

# Complementary Therapies: Physical

- Many polio survivors have found complementary therapies assist them to manage a range of symptoms, including pain and fatigue
- There are 'passive' and 'active' treatments
- It is important to talk to your doctor before using complementary therapies

If you have the Late Effects of Polio, you may look for alternatives to conventional, Western medical treatments to manage your health. These alternatives are often called complementary therapies. There are both physical and medicinal complementary therapies. Polio Australia has a separate [Complementary Therapies—Medicinal Fact Sheet](#).

Research on the Late Effects of Polio showed:

- Gentle physical therapies such as yoga and meditation can improve fatigue, weakness and pain symptoms
- Chi Kung (Qi Gong) was shown to improve cold intolerance

All therapies should be discussed with your general practitioner to make sure they are suitable. They can help explain anything that needs to be thought about before starting a treatment. There may be interactions of treatments with medication, or other therapies, that could affect your overall health.



## What Is The Difference: Passive And Active?

**Passive** therapies: a treatment that is done to you.

*Example: Massage - a therapist uses techniques to relieve pain and fatigue.*

**Active** treatments: something you participate in.

*Example: Yoga - the individual does a series of poses and meditation.*

## Passive Therapies

Polio survivors have found these **passive** therapies help them:

- **Acupuncture:** fine needles inserted into the skin. Helps with balance and healing.
- **Bowen therapy:** a series of changes to the soft connective tissue (fascia).
- **Chiropractic therapy:** adjustment or manipulation of the spine. Relieves pain symptoms.
- **Myotherapy** and **massage:** acupressure, remedial, lymphatic, and myofascial are popular.
- **TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) machine:** a device that has uses two small electrodes placed on the skin. Reduces pain signals being sent to the brain.
- **WBV (Whole Body Vibration) machine:** a vibrating platform that creates rapid muscle contraction to targeted areas of the body.



If you are viewing this document electronically, you can click any heading on this page to find out more about that complementary therapy. Please note, these links are for general information only and may not reflect true information.

## Active Therapies

Polio survivors have found these **active** therapies help them:

- **Alexander Technique:** education on ways to improve patterns of movement and posture.
- **Chair dancing:** gentle movement to music for people with reduced mobility, allowing expressive movement.
- **Chi Ball:** an experience of colour, music and flowing movement. Based on the principles of traditional Chinese Medicine.
- **Feldenkrais:** guided exercise and education to increase self-awareness with movement.
- **Meditation:** guided meditation techniques such as “mindfulness”, Chi Kung (Qi Gong), and visualisation. May assist with pain relief, emotions and behaviour change to manage pain and fatigue levels.
- **Pilates:** a method of rehabilitation and exercise that focuses on muscular balance.
- **Tai Chi** (seated and standing): gentle guided exercise or ‘postures’. Have been linked with reduced pain and improved balance among people with arthritis, osteoporosis, older adults and spinal cord injury.

### More Information

Speak to your general practitioner about complementary therapies

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