What’s the Bottom Line?

How much do we know about Reiki?
We don’t know very much because little high-quality research has been done on Reiki.

What do we know about the effectiveness of Reiki?
Reiki hasn’t been clearly shown to be useful for any health-related purpose.

What do we know about the safety of Reiki?
Reiki hasn’t been shown to have any harmful effects. However, Reiki should not be used to replace conventional care or to postpone seeing a health care provider about a health problem.

What is Reiki?
Reiki is a complementary health approach in which practitioners place their hands lightly on or just above a person, with the goal of facilitating the person’s own healing response.

— Reiki is based on an Eastern belief in an energy that supports the body’s innate or natural healing abilities. However, there isn’t any scientific evidence that such an energy exists.
— Reiki has been studied for a variety of conditions, including pain, anxiety, fatigue, and depression.

What the Science Says About the Effectiveness of Reiki
Several groups of experts have evaluated the evidence on Reiki, and all of them have concluded that it’s uncertain whether Reiki is helpful.

Only a small number of studies of Reiki have been completed, and most of them included only a few people. Different studies looked at different health conditions making it hard to compare their results. Many of the studies didn’t compare Reiki with both sham (simulated) Reiki and with no treatment. Studies that include both of these comparisons are usually the most informative.

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What the Science Says About the Safety of Reiki

Reiki appears to be generally safe. In studies of Reiki, side effects were no more common among participants who received Reiki than among those who didn’t receive it.

More to Consider

— Reiki should not be used to replace conventional care or to postpone seeing a health care provider about a health problem. If you have severe or long-lasting symptoms, see your health care provider. You may have a health problem that needs prompt treatment.

— Tell all your health care providers about any complementary or integrative health approaches you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

For More Information

NCCIH Clearinghouse

The NCCIH Clearinghouse provides information on NCCIH and complementary and integrative health approaches, including publications and searches of Federal databases of scientific and medical literature. The Clearinghouse does not provide medical advice, treatment recommendations, or referrals to practitioners.

Toll-free in the U.S.: 1-888-644-6226
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Key References


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Reiki


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