

Can Reiki Help Speed Healing After Surgery?



According to the Global Surgery 2030 study in *The Lancet*, 313 million surgical procedures are undertaken each year. And 143 million additional are needed each year to save lives and prevent disabilities. While necessary, surgical procedures are difficult on the body, whether it is a minor laparoscopic procedure or a major surgery. After the procedure is complete, it will take time for the individual to heal. Until healing is complete, the individual cannot return to his or her normal life. In order to speed the recovery, surgical patients often spend time resting, taking medication or participating in various types of therapy. Some people may also schedule Reiki sessions with the goal of encouraging the body to heal more quickly.

The Stress of Surgery

Surgery affects the body in many ways. Some of the most notable effects of surgery include:

Short-term effects of anesthesia.

The short-term effects of anesthesia may include drowsiness, sore throat, nausea, confusion, itching and chills. Most people experience these symptoms most intensely on the day of surgery, but symptoms can linger for some individuals.

Long-term effects of anesthesia.

Some studies have shown that exposure to anesthesia may possibly affect the risk of various complications in some cases, including heart problems, even after the individual has recovered. One study showed a possible increase in the risk of death for up to two years following a surgical procedure. Risks are more pronounced for people who spend more time under anesthesia.

Surgically-induced stress response.

Following surgery or any other severe trauma, various hormonal and metabolic changes occur in the body in response to the stress.

Limited mobility or function during recovery.

During the recovery process, individuals who have undergone surgery are often instructed to restrict their movement or avoid certain activities. As time goes on, the individual is able to regain more of his or her normal function, depending on how well the surgical site heals.

Complications.

After every surgical procedure, there is always a risk for complications, including post-surgical infections, problems with the incision, and more. During recovery, surgical patients follow doctors' instructions carefully to avoid these complications.

How Reiki After Surgery Can Help

Research studies have shown that Reiki offers a number of different benefits, some of which may be beneficial to people who are recovering from a surgical procedure.

1. Reiki may reduce anxiety before and after surgery.

Multiple research studies have explored the possibility of using Reiki to help patients who are preparing for or recovering from surgery. These studies have shown that people who participate in Reiki sessions before and after surgery are less likely to feel anxious than those who do not. Because anxiety may inhibit the healing process, it stands to reason that reducing anxiety through Reiki sessions may be beneficial to the healing process.

2. Reiki may help prevent or reduce depression after surgery.

Depression is a common issue experienced by patients following surgery, especially if the surgery was complex or requires a long, painful recovery period. People who are struggling with depression are less likely to follow doctors' orders and may therefore experience a more difficult, slower healing process. Failing to comply with a doctor's instructions may also raise the risk of post-surgical complications. Studies have shown that Reiki may reduce depression and help people to feel more optimistic. Thus, people who participate in Reiki sessions after surgery may be less likely to feel depressed and more likely to be proactive in their recovery.

3. Reiki may reduce stress levels.

Stress causes inflammation to build up in the body, which may delay healing. Research shows that people who participate in Reiki sessions report feeling less stressed and more relaxed. People who have undergone a surgical procedure may be able to use Reiki to reduce their stress levels and encourage faster healing.

4. Reiki may improve the quality of sleep.

When the body is trying to heal from an injury, trauma, or surgical procedure, good quality sleep is essential. Reiki produces feelings of relaxation for many clients, and people often report that they notice improved sleep quality after beginning Reiki therapy.

5. Reiki may reduce sensations of pain.

Pain is incredibly common after surgery. If the pain is severe, it may even slow the healing process by preventing the individual from participating in the physical activity necessary to promote recovery. However, Reiki may reduce sensations of pain following surgery. In fact, one study showed that women who had undergone a hysterectomy experienced less pain during recovery if they participated in Reiki sessions before and after the procedure.

Is Reiki Safe after Surgery?

Reiki is completely noninvasive. During a Reiki session, the practitioner places his or her hands gently on the client in specific positions in order to encourage the proper flow of the client's own ki or chi energy. In some cases, the practitioner may not need to touch the client at all. Thus, Reiki should not pose any risk of complications or side effects for patients who have recently undergone surgery. In addition, it can be used in combination with any other type of therapy, rehabilitation, or medication the individual may need to aid his or her recovery.

That being said, it is essential for people who have undergone surgery to follow their doctor's instructions carefully. Reiki is never a substitute for medical treatment after surgery, but it can be used to support medical treatments and potentially help aid in the healing process. If you choose to participate in Reiki sessions, make sure that your practitioner knows that you have recently had surgery so that he or she can make the appropriate accommodations.

Thank you IARP!

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