



# Dr Heidi Rootes

Naturopathic Physician

## **What is Bowen Therapy?**

Bowen therapy is a unique form of body work that utilizes the connection between the muscles and the nervous system to provide relief to a wide range of conditions. Each move of a Bowen treatment challenges a muscle at the site where the nervous system innervates. There is a dynamic relationship between these two systems that allows us to move and hold positions without a great deal of effort and conscious thought. This is done by a series of communications between the muscles and the brain transferred by the nerves connecting the two. If we want to bend our arm we consciously bend it but once moved no longer think about keeping it bent. This is because the nerves innervating each muscle involved send a message to the brain that we have shortened some muscles and lengthened others. The brain understands these messages and resets the length of each muscle to hold that position. When a move is made in a Bowen treatment, the muscle is challenged without changing the length of the muscle. This sends a “default” message to the brain which essentially tells the brain to reset the muscle into its resting position. The outcome is to relax a tight or contracted muscle or to shorten a stretched muscle. When this is done throughout the entire muscular system, the effect is to reset the entire system to its relaxed resting state. The end effect: relief from pain.

## **What conditions respond to Bowen therapy?**

Essentially any system that has muscular involvement will respond to Bowen therapy. This includes the musculoskeletal system, the digestive system, the respiratory system, the cardiovascular system, the genitourinary system and the nervous system. Specific conditions include: acute and chronic pain, asthma and other respiratory conditions, sinus congestion and hay fever, high blood pressure, gynecological complaints, migraine, digestive complaints, obstetrical pain, sciatica, frozen shoulder, low back pain, and carpal tunnel syndrome.

## **Is there anyone who cannot receive a Bowen treatment?**

No. Bowen therapy is a safe and effective treatment for people of all ages from newborn to the elderly.

## **What can I expect from a treatment?**

A given treatment lasts anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour. During the treatment the patient is on a treatment table with a draped blanket and is encouraged to do nothing more than deep focused breathing. The practitioner will perform a series of moves and then leave the room for several minutes to allow the message to transfer from the muscles to the brain before continuing with the next move. One of the unique aspects of Bowen therapy is that it typically takes between three to five treatments to provide lasting relief for a given condition. Between 85 – 90% of people respond favorably to Bowen therapy. People who typically do not respond are those who smoke and people with extensive scarring.

## **Why is Bowen Therapy unique at Vitality Clinic?**

Dr. Heidi Rootes, the certified Bowen therapist at the Vitality Clinic, is also a licensed Naturopathic Physician. These two tools allow Dr. Rootes to have a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationships and interactions within the body and the ability to treat the body as a whole. Using both her skills as a Bowen therapist and a Naturopath Dr. Rootes integrates the physiological, emotional and mental aspects of one’s self together with external factors such as diet, lifestyle and environment to successfully treat many conditions. Often the presenting symptoms are just clues about the underlying cause of the problem. By finding and treating the cause of a condition Dr. Rootes is able to assist the body in its dynamic ability to heal and maintain health.