

BACK PAIN relieve it with gentle Bowen Technique

✦ **THE THERAPY?** When you're in pain, for whatever reason, even the thought of a deep massage may literally send you through the roof! But Bowen Technique, a different kind of hands-on experience, is definitely worth trying. "Bowen isn't really massage at all," says expert Nikke Ariff. "It's soft tissue therapy, a subtle rolling of muscles, nerves and tendons that's gentle but still penetrating. Usually, where there is pain there's inflammation, so the last thing you need is a sledgehammer approach."

✦ **WHAT HAPPENS?** After a health consultation, you'll lie, lightly clothed, while the therapist, using a series of gentle movements, works on your spine and other more specific areas of the body. "We may use thumbs, middle and index fingers but not the heel of the palm, so no pummelling," says Nikke. "After each sequence of moves the therapist will leave the room for about two minutes to allow you your own space to relax and respond to the moves – they could do this six to eight times during a treatment."

This is the unique and slightly miraculous part of Bowen – because you can't predict when the therapist is going to return, you truly relax and even sleep.

✦ **HOW LONG?** "Bowen is known to be fast acting and you could see results after the first treatment," says Nikke. "But you'll see a real change after two to three."

✦ **HOW MUCH?** £50 for one hour with Nikke Ariff in London, (020) 7388 9818; mindbodypositive.com. For therapists nationwide, call 0844-5617173 or go to bowentherapists.com.

"It's amazing the relief you get from something so gentle"



TINA JOHNSON, 30, a compliance officer from Hainault in Essex, was surprised at the power of this subtle therapy.

"I gave Bowen a try because I had a dreadful pain and burning sensation in my back under my shoulder blade, and painkillers weren't helping. I haven't got great posture – probably from working at a computer all day – and I also suffered from agonising period pains. Everyone says Bowen is weird but it works – and they're right. It feels like deep massage

but it's so gentle. They're hardly touching you, yet everything is being relaxed. The leaving-the-room thing seemed odd at first but that time alone is quite meditative. You feel warm as your body releases – you feel it happening! Because Bowen treats the whole body it's good for lymphatic drainage too. I have a lot of cellulite, and I hold water in my calf area – Bowen has helped release that. After three treatments my back isn't painful, I don't have period pains at all and my posture has improved. I really needed Bowen!" >>

