



Supervised Use of the Surge of Chi Exerciser in a Clinic Context

by [Maggie Tisserand \(more info*\)](#)

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Chi Exercise Machines provide a form of passive exercise that stimulates the nervous system, mobilises the back and releases tension. Invented in Japan about 20 years ago, the initial design was intended to accommodate use in the home. I came across this original machine - the Sun Ancon® Chi Machine® - about 8 years ago, and was fascinated by the dynamic effect of the simple sideways movement. I purchased a Sun Ancon for personal use, and have used it regularly over the years, partly as a very pleasant antidote to the many hours I spend as a writer in front of a computer screen.

More recently I was introduced to the Surge of Chi® Exerciser; an advanced product with variable speed controls and other programming. The additional functionality of the Surge of Chi - especially the option of using a gentle starting speed - is of particular benefit to people with sensitivity of some sort or deep-seated health issues. This has allowed healthcare practitioners to use them as an adjunct to treatments in clinic, especially for clients with conditions that they feel may respond well to the gentle action of the Surge of Chi.

A member of my family, who is registered as 'legally blind' and therefore restricted in her exercise and fitness options, has a history of being overweight and lethargic; I decided to purchase a Surge of Chi for her. The results were so immediate (increased energy levels, followed by a gradual loss of body fat leading to a better body shape, and a general 'feeling of calmness') that I became even more intrigued by what happens within the body when the feet are swung in this simple way. I have a long-standing working relationship with Japan and was inspired to investigate the source of wisdom that gave rise to the invention of chi exercise machines.

Kakuichi Kato lives near Tokyo and has helped me in the past with research work in Japan. I was amazed to discover that he was a student of the Nishi-shiki Method back in the 1970s - and that Mr Nishi, the founder, encouraged the practice of what he called 'goldfish exercise' long before these machines were invented.

Having gone back in history to grasp how the Japanese came to recognize the value of swinging the legs in this way, I decided to follow the story through to understand how healthcare professionals are now making use of these machines. I discovered that some trials with practitioners of various disciplines had been conducted by Energy for Health, the suppliers of the Surge of Chi Exerciser. I decided to conduct a review of the results of those trials, particularly where the practitioners had done case studies on clients with specific conditions. The remainder of this article summarizes the results of my review.

Broadly speaking, five categories of benefits were observed across the trials:

- Stress relief (at both mental and physical levels);
- Boosting of energy;
- Improved circulation;
- Back care benefits (including increased mobility of joints and better posture);
- Better sleep.

Many participants saw multiple benefits, whilst a smaller number of people saw a significant improvement in a specific area, such as digestive system benefits through the effect of the 'goldfish' movement massage of the internal organs. To give an overview of the trials I have chosen five case studies to illustrate the benefits obtained over the main categories; the names of participants have been changed to protect confidentiality.

The results are based on the session records kept by the practitioners in a diary format, with clients' comments recorded alongside the practitioners' own observations of progress. A questionnaire was in each

case completed by both client and practitioner at the end of the 30-day trial period.

Case Study A - Stress Relief

Client, 'Ben', presented with a long list of symptoms, many related to his longstanding Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) condition. A highly qualified and sensitive person, Ben had tried many therapies including psychotherapy and cranial sacral therapy. He had been prescribed various medications and had also tried many supplements, but found "none very effective". He described his hopes for the opportunity to use the Surge of Chi like this: "To help me 'let go' of perpetual contracted body. Help 'loosen' frozen energy in my body and thus feel more alive. Help alleviate any of my many symptoms."

After 14 sessions on the Surge of Chi under the supervision of his therapist, Ben reported many benefits particularly with release of tension and stress - on both a physical and mental level. Specifically he found that he was enjoying improved mental clarity and ability to focus, and was able to cope better with his workload. He described a definite change in his sense of well-being, and a very noticeable "greater sense of self". As well as feeling calmer and more relaxed, he noticed better energy levels and improved sleep.

In terms of his physical symptoms, Ben reported increased mobility of joints / muscles, and less tension in back, neck and shoulders; but felt he needed more time to enjoy the full benefits at this level. In fact Ben went on to buy a Surge of Chi so that he could use it regularly.

Case Study B - Boosting Energy

The client in this case, 'Jane', suffered from the energy imbalances associated with ME, along with sleep disorders and anxiety. She had previously tried acupuncture, yoga, cognitive behavioural therapy. Her current therapist - who conducted the trials with the Surge of Chi Exerciser - had been giving her regular massage. Jane had also been prescribed anti-anxiety medications by her GP.

During Jane's first three sessions (of 2 minutes' duration each), she was "trying hard not to tense up"; during the next three 5-minute sessions she started to learn how to relax more and by Session 6 was reporting that it "felt good". By Session 7 she "was really liking it" and her session times then increased to 10 minutes. In Session 10 she remarked that she was "really feeling the 'surge of chi' afterwards" and by Session 13 she was noticing "lots more energy after using the machine".

Apart from the boost to her energy levels, Jane reported improvements in terms of tension and stress levels, better posture and a general sense of well-being. She said it "took a while to get used to, but once I did, I really liked it, and felt much more energized and calmer after using it."

Her therapist commented that "it took 5 - 6 sessions for her to learn to relax, but then she saw good benefits with her energy levels. Having seen such good results with my client on the Surge of Chi Exerciser, I would love to be able to offer it to other ME sufferers and those with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome."

Case Study C - Better Circulation

This client had a multi-factor history of joint and muscle pain, poor circulation (resulting in oedema), breathing and heart disorders, and back problems. These conditions were accompanied by depression. Jim had a long list of prescribed medications but reported that he had "sought help from the NHS, but apart from medication, they couldn't help." His main reasons for wanting to trial the Surge of Chi Exerciser were to get relief from pain, and also to exercise the body, as he was unable to participate in active exercise.

With his delicate state in mind, Jim's therapist introduced him to the Exerciser gently, starting with very short sessions and the gentle starting speed of 80 beats per minute. By Session 4 he was "beginning to feel tingling in my feet." In Session 6 he said "Feel much better each time," and in Session 7: "Health seems to be improving." By Session 11 he reported: "Circulation improved, stature improved, and sleeping better." By Session 14 he reported "feeling in feet improved, standing tall, feeling good. Find the Surge of Chi Exerciser extremely helpful."

After the 14 sessions of his trial Jim listed the following benefits:

- Improved circulation;
- Less stressed;
- Helped Back, Neck & Shoulders;
- Increased energy;
- Decreased tension;
- More relaxed;
- Deeper breathing;
- Better posture;
- Increased mobility of joints / muscles - Knees, Ankles, Hips;
- Helped cope with work load;
- Increased mental clarity / alertness;
- Improved concentration / focus;
- Improved general wellbeing.

Case Study D - Back Care

The client's back problems related to an operation on the spine to remove a benign tumour. Her therapist in this case was very supportive of Helen's determination not to accept the pessimistic prognosis of the spinal specialist - which was that she had little hope of recovering without need for a wheelchair. Other symptoms included muscle pain, energy imbalances, exhaustion, asthma ("used to be bad but not too serious now"), and constipation (related to strong painkillers).

The primary reason for treatment with the Surge of Chi was to help reduce pain, improve mobility and relax. Other reasons were to help energy levels, and loosen muscles generally, particularly the shoulders and legs.

After only 11 sessions Helen reported that regular use of the Surge of Chi had helped greatly to release tension in the back, neck and shoulders. She reported increased mobility of joints and muscles in the same areas, better posture, and that her legs were in more control. In this regard the therapist's comments were: "all over looser, stirring back to life, helping build new neural pathways."

Having missed a Surge of Chi session after the 10th one, Helen said she noticed some stiffening up and felt that the relaxation and loosening-up effects were more due to use of the Surge of Chi than the concurrent acupuncture treatment, although she attributed pain relief to both. At this point she decided to purchase a Surge of Chi for use at home.

Other benefits reported by Helen were increased energy, deeper breathing and an improved sense of general wellbeing. Overall, she said she had been given a feeling of hope for the future, having originally been told that the tumour would grow back slowly. In general, she reported that she was feeling more able to cope with future treatment.

The spine specialist, who had confirmed that it was medically acceptable to use the Surge of Chi, was pleasantly surprised by the benefits derived from this and the other holistic treatments Helen had received.

Case Study E - Improved Sleep

Mary had a history of sleep disorders, headaches, poor digestion and painful knees. Her therapist's main objectives with the Surge of Chi were:

- Improved sleep;
- Reduction in headaches;
- General relaxation.

Mary found her sessions with the Surge of Chi very helpful, particularly on days that had been stressful.

After twelve sessions she not only reported improved sleep and feeling calmer, but also increased mental clarity and alertness. In addition, the release of tension helped with her back: "Tension ebbed as weeks went on. My body alignment is now excellent.This machine is ingenious....."

Practitioners' Own Use

As well as giving trial sessions to selected clients, practitioners were of course able to use the Surge of Chi freely themselves. Their findings were summarised by Hannah McDonald in Issues 125 and 141 of *Positive Health*. Here is just one example of a therapist who gained significant benefits personally.

Jacqueline Pinkham MAR LCIC who practices Reflexology and Indian Head Massage in Dorset, says she found the Surge of Chi excellent for clients with back pain, whiplash and neck injury, joint problems including arthritis, high stress levels and low energy levels. Even therapists occasionally need help with health matters; Jacqueline experienced a transformation in her own health, having suffered for 7 years from debilitating arthritis. "Although I know I still have arthritis - from odd twinges here and there - I no longer need to take pain killers and can walk much further than I used to. I can walk up and down slopes and hills (always problematical before getting my Surge of Chi), and I can get out of bed normally, whereas I used to feel like a 90-year old, as it took such a long time.

*About Maggie Tisserand

Maggie Tisserand has been involved with aromatherapy since the early 1970s. As a young mother studying all aspects of natural health, she utilized essential oils in bringing up her three children without recourse to antibiotics or other allopathic medicines: it was this practical knowledge that formed the basis of her first book *Aromatherapy for Women*. Maggie has written / co-authored four other books on aromatherapy and is currently involved with the publication of a sixth book, entitled *Aromatherapy vs. MRSA - antimicrobial essential oils to combat the superbug*.

Maggie was, in 1989, the first aromatherapy speaker in Japan, and has lectured in Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo. For the past six years Maggie has been working alongside university microbiologists to determine which essential oils worked most effectively against the superbug - MRSA, and with encouraging results Maggie went on to research and develop a unique combination of thyme oils known as Benchmark Thyme and is founder of Benchmark Oils, the trading company for the blend. Maggie can be contacted via her website www.benchmark-thyme.com