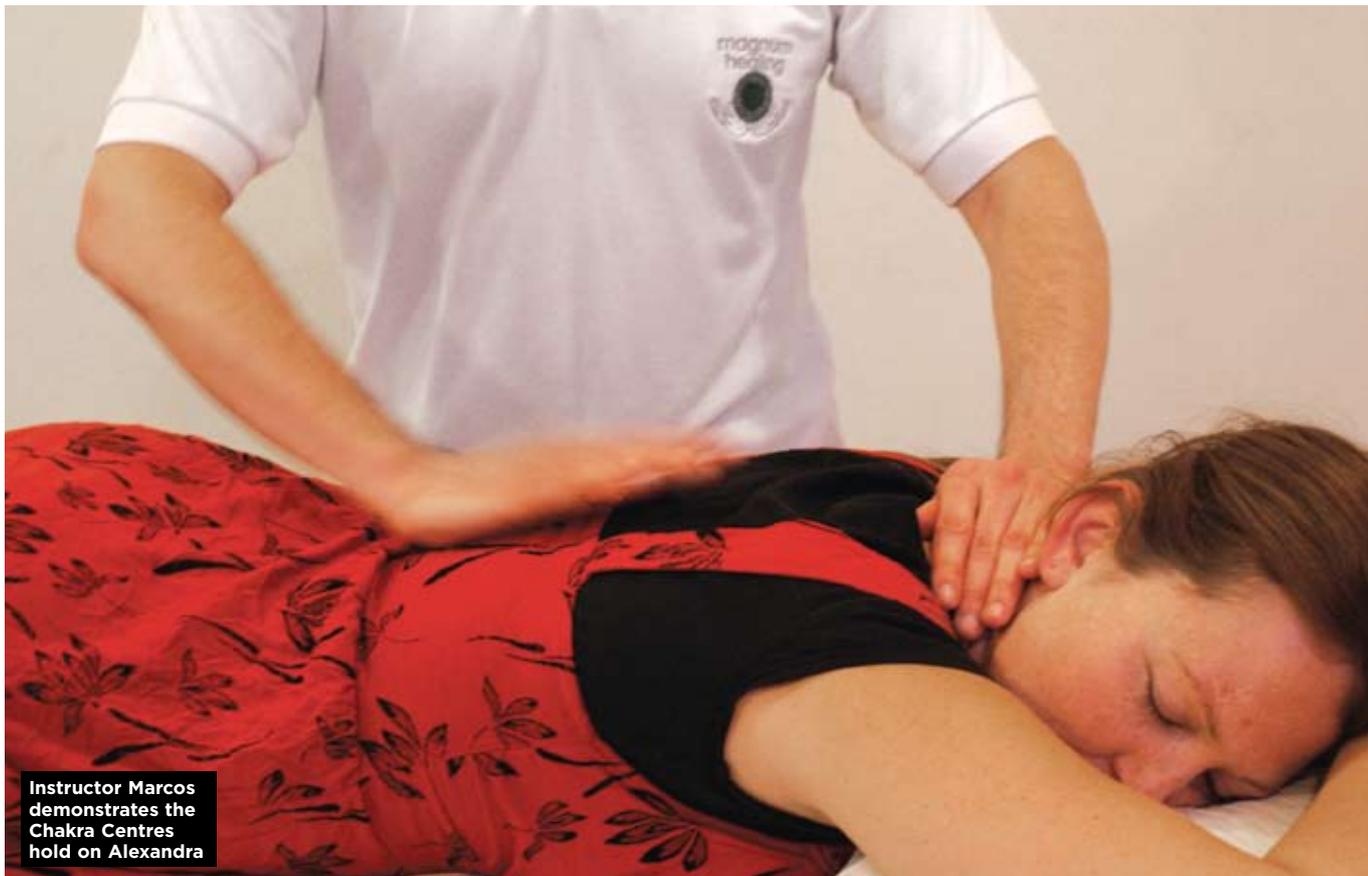


Tried and *tested*



Polarity **shift**

Prediction's Editor Alexandra Wenman gets some hands-on healing experience - and a bit of free healing as the instructor's test subject - on a Polarity Therapy Introductory Course in London

I'm 15 minutes early for my Polarity Therapy Introductory Course in London's Kings Cross, so I grab a coffee at the posh new St Pancras station. It's a chilly day, but when I finally arrive at Helios, I'm thawed out by the warm greeting of my instructor, Brazilian therapist Marcos Viliotti - the smiliest man on Earth. The rest of the people on the course are settled in the front room, getting to know each other. There are nine of us, including four Reiki masters - although there is no set criteria for attending - and we grab a cuppa or water before Marcos takes us downstairs to the workshop space to begin.

What is Polarity Therapy?

Seated on chairs in a circle, Marcos explains that Polarity Therapy (PT) is a combination of massage, Acupressure,

Reflexology, Ayurveda, Osteopathy, Cranio Sacral work and spiritual healing. He calls it "a special healing toolbox." It is an energy-based holistic therapy and the treatments involve many different elements, including body manipulation, working with the body's own energy flow and chakra centres, as well as using exercises to promote healing.

Originally created by Dr Randolph Stone, an osteopath and chiropractor, who studied Eastern therapies, PT came about when he brought together techniques from both the East and the West and devised a system, which he called the 'Wireless Anatomy of Man'.

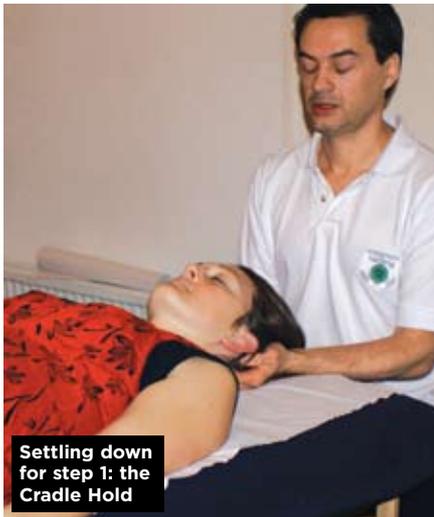
The UK Polarity Therapy Association website (polarity.tk) states, "A Polarity Therapist always deals with the whole person - mentally, emotionally and physically - and gently assists your body to heal itself naturally... Polarity Therapy works on many different levels: subtle energy; nervous, musculo-skeletal, cardiovascular, respiratory and

digestive systems; gynæcological (excellent in pregnancy and after-care) and at emotional and mental levels. It unlocks the holding patterns that create the symptoms of illness and stress."

Interestingly, PT is equally successful as a stand-alone therapy or integrated into other therapies - for example, Reflexology, massage, Acupuncture, Shiatsu, Indian Head Massage, Reiki and, according to Marcos, there are plans in place to teach special courses which demonstrate how to integrate PT into these other methods. It seems there is a technique for any occasion!

Getting to work

Marcos goes on to explain that, while there is a lot more to PT, the intro course focuses on the different types of touch used - 'Sattvic' is gentle, 'Rajasic' uses movement of the tissue and 'Tamasic' is a penetrating hold. These three variations of touch are incorporated



Settling down for step 1: the Cradle Hold



Marcos explains the Hip Rock and Release hold

into 18 different 'holds' or techniques, which are performed in a set sequence. Marcos tells us that each hold is simple and requires you to just "hold, wait and attend". We must keep the lines of communication between ourselves and our client open at all times and make sure that any pain they experience is 'good pain'. Marcos says, "If it hurts too much, then it's a good idea to soften your touch or move on to the next hold."

After a quick tea break, we move to the back of the room where three massage beds have been set up for our use. Marcos then chooses one member of the group to demonstrate all 18 of the holds we are

Marcos feels that this is the best way to learn. "Usually, during the intro course, you would get into pairs," he says, "But it's good to have the opportunity to just observe because this is where you can see the whole picture and give your brain time to let everything you've just learned sink in."

Over the next few hours, we take it in turns to try out the 18 holds on each other and, to my surprise, I find that I get into the flow of the sequence easily and I end up really enjoying myself. It certainly helps when you're in a group of like-minded people, where you feel supported and encouraged.

Interestingly, PT is successful as either a stand-alone therapy or intergrated into other treatments

to learn today. It looks quite complicated and very hands-on. I've never had any massage experience before, so I'm a little apprehensive about getting 'stuck in' and working so closely with a client. However, Marcos reassures me that once I'm in the flow, it will come naturally.

We break for lunch and over a delicious falafel wrap in a nearby café, Marcos tells me, "Polarity is my true passion. I love all the work I do [Marcos is trained in Reflexology, Ayurvedic and Holistic Massage, Metamorphosis and Indian Head Massage, among others], but Polarity really resonates with me - it incorporates everything. It's so special."

Hands-on healing

After lunch, we get into groups of three - one person is the practitioner, one is the client and one is the observer - to try out Polarity Therapy for ourselves.

During each hold, members of the group have some unusual experiences. As I'm working with other healers or Reiki Masters, I have quite strong visions and can feel tingles. And, during the chakra clearing, one lady spontaneously bursts into floods of tears. Marcos tells us this is all part of the process, as through intention and concentration, Polarity Therapy incorporates an element of energy healing into the session as well.

After we each finish performing and receiving the 18 holds, Marcos runs through the whole sequence once more - this time using me as a guinea pig. We finish with a review of the day's events. I'm not sure I'll become a fully fledged practitioner of Polarity Therapy, but I have faced my fear of total hands-on healing and I'm now ready to begin practising on friends and family. In fact, my other half has a bad back at present. Perhaps, he can be my guinea pig... ■

How to book

The one-day Polarity Therapy Introductory Course costs £75. Visit magnumhealing.com. Marcos is teaching the course on the following dates in 2011: 9th April - Weston-Super-Mare, 16th April - London, 21st May - London. For further course dates, practitioners and info, visit healingtoolbox.info

THE 18 HOLDS

A brief outline

This is just an outline of what's taught on the course. It is not to be attempted without training

1 Cradle Hold

Place fingers under base of skull.

2 Unwinding

Take the weight of the client's head. Follow the natural movement.

3 Loosen Shoulders

Gently pulsate client's shoulders.

4 Shoulder Tissue Movement

Hold shoulder blades in hands.

5 Loosen Arm

Hold the clients arm at the wrist and the elbow. Gently shake the arm.

6 Wrist Circles

Hold the client's wrist in one hand and fingers in the other. Rotate.

7 Finger Pull and Circle

Turn fingers clockwise. Reverse.

8 Arm Unwinding

Hold the client's elbow. Link fingers. Follow natural movement.

9 Leg - Release of Sore Points

Stand by client's leg. Lift or roll. Look for sore points on the thighs.

10 Release through Fire Toe

Hold the sore point. Hold the middle (fire) toe with other hand.

11 Hip Rock / Release

Press hip down. Then the other.

12 Sacral Hold

Place hand under the sacrum. Place other hand on their stomach.

13 Knees to Neck Connection

Place one hand under the neck and the other under the knee.

14 Chakra Centres

Place one hand on neck. Move other hand clockwise over chakras.

15 Long Line Currents

One finger on shoulder and one under buttocks in a line. Create five points and move across one by one.

16 Ankle Hold for Grounding

Hold your client's ankles.

17 Fingers to Toes

Hold your fingers to their toes.

18 Brushing Down

Stroking motion with hands.