

The Power of Touch

Ancient Japanese craft offers healing therapies

I left the office in plenty of time. Yet, after being delayed picking up a package along the way and getting stuck in uncharacteristic traffic in Newburgh, I am running late enough to be stressed for my first High Touch Jin Shin treatment.

To be fair to the practitioner, Gina Carrigan-Piper, owner of Essence of Light, I phoned to give her an opportunity to reschedule me; I certainly didn't want to wreck her schedule, too. Gina speaks in a very even, soothing voice and she assured me that she could still work on me.

As I waited in the traffic jam, practically in sight of her small storefront, I reviewed the brochure she had given me a few days earlier:

"Do you feel short-circuited, overloaded, drained?" it reads. Did I ever! Gina couldn't have asked for a better case study to highlight the Jin Shin treatment.

High Touch Jin Shin is, according to the brochure, a remarkably simple and

effective 5000-plus year-old Japanese self-healing art. High Touch does not involve manipulation of bones or muscles like traditional massage. It is a gentle form of acupressure – or acupuncture without the needles. The practitioner uses light, accurate fingertip touches over 26 sets of points – or meridians – on the body. These points are contacted in specific combinations and patterns to restore the normal flow of healing energy already naturally present in the body.

The treatment begins by removing my shoes, and reclining, fully clothed, on the massage table in Gina's wonderfully scented treatment room.

Gina begins by lightly taking my pulse at the wrist and ankles. She's not checking my blood pressure, she explains. Rather, she is listening to my meridian pulses with her fingertips to detect any disharmony, which has a specific texture and pulse frequency. Meridians, according to Gina, are a unique electromagnetic energy circulatory system present in everyone's body. This

system is separate from the blood, lymphatic and nervous system.

Then, she begins connecting my meridians by lightly pressing and pulsing a specific spot along my shoulder blade with other specific spots, or circuit breakers, on my body.

The areas she works on seem to warm and relax, even without the kneading of a typical Swedish-style massage.

At this point, Gina explains that she began on this particular meridian because my pulse told her that an area of stress or discomfort was my upper back, along my shoulder blades. I'm impressed! Yoga keeps me fairly well tuned, but toting a 2-year-old and chasing a 5-year-old sometimes plays havoc with my body. Indeed, my upper back is often sore.

My treatment lasts about an hour. I didn't inquire about every technique she used, but I did thoroughly enjoy the total relaxation and awareness of my body as I felt the stress of the week leaving me.

Gina says that most of her clients fall into two categories: people who are seeking a more natural or alternative remedy to a particular health concern, and people who are working with their doctor's after traditional treatments have failed.

Gina is one of about only 40 High Touch Jin Shin instructors in the U.S. and the only one in Indiana, according to the instructor list published on the High Touch Network Web site (www.high-touchnet.com).

She stresses the best results are achieved with at least three visits in a three-week period. Last spring she traveled more than 900 miles to Florida to study with a Jin Shin Jyutsu practitioner and received two treatments daily for five days – an incredible experience, she says.

Although most of Gina's clients come to her for traditional massage, she almost always incorporates Jin Shin because she's seen the power of what those techniques can do for muscles and the body.

As I get up from the massage table, Gina says I look better – more refreshed – than I did when I rushed in. Without question, I feel better. Will I try Jin Shin again? Certainly. I'm eager to see what is possible after several treatments.

— Kristen K. Tucker

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Gina Carrigan-Piper

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Call
812.858.1147

16 W. JENNINGS ST.
NEWBURGH, IN 47630

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