The ground beneath our feet

Here is a movement to reconnect us to the earth and help get rid of lifestyle ills

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Last year, Naomi Harris, the star of Skyfall and Spectre, took to Instagram to preach the benefits of a practice called “grounding”. Another celebrity endorsement of the practice came from actor Gwyneth Paltrow’s Goop website, which made “grounding” the new A list buzzword with its interview with Clint Ober. Goop claimed that Earthing can cure everything from inflammation and arthritis to insomnia and depression.

So what is “grounding”, and how do we do it?

Grounding, or Earthing, is a new-age therapy that is fast gaining ground. Its proponents argue that when the bare skin of our feet connects with the electric charge of the earth, we are ‘grounded’, that is to say, the free radicals creating havoc in our bodies are neutralised. The result is emotional and physical health.

Modern lifestyle factors such as life in high-rise buildings, sleep on elevated cots (as different from beds spread on the floor) and the wearing of shoes with rubber soles have contributed to our lack of direct skin connection with the earth’s surface. Electrons from the earth may be the best source of antioxidants for our bodies and they have zero negative secondary effects, because our bodies have evolved over eons of physical contact with the ground. Our modern lifestyles have broken this natural connection with the ground and taken our immune system by surprise, depriving it of its primordial source of energy.

Research by Oschman, Chevalier, and Brown studied the effects of grounding on the immune system, inflammation, wound healing and treatment of autoimmune diseases. They concluded that disconnect from earth has an “important, insidious, and overlooked contribution to physiological dysfunction and to the alarming global rise in non-communicable, inflammatory-related chronic diseases”. Chronic fatigue, injury, inflammation and autoimmune disorders may be the results of this disconnect.

Bioelectrical beings

The practice of grounding rests on the fact that we are bioelectrical beings living on an electrical planet. Our bodies operate electrically. Our cells transmit multiple frequencies that run our heart, immune system, muscles, and nervous system. Multiple positive effects can be created by a reconnection to the earth. These include decreased levels of inflammation and pain, reduced stress levels, improved circulation, mood enhancement and emotional well-being.

If sunlight gives us Vitamin D, “earthing” gives us Vitamin G. How can we increase our daily dose of this?

The simplest grounding technique is to take off your shoes and socks and walk barefoot on sand or grass. Make sure that your toes, heels and soles press down softly and firmly on the ground. The pressure points on the sole relate to various organs of the body and you get a free reflexology session with a barefoot walk in the park.

The risk of stubbing a toe or walking on glass brings mindfulness and present moment awareness to the walk, which thus serves as meditation.

Feeling more adventurous? Lie on the grass and stare up at the sky. Or even better, imitate your pet dog or cat as it rolls on the ground. They may be smarter than we think. Rolling on the ground discharges negative energy. It feels good! The Earth’s energy has a warm, tingling, pleasant sensation.

Another option lies in ditching our super-soft beds and mattresses. Try sleeping on the floor.

Since the late 20th century, chronic degenerative diseases have overcome infectious disease as the major causes of death. Increased human longevity will depend on finding an intervention that inhibits the development of these diseases and slows their progress.

The Earthing Movement suggests the intervention lies right beneath our feet. The Earth’s surface electrons are a source of untapped energy and the Earth itself is a global treatment table. Critics dismiss these claims as hyperbole designed to sell Earthing products, but perhaps a barefoot walk in the park or a roll on the beach is just what we need to realise the effects – and re-establish our connection with the Earth.

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