



In all things
of nature, there
is something of
the marvelous.

—Aristotle

Touching the Earth

The Healing Powers of Going Barefoot

by Martin Zucker

Melanie Monteith, of San Diego, California, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at age 24 and plagued by symptoms for 14 years. Simple daily tasks became challenging. She relied on walking aids and walls to keep from falling. Eventually, she quit her job. Every day tested her survival skills. Then, in late 2017, Monteith tried grounding and it changed her life.

Grounding, also called Earthing, refers to the discovery of major health benefits from sustained contact with the Earth's natural and subtle electric charge. Recent research published in the *Journal of Inflammation*, *Integrative Medicine: A Clinician's Journal*, *Neonatology* and *Health* indicates that grounding stabilizes the physiology in many ways, drains the body of inflammation, pain and stress, and generates greater well-being.

Grounding can be as simple as going barefoot in nature, including the backyard, for 30 to 60 minutes once or twice a day on surfaces like grass, soil, gravel, stone and sand. If this isn't practical, special grounding mats and pads are available online for convenient indoor use while sitting or sleeping; people with compromised health often benefit from more time being grounded.

The activity restores a primordial electric connection with the Earth that has been lost with modern lifestyles. We wear shoes with insulating, synthetic soles and live and work elevated above the ground. These overlooked lifestyle factors may contribute to increasing global rates of chronic illnesses. Grounding revitalizes us, akin to charging a weak battery, because our bodies operate electrically and our movements and thoughts are based on electrical signals. We are bioelectric beings.

Eighteen years of grounding research in a variety of indoor settings, plus grassroots feedback from around the world, clearly show that our bodies operate more effectively when grounded. We sleep better, have less pain, more energy and even look better. Here are some of the documented benefits.

Reduction of chronic inflammation

"Inflammation is intimately linked to most chronic and aging-related diseases," says Gaétan Chevalier, Ph.D., a visiting scholar at the University of California, San Diego, who has conducted multiple grounding studies. "Grounding seems to be nature's way to reduce inflammation."

Enhanced blood flow

Thick, sludgy blood is a common feature of diabetes and cardiovascular disorders. Several grounding studies have demonstrated a significant decrease in blood viscosity and enhanced blood flow. "Grounding represents a potent circulation booster; a simple, yet profound preventive and therapeutic strategy," says integrative cardiologist Dr. Stephen

T. Sinatra, of Manchester, Connecticut, co-author of the book *Earthing: The Most Important Health Discovery Ever!*



Decreased stress

Tracy Latz, a medical doctor and integrative psychiatrist in Mooresville, North Carolina, has found, “Patients with anxiety issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder and depression, often benefit from grounding.”



Improved vagus nerve function

The vagus nerve connects with and regulates key organs, including the lungs, heart and intestines. In one study, doctors at the Penn State Children’s Hospital, in Hershey, Pennsylvania, grounded hospitalized premature infants and documented improved vagal function that could potentially boost resilience and reduce complications. “These babies have a lot of health challenges,” observes Dr. Charles Palmer, former chief of the center’s division of newborn medicine. “It seems that they are more relaxed when grounded.” More research is needed.

Within a few months of grounding both day and night, Monteith’s disease symptoms receded dramatically. Her balance and stability improved when standing and walking. She sleeps more deeply and has more energy. An eye issue for which there is no drug subsided. She says her health continues to improve and she looks forward to living each day.

Troy Baker, a recovery consultant for special populations and chief program officer of the nonprofit Adapt Functional Movement Center, in Carlsbad, California, who has been overseeing Monteith’s exercise training schedule, has observed a reduction in the effects of multiple sclerosis since she started grounding. “Her body is more fluid, not as stiff. She moves much better, with increased energy and stamina.”

For more information on grounding, visit EarthingInstitute.net.

*Martin Zucker, a former Associated Press correspondent, has written about alternative medicine for 40 years and is co-author of the book *Earthing*.*