductors of electricity.

You can ground on grass, dirt, stone, sand, some concrete and brick (as long as it is not sealed) as these are great conductors of the energy/electrons that are responsible for the amazing benefits! Since water is a great conductor of electricity, wet grass, mud or wet sand at the beach are the very best surfaces to ground on!

How is this beneficial to me?

Our bodies are constantly producing free radicals through our many cellular and metabolic processes that are continually taking place. Even 'healthy' activities like exercise can produce them. Free radicals are unstable atoms that can damage cells. When there is an imbalance of free radicals and antioxidants, the body experiences oxidative stress. Oxidative stress can cause chronic inflammation. If our bodies are constantly in this state of oxidative stress, it is likely that inflammatory diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, or even cancer can develop. When your body is in contact with the Earth's energy, it will absorb these negatively charged electrons, restoring balance and minimizing and neutralizing the harmful effects of the free radicals which contribute the body to be in a more pro-inflammatory state. We often hear about how important it is to consume foods that contain antioxidants. Why do we need them? Because they help to neutralize the damaging effects of the oxidative stress. They are providers of electrons. Think of the earth as the biggest and best natural antioxidant and anti-inflammatory source that exists.

Numerous studies on grounding have shown:
*improved duration and quality of sleep
*reduced stress/improved mood
*reduced pain (due to reduced inflammation)
*balancing of hormonal levels including cortisol/improved thyroid function
*accelerated recovery from intense physical activity/athletics
*reduced fatigue/more energy
*improved immune function
*accelerated wound healing
*normalizes body's biological rhythms including circadian rhythm (improving recovery from jet lag)
*thins blood/reduces blood viscosity (which has potential to reduce blood clots)/improved circulation and blood pressure

And anecdotal reports of improvements in: arthritis, autism, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, PTSD, TMJ, autoimmune conditions, recovery from injuries, bone density and osteoporosis, spinal realignment, flexibility and range of motion, bone spurs, pet health and more.

How can I apply Grounding/Earthing to my sound healing practice?

Although the easiest and most inexpensive way to ground is to just go outside and stand on some grass, that may not be feasible for many people. Luckily there are many products available now that allow you to connect with the earth's natural energy through grounding sheets/pillowcases, pads, blankets and even shoes. Most of these products are made of conductive material that is attached to a cord that is plugged into the grounding port of an electrical outlet which allows the access to the earth's energy/electrons. But one way that I am really getting more interested in, is using the grounding cords. I purchased a pad and blanket

from Clint Ober's website, earthing.com (Clint is credited as the person who really re-discovered the power of grounding in the 1990's and sells a line of products) and my purchase included grounding cords that attach to electrodes that you attach anywhere on your body, in particular areas that may not get the direct contact of lying on the blanket, or putting your feet on the pad. For instance, placing one electrode on a painful joint like your knee or an arthritic hand. You would be able to direct the energy directly to the area to receive its anti-inflammatory benefits. Another way to use these cords is to place the electrodes on acupuncture points, to receive these energies into specifically intended meridians or just place on the palms of hands, or feet. I believe that grounding your clients at the start of a session would be setting a nice foundation in the body, creating a relaxed and receptive state on which to build the rest of the sound session. I believe this would make a lovely complement to one's personal and professional sound healing practice. I also foresee that as more studies are done on earthing/grounding, one day soon it will become an accepted form of treatment in healthcare settings and "prescribed" by healthcare professionals for a multitude of issues.

I highly encourage everyone to spend more time in contact with the earth (as often as you can!) and especially anyone who has any type of health issue, check out Clint's website (earthing.com or ultimatelongevity.com- not all grounding products are created equal) and earthinginstitute.net (for more information about studies) and do your own research and consider investing in some products so you have the benefit of grounding in your home.

In conclusion, "Earthing is nothing really new. It's a revival of a timeless practice and a forgotten law of Nature: that we all belong to Nature and part of the connection with Nature is our connection with the Earth." (earthinginstitute.net)

Happy Earthing!

Bibliography

Earthing: The most important health discovery ever! Clinton Ober, Stephen Sinatra, M.D., and Martin Zucker. Basic Health Publications, Inc. 2014.

"Earthing: Health Implications of Reconnecting the Human Body to the Earth's Surface Electrons", Journal of Environmental and Public Health, published Jan. 12, 2012. (https://ncbi.nlm.nih/gob/pmc/articles)

Earthing.com

UltimateLongevity.com

Earthinginstitute.net

How does it work?

We are bio-electrical beings living on an electrical planet. The earth is basically a six sextillion metric ton battery that is continually being replenished by solar radiation, lightning and heat from the deep molten core. This natural energy source gives off an unlimited supply of subatomic particles called free electrons. These electrons have a negative charge.

When one stands barefoot on the earth or makes any skin contact with the Earth, you access the Earth's natural surface charge. You can also do this with specialized equipment such as grounding pads, mats, sheets and blankets etc. that have conductive materials in them that when plugged into the ground port of an electrical outlet, allows access to the Earth's charge.

Electrons are thought to act as natural anti-oxidants by neutralizing positively charged inflammatory free radicals. ("Can electrons act as antioxidants? A review and commentary" by James Oschman)

Through many studies that have been done, it has been found that the grounding occurs "immediately"

Ways to naturally ground

Standing barefoot on grass, sand, dirt, rocks, some concrete, bricks?, touching/hugging trees, touching plant life, swimming in natural waters (ocean, rivers, lakes)

Benefits

Improved sleep, duration and quality
Reduced stress and pain via reduced inflammation
More natural and balanced functioning within the body
    Balanced hormones- normalizes cortisol levels (which may lead to weight loss)
Accelerated recovery from athletic activities
Reduced fatigue/more energy
Improved immune function
Accelerated wound healing
Normalizes the body's biological rhythms, including the Circadian rhythm (improving recovery from jet lag)
Thins blood/reduces blood viscosity (which potentially decreases chance of stroke or other blood clot related disorders)

Why/How do these benefits occur?

Why is cortisol so important?

Cortisol is a hormone and helps regulate our body's response to stress. It affects almost every organ and tissue in your body. Your body releases cortisol when you experience any type of stress.
"A relationship between cortisol and inflammation was established in the pioneering work of H. Selye published in the 1950's. Current biomedical research has led to an inflammation hypothesis that is establishing chronic inflammation as the culprit behind almost every modern chronic illness."

I believe that adding grounding technology to a sound healing session is a wonderful adjunctive therapy. For instance, one could use a grounding cord attached to conductive pads/electrodes (like those used when getting an EKG) placed on the feet and/or palms, specifically using the K-1 point on the bottom of the foot, to automatically ground your clients and set the foundation for relaxation and receptivity of the rest of the sound healing session. Another cool idea would be to conduct a sound bath at a park with everyone lying on the grass or sitting at the beach with your bare feet dug into the sand! Sound healing + plethora of negative ions = 8) 8) 8) = [3 really blissed out faces]

It is the act of contacting the earth's surface with your bare skin, for instance, walking barefoot on grass or sand and this contact transfers a natural electrical signal to the body.

It is the process of connecting with Earth's abundant supply of negative ion's that match up with a body's oxidants/positive ions, which creates a very beneficial anti-inflammatory effect. It is a practice that humans have utilized for millions of years but has diminished substantially in our modern era and is now being remembered and rediscovered for its many health and wellbeing benefits.
"It is both a timeless practice and a modern discovery."