Accessing the Healing Power of Earth
by Patty de Llosa

“To touch the earth is to move into harmony with nature.”
--Oglala Sioux

Shamans, Native Americans, and wisdom teachers all over the world see the earth as a giant, conscious, living being. They say pollution sickens her in the same way cancer spreads slowly through a human body.

Debilitated though she may be, our Mother Earth still retains tremendous power to heal. When we physically ground ourselves on her surface we are gifted with her vital energies.

The science behind it is simple: The water in your body acts as an electrical conduit to earth’s negative ionic charge so you feel better when any part of you touches it. Charged particles that come originally from the sun reach the Earth in lightning, electrifying its entire surface. And while lightning may not be flashing across the sky right where you are, it’s always flaring somewhere, creating a continually flowing current from the ionosphere to the earth.

James Oschman explains that “From the top of your head to the earth’s surface, there is a potential you don’t feel, because it doesn’t cause any particular current to flow, even though it can be a couple of hundred volts. And depending on the changes in weather, that potential can go up from a hundred to 10,000 volts per meter.” As your bare feet make direct contact with the earth’s energy field, your body becomes equalized to its energy level or potential. That will gradually synchronize your internal biological clocks, hormonal cycles, and physiological rhythms.

For more on Oschman’s investigations, turn to his groundbreaking books, Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis, and Energy Medicine in Therapeutics and Human Performance. He and others at the forefront of research into alternative healing solutions invite us to enter into a deeper dialogue with mind and body and take more responsibility for our own mental and physical health. You can also look into continuing research at the Earthing Institute to stay up to date on how access to earth’s energy can keep you healthy and vigorous.

It was Clint Ober, a retired cable TV executive, who figured out that ever since people have worn synthetic-soled shoes, their bodies have been insulated from the same energy field that stabilizes not only cable TV but all industrial and residential electrical
equipment throughout the world. He wondered whether the human body might benefit from similar grounding.

And he was right. Our immune system functions optimally when our body has an adequate supply of earth’s free electrons—the antioxidants that are a major weapon against disease.

However, since you can’t go barefoot outside all the time, various conductive systems have recently been developed that can ground you indoors to the same electrical charge as earth’s surface while you work or sleep. An earthing sheet for your bed allows you to absorb electrons throughout the night, or a mat under your bare feet can ground you while you work at your desk.

Acknowledging Your Living Matrix

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together . . . all things connect.” -- Chief Seattle

Based on his studies in biophysics and cell biology, Oschman envisions the body as a web, a semi-conductive fabric that connects everything in the body, including the inside of every cell. He calls this system a living matrix, and describes it as “a continuous and dynamic ‘supramolecular’ webwork extending into every nook and cranry of the body; a nuclear matrix within a cellular matrix within a connective tissue matrix.”

That means every time you touch a human body you are making contact with a continuously interconnected system, composed of virtually all of the molecules in the body linked together. Since what happens in one corner of that system will affect all the others, the properties of the whole net will depend on the integrated activities of all of its parts.

This whole fabric—you—is, in fact, an antioxidant defense system. If you go barefoot, your body will take in and store earth’s electrons because we contain what’s called ground substance—a gel-like material that hoards electrons and is part of our connective tissue.

What’s more, the earth-based electrons that enter your feet can move anywhere in your body. Wherever a free radical forms, they can neutralize it and prevent mitochondrial damage, cross-linking of proteins, and mutation or genetic damage.

While it sounds miraculous, there is plenty of science behind it. Grounding to Mother Earth balances the immune system and reduces pain by altering the numbers of circulating neutrophils and lymphocytes.

It also affects various circulating chemical factors related to inflammation—the primary cause of many diseases. “Inflammation, which in medicine is considered an important part of the healing process, is really an artifact caused by lack of electrons in your tissues,” Oschman explains. “The neutrophils deliver the free radicals to the site of injury in what’s referred to as an oxidative burst. “They are like Pac-Man—very important molecules that tear things apart. If bacteria have entered through your skin, these free
radicals will destroy them very quickly. If you have damaged cells, the free radicals will break them apart so that there is a space for healthy cells to move in and repair the tissues. But in so doing, some of those free radicals can leak into and damage healthy tissue.” Not to worry however, because free radicals are positive and electrons are negative, so sooner or later any free radicals that leak into the healthy tissue will be neutralized.

Candace Pert, herself a medical research pioneer, celebrates Oschman’s new vision of the human body as “a liquid crystal under tension, capable of vibrating at a number of frequencies . . . a dynamic, shape-shifting bundle of multiple personalities . . . capable of sudden and dramatic transformations.”

Now that is hard to visualize! How can this body, with its firm bones and soft flesh, be a liquid crystal? We ordinary folk have only recently begun to wrap our minds around the new physics, doing our poor best to imagine a solid wooden table as a nest of swirling atoms and molecules that a karate chop of intention could break in half.

But Oschman clarifies: “When we think of crystals, we think of hard mineral crystals such as diamond or agate. The living crystals within us are made of long, thin, flexible molecules that are packed together in regular arrays, like the atoms of mineral crystals, but soft and flexible.”

To invite those healing electrons into your living matrix, all you have to do is stand with bare feet on the ground (or buy a grounded sheet for your bed, a pad for your feet, or patches for the balls of the feet). “Grounding or earthing protects your body from what I call collateral damage,” adds Oschman. “Damage that was not intended to take place but happens because we have disconnected ourselves from the Earth by putting rubber and plastic on the bottoms of our shoes.”

Emerging new electromagnetic devices to lessen pain and cure wounds go far to confirm this new vision of the human being as a living, moving matrix of electromagnetic forces forever in play, as body and mind continually readjust to whatever’s going on in and around us.

If this all sounds far fetched to you, wait till you are feeling stressed out or coming down with a minor ailment. Then go outside and stand barefoot on the ground for 10 or 15 minutes. Having done it myself many times, I guarantee you will soon begin to feel better.

Receiving Earth’s Gift

“Earth’s crammed with heaven . . . But only he who sees takes off his shoes.” --Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The simplest way to practice earthing is to take off your shoes and walk on the grass. Another ideal location is the beach. But if you want earth’s precious electrons to gift you with good health, avoid asphalt and wood, as well as typical insulators like plastic or rubber.

“Earthing is the easiest and most profound lifestyle change anyone can make,” says
Oschman. “The moment your foot touches the earth, or you connect to the earth through a grounding wire, your physiology changes. An immediate normalization begins, and an anti-inflammatory switch is turned on.”

City dwellers like me must seek out parks for barefoot walking. And we can buy earthing sheets to ground ourselves indoors for a really good night’s sleep. The brick wall in my study—part of the original foundation of the building I live in—goes straight down into the earth. So I sometimes rest my hands or forehead against it to absorb negative electrons when achy joints make themselves known. Concrete is also a good conductor as long as it hasn’t been sealed (painted concrete doesn’t allow electrons to pass through).

As for those who seek the luxury of a penthouse, Oschman suggests they think twice: the higher you are above the earth the weaker the power of grounding. He predicts that those who live nearer the top of a high-rise will have more health issues than the people who live on the first floor.

Personally I have found hands-on cooking a rewarding experience—cutting, peeling and slicing with my own hands, rather than using machinery to do it. Touching raw food contacts earth energy, just like digging, planting and caring for flowers in my small window boxes. It also offers one more reason to cook for oneself and leave those processed foods behind.

Another source of nature's bounty comes from contact with animals. When in a state of stress, I cuddle my cat in my arms. Tension, anxiety and indigestion gradually quiet down as the rest-and-digest part of my nervous system takes over and deep breathing begins. So if you have a cat, dog, or horse, hug it often.

Finally, it will come as no surprise that earthing helps us feel better emotionally. Dr. Chevalier’s recent study on earthing’s effect on mood improvement (Ammons Scientific Psychological Reports—April 2015) concludes that “grounding may be a simple way to improve mood states and help mitigate common detrimental effects of negative moods on health and psychological state—such as anxiety, stress, and depression.”

Take a few minutes to meditate on the intimate connection between your own nature and Mother Nature. Here’s how John Muir calls up that intimacy of Being: “The sun shines not on us but in us. The rivers flow not past, but through us. Thrilling, tingling, vibrating every fiber and cell of the substance of our bodies, making them glide and sing. The trees wave and the flowers bloom in our bodies as well as our souls, and every bird song, wind song, and tremendous storm song of the rocks in the heart of the mountains is our song, our very own, and sings our love.”

Settle down into yourself for a few minutes until any automatic nervous activity quiets down. Then imagine that you are an ocean. As a large body of water you contain many things, both small and large. Some of them are organic—life forms of different kinds.

Many are beautiful and/or friendly, but some are too dark, ominous or big for anyone to feel comfortable near them. There are valuable objects floating around within you, made with thought and care. But also a lot of flotsam and jetsam—like the islands of plastic garbage that now inhabit the world’s oceans.

All of this moves within you—call it your inner life. But you are the ocean itself, so you don’t need to do anything about it. You just allow everything a place in you, even though you may sometimes wonder where it came from and what use it serves. As the winds and
the seasons move above and around you, sometimes forming towering waves, other times scarcely wrinkling your smooth surface, you remain wholly receptive.

Sink your imagination deep into this image as you experience the waves at the top and the tides that pull secretly below. Begin to acknowledge that there is a stability in you that contains all things. Follow your breath as it comes and goes in rhythm with the waves.

When you are ready to finish, ask yourself, “Who is at the center of this teeming life?”