

Comparison of Physical Therapy with Energy Healing for Improving Range of Motion in
Subjects with Restricted Shoulder Mobility
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Purpose: Two forms of Energy Healing, Reconnective Healing (RH) and Usui Reiki, which involve light or no touch, were tested for efficacy against physical therapy (PT) for increasing limited range of motion (ROM) of arm elevation in the scapular plane.

Methods: Participants were assigned to one of 5 groups: PT, Reiki, RH, Sham Healing or no treatment (15-17 per group). Except for no treatment, participants were blinded as to grouping. Range of Motion, self-reported pain and heart rate variability (HRV) were assessed before and after a 10-minute session.

Results: On average, for PT, Reiki, RH, Sham Healing and no treatment, respectively, ROM increased by 12°, 20°, 26°, 0.6° and 3° and pain score decreased by 11.5%, 10.1%, 23.9%, 15.4% and 0%. Physical therapy, Reiki and RH were more effective than Sham Healing for increasing ROM (PT: $F=8.05$, $p=0.008$; Reiki: $F=10.48$, $p=0.003$; RH: $F=30.19$, $p<0.001$). It is possible that this improvement was not mediated by myofascial release because the subjects' HRV did not change, indicating no significant increase in vagal activity. Sham treatment significantly reduced pain compared to no treatment ($F=8.4$, $p=0.007$) and was just as effective as PT, Reiki and RH. It is the authors' opinion that the accompanying pain relief is a placebo effect.

Conclusion: This pilot study is a proof of concept that the use of RH or Reiki is equally as effective as manual manipulation PT in improving ROM in patients with painful shoulder limitation when evaluated immediately after a 10-minute treatment. The results suggest that it would be beneficial for physical therapists to be trained in RH or Reiki as well as PT so that they could reduce the need for manual work on patients, at least in cases of shoulder limitations.