

# Six degrees of connection

Heard of iridology? Always wondered what kinesiology is? Our S testers took their troubles to a range of alternative therapists.

## Hypnotherapy

**The problem** Lifelong smoking habit.  
**The practitioner** David Schroder, Sydney Hypnosis, 107 Showground Road, Castle Hill and 118 Sutherland Street, Paddington. Phone 0435 136 127 or see [www.sydneyhypnosis.com](http://www.sydneyhypnosis.com).  
**The cost** \$150 for a 45-minute session.  
**What happens** "Hypnotherapy," Schroder says, "is like uploading new software for the unconscious mind."

I see him in an effort to quit smoking after 30 tar-filled years on the nails.

He questions me deeply, runs through the procedure and soon I am drifting away to the sound of his voice, getting sleepy, sleepy.

The procedure is just as he said it would be – relaxation, suggestion, visualisation and the awakening. Aware and sentient throughout the experience, I sense a calmness seeping into me; a sort of empowering lightness, drifting on the virtual cloud David has me riding in my mind's eye.

He stresses the importance of visualising a fork in the road – a metaphor for choosing to smoke or not – one path to freedom and clarity, the other to addiction and sadness. I leave feeling warmly relaxed, even drowsy. The hazy feeling lasts a few days and the need to smoke is certainly diminished, if not extinguished.

**The verdict** Immediate reduction from 20 a day to five. I can't say this single hypnotherapy session has been a magic bullet but a residual subconscious resistance to smoking remains. In fairness to David, he says two or even three sessions may be required – and I will be going back. **MAL CHENU**

## Iridology

**The problem** Burning the candle at both ends.  
**The practitioner** Iridologist and naturopath Catherine Browne, Soultonik, 42 Grosvenor Street, Woolahbra. Phone (02) 9389 6000.  
**The cost** \$110 as part of a naturopathic consultation.

**What happens** Eyes are the windows to your soul, so to me it makes sense that they are the windows to your health, too. I just hope my eyes don't show the number of parties I've been to in the past year – a job hazard at S.

Iridology – a tool to assess the body's general constitution and ability to handle stress and illness – goes hand-in-hand with a naturopathic

consultation. Depending on the markings on the iris, the technique sorts people into three categories: silk; its opposite, hessian; and linen, in the middle. "You are a silk, which is common in A-type personalities," Browne says. "But you need to work on your constant driving need for perfection and tendency to say yes to everything or you'll fall in a heap." Ouch. She got me in one.

Different parts of the eyes represent different parts of the body. So if you have a weakness in a certain organ it will show in your eyes as a spot or a line. She then looks more intently into my eyes and picks up two or three health complaints I've had diagnosed by doctors previously.

I'm amazed that she pinpoints issues I've struggled with for years. "I would never rely on iridology only, but as a naturopath it's a great tool to assess constitution," she says.

**The verdict** I leave the office promising to eat better, take herbs, exercise more and then I realise that must be what every A-type personality says as they wave goodbye, juggling their car keys and tapping on their BlackBerry. **SHELLY HORTON**

## Acupuncture

**The problem** Headaches in pregnancy.  
**The practitioner** Ray Ford Acupuncture, 12 Ridge Street, North Sydney. Phone (02) 9954 3322 or see [www.rayfordacupuncture.com.au](http://www.rayfordacupuncture.com.au).

**The cost** My initial treatment costs \$150, with follow-ups \$70. Weekly treatment sessions for \$20 are held at community centres around Sydney.  
**What happens** Now, many thousands of years after it was originally practised and 26 years after Ray Ford began his acupuncture training in Sydney, Chinese medicine as a whole is much less fringe and much more mainstream. But the idea of using my body as a pincushion has no appeal until a friend recommends it for the blinding headaches I've been having during pregnancy.

It turns out the acupuncture needles are tiny. In fact I can't feel them at all when they are inserted in different pressure points to unblock energy pathways. The clinic is so homey and Ford so welcoming that by the end of the 90-minute consultation I'm not sure if my lift in mood and wellbeing is due to the treatment or to his influence.

He has used acupuncture to treat countless pregnant women for nausea, headaches and sore lower backs, as well as turning breech babies and helping to induce labour. Just by looking at my tongue and taking my pulse he is able to determine



The way ahead ... a meditation path at The Golden Door Health Retreat – Elysia.

that I'm severely run-down and by the end of the session I'm feeling human again. The headache returns that night but it's not as aggressive and I didn't expect to be cured after one session.

**The verdict** I plan to be back for more. **KATE COX**

## Applied kinesiology

**The problem** Lack of vitality.  
**The practitioner** Wendy Cole, Eastpoint Health & Wellbeing, Edgecliff. Phone (02) 9328 5837.  
**The cost** \$120 for initial 30-minute consultation, \$75 for 15-20 minute follow-ups.

**What happens** "So many women are walking around the edges of burnout at 40 instead of feeling vibrant and energetic," says chiropractor Wendy Cole.

Applied kinesiology uses muscle testing to diagnose your problems, whether physical, emotional or chemical. I lie down, raise my arm and Cole takes a firm hold of my wrist. As I place my other hand on various areas of my body – liver, gut, heart, stomach – she applies downward pressure: if my arm gives way, there's a problem; if it stays strong, there's not. Then, she places vials of liquid "neuro-transmitters" on my tummy, my arm's response to their presence determining the health of my nervous system. It's complicated and a little bit East-meets-West kooky, but it's all about the mind-body link.

**The verdict** I'm diagnosed with nervous exhaustion and chronic gut dysfunction. Apparently, I've been living on adrenaline instead of nutrition. "We need to rebuild you," Cole says, starting with herbs to kill the fungus in my gut, followed by more herbs and vitamins and chiropractic-style adjustments. Hopefully it won't cost \$6 million. At \$75 a consultation, it could, but I'm going back next week. **SARAH MAGUIRE**

## Hemaview

**The treatment** Live blood analysis.  
**The problem** Fatigue.  
**The practitioner** Soultonik, 42 Grosvenor St, Bondi Junction. Phone (02) 9389 6000.  
**The cost** \$85 test and report only; \$40 as part of naturopathy consultation (\$110 initial consultation).  
**What happens** Hemaview is used in conjunction with naturopathy to let you see what your blood says about your state of health. Consultant Catherine Browne tells me it is particularly useful for people who are stressed, want to lose weight, or simply want to feel better.

**The verdict** No pain, no gain. Ten days later I've lost three kilos of leg puffiness and made no change to my diet. **EMMA-KATE DOBBIN**

A pinprick of blood is taken from your finger (it doesn't hurt). A drop of blood is then placed on glass slides and put under the microscope. What the microscope sees is then transferred to the computer screen so you can have a look and understand what your consultant is explaining to you. There are also lots of great words to learn here: you're likely to see examples of neutrophils, lymphocytes, fibrins, monocytes and eosinophils, among other things. It's fascinating to watch. Depending on your complaints, your consultant will prescribe vitamins, detoxing, herbal supplements and the like.

**The verdict** My reading tells me I have some "inflammatory markers" (treated with omega 3 fish oils, antioxidants and some dietary tweaking) and also some oxidative stress due to "lifestyle and dietary factors". Eight to 10 weeks later you return for a follow-up consultation, where you can see how your state of health has (hopefully) improved. "It's amazing how people's blood changes," Browne says. **GLYNIS TRAILL-NASH**

## Structural massage

**The problem** Fractured right ankle, too many get-well cupcakes.  
**The practitioner** Abrar Kenja, phone (02) 9386 4616 or see [www.naturalhealthessence.com.au](http://www.naturalhealthessence.com.au).  
**The cost** \$165 an hour. Session three hours.  
**What happens** "Your liver is furious with you," practitioner Abrar Kenja says, grabbing my right ankle. Apparently this is made obvious by my puffy leg. He rests it on his shoulder and stimulates a pressure point near my right hip – allegedly the site of the "liver meridian".  
With structural massage, a practitioner uses intuitive skills to treat the nervous and lymphatic systems, which releases old injuries and frustrations.

"The liver's angry about your body image as a teenager," he says.

As Kenja works on my lymphatic system through a combination of deep tissue massage and stretches (that run from my feet to neck), I cry. Tears, he says, are "an emotional release" helping to unblock my liver's teenage issues.

I appreciate my liver's unresolved angst but I am in too much pain to apologise. I scream more in this three-hour session than I did when my surgeon said I couldn't wear heels for six months.  
**The verdict** No pain, no gain. Ten days later I've lost three kilos of leg puffiness and made no change to my diet. **EMMA-KATE DOBBIN**

# Be free of your demons

Natural therapies can help break the cycle of addiction, writes DANIELLE TEUTSCH.

AMANDA JEFFERYS, program manager at The Golden Door Health Retreat – Elysia, in the Hunter Valley, sees them coming through her door all the time: stressed, busy people, utterly burnt out.

Part of her job is to help them identify the poor practices allowing them to push through immense workloads and cope until the end of the day – the bottle of chablis in the evening, cigarettes desperately puffed in the corridor, double-strength long blacks, afternoon chocolate binge or bags of chips and gravy.

"It's the rat-on-a-wheel syndrome of work, work, work," Jefferys says.

Quite often these "strategies" turn into addictions – which is where the other part of Jefferys's job comes in. She designs a program of alternative therapies at the centre that can help people break bad habits and start afresh.

Jefferys, a health psychologist, says alternative therapies can have an important role in helping people with addiction.

Although she does see the extreme end of such problems at The Golden Door – like people with drug dependency – most clients struggle with the more common forms such as emotional eating, overdependence on caffeine and binge drinking. "You have to consider that binge drinking is classified as four standard drinks a day, which is only half a bottle of wine," Jefferys says.

Also very familiar to many office workers is the familiar blood-sugar low in the afternoon, followed by a splurge on chocolates, lollies and chips.

"That's emotional eating, done to satisfy a lot of other needs [apart from hunger]," she says.

Her treatment is "about helping them to be more self-aware." Then, once the triggers for addictive behaviour have been identified – they may even stem

from childhood – Jefferys will use a counselling technique called "motivational interviewing", which helps people resolve any ambivalence preventing them from making a change.

Finally she will tailor a program of alternative therapies for them; therapies such as hypnotherapy, pranic healing, meditation, kinesiology, acupuncture and personal training which can help to replace bad habits related to stress. In addition the endorphins from exercise, as well as sessions with a naturopath and nutritionist, can help combat the physical effects of addiction

by rebalancing the body. Jefferys emphasises there is no one-size-fits-all solution to changing addictive behaviour.

"If there are emotional issues such as grief, I may look at some counselling, kinesiology, maybe even a pranic healing," she says. "Kinesiology is a short, sharp way of opening people up – if there is some resistance, for example."

If she feels someone may be resistant to some of the more New-Age therapies, she may tailor a program of more established, mainstream therapies such as relaxation, advice from a dietitian or personal training such as boxing and aqua fitness. "Sometimes it's the simple things like having a nice, healthy low-GI breakfast with a bit of fruit," she says.

Jefferys says results can be profound in the optimum seven-day stay at the centre because people are removed from the usual environment that is causing them stress.

"There are no triggers here, no stresses, so it's very successful in a very short time. Our goal is to help people to flourish."

See [www.goldendoor.com.au/elysia](http://www.goldendoor.com.au/elysia).

**It's very successful ... Our goal is to help people to flourish.'**

# Miracle of olive leaf extract



FORGET echinacea, spirulina, grape seed extract, vitamin C, and goji berries – the new alternative health superstar is the olive leaf.

Extract of the olive leaf is said to have free-radical busting, antifungal and antibiotic properties, as well as the ability to lower blood pressure, ward off coughs and colds, and treat cardiovascular problems.

It's not an entirely new discovery. The Egyptians were said to use it for medicinal purposes. And at the turn of the last century researchers discovered a bitter compound called oleuropein in the leaves of certain olive trees which partly explained its resistance to diseases. Since then, scientific evidence has grown of olive leaf extract's health potential.

A study by the Australian Centre for Complementary Medicine Education and Research in 2006 found olive-leaf extract killed off human breast and prostate cancer cells in the laboratory. Research done by the centre the previous year also showed olive leaf extract had an antioxidant capacity 400 per cent higher than vitamin C and almost double that of green tea or grape seed extract – and that furthermore it could help to fight some inflammatory conditions. More good news about the miracle leaf came a Swiss and German study published in the journal *Phytotherapy Research* this year showing that a supplement containing olive leaf extract may help lower blood pressure and cholesterol in people with mild hypertension.

**DANIELLE TEUTSCH**

# Are your hormones driving you crazy every month?

## Do you suffer from PMS?

The good news is - you can do something about it!

It is estimated that as many as 85% of women in Australia experience symptoms of Pre-menstrual Syndrome (PMS)\*. Yet despite PMS affecting a large portion of the female population little is known about the condition and its cause.

Many women think of PMS as an unpleasant yet normal interference they have to put up with 2 weeks of the month. Others experience symptoms so severe it may sometimes feel like they have PMS the whole month! However contrary to popular opinion, PMS is not something you should have to put up with.

### Symptoms of PMS

- The most common symptoms associated with PMS include:
- cramping
  - anxiety
  - fatigue
  - bloating
  - mood swings
  - breast tenderness
  - irritability
  - headaches
  - menstrual discomfort
  - weight gain

For those suffering with severe PMS watch out! Mood swings and irritability can turn into outbursts of anger and rage.

### So what is PMS?

A pioneer of Natural Hormone Support and author of "What your Doctor may not tell you

about Pre-menopause" Dr John Lee, considers PMS to be linked to insufficient levels of the hormone "Progesterone" experienced during the 2nd half of the female cycle (the Luteal Phase).

This hormonal imbalance can cause problems with your body if there is a significantly low Progesterone to Estrogen ratio which results in "Estrogen Dominance". As this imbalance occurs, so to do those dreaded symptoms.

PMS can affect menstruating women of any age; however for most women PMS begins in the pre-menopausal years, around the mid 30's and tends to become increasingly severe as the years go on.

### What causes PMS?

PMS is a multifaceted syndrome. To date the jury is still out (in fact many believe there is no one cause) but most experts do agree that PMS is directly related to hormonal fluctuations of the menstrual cycle.

In some women with PMS, irregular levels of estrogen and progesterone appear to impair chemical messengers in the brain known as neurotransmitters. Low levels of some of these neurotransmitters (such as serotonin) lead to an increase in feelings such as depression. Conversely, high levels of the neurotransmitter

noradrenalin induce feelings of hostility and irritability, symptoms most women with PMS can relate to very well!

**"I used to dread my monthly period. Emotionally I was a mess and I couldn't control my anger. I now can't believe how great I feel. My treatment program is just the best, THANK YOU"** DH NSW

Other factors that may contribute to PMS include:

- Nutritional deficiencies
- Stress
- Excessive consumption of products containing caffeine
- Adrenal exhaustion

**Now there is an effective more natural approach that can help eliminate symptoms of PMS and have you feeling great all month!**

### YES there is help!

At the Women's Health Centre Australia we approach your PMS acknowledging that each woman's experience throughout PMS is unique. We believe in a multifaceted approach and as your PMS is unique to you, your treatment must be tailored based on your individual needs, hormonal health and symptoms of PMS.



The treatment will be created specifically to suit your body and to address your symptoms. We will also advise on lifestyle factors relating to diet, nutrition and stress management that will help you cope with PMS.

Don't dread your monthly cycle any longer. You can have relief from your symptoms.



## Free Medical Health Evaluation for PMS Sufferers

If you're suffering with PMS I invite you to discuss your symptoms with one of our qualified medical practitioners to determine your suitability for our new "plant based" treatment approach.

FOR YOUR FREE REPORT ON PMS OR TO BOOK YOUR FREE EVALUATION CALL

**1300 133 254**

[www.australianwomenshealth.com.au](http://www.australianwomenshealth.com.au)