



Sept 2009

Issue 9 -

SPRING

# Healing at hand



**BOWTECH**  
The Original Bowen Technique

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"He who fills his head with other people's words will find no place where he may put his own".  
- Moroccan proverb

## Greetings ...

**National Arbour week** is commemorated during the first week of September. It is a time when South Africans of all ages are able to celebrate the beauty and importance of trees. People from all aspects of the community are urged to get involved and thousands are educated and made aware of the benefits of the many different aspects of forestry. Planting a tree is a wonderful gesture and a valuable aid to our eco-system. One could start a tradition by planting a new tree as a welcoming gift for every new child born in the family; and also plant a tree as a memorial for a loved one who has passed away.

In the practice of Hatha Yoga is a posture called *Vrksasana* - the Tree Pose. Practicing *Vrksasana* develops in one a sense of poise and stability, both mentally and physically. It helps to centre and balance the body and mind. The ancient roots of yoga practices are very much linked to nature. The ancient yogis were inspired and energised by the forms they encountered in nature. One only has to look at a majestic tree to appreciate its remarkable beauty and magnificent strength by observing how it is firmly rooted, standing tall and unshaken by the forces of nature. The next time you come across a tree, get up close and observe - feel the texture of its bark: rough, woody and unbending. Compare it then with your own skin: soft, warm and elastic. Two different life forms, yet at atomic level they are the same: a mass of energy. A beautiful symbiotic relationship of giving and receiving exist between the two. One life form emits carbon dioxide for the other to receive and process it. It, in turn, gives off oxygen which the other receives to sustain its life. How marvellous the creation is! Hence it makes sense to appreciate trees and to promote its growth and benefits.

*Ramadhan Mubarak* for the start of the annual fasting month - wishing good health, prosperity and spiritual upliftment to all. God bless!

Be well, *Rashidah*

## Tree cheers for CO<sub>2</sub>

Trees and plants are growing bigger and faster in response to the billions of tons of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere by humans, scientist have found.

The increased growth has been discovered in a variety of flora, ranging from tropical rainforests to British sugar beet crops. It means they are soaking up at least some of the carbon dioxide that would otherwise be accelerating the rate of climate change. It also suggests the potential for higher crop yields.

One of the most convincing confirmations of this trend, recently published in the science journal *Nature*, came from a team at Leeds University. Some researchers believe the phenomenon is strong enough to buy humanity some extra years in which to try to reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. But few dispute that this will provide anything more than a temporary reprieve.

"The Times, London" - *The Times*, 07 Apr 2009



## Comic Relief



# Culture Shock

**Carol-Ann Davids takes a look at modern manners for new South Africans**



Between our pap and *bredies*, *doekies* (headscarves), *isicholos* (traditional Zulu hats) and 11 languages, South Africa is one multifarious place. And because we are diverse, cultural misunderstandings and misconceptions are likely, unless you've walked a mile in someone else's *veldskoene*.

## Rules of thumb

Hands are vital to the flavour of language. In touching or gesturing, hands add nuance to communications, making conversation exciting and textured.

In South Africa, the handshake is perhaps the most widely accepted means of greeting, whether you go for the regular old handshake, or the well-known comrade handshake (a three-stage process of grip, swing palm around thumb area and grip again). In Xhosa culture, deference may be shown to an elder by holding the arm beyond the wrist, while shaking hands. 'This traditional handshake is used when a younger person greets a senior,' says Ntombisizwe Tena, a filmmaker who plans to open a Xhosa cultural village. Rastafarians, on the other hand, forego hand clutching for a gentle touching of fists.

So, if an outstretched hand, fist or palm comes your way as introductions are underfoot, reciprocate, because it's offered out of courtesy. Confusion, as you take your time figuring out the sort of greeting, is much more acceptable than not responding in kind!



## Hands down

However, if someone does refuse your hand, there may be a valid reason. In Islamic tradition, a woman may refuse a stranger's hand because she may not, at that point, make physical contact with any man. Another nuance the new South African should know is that it is somewhat inappropriate to hand a Muslim person anything with your left hand. 'The right hand is reserved for eating, greeting and passing objects, while the left hand is used for other things... let's say, matters linked to ablution,' says Ashraf Johardien, a playwright who explored South Africa's Islamic roots in his award-winning play, *Salaam Stories*.



Then there is handholding. A litmus test for romance in Western cultures, hand-holding isn't only meant for lovers, at least not in South Africa. Among some African cultures, holding hands may just be something that two women or two men do while walking, to keep each other close. They are friends after all. But chances are, only friends, explains Ms Tena. 'In other cultures handholding is for lovers or young couples so some South Africans misinterpret hand-holding in our tradition as something intimate. But in many cases it shows friendship and not a relationship.' Now you know.



वेद्यन्त्रिणं कावे वेद्यन्त्रिणं

## Howzit!

Writer Simon Brett relayed a story on BBC Radio 4's *Home Truths*, about a man overheard talking on his cellphone during a train ride from Paris to London. The man miscalculated the time difference between the two countries and asked his friend to arrive two hours too late. What happened next? 'We were faced with a dilemma,' says Simon. 'We knew the time difference worked the opposite way, which could lead to all kinds of complications, but for any of us to say anything would be tantamount to admitting that we'd listened to the man's conversation. Not a word was said. Very British.'



Some South Africans may relate to this need for social distance in public, whereas in African cultures this desire for privacy is not as highly prized. In fact, conversation between strangers is not only welcome, but it is deemed respectful to enquire how people - even strangers are. After all, in African cultures the philosophy of *ubuntu* asserts that people are interrelated and must extend themselves towards others. So banter is easily started between strangers on trains and taxis. A similar scenario to Simon's story on a train from say, Soweto, is most unlikely.



Even on the telephone this courtesy of enquiring after the wellness of another is considered to be a basic social skill. 'Sharing information on your wellbeing is a part of talking,' says Ms Tena. So even when you're in a rush, if someone asks how you are, take a few seconds to respond. Someone's just acknowledged the person behind the voice. But don't speak too loudly, some groups consider it shouting. Then again, best you speak up; hushed voices are considered impolite and indicative of plotting in other cultures ...



## Not quite African time

Different regard for time has become something of a bugbear among South Africans, but time is valued differently in different cultures. However, not only are great meals ruined this way, but also careers. Because lateness is perceived by many cultures within and outside of South Africa as disrespectful, it may create a perception of the latecomer as bad mannered or unreliable. So while lack of time pressure is stress-friendly and better for health, it is best avoided, at least for work. Timing for social events may be more flexible, but try and warn your host if you are running late all the same. Knowing someone's culture doesn't mean you can predict how he or she thinks or acts, but it may give you some insight into who they are and where they come from. The best modern manners for all new South Africans? Tolerance.



... Continued on next page ...



## Cultural mix-ups

Dr Thabo Moloi\* who is originally from Lesotho, studied in the USA and in Cape Town. 'I had studied overseas for a number of years. When I came back home a friend and I were walking and, as he would have done years before, he grabbed my hand. My first response was, 'Hayi wena, man! Are you mad!' He looked upset, but I'd forgotten that it was innocent and actually a very nice gesture. He didn't stay angry, but we try to leave handholding out of our friendship nowadays!'

Ntombisizwe Tena who is Xhosa says, 'I greeted an English-speaking woman on the phone one day and took some time to ask how she was. She became very abrupt and annoyed and told me to get on with things. I felt quite hurt. So now I try to be brief unless I can hear it's an African person speaking. But it's quite sad really.'

Heidi Nigli, of Swiss and South African parentage, grew up in Zurich but is currently living in Cape Town. 'When I first arrived in South Africa, I was invited to supper at a friend's house. Of course I was on time. But I was the only one there - even the person who had invited me to dinner wasn't home yet! It was very frustrating. Nowadays my friends know to try, at least, to be on time if I invite them to my place, and if I know the person I'm meeting is usually delayed, I aim to get there later!'

\* Names have been changed

<http://www.clicks.co.za>

Heritage Day celebrations take place on 24<sup>th</sup> September. This day recognizes and celebrates the cultural wealth of our nation. South Africa has a rich and varied cultural heritage and together we have a profound power to help build our nation. This public holiday's significance rests in recognising aspects of South African culture which are both tangible and difficult to pin down: creative expression, our historical inheritance, language, the food we eat, as well as the land in which we live.

Within a broader social and political context, this day serves as a powerful agent for promulgating a South African identity, fostering reconciliation and promoting the notion that **variety is a national asset** as opposed to igniting conflict such as xenophobic violence. We do so, knowing that the struggles against the injustice and inequities of the past are part of our national identity; they are part of our culture. We know that, if indeed our nation has to rise like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes of division and conflict, we have to acknowledge those whose selfless efforts and talents were dedicated to this goal of non-racial democracy. Hence we need to promote:

- RESPECT • CO-EXISTENCE • UNDERSTANDING
- RECONCILIATION and • HEALING

☺ Join the CTII Heritage Day Bus Tour on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009. E-mail: [ctii@iafrica.com](mailto:ctii@iafrica.com)

## Finally! 2 Drug-free Solutions for ADHD

By Kerry Bone, Nutrition & Healing, Fleet Street Publications

The first herb I want to tell you about has an expanding list of health benefits. Its primary claim to fame was treating chronic venous insufficiency. It's also shown to alleviate asthma, migraines, reduce blood pressure and lower blood sugar levels. I'm talking about **Pycnogenol**, a proprietary, standardised extract of French maritime pine bark (*Pinus pinaster*). A pilot study found that Pycnogenol significantly improved ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) symptoms. This led to a double-blind, placebo-controlled study in 61 children over four weeks. The children received 1mg/kg/day and were examined at the start of the trial, one month into the trial and one month after the end of it.

Results showed that just one month of the pine bark extract caused a significant reduction of hyperactivity and improved the attention, co-ordination and concentration in children with ADHD. No positive effects were found in the placebo group. Pycnogenol can help control ADHD, yet it's in no way a cure, as the symptoms relapsed one month after the children stopped taking it.

If you have a healthy, ADHD-free child in your family you could still consider **Bacopa** for its mind-boosting effects. In one trial, researchers looked at the effects of **Mentat** (a herbal formulation containing Bacopa as the main ingredient) versus a placebo in 60 children with ADHD. The children were assessed academically and psychologically before and after the trial. The Mentat group showed significant improvement in both areas compared to the placebo group.

The second study looked at the effects of Bacopa itself. 19 children were given 100mg/day for 12 weeks. The remaining 17 were given placebos. The herbal treatment was followed with 4 weeks of placebo treatment, making the trial 16 weeks in duration. The children were evaluated with all sorts of tests before, during and after the study. Behavioural results weren't clear but there were striking improvements after 12 weeks in the children taking Bacopa in sentence repetition, logical memory and learning. The improvement was maintained for the entire 16 weeks, even after having been switched to a placebo. During the trial, Bacopa showed excellent tolerability and no adverse effects were reported.

Other studies support these learning-enhancement effects. In another trial, 300mg/day of Bacopa extract significantly improved learning and memory consolidation. With these results in mind, Bacopa may be worthwhile, even if your children or grandchildren don't suffer from ADHD.

<http://www.fsp.co.za>



## ATES – food of the heavens

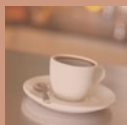


Not long ago, the only dates in South Africa came in a hard, dried compressed form – but now tempting, fresh punnets are the order of the day. Here are some facts about the ancient fruit:

1. The date palm has grown in the Middle East for thousands of years, making the date an ancient fruit.
2. The Arabs refer to the date palm as the “tree of life” as dates are one of the most nutritious foods – high in carbohydrate, rich in iron and fibre and a premium source of vitamin C. They also have a very high tannin content and contain almost no water, so the quality does not change much when dried.
3. Klein Pella in the Northern Cape is South Africa’s city of dates. It is the largest producer of the Medjool dates in the Southern hemisphere.
4. For Muslims, dates and milk are the traditional first meal for breaking the fast after sunset during Ramadhan.
5. A mature date palm can produce up to 80-120 kg of dates per harvest.
6. Iran is one of the world’s major producers of dates, which make up over 80% of the world’s export.
7. The Medjool date, which originated in Morocco, is one of the most common varieties. It is grown for its high yield of large, sweet fruit.
8. In India and Pakistan, date palms are tapped for a sweet sap which is converted into palm sugar known as *jaggery*. It comes in a solid cake, caramel in colour, and is used as a sweetener in cooking.
9. Dried dates are used as a nutritious animal feed. Ground and mixed with grain they are fed to camels, horses and dogs in the Middle East.
10. Dates are not necessarily only enjoyed as a sweet. The Persian custom of combining fruit with meat, especially in tagine dishes, is enjoyed in the Middle Eastern countries. Dates can be stuffed with cream cheese or almonds as a snack.

*Facts by Hilary Biller*

- For a full nutritional chart, go to: <http://www.thefruitpages.com/chartdates.shtml>
- For delicious date recipes, go to: <http://www.justfruitrecipes.com/inxdat.html>



## Toast to your health... with tea

*Apart from the taste and aroma, tea offers some great health benefits too...*

With the pace of life being what it is, we hardly have time to control what we eat and drink - even though we know we should. It's far easier to grab a snack on the go, than to sit down to eat a healthy balanced meal.

Yes, we know tea is great tasting, but there's even more reason to celebrate this tasty brew - tea is good for you. Packed full of antioxidants, naturally preservative free and low in calories, there are just so many reasons to drink tea. And in the midst of a busy day, it's easily accessible - a quick minute is all it takes to grab a cup full of health.

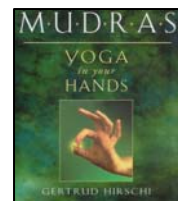
Basic rules such as watching your calorie intake and drinking at least eight glasses of water per day are important to follow, when trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle. "Black tea is naturally low in calories, containing only one calorie per 100ml", comments Debbie Shepard, brand manager at Five Roses. This makes tea a perfect low calorie drink option, provided you control the amount of sugar and milk you use per cup. A cup of tea also contributes to your daily water intake, as you will typically use one teabag per 180ml of water.

And what about the caffeine content? Although teas such as black tea contain a form of caffeine, they contain about half the amount that you would find in a cup of coffee. For an even lower caffeine option, try green tea. Either way, if you're watching your caffeine intake, tea is a good alternative as a hot drink that is refreshing and delicious. Tea is packed full of polyphenols, which are a good source of antioxidants. Foods containing high levels of antioxidants have been celebrated for their ability to reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers. Antioxidants also help to build the body's natural immunity and improve skin tissue. And in this day and age, when food is treated with all kinds of preservatives, tea is naturally preservative free, another reason why this drink is so popular, and shown to be the second most widely consumed beverage, after water.

"Tea is truly the unsung hero when it comes to healthy beverages", comments Shepard. The fact that it is great tasting and versatile, goes without saying. The real news is that drinking tea is good for your health".

[www.women24.com](http://www.women24.com)

# HAND MUDRAS – yoga in your hands



Mudra is a Sanskrit word with many meanings. It is used to signify a gesture, a mystic position of the hands, a seal, or even a symbol. However, there are eye positions, body postures, and breathing techniques called mudras. These symbolic finger, eye, and body postures can vividly depict certain states or processes of consciousness. Conversely, specific positions can also lead to the states of consciousness that they symbolize.

Mudras engage certain areas of the brain and exercise a corresponding influence on them. However, mudras are also effective on the physical level. We can effectively engage and influence our body and our mind by bending, crossing, extending or touching the fingers with other fingers. Isn't this wonderful?



The thumb is symbolic of cosmic (divine) and the index finger is symbolic of individual (human) consciousness. The ultimate or primary goal of yoga is the oneness of humanity with cosmic consciousness. With this gesture, the human being expresses this desire, this longing. It is interesting to note that both these fingers belong to the metal element in Chinese Five Element Theory. Metal is the material that is the best conductor – it conducts energy. According to this teaching, the metal element also creates the connection with the cosmic world, and inspiration and intuition dwell in this element.

The index finger represents inspiration (energy from the outside) and the thumb stand for intuition (inner energy). In this gesture, intuition and inspiration are connected and mutually fructify each other.



The origins of the mudras are a mystery. Mudras are not only found in Asia, but they are also used throughout the entire world. In their rituals, our European ancestors certainly were familiar with specific gestures, which they used to underline and seal what they thought and wanted to say. During the Christianization of the Nordic peoples, many gestures were initially prohibited, such as invoking the gods with raised arms. Later, these gestures were partially integrated into the Christian teachings. But our everyday life is also characterized by gestures, the origins of which hardly anyone knows today: crossing our fingers for something, clapping our hands as applause, the handshake, holding hands, or “giving someone the finger” to display our low opinion of them.

The mudras are just as familiar in Indian dance, where the hands, eyes and the body movements act and/or dance the entire drama without words.

## How are Mudras Practiced?

Quite simply: Form your hands and place the fingers as they are shown in the various illustrations. When you do this, the pressure of the fingers should be very light and fine, and your hands should be relaxed.

Mudras can be done while seated, lying down, standing, and walking. Be sure that your body posture is symmetrical and centred, and that you are as relaxed and loose as possible. If you sit on a chair while doing them, your back should be straight and your feet should have good contact with the floor. If you do them while lying down, resting on your back is naturally the most suitable position. If you do them while walking, make sure you move in an even, calm, and rhythmic way. If you stand while doing them, keep your legs shoulder distance apart. The knees should be relaxed, and the tips of the toes must point forward.

## When and where can you practice Mudras?

You can actually practice the mudras at any time and in any place. Preferably, mudras should be done in a meditative, harmonious mood. Modern authors take the view that mudras can even be done while stuck in traffic, watching television, or when you have to wait for someone or something.

## How long is a Mudra held?

The great masters do not agree on the length of time to practice a mudra position. The Indian mudra researcher, Keshav Dev recommends holding one mudra per day for 45 minutes; chronic complaints can be eliminated in the way. If it isn't possible to do this, these 45 minutes can be divided into three periods of 15 minutes each.

Mudras can be used for acute complaints – such as respiratory and circulation problems, flatulence, exhaustion, or inner restlessness – and should be discontinued when the appropriate effect is achieved.

The effect of a mudras may be perceived immediately or only after a certain amount of time. You start to feel warm, the sense of unwellness and pain fade away, your mood improves, and your mind is refreshed. But exactly the opposite may occur at the start. You become tired, or start to feel cold and shiver. This is also a positive sign of the effect. The effect of a mudra can also be intensified with the breath. In short, practice the mudras in silence, and remain persistent and mindful while doing them.



*Mudras – yoga in your hands*, by Gertrud Hirschi (Book available from [www.loot.co.za](http://www.loot.co.za))



A once-off Hand Mudra Workshop is to be held at Ananda Kutir on Sat. 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2009, from 09h00-11h00.

Cost R150. Bookings by 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct. For more information, Tel. 021-696 1821 or email: [info@anandakutir.org.za](mailto:info@anandakutir.org.za)



## D-LIGHTFUL SUNSHINE!

During Winter more people are depressed, can't sleep, get infections, and put on weight, than during any other time of the year. Even worse, your risk of developing heart disease and cancer is also higher. Why? It's all about sunlight. Sunlight stimulates the skin to produce vitamin D, which is a natural anti-depressant and immune-boosting vitamin. Vitamin D also helps prevent weight-gain and cancer, and it protects your heart too. Sunlight also stimulates the body to produce two natural anti-depressant neurotransmitters (brain chemicals), namely serotonin and melatonin (melatonin is also responsible for maintaining restful sleep). In Winter, the days become shorter, and sunlight less intense - levels of vitamin D, **serotonin** and **melatonin** begin to decline. This can often result in depression, poor sleeping patterns and a weakened immune system during the winter months. Since vitamin D also helps protect against cancer and heart disease, the incidence of these is greater in winter also. Winter is also a time when colds and flu strike. Firstly it's because our immune systems are suppressed by the colder weather and lack of vitamin D, and secondly because we spend more time indoors, closer to other people, breathing the same recycled germ-filled air. This combination can result in continuous re-infection.



Want to reduce your chances of suffering from a degenerative brain disease? Step out in the sunshine! According to researchers at the Peninsula Medical School in England, a deficiency of vitamin D, also known as the 'sunshine vitamin', has been linked to cognitive dementia in a study of older people. It was found that those with low levels of the vitamin were twice as likely to be cognitively impaired. Get your vitamin D levels up through responsible exposure to sunlight and foods such as oily fish and those fortified with the vitamin.

*Psychologies Magazine, June/July 2009*



**Make a full prayer to God just being grateful,  
without asking Him for anything.**



**Next workshops being held on: Saturday & Sunday,  
19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> September 2009; and 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> October 2009**



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*Every body is better  
with Bowen*

## Bowen Therapy Case Study:

### Fibromyalgia, Menier's Syndrome and Jaw Pain

A 63 year old patchwork and quilting teacher came with several problems including Fibromyalgia, Menier's Syndrome, jaw pain and restriction. The jaw pain was quite severe and she could barely fit a finger width between her teeth. X-rays confirmed her TMJ joint was out of alignment and the spaces restricted. Pain was severe at times, difficult to eat and unpleasant to talk a lot.

The client came for 7 Bowen sessions in all. The first 3 sessions, TMJ procedure was done, with TMJ additional procedures added at a later stage. When pain decreased significantly, the other problem areas were addressed. At the 7<sup>th</sup> session, the client reported minimal discomfort, only when yawning. She was able to chew and eat properly again and felt the final session should be devoted to her creaky knees, tender ankles and sore breasts. Since then she has not needed to come again, but would like maintenance Bowen work to "keep her going".

Submitted by Jean Nortje for Bowtech SA News

## Cleaning the Green Way

There's a reason why you keep your cleaning products hidden away underneath the sink - because they contain dangerous and toxic chemicals. We flush these harsh, toxic chemicals down the drains and empty them into toilets - damaging the environment as we do so.

Now Pick n Pay has launched PnP Green, a new range of household cleaning products that make it possible to live in a sparkling home without damaging the environment. It is manufactured to the highest global environment standards.

This range of household cleaners is designed to have as little effect on the environment as possible. They contain no volatile organic compounds, sodium lauryl sulphate, ammonia or chlorine that pollute our water and damage our ozone. The products are non-toxic to humans, animals, plants, septic tanks and aquatic life. Once the product has been used, they bio-degrade within six days.

The range includes gel cleaners, kitchen cleaners, dishwashing liquid, carpet and fabric cleaner, bathroom cleaner, toilet cleaner and fabric softener. Happy cleaning!

*The Times, 13 Aug. 2009*

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE . . . for fun

1. Which stringed instrument did Sherlock Holmes play?
2. Which Tanzanian city's name means "abode of peace"?
3. Who wrote the books with titles like *The Shining* and *Carrie*?
4. In which organ of the human body is the myocardium?
5. What does the isiXhosa name *Sizwe* mean?



1. Violin 2. Dar es Salaam  
3. Stephen King 4. Heart 5. Nation



Early Spring by [olvwu|èZ«æ-1](http://olvwu|èZ«æ-1)

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*Time to Contemplate . . .*

**Virtue is a state of war, and to live in it we have  
always to combat with ourselves.**

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau*