



Pathways to balance

The transformative power
of anthroposophic body therapies

A LOOK INTO THE ANTHROPOSOPHIC MEDICAL SYSTEM

A therapeutic approach that sees the whole human being

Anthroposophic Medicine is an integrative approach to healthcare that views the human being as a unity of body, soul, mind, and spirit. It involves collaboration among physicians, nurses, body therapists, art therapists, and other health professionals, who contribute their unique therapeutic perspectives to support the patient's journey towards healing.



Anthroposophic body therapies play a vital role in this interdisciplinary approach. A central aim of all anthroposophic body therapies is to support and complement medical treatments by gently stimulating the body's inherent self-healing and regenerative forces. These therapies include therapeutic baths, various forms of massage, and movement-based approaches. They promote vitality, help release physical and emotional tension, and encourage a quiet inner space for reflection, supporting access to inner resources such as resilience, balance, and self-awareness. In addition to their physical effects, anthroposophic body therapies can have a stabilising and strengthening effect on mental health. The therapeutic space, characterised by warmth, rhythm, and attentiveness, can foster calmness, inner orientation, and a renewed sense of connection,

helping individuals find greater psychological balance and emotional grounding.

In doing so, anthroposophic body therapies contribute not only to physical well-being but also to the reawakening of a deeper connection to oneself and the world around us. They strengthen self-confidence and encourage a more conscious, engaged relationship with one's health and life journey.

Rooted in anthroposophic medicine and guided by a holistic understanding of the human being, these therapies combine conventional medical insights with a broader perspective on the person as a spiritual and physical being. Each treatment is individually tailored and gently supports the body's resistance and healing processes.

CORE AREAS OF ANTHROPOSOPHIC BODY THERAPIES

Anthroposophic body therapies encompass a range of carefully developed methods that promote individual health and support healing processes. These include: **Bothmer® Therapy**, **Chiroprönethics** (therapy through speech and touch), **Colour Meridian Therapy** (developed by Christel Heidemann), **Loheland-Gymnastics**, **Oil Dispersion Bath Therapy**, **Rhythmical Massage Therapy**, **Simeon Pressel Massage Therapy**, and **Spacial Dynamics®**.

In all these therapies, the individual is accompanied attentively by a trained therapist in a quiet, protected setting. The therapeutic encounter through the body - whether in massage, bathing, or movement therapy - often serves as an essential foundation for long-term mental and emotional well-being. These methods help create space for inward listening, integration, and the re-establishment of balance on multiple levels of the human being.

Movement, Touch and Therapeutic Baths

ANTHROPOSOPHIC MOVEMENT THERAPIES

Anthroposophic movement therapies, such as **Bothmer® Therapy, Loheland Gymnastics, and Spacial Dynamics®**, work with the human being's relationship to space, posture, and movement. These approaches aim to gently correct imbalances and asymmetries, not through force, but through conscious, guided movement that supports the individual's inner and outer alignment.

With therapeutic guidance, inefficient or unbalanced movement patterns can be relearned and transformed into healthy, harmonious movement

sequences. In this process, coordination, balance, and breathing are gradually strengthened and brought into greater rhythm and integration.

Anthroposophic movement therapies are suited to individuals across the lifespan and can be offered in both individual and group settings. Each session is tailored to meet the specific needs and developmental stage of the person, supporting not only physical function but also emotional resilience and a sense of presence and orientation in life.





ANTHROPOSOPHIC MASSAGE THERAPIES

Anthroposophic massage therapies are distinguished by specific hand techniques and touch qualities that enable the therapist to enter into a wordless, perceptive dialogue with the patient - a therapeutic exchange that addresses the human being as a whole. Among the established forms are **Rhythrical Massage Therapy** and **Simeon Pressel Massage Therapy**, each arising from distinct anthroposophic impulses.

These massages aim to support the body's self-regulatory capacities, particularly by harmonising the breathing and circulatory systems. This, in turn, can stimulate healing processes throughout

the organism and bring balance to the metabolic and musculoskeletal systems.

Following the treatment, a period of therapeutic rest is essential. It provides the space for the impulses received during the massage to be internalised and integrated on both a physical and an inner level. Beyond their physiological effects, these therapies can also foster emotional calm and mental clarity. The quiet and attentive quality of the massage often invites a reflective state, allowing patients to gently distance themselves from the demands of everyday life and reconnect with their inner experience.

THERAPEUTIC BATHS

Through its various characteristics - such as temperature, movement, and the sensation of being held - water engages the human being on multiple levels: physically, mentally, and emotionally. In anthroposophic medicine, there are eight distinct forms of therapeutic baths, with **Oil Dispersion Bath Therapy** being the most widely known and practised.

These therapies differ in several ways: the temperature of the water, the rhythm and character of the movements (which may be gentle, flow-

ing, or stimulating, and sometimes involve contact with brushes or gloves), and the substances or additives used. Each combination produces specific effects, supporting the healing process, influencing the course of illness, and providing therapeutic support.

At the end of the anthroposophic bath treatment, the person is wrapped in a full-body cloth and enters a period of rest. This quiet phase allows the body and mind to absorb and integrate the therapeutic impulses.



TRAINING AND FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

Anthroposophic body therapists are trained professionals with a solid foundation in conventional medical or therapeutic practice. After completing a state-recognised medical, nursing, or therapeutic qualification, they undergo at least 1,000 additional hours of specialised training in anthroposophic body therapy. These therapies are offered in a range of settings, including hospitals, therapeutic centres, private practices, and home environments. They are constantly adapted to meet the individual needs and life context of each patient.

Accreditation and quality assurance are guided by international standards and regulations. A key reference point is the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, which published official benchmarks for training in Anthroposophic Medicine in 2023. These benchmarks define the minimum training requirements for the various therapeutic disciplines of anthroposophic medicine.

PROMOTING CONSCIOUS PARTICIPATION

A central aim of anthroposophic body therapy is to encourage patients to take an active role in their own healing journey.

Through therapies that are individually tailored, patients are gently supported in developing greater awareness of bodily sensations, emotional states, and inner experiences.

This enhanced self-perception often leads to improved body awareness, emotional balance, and a stronger sense of personal empowerment. Over time, this process promotes inner stability, strengthens self-confidence, and fosters personal development, laying the groundwork for a more conscious and responsible relationship to one's health.



SUPPORTING VITALITY

In addition to their therapeutic benefits, anthroposophic body therapies also support **preventive health** and overall vitality. Massage, therapeutic baths, and movement therapies can activate the release of endorphins and other beneficial hormones such as serotonin, naturally supporting well-being.

By awakening the body's self-regulating forces and inviting the individual into an active, inwardly engaged process, these therapies provide a foundation for long-term health. They reflect a forward-looking approach, one that places the human being's freedom, self-knowledge, and inner development at the heart of healing.

EXPERIENCES

"I feel warm all the way through."

"I feel balanced when I perform the movements myself."

"I feel more vital, more alive."

"I feel upright and whole."

"I feel seen as a whole person, not just as a diagnosis."

"I feel light and full of energy."

"Finally, someone is really listening to me."

"I am myself again."

"Finally, I can again perform everyday activities, sleep through the night and move without pain."

"I have not felt so secure since I was a child."

"I have rarely been treated with such attention."



"The whole-body movement therapy combines meaningful movement, correct posture, appropriate gestures and mental well-being. Patients, even those with acute illnesses or addiction problems, benefit greatly from this."

DR. STEFAN ZIEGLER, HEAD PHYSICIAN, PSYCHIATRY OF LUCERNE (LUPS)





RESEARCH, ETHICS AND SAFETY

Research in the field of anthroposophic body therapy often focuses on case studies, which reflects the very individual approach of the work.

To guarantee high-quality documentation and maintain scientific rigour, the adapted CARE Guidelines for research or case collection on therapeutic massage are followed. For more information, please visit the following links: <https://www.iaabt-medsektion.net/en/research>, and <https://www.care-statement.org>.

The core of anthroposophic body therapies is guided by a strong ethical foundation. Each individual is seen as a developing human being, comprising body, soul, and spirit. The ethical principles align with the principles outlined in the WHO Declaration on the Rights of the Patient in Europe and the European Patients' Charter.

Annexes

THE CORE METHODS OF ANTHROPOSOPHIC BODY THERAPIES

Anthroposophic body therapy offers diverse methods, each supporting health and healing in its own way. Therapists adapt these approaches to each patient's unique situation and needs.



Further links to anthroposophic body therapies

1. THERAPEUTIC BATHS

Therapeutic baths combine deep patient relaxation with restorative and healing processes. In a quiet and protected setting, the patient is gently guided by a therapist. The warmth of the water, its movement, and natural additions, such as plant

extracts or essential oils, are carefully chosen to help calm the nervous system, stimulate circulation, and encourage warmth and inner balance. The therapist remains present, providing support to the patient throughout the experience.



Additional link to anthroposophic bath therapies

2. MASSAGE THERAPIES

Anthroposophic massage therapies combine gentle, attentive touch with specific hand techniques to create a perceptive, wordless dialogue that addresses the human being as a whole.

By supporting the body's natural self-regulation and harmonising breathing and circulation, these therapies can awaken healing processes, restore balance, and invite emotional ease and inner clarity.

Rhythrical Massage

Developed in the 1920s by Dr. Ita Wegman - a physician trained in physiotherapy and Swedish massage - rhythmical massage employs gentle, rhythmic, wave-like movements designed to

harmonise and stimulate the body's self-healing forces. Patients often experience not only physical relaxation but also a deep sense of emotional calm and revitalised energy.

Simeon Pressel Massage

Developed by the anthroposophic physician Dr. Simeon Pressel (1905–1980), this massage consists of gentle but also in-depth, carefully sequenced techniques along the back and limbs. The person is regarded in the depth of his individual personality, which energises various processes, physically, emotionally and mentally. Additionally, it can emphasize inner processes and lead

to greater courage in life and increased energy to pursue life projects. Through this approach, the massage supports the harmonious flow of the body's energies, bringing relief and renewed vitality to people for decades. It is highly effective for managing chronic conditions and enhancing overall well-being.



[Additional links to anthroposophic massage therapies](#)

3. MOVEMENT THERAPIES

Movement therapies invite patients to engage in mindful, individually tailored movements that help achieve natural, healthy, and beneficial movement processes. This helps to improve coordination, breathing, balance, and inner harmony. Human beings are in constant relationship with the world and the space around them through their bodies, especially when they move. Movement therapies support not only physical health but also helps

patients regain a deeper connection with themselves and their surroundings, fostering self-confidence and emotional well-being. It is suitable for all ages and can be offered individually or in small groups. Specific forms of movement therapies within the anthroposophic practice include Spacial Dynamics® and Bothmer® therapy, each offering unique benefits and approaches.

Spacial Dynamics®

Founded in the United States in 1985 by Jaimen McMillan and the Spacial Dynamics® Institutes, spacial dynamics explains the moving human being as a fluid continuum of body, space, and awareness. This therapy helps individuals explore and improve their relationship with the space around them, and it is used worldwide in

therapy, pedagogy, performance augmentation, or business leadership. Through specific spatially oriented exercises, patients often experience increased physical comfort, improved posture, and a heightened sense of confidence and ease in their daily activities.

Bothmer® Therapy

The Bothmer® movement has its origins in Bothmer® gymnastics, which was initially developed by Fritz von Bothmer in collaboration with Rudolf Steiner, after Fritz von Bothmer became the gym teacher at the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany, in the 1920s. What began as a pioneering approach to movement through gymnastics has since evolved into a broader practice. Today, it is successfully applied in education and therapy

with children and adults, as well as in personal practice, supporting health, balance, and overall well-being. The method focuses on structured, rhythmic movements to improve coordination, stability, and spatial awareness. Participants often feel more grounded, centred, and balanced, leading to enhanced physical confidence and overall vitality.



[Additional links to anthroposophic movement therapies](#)

HOMEPAGE AND LINKS

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ANTHROPOSOPHIC BODY THERAPIES:

<https://www.iaabt-medsektion.net/en/>

<https://www.iaabt-medsektion.net/en/methods>

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ANTHROPOSOPHIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS (IVAA):

<https://www.ivaa.info/>

PHOTO SOURCE:

IKAM & International Association of Bädertherapie

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International Federation
of Anthroposophic
Medical Associations



