

Fact Sheet on Osteopathy

What is osteopathy?

Osteopathic medicine is a system of diagnosis and treatment that provides effective relief for a wide range of painful conditions. It aims to resolve underlying structural problems in the body which can lead to the development of symptoms. Through treatment, areas of imbalance, strain and inflammation in the body's muscles, tendons, joints and ligaments can be reduced to provide relief and minimise the risk of future problems.

What problems do osteopaths treat?

Osteopathic treatment can help many musculo-skeletal conditions including:

Back pain	Neck pain
Hip and knee pain	Frozen shoulder
Arthritis	Sciatica
Asthma	Whiplash
Headaches	Sports injuries
Tennis and golfer's elbow	Post operative rehabilitation
Repetitive strain injury	Digestive disorders

Problems can develop from lifting, straining, work, sports or hobbies, falls overuse, arthritis and inappropriate posture. Osteopathy can often help relieve symptoms associated with stress and tension, including chronic headaches.

What does an osteopath do?

Osteopaths use a range of techniques including rhythmic joint mobilising, gentle stretching and manipulation of the muscles, tendons and ligaments to treat the affected areas.

Osteopathic training includes extensive study of anatomy, physiology and clinical examination as well as osteopathic techniques. Osteopaths are specialists in identifying and treating both the symptoms and the underlying source of the pain.

What can I expect from the first consultation?

The initial consultation lasts approximately 45 minutes. You will have the opportunity to discuss your problems in detail and will be asked about your medical history, life-style and leisure activities.

The osteopath will carry out an examination in order to identify areas of strain, weakness and reduced mobility. A diagnosis and treatment plan will then be discussed and agreed with you. A short treatment session is usually included at the end of the initial consultation.

Sometimes additional tests may be necessary, such as X-rays, and these can be arranged separately.

How many treatments will I need?

Further sessions last approximately 25 minutes. Most difficulties are resolved within 6 treatments depending on the nature of the problem. Some patients benefit from regular maintenance sessions to prevent chronic conditions from deteriorating.

What qualifications and training does an osteopath have?

The title Osteopath is protected under the 1993 Osteopaths' Act. All registered osteopaths have completed a recognised professional training and demonstrated the ability to practice to a safe and rigorous standard.

The qualification is ratified by the General Osteopathic Council, which produces a statutory register of practitioners.