

## New therapy targets problem muscles, helps patients manage chronic pain

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July 1, 2007

Jaime Mowery convulsed and screeched when therapist Chris Denham lightly touched her abdomen. Mowery injured her feet seven years ago, but Denham barely touched them. Instead he tapped, flicked and pressed key points on her legs, stomach and neck.

After Denham diagnosed Mowery's problem muscles, he began therapy. He had Mowery raise her arms and resist him as he sporadically pushed them back. He said he's turning off muscles in deep spasm using a new therapy called Primal Reflex Relief Technique, which he demonstrated June 7 at an open house of the North Colorado Therapy Center.

Physical therapist Chris Denham performs Primal Reflex Release Technique on Jamie Mowery, who suffers from chronic pain caused by reflex sympathetic dystrophy, during a recent demonstration of the technique at North Colorado Therapy Center in Greeley. Denham is one of several therapists at NCTC who is trained in and practices the technique.

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Invented by John Iams, the technique is gaining popularity across the country for therapists looking to help patients with chronic pain.

When Denham first heard of the technique three years ago, he thought it sounded a little like voodoo. But he had patients who just didn't respond to his other techniques, so he attended a training session.

"There was always a group of chronic pain people I couldn't seem to get anywhere with," Denham said.

The first patient he used it on erased all of his skepticism. The woman had headaches, numbness and tingling in her limbs. But after only one visit she felt much better. After four visits, the patient no longer needed therapy.

Mowery's story is similar. She has reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome, which surfaced as chronic pain after she fractured her foot seven years ago. She could only limp about 100 yards without sitting down, until she began therapy with Denham. After the first visit, her pain was almost cut in half.

Denham not only offers treatment, but he gives his patients techniques to use at home. Mowery pulls on the hair behind her ears, and at night will stretch opposite arms and legs, looking up toward her hand, a move she said helps her feel more comfortable laying down. Using the home techniques, Mowery is managing her own pain and hasn't seen Denham in months.

Denham said he sees the same results using Primal Reflex Relief Technique in patient after patient. Three of his coworkers at the therapy center are also trained in the technique.

Although Denham said he doesn't know how the therapy works, the results are all he needs to continue using it on his patients.

Denham doesn't employ the technique on every patient, though, it's simply one wrench in his therapy toolbox. If a patient isn't responding, he tries something else.