

Praise for Alexis Brink and the Art of Jin Shin

“Having watched Alexis interact with clients from a diversity of backgrounds over the three decades we have known each other, I have always been impressed by her gentle confidence and natural inquisitiveness. A true healer who knows and implements both the science and art of medicine, she has always impressed me by her desire to break new boundaries and think beyond ordinary paradigms.”

—Deepak Chopra, MD

“For years, Jin Shin self-help has been my saving grace, pulling me and even my band-mates through a range of crises, from food poisoning on a twelve-hour flight to South America to a flu passing through our band bus. Once one becomes empowered by Jin Shin self-help, life starts afresh!”

—Maria Schneider, Grammy Award winner and
leader of Maria Schneider Orchestra

“The Art of Jin Shin is an energetic healing modality that is a powerful complementary practice to Western medicine.”

—Maurice Preter, MD, integrative neuropsychiatrist

“The Art of Jin Shin is a powerful self-help tool that can be extremely helpful for dancers, as the unblocking and release of energy can aid in injury prevention and more rapid healing of injuries.”

—Nikki Feirt Atkins, founder and producing artistic director,
American Dance Machine for the Twenty-First Century

“I have been seeing Alexis Brink for over fifteen years, and whenever I’m in New York City I make sure to get a treatment. I always leave a session more energized, yet calmer, and am better able to go about my day in a peaceful, joyful state. Alexis is a first-rate healer/practitioner and I highly recommend her to anyone suffering with a particular health issue or anxiety issue, or those who simply want to be at their optimal level of being!”

—Debbie Gibson, singer, recording artist

THE ART OF JIN SHIN

Copyrighted image

The Japanese Practice of Healing
with Your Fingertips

Alexis Brink



JIN SHIN
INSTITUTE

TILLER
PRESS

New York London Toronto Sydney New Delhi

TILLER
P R E S S

An Imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

This publication contains the opinions and ideas of its author. It is intended to provide helpful and informative material on the subjects addressed in the publication. It is sold with the understanding that the author and publisher are not engaged in rendering medical, health, or any other kind of personal professional services in the book. The reader should consult his or her medical, health, or other competent professional before adopting any of the suggestions in this book or drawing inferences from it.

The author and publisher specifically disclaim all responsibility for any liability, loss, or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the contents of this book.

Copyright © 2019 by Alexis Brink

The names of some individuals in this book have been changed.

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever.

For information, address Simon & Schuster Subsidiary Rights Department,
1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

First Tiller Press trade paperback edition June 2019

TILLER PRESS and colophon are trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact
Simon & Schuster Special Sales at 1-866-506-1949 or business@simonandschuster.com.

The Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau can bring authors to your live event.
For more information or to book an event, contact the Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau
at 1-866-248-3049 or visit our website at www.simonspeakers.com.

Interior design by Joy O'Meara

Manufactured in the United States of America

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

ISBN 978-1-9821-3093-0
ISBN 978-1-9821-3094-7 (ebook)

CONTENTS

[Foreword](#) ix

Introduction xiii

1

[The Jin Shin Effect](#) 1

2

The Power of Self-Care 9

3

Getting Started 17

4

Mapping the Fingers 23

5

The Safety Energy Locations 29

6

The “First Three” Flows 41

7

The Twelve Organ Flows 51

8

The Mudras 87

9

Mini Flows, Quickies, and Ascending and Descending Flows 93

10

The Symptom Encyclopedia 119

The Infinite Wisdom of Jin Shin 193

Afterword 197

Acknowledgments 201

[Index](#) 203

Foreword

BY ELIZABETH CUTLER

I came to the Art of Jin Shin at twenty-one through Daniel Tucker. Daniel and I had recently both moved to Telluride, Colorado, where he was starting an art school called “Ah Haa”—as in that moment when we know we get it. I was a recent graduate of the University of Colorado, starting my first job as the receptionist in a real estate office.

By that time I had already developed an interest in practices that allow our bodies and beings to feel their best naturally. My best friend had died of cancer in high school, and her suffering led me to ask myself what else was out there. The medicines available at that time made her more sick than she already was, and I felt a deep yearning to explore and learn more. One that would not go away. One like I felt before my partner, Julie Rice, and I started SoulCycle.

I took off from college in Boulder to do my junior year abroad, living in a monastery in India to focus on meditation and traveling to Taiwan to study tai chi and herbs, figuring that these various ancient teachings would give me some answers.

The experiences were rich, and I learned a lot, but something was still missing.

“You go around the world to come home again” was a phrase Julie and I always used when we were in search of an answer in our SoulCycle business and found it right under our noses. It happened frequently, so much that we would laugh about it.

That is how I felt after my third Jin Shin class in Telluride. Jin Shin Jyutsu is a magical, somewhat esoteric form of energy medicine that Daniel had studied for many years with Mary Burmeister, the Japanese-American woman who brought the practice to the US. The school’s introduction of Thursday night “self-help” classes intrigued me. People showed up at 5 p.m., setting up cots to work on one another using a book Mary had written and compiled from her studies with her teacher, Jiro Murai. In that book, as in this one, there are ways to hold places on your own body, and other people’s bodies, to help restore energetic pathways that become blocked by everyday living.

We started each class by putting our hands under our armpits, reaching the back of the scapula with our fingers while our thumbs faced up on the front sides of our bodies. We dropped our shoulders and began breathing thirty-six times, noticing at the end of those breaths whether we felt differently now than we had thirty-six breaths ago. The answer was yes, always yes. Sometimes a big “YESSSSS,” and sometimes a smaller “yes.”

By simply placing our hands and getting out of the way in order to allow the source of life to come through us, we could become a “jumper cable” for our own bodies, or for someone else. (I know this sounds crazy, but we all have this source energy running through our bodies and it’s okay—just try some of the simple holds featured in this book, and I promise that you’ll feel it, too.) We could be a jumper cable for our own body or someone else’s, and use a series of holds on specific energy locations to unlock the incredible, ancient wisdom of the Art of Jin Shin.

The amazing thing was, each time we did this, we added to our energetic foundation and the body’s ability to find homeostasis more efficiently.

Thirty-six breaths and I was hooked, practicing on myself daily. I went on to educate myself as much as I could and eventually began practicing on others. I’m not exaggerating when I say that I have found this practice to be one of the

greatest gifts for all of humanity: accessible to everyone with breath, requiring no tools or special abilities.

In all the years I've practiced and loved Jin Shin, I could never understand why this healing art has remained so unknown—that's why I wanted to write this foreword. The Art of Jin Shin remains life changing for me, giving me the stamina and depth to build a big business, stay grounded in my core beliefs, and do my best to allow the freedom of energy flow through my life and work each day.

I had a thriving practice in Jin Shin for fifteen years before I started Soul-Cycle. I loved the practice and experienced many of the things Alexis references in this book. The biggest hurdle for me was how to explain what I did when sitting next to someone at a dinner party. Usually it worked out, but I am relieved that Alexis has written this book to help the Art of Jin Shin become accessible to people like my twenty-one-year-old self—and for whomever its pages may help today.

I am extraordinarily grateful to all the teachers and practitioners who have shared their wisdom so that the Art of Jin Shin can remain alive. Jin Shin has been the greatest, most consistent gift of my life.

audience. For instance, those of you who have familiarity with the modality will know it as Jin Shin Jyutsu. In order to avoid a common source of confusion, we changed “Jyutsu” to its English translation, “art,” removing echoes to a martial art.

In writing this book, it was necessary for me to make choices on how to present the information as directly and accessibly as possible while maintaining the integrity of the work. At times, this was a challenge, requiring me to put multifaceted philosophical concepts into simple language. As all Jin Shin practitioners know, the healing practice we refer to as an “art” can encompass a lifetime’s worth of study and freedom to explore our own creativity. There are many paths leading to one goal. It is in my awareness at this moment that I am putting the practice into simple words so that it can be understood and used by many. If you decide to continue your exploration into the Art of Jin Shin after reading this book, you will find endless layers within the practice, along with links and similarities to other disciplines such as astrology and numerology. On the other hand, Jin Shin can be as simple as taking a breath and holding a finger. Both ways of practicing are equally wonderful and complete, neither one superior to the other. That is part of the beauty of Jin Shin, which can be practiced on all levels.

You can use *The Art of Jin Shin* to alleviate common ailments, such as bringing down your baby’s fever or helping yourself or your partner with a headache, or you can use it as a regular daily tune-up for general wellness. Most of my clients make Jin Shin self-help a part of their daily routines, many of them practicing before they get out of bed in the morning. Other great times to practice your Jin Shin include middle-of-the-night wake-ups, downtime while waiting for appointments, or couch time while watching movies or TV.

You never know when the opportunity will present itself. My college-aged son, who frequently calls me from school for some quick Jin Shin advice, phoned breathlessly a few weeks ago to tell me that a kid had collapsed outside his dorm. I gave him instructions for a simple hold and told him to stay with it until EMS arrived. A few minutes later I got a one-line follow-up text message:

“I did it!” The young man was okay, and Tyler had had the opportunity to be there for him by applying some simple Jin Shin.

As my teacher likes to say of Jin Shin’s library of self-help quickies and recalibrations: “Don’t leave home without it!” You will find everything you need to get started within the pages that follow. And since this simple energy work involves no tools other than your own two hands, you will always have everything you need in order to relieve your aches and pains or set yourself up for a great day.

Copyrighted image

THE ART OF
JIN SHIN
MURAI METHOD

The Jin Shin Effect

Katie, a bright and studious sixteen-year-old, had been on antidepressants for three years when she came to see me. She faithfully kept her therapy appointments and meditated to reduce her anxiety. Still, her depression was so acute that she frequently needed to skip school or leave class in the middle of the day, felled by bouts of uncontrollable crying. Nothing seemed to be able to dispel the dark cloud of misery that enveloped her.

When she lay down on my table, I immediately noticed that her feet were completely pigeon-toed. More alarmingly, her entire body, especially her head, was rolling off to the right. It's not unusual for older clients to present with asymmetry, yet hers was the most extreme resting body position I had seen in someone so young. Given that she had no known postural issues, I asked her about prior trauma. Katie couldn't remember anything in particular. I made a mental note to schedule an intake with her mother after our session. Even without knowing her history, it was immediately apparent that I would need to start working my way through a descending sequence to move the energy down and out of her head. Slipping my right hand under her neck—a specific area known to clear mental and emotional blocks—I'd felt a large lump: the mass of knotted muscle and congested energy that was pulling her head to the right. I maintained a gentle hold on the area until I felt Katie's quiet, uneven pulse become more lively and even. I moved my left hand to an area above her eyebrow to clear the mind. Keeping my right hand where it was, I placed my left on her tailbone, to jump-start her body's source energy and harmonize the blood es-

ditions. She had been under medical care for nineteen years, a self-described “semi-invalid” who had been hospitalized several times before a chance encounter brought her to the Art of Jin Shin. As a nurse who was married to a physician, she had access to the best medical care. Still, a daily regimen of blood thinners and painkillers had done little to alleviate her discomfort. So pronounced was her exhaustion that her children frequently had to help her up the stairs at night.

Fate intervened in the form of an approach from a benevolent stranger at a convention. Taking in her poor color and obvious ill health, a man named Charles told her in no uncertain terms that if she wanted to get on with life, she needed to go see a woman named Mary Burmeister in Arizona—the teacher and practitioner who had carried the message of Jin Shin Jyutsu from Japan to the United States. Lacking any means of investigating the practice in those pre-internet days, Philomena bought a plane ticket to see an associate of Mary Burmeister’s. Patricia Meador would give her sessions twice a day for ten days.

Over a series of hour-long sessions, Pat gently placed her hands on various areas on Philomena’s body, occasionally telling her about the connections she observed. On the fifth day, after her ninth session, Philomena was sitting poolside, the Ace bandages and compression stockings in which she customarily wrapped her legs set aside so she could dip her toes into the cool blue water. Summoned to the house by a phone call, she gathered herself and headed toward the living room. Halfway there, she realized she was walking without pain—and without the aid of her compression gear.

Her transformation was profound. First, the cousin charged with picking her up from the airport in Newark failed to recognize her. (To be fair, Philomena had also switched out the baggy pants she usually wore to cover her bulky compression bandages for a skirt and heels.) Then, when she went to see her physician for her weekly blood test, the nurse who examined her chart was so puzzled by the radical change in her numbers that she feared Philomena’s chart had accidentally been switched with another patient’s. The doctor came in to examine her, and Philomena told him the story of where she had been. “Whatever it is you’re doing,” he said, “keep it up.” Philomena had weaned herself off her painkillers over the previous week, and her doctor also took her off blood

thinner, then and there. Her problems never recurred, and indeed she never found cause to return to see her hematologist.

In the clean, spare practice room where she saw clients, Philomena asked about my reason for visiting her, and I told her about my knee problem.

“In Jin Shin Jyutsu, we call ‘problems’ projects,” she said as she paused to correct me. “Projects are fun, and we work with them.”

Philomena then took a firm hold of my little toes and tweaked them a bit. As she worked, she told me I could help my knee by simultaneously holding the inside and outside of the knee. The transformation from that one simple tweak right then and there was instantaneous. I returned to rehearsal the very next day and was never again sidelined as a result of knee pain. Occasionally, I would start to feel the stirrings of the old injury, and a little application of self-help would immediately resolve the issue.

Philomena also suggested I take a workshop with her that following week so that I could learn how to give sessions to my friend with multiple sclerosis. I took her suggestion.

Over five days, more than a hundred of us gathered from all over the world in a rented conference room at a New Jersey hotel. Though much of what Philomena was teaching went over my head, I instantly embraced Jin Shin’s profoundly simple, holistic philosophy. As Westerners we tend to think that ailments have a single cause, and that one person with fifteen ailments might require as many different kinds of treatments or prescriptions. In contrast, many Eastern philosophies suggest that everything, from energy in the body to events in the world, moves in a continuous cycle, with each individual part being connected. Looking at the body from an energetic point of view makes sense of even very disparate-sounding dysfunctions—like bunions and lung issues, as in the case of one of my clients, a jazz singer in her eighties. Yolande Bavan came to a case study of five sessions that I conducted with an apprentice. Her lungs improved and it was easier for her to fill them with oxygen, and we were lucky to witness her phenomenal performance at a tribute to Duke Ellington.

The practice itself is both simple and infinitely complex. What struck me right away was how much you can learn about the body just by feeling and looking. As Philomena talked us through her process, demonstrating on a volunteer, we saw transformations take place with our very own eyes. A raised shoulder, visibly out of line with the rest of the body, would sink down into the table as she gently held on to the underside of the opposing knee. Pigeon toes would gradually turn outward as she held the volunteer's upper thigh, and cupped hands would resolve with a release of the upper back. Philomena guided us through body readings, training our eyes to notice congestions within the body—a rolled-in knee, a locked shoulder, a distended abdomen.

I felt like a newly awakened being. The career I had trained for all my life flew out the window during that seminar. Soon afterward, I asked Philomena whether she would be willing to continue training me privately, and I became one of the few lucky people to benefit from her extended instruction and mentorship.

In short order I was able to give comprehensive treatments myself, at times using specific protocols recommended by Philomena, and with astonishing results. I practiced as much as I could on whomever I could get my hands on, mainly dancers I knew from company and class. My first real clients were an artistic couple referred my way by Philomena: Milton Resnick, a well-known painter, and his wife, Pat Passlof, a professor of art and fellow painter. Milton dealt with arthritic conditions among other ailments, while Pat had vision and digestive problems, all of which were alleviated by our continued sessions. I started working with my ballet teacher, whose persistent neck problems resolved within a couple of sessions. Soon she was sending me any injured or ailing performers she came across, principal dancers from New York City Ballet and the Joffrey among them. My practice filled up immediately, and over the years my client base has expanded to people from all walks of life.

Sometimes the practice is used for maintenance, to alleviate conditions that are a natural by-product of the aging process or to support clients experiencing serious illness. Sometimes I find myself using it as a form of first aid. Once, on

a flight to Paris, a woman walking down the aisle literally fainted into my lap. She fell in the right place, I told my family later. She promptly recovered once I treated her in the back of the plane. Then there was the man who collapsed onto a New York City sidewalk while I was out walking with my daughter. He had fallen straight onto his face and lost consciousness. After some bystanders helped to turn him over, I held the base of his head at the same area where I had helped the woman on the plane, and within minutes he regained consciousness. He stood up and, refusing help from the waiting ambulance, attempted to make his way home. With some convincing, we managed to get him into the care of the EMTs.

Often people come to see me as a last resort, after they have exhausted many options in the search for relief. Alex, the usually chatty superintendent of the building next door to mine, is our unofficial block mayor. When I ran into him wearing a back brace one day, he was in so much pain that despite sixteen sessions of physical therapy and multiple doses of heavy pain meds, he had been forced to hire other people to take over his building duties. I suggested he come for some Jin Shin. After just one Jin Shin session, he took off the brace and discontinued the meds. Given that his work is so physical, we continue to see each other for regular touch-ups.

I have worked with expectant mothers who had been previously unable to carry the pregnancy to term and were able to deliver healthy babies with the support of the Art of Jin Shin. With late-stage cancer patients looking for relief from their pain and the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation, and with clients struggling with back pain, digestive troubles, addiction issues, or anxiety and depression, some of them at risk of developing opioid dependencies due to long-term struggles with pain.

Though this book is limited to a simple set of self-help techniques, the Art of Jin Shin is vast. I have been practicing for nearly thirty years now, and I learn something new with every client.

As you explore Jin Shin's simple and gentle techniques for energetic rebalancing, I hope you will discover the potential for increased health, balance, and vitality that Jin Shin has to offer.

steep, and the prognosis was dire. Despite the legions of doctors in his orbit, nobody in his family could help him. So according to his wishes, he was carried on a stretcher to his family's mountain cabin, where he told his relatives to check on him again in eight days' time.

In the acute stages of his mysterious illness, it occurred to Murai that the Buddha had attained enlightenment after a week of Zen sitting and fasting. Wondering whether a Zen practice could be used to overcome illness, Murai decided to put himself through a regimen inspired by the Buddha's path. As he meditated, he performed various "mudras," the ancient finger positions said to stimulate the movement of cosmic energy through the body. He fell in and out of consciousness, his body going freezing cold and then pulsing with a fiery heat. After several days, he experienced a great sense of calm. On the seventh day Murai stood and was able to walk again. His relatives were surprised and delighted to see him return from the mountain cabin alone and in good health.

These events were transformational for Murai, who finally channeled his energies toward a concrete goal—conducting research that started with the mudras and branched out into a wide-ranging study of his own making. He studied ancient Chinese, Greek, and Indian texts as well as the Judeo-Christian Bible, looking for connections between them. He examined corpses prior to cremation and visited slaughterhouses to purchase the heads of cattle, dissecting them on the premises to study the circulation of bodily fluids. Meanwhile he continued his own experiments, eating a single type of food for weeks at a time in order to see how it affected the energy flow in his body.

Through this intentional practice, Murai began to become aware of hidden forces, the natural movement of energy in the body becoming palpable.

Eventually he began translating his insights into a system that could be used on others. Murai had clients in the uppermost echelons of Japanese society as well as in the humblest corners. After healing the brother of Japan's Emperor Hirohito, he was awarded access to the archives of the Imperial Palace and to the Ise shrine, the highest temple in Shinto, the traditional religion of Japan. During this time, Murai was able to immerse himself in a study of the Kojiki—

the Record of Ancient Matters, the famous collection of Japanese myths and historical records dating back to the year AD 712. All of these primary sources, from the experience he had in the mountains to the ancient wisdom of the Kojiki, came to bear on the art and practice he named “Jin Shin Jyutsu.”

As word of his experiments spread, the evolving technique was eventually taken in hand by two students of Murai’s: Mary Burmeister, a Japanese-American woman who brought the practice to the United States and to Europe after a radical healing experience of her own, and Haruki Kato, who practiced in Japan. When Murai passed away in 1961, Kato and Burmeister became the keepers of his legacy, the “gift” which Jiro Murai had granted them. Haruki

Copyrighted image

Kato opened a clinic in Japan, while Mary Burmeister helped to spread the word of Jin Shin Jyutsu, continuing to deepen her understanding of the art through research that culminated in her writing several books.

IS JIN SHIN RIGHT FOR ME?

Is Jin Shin appropriate for your particular ailment? The answer is a resounding yes. Jin Shin can relieve a wide variety of ailments, from headaches, fatigue, and insomnia to digestive disorders, depression, back pain, and arthritis. It can also provide support for individuals facing more serious conditions; studies have proven the Art of Jin Shin to be effective in managing the side effects of cancer treatments and regulating blood pressure in stroke victims, and I have had many experiences using the modality of Jin Shin as a form of complementary medicine in this regard.

One particularly memorable instance involved a fifteen-year-old boy, Ray, who was receiving chemotherapy for a cancerous germ cell tumor. His mother had gotten in touch, hoping that some alternative treatment might help him with the side effects. When Ray walked into my practice space with a baseball cap covering his scalp, his face was set in the weary expression of someone who'd come to see suffering as his inescapable lot. Listening to his pulses in his wrist, I could feel the chemo medicine raging through his system.

Working two specific sequences designed to mitigate nausea and fatigue, I showed Ray and his mother some simple self-help flows to practice daily. These would support his immune and endocrine systems and help keep his blood counts in order, while a few additional areas could be used as needed for nausea. After daily sessions of self-care with his mother (who'd had no prior experience with Jin Shin), he came back to see me the next week feeling more energetic, with the hint of a smile on his face. His mother told me she was worried about his low platelet count, however. A diminished supply would inhibit his blood's ability to clot—and prevent him from undergoing his final round of scheduled chemotherapy treatments the following week.

After listening to his pulses again, I intended our session to focus on blood composition. Once we were finished, I asked Ray whether he would consider coming back the following day, in order for us to build up his body as much as possible so that he could receive his last round of chemo. The next day I gave him another session and showed his mother how to do a flow that would help with his red blood cell count, instructing her to work on him once or twice each day.

The next day, his blood counts were back to normal and he was given the go-ahead to receive his chemotherapy treatment.

How can we claim to cast such a wide net, working through symptoms ranging all the way from excessive anger, recurring headaches, and sore knees to low blood cell counts? Within a Jin Shin framework, a diagnosis (or “label”) of disease is the result of a buildup of months’, or even years’, worth of pent-up energy. Those blockages or disharmonies may be brought about by internal attitudes and emotions as well as diet, work habits, or hereditary susceptibilities, and they may also be caused by accidents or environmental stressors. Regardless of their nature and origin, we consider symptoms to be helpful warnings, nudges from bodies hungry for a change in energetic pattern, and causing us to investigate and understand the cause of the project so that the symptom will disappear and won’t resurface in another form.

JIN SHIN IN A CLINICAL SETTING

As the Art of Jin Shin has become more established outside of Japan, several hospitals and clinics have begun to experiment with using its protocols in their pain management programs. At Morristown Memorial Hospital in New Jersey, a program founded by my mentor, Philomena Dooley, has successfully used Jin Shin to ease anxiety, physical discomfort, and pain in pre- and postoperative heart transplant patients. In New York City at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center, I’ve taught Jin Shin workshops to emergency room

nurses, showing them how to hold an index finger to calm a patient's fears, or position their hands around a patient's ankle to release a dose of the body's own natural painkillers. Teaching nurses to use self-care to manage their own aches and pains or fatigue during long, stressful shifts spent largely on their feet, the program also offers them the opportunity to share Jin Shin with patients' family members, making their loved ones feel more comfortable and empowering them to be of assistance when needed. At the Markey Cancer Center in the UK, where Jin Shin is offered to all patients, a 2012 study demonstrated a considerable improvement in patients' experience of nausea, pain, and stress.

None of this is surprising to those of us who have seen the transformative power of Jin Shin up close—yet the use of Jin Shin as a form of alternative medicine within more traditional medical contexts is heartening news for practitioners and patients alike.

will only help your practice, as will a basic understanding of the concepts that animate Jin Shin.

To that end, here's a brief and simple primer on the foundations of the practice.

Energy

A construct that is accepted in Japanese culture yet still requires explanation in the West, the idea of source energy—*ki-eki*, also known as universal or ancestral energy—is key to our work. This source energy animates every molecule in the universe, from the stars in the sky to the bone in your littlest toe, and this energy is what we tap into when we perform Jin Shin.

Source energy moves through various pathways in our bodies in a continuous pattern (down the front of the body and up the back), feeding life into all of our cells. When the pattern is disrupted—by stress, trauma, exposure, or other events—blockages result. This damming effect leads to discomfort, pain, or illness, and by relieving the damming and restoring the flow of energy, Jin Shin brings relief.

A note: There are actually two kinds of energy within Jin Shin, *ki-eki*, as described above, and *tai-eki*, which refers to individual energy. For the purposes of this book we will not be making a distinction between them, though we'll learn a bit more about *tai-eki* in chapters to come.

Breath

The practice of conscious “abdominal” breathing, familiar to anyone who has meditated or practiced yoga, is the most basic (and arguably most important) form of Jin Shin self-care. It's also the bridge between the conscious and unconscious functions of our nervous system. When we take “diaphragmatic” or “abdominal” breaths, allowing the abdomen to expand on the inhalation so that the diaphragm can make more room for the lungs to expand fully, receptors inside the lungs send electrical and chemical signals to the brain. These signals turn on the parasympathetic nervous system that allows our bodies to rest, digest, heal, and repair—telling our brains to do things like lower our blood

pressure and slow down our heartbeats. Isolated within the chest, the short, shallow breaths we take as a response to stress keep our bodies in a constant state of fight-or-flight. This agitated state of sympathetic stimulation makes it very hard for healing to occur.

A tool so powerful it's been shown to help soldiers suffering from PTSD, abdominal breathing is the baseline of many holistic techniques. Within the practice of Jin Shin, breathing begins the process of moving energy through the body and makes clients more receptive to treatment. Clients can actually unlock blockages and spark their pulses merely through the use of their breath, which is why when a Jin Shin practitioner can't feel a pulse, asking a client to breathe will often cause the energy to begin to move.

Aim to consciously practice abdominal breathing as you begin to explore the flows and holds outlined in this book. For the combination of deep breathing and visualization that's unique to the Art of Jin Shin, see page 27.

The Use of the Hands

Whether we are using self-care or placing our bodies in the care of a Jin Shin practitioner, the only tools needed for this practice are a pair of hands. The hands are seen as jumper cables, resetting the flow of energy in the body. For the practitioner, the hands also receive vital information about the client's pulses (see below), hot or cold areas of the body, muscular tightness, or textural inconsistencies. A note: When you're being treated by a practitioner, he or she will use the eyes as well—looking for swellings, postural misalignment, skin disorders, poor blood circulation, and other signs of energetic imbalance.

Pulse

As you practice the holds and flows in this book, over time you'll begin to develop a sensitivity to your energetic pulse, one of the primary sources of feedback in Jin Shin. Distinct from the arterial pulses which measure the flow of blood to and from the heart, Jin Shin's energetic pulses are the result of vital source energy spiraling to the bone or the core of the body and back in response

to the practitioner's touch. The advantage to feeling a pulse quickening or slowing as the treatment takes hold is one of several reasons Jin Shin practitioners use their hands instead of needles (as in acupuncture) or other implements. The pulses give us information about which areas of the body need to be harmonized.

Symmetry

It may not seem logical to treat a lung, heart, or digestive issue by holding your inner knee. To Jin Shin practitioners the relationship is clear, because the vertical movement of energy through the body creates a mirror relationship between the upper and lower body. To resolve issues in the upper half of the body, a Jin Shin practitioner will often choose an area on the lower half of the body, creating an escape route so the stuck energy has a place to go. Similarly, there is an interplay between the left and right sides of the body. The right side of the body tends to exhibit symptoms related to lifestyle issues, where the left side carries the mark of older traumas or hereditary predispositions.

The Safety Energy Locations (SELs)

We use our hands to harmonize distinct locations on the body—these are the Safety Energy Locations (SELs). The function and location of the SELs was one of Jiro Murai's most eye-opening discoveries. As his investigations determined, when an energetic flow falls out of balance, energy tends to come to a halt—the body shorting its electrical supply in order to avoid a major electrical surge. Using the specific locations he discovered, the energy begins flowing through the congested areas again and, like a traffic jam, the congestion resolves. Oftentimes overlapping with acupressure points, these twenty-six locations run about three inches across—about the size of the palm of your hand—and they are mirrored on the right and left sides of the body. The areas can be held singly (a “hold”) or in simultaneous and successive pairings (a “flow”). When all twenty-six SELs on both sides are open and flowing without interruption, there is harmony in the body.

image

not

available