

Mixing the old with the new in massage technique

By Kristen Berns/Austin Daily Herald

Relieving stress comes in many forms. From meditation to yoga to massages, people for years have used different methods in order to relax, relieve stress and help in overall health.

Recently Terri Bergstrom of Austin added an additional method to her massage therapy business, Willow Moon Healing. It's what Bergstrom calls "a Western technique with Asian roots."

As Bergstrom uses the technique on clients she holds onto rails attached to her ceiling for balance and support. Then, with her size eight-and-a-half feet, she begins what almost looks like a dance across the client's body.

Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy (AOBT) is an ancient form of barefoot massage using deep compressions over the body.

Ashiatsu, ashi meaning foot and atsu meaning pressure, is an ancient form of bodywork by Buddhist monks.

In March Bergstrom, a certified and licensed massage therapist, was certified in this new technique.

She said she was inspired to learn the technique because of her clients that may be of larger body mass so she could apply more pressure.

"There's only so much pressure you can get with your hands and elbows, and this allows for more," Bergstrom said.

A client of hers, receiving the unique massage for the first time described it as a fuller and deeper massage. "It's like you can get more at one time," she said.

"The surface area of my foot covers more than my hand surface," Bergstrom said.

The technique was originally designed for petite people to practice but now, she said, all people of different shapes and sizes do it.

With 1,200 certified in the United States to practice AOBT, Bergstrom is the third in Minnesota.

"It's becoming more of a popular massage," Bergstrom said. "A lot of people look and deserve a deeper massage."

Bergstrom said in her business some of her clients ask for this type of pressure in their massage and now she's able to offer this to them.

She said it's good for all different body types, large or small. Although it shouldn't be used on fragile people.



Terri Bergstrom was recently certified to practice Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy at her massage business, Willow Moon Healing. Using the rail bars on her ceiling for balance and support, she uses her feet to massage clients. Kristen Berns.

AOBT is very good for people, she said, who have chronic back problems. But she also said many of her clients use not only AOBT for chronic problems but also for overall health care, preventative and, of course, stress relief.

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