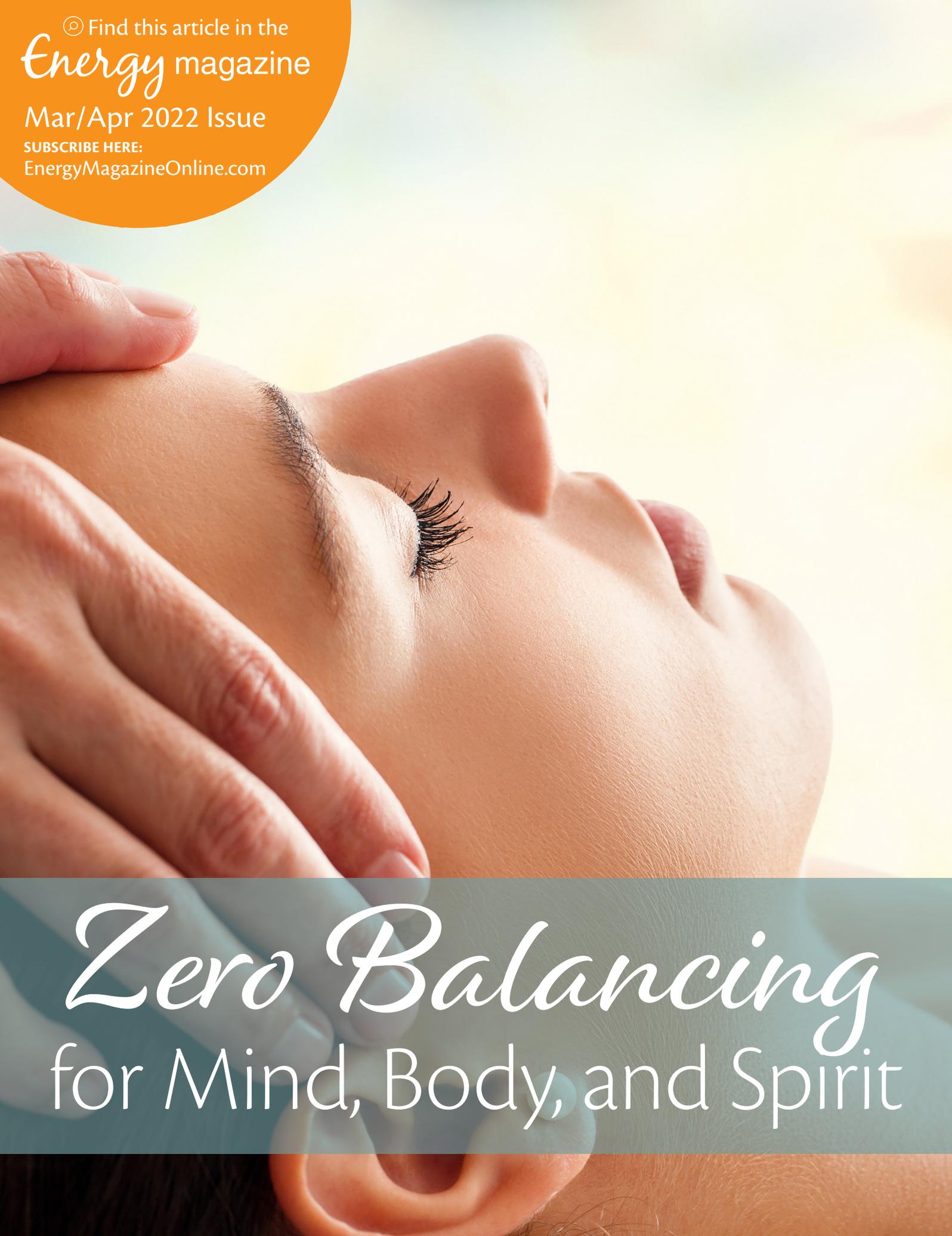


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*Zero Balancing*  
for Mind, Body, and Spirit

*We live simultaneously in the world of duality, our normal waking consciousness of everyday reality, and the world of unity, where we feel connected both to our core and to the universe.*

Jim McCormick

One of many new horizons in the energy healing world is the huge potential for change, healing, and personal transformation possible through the techniques and principles of conscious touch modalities. Most of this potential is unknown outside of the bodywork community. The body, mind, and spirit are such exact mirrors of each other that working through the body can create major changes in the mind, emotions, spirit, and overall wellness. One of the modalities that works in that area is **Zero Balancing**.

Zero Balancing is a hands-on body/mind/spirit system of conscious touch and transformation which benefits people on all six dimensions of health: physical body, mental, spiritual, emotional, environmental, and social. Zero Balancing was founded in 1973 by Dr. Fritz Smith, an osteopath and MD. It was created as an integration of Western (Osteopathic and allopathic) ideas and approaches to health with Eastern ideas of acupuncture, energy healing, and meditation.

“Zero Balancing is at home with the transition from Newtonian to Quantum physics, including the possibility of non-causal occurrences and the influence of the observer on the outcome of events. Zero Balancing reflects this transition through the power of touch.” - Fritz Smith

Of particular interest for energy workers is the Zero Balancing (ZB) concept about energy in the body. One of the hallmarks of ZB is the idea that we have two bodies – one of structure and one of energy. “ZB considers the relationship of energy and structure in the human body as a fundamental underpinning of health.” - Fritz Smith

A good example of the relationship of structure and energy in the world is a sailboat, where the boat is the structure and the wind is the energy. By adjusting the relationship of the sail (structure) to the wind (energy) you can adjust the speed, direction, and efficiency of the vessel. A similar example can be seen looking at the effects of the relationship between a tennis racquet and the ball. When the ball just hits the frame of the racquet (the structure), not only



does the ball not go where you are aiming, it also creates a strong and very unpleasant vibration in the player. But, when the ball hits the sweet spot in the middle of the racquet (both energy and structure) several things happen: the ball often goes out faster than it came in, it goes in the right direction, and the vibration created in the player feels wonderful. It can fill your whole body with a strong pleasant sensation.

Zero Balancing looks for how we can find those sweet spots in the body; those places where we can most strongly affect both our energy and the structure. In ZB we look for these sweet spots primarily in the bones and the joints.

Foundation joints are key areas in the body whose main function is not about locomotion and support, but about energy transmission. They have several characteristics:

- They all have a minimal range of motion (as little as six thousandths of an inch)
- There is no voluntary musculature across these joints, so when problems arise the body tends to compensate around them rather than fix them.
- Because their range of motion is so small, very small imbalances in these joints make for a big loss of function. (Fortunately the reverse is also true – very small improvements make for a big gain of function.)
- The function of these joints does not have to do with locomotion, it has to do with the transmission of energy in the body. This energetic transmission is part of what allows for our connection to the earth, to the heavens, and to ourselves. If energy is not moving well through these joints all these connections are lessened.

In ZB we evaluate these joints and balance them where needed. The list of these joints include the cranial bones, the tarsal and carpal bones, the Sacroiliac joint, and to a lesser extent, all the articulations between the vertebrae and between the ribs and the vertebrae.

The other main place we find the sweet spots in the body is in the skeletal system – the bones. Not that many systems of healing work directly with the bones as a vital part of our overall functioning. Even fewer work with the energetic component of the bones.

There are several main energetic characteristics of bones that make them ideal for helping to create change in all levels of the person. Bones transmit energy rather than absorb it so any change in one bone is often transmitted through the whole skeleton and means that every ZB touch is not just local but global. Our clinical experience validates the idea that there is a very different quality to work with the bones than to work with the soft tissue. The experience for both the giver and the receiver of working with the skeletal system is more ethereal and expansive than for the soft tissues, which are often more soft and earthly. The bones hold energetic vibration, and in that held-energy is information about a deep part of who we are. The Chinese saw the bones as being controlled by the kidneys and saw the main function of the kidneys as storing our essence. So, long ago, there was this idea that the bones hold information that is central to who we are. Recent research is showing the importance of the hormones created in the bones which affect the whole of our being. Bones can also get vibration stored in them when parts of our experience have not been processed. This has big implications for work with trauma.

The effects of ZB are many and varied. ZB feels wonderful to receive and often leaves a person feeling relaxed, and yet at the same time, focused and connected. ZB has a wonderful effect on many physical and emotional symptoms – everything from back pain and headaches, to anxiety and depression. But what I want to focus on in this article is its ability to help put people into a deep meditative state and thus into an altered state of consciousness. This is the aspect of ZB that leads to the greatest sense of transformation and to the person connecting with their best self.

One of the hallmarks of Zero Balancing is that we can



intentionally work with and induce *altered states of consciousness* in the client. As Dr. Smith (1986) says, “through touch we can often help a person drop into a deeper meditative state than she could reach on her own, even after months of meditating.”

“Brain physiology tells us there are a number of brain wave patterns, each having its own characteristics. In ZB we use ‘expanded states of consciousness’ or ‘altered states of consciousness’ to indicate brain waves that move away from a beta, linear-thinking mindset.” - Core Zero Balancing Study Guide, Smith, F

We live simultaneously in the world of duality, our normal waking consciousness of everyday reality, and the world of unity, where we feel connected both to our core and to the universe. In this second state, time can seem to stop. In Zero Balancing, we can help the client enter into that world of unity consciousness. We can do that through touch in a ZB session by varying our touch – for instance having a softer touch or holding for a longer time while simultaneously keeping awareness contact with both their structure and their energy.

When in an altered state, the client’s awareness goes more to his internal sensations and less into contact with the outside world. Often the client will report little or no sense of time or space. The client is less tightly bound to his normal belief systems, to his sense of who he is or to his illness, and thus more change is possible. He is able to get outside his normal conditioning. The following are a couple of short passages from my new book, *Zero Balancing: Conscious Touch and Transformation*, which gives a sense of the changes possible through high quality conscious touch.

“A good example of a client going into an altered state through Zero Balancing is a session with Brian, a Zero Balancing faculty member in his 50s. We had done many ZB sessions together. On this day, a third of the way into a ZB session I began to do a fulcrum we call the lateral leg fulcrum, coming down the side of the leg along the *tensor fascia latte* muscle along the gall bladder meridian. I took a long time doing

this fulcrum, much longer than usual. I kept the connection very clear and kept moving more and more slowly as I went down his leg.

When I did this fulcrum slowly, and then more and more slowly as I moved along his leg, Brian started to experience that sense of time shifting and even seeming to stand still. He was so involved in his internal experience, that he had almost no sense of the outside world. A client in that state of awareness has more internal fluidity and thus is more open to change in his beliefs, his physical body and his attitudes. Brian was a very experienced ZB practitioner and a very experienced meditator. He was able to go with this strong energetic influence and allow his awareness to shift.

There are physical signs that indicate a person is in an altered state. The breathing usually changes, developing either a prolonged shallow breaths, a period of not breathing or a number of deep breaths. The pulse often gets stronger, and you can sometimes see the pulse in the aorta near the throat beating strongly. Their head may make micro movements just barely visible. With Brian, all these things were happening as I came down his leg from the hip towards the ankle.

As the fulcrum continued, I moved even more slowly and he continued having deeper breaths and more frequent breaths. I could feel in my hands the intensity of his energy building and getting stronger.

I began to feel in my body what was happening for him. My own energy field began to get stronger and to pulsate more. It was building so much that I was having trouble tolerating the surge of energy. I realized that I had to expand my field and not let my own limitations stop him from shifting as fully as he was able. I needed to relax more and to breathe and let my own system adjust to the new input. Soon, I was able to let my energy expand, and the internal change in him kept growing. It brought tears to his eyes, tears of joy, and also tears of mourning for not having this experience all the time. This continued for the rest of the session.



When we finished the session, Brian's eyes were bright. He felt alert, energized and yet relaxed. He felt grateful for our connection and for the work in general. He said he was "able to experience the world in a new way for the first time." He had received many ZB sessions from skilled practitioners, but he felt this was the best and deepest experience he'd had of that fulcrum. The experience left us both feeling connected to each other, expanded and filled with love for each other.

This ability of Zero Balancing sessions to help a person move into expanded states of consciousness is one of the main reasons we talk about Zero Balancing as a body and mind system that facilitates personal transformation. Clients that have this type of experience begin to experience the world in new ways. Their early conditioning is lessened, and their perceptions become clearer and less clouded by their past history. Some of these sessions become a turning point in a person's life.

Another example of an altered state from Zero Balancing showed up in a ZB session with Ella, an executive in the high tech world, who rapidly dropped into a deep, altered state early in the ZB session. Often when a client has gone to a deep state quickly, there is the possibility of overload – of doing more than the person can integrate easily or well. In this case I decided it was safe to do as much as Ella could tolerate, and to watch her carefully to make sure I didn't overdo it. This is always a clinical judgment, but Ella is experienced with Zero Balancing, and I was confident that she would respond well to stronger work.

As we continued working Ella's bones and the soft tissues literally felt livelier, more elastic, and more vibrant, and similarly her energetic field became more lively and sparkly. And in between these movements she would have periods of extreme stillness, her body not moving while her energetic field grew quieter and quieter. After the session we talked for thirty minutes. She was very animated during this time. She looked, and said she felt, totally alive and full of joy,

She had a beautiful expression of amazement on her face at the experience she'd just had. She felt "refreshed and renewed...I feel alive like I haven't felt for decades...I can't stop smiling. I feel so much joy it's almost bursting out of me...I feel new...I feel surprised...I feel like dancing...I have a swagger to me." She began to connect to her younger self who, she remembered, was "smiling all the time" and which she hadn't felt for years.

In another session with Ella, she again went into a deep altered state. She told me afterwards about her experience during the session. "During the early part of the session I saw a large, round, glass bowl with very dirty water in it. The water gradually became clearer and clearer, and then was totally clear. Then there was a goldfish swimming in the bowl. And finally I was the goldfish, happily and easily swimming in the clear water in the sunshine."

Finally, another client, Rita, had an experience that she told me about after the session. Before the session and often in her life, she felt disconnected to herself and as she had no core self. During the early part of the session she recognized that she often felt she was walking on a tightrope with a blindfold and no net, fearful of taking any step lest she fall off. As the session progressed, she realized that she could take the blindfold off. So she saw herself and felt herself still on the tightrope, but at least she could now see, which was much safer. Near the end of the session she had a vision of herself, no longer with the blindfold, and able to step off the tightrope. She was on the ground in no danger, with a clear vision of herself and her life. She had moved into connection with her core self within the space of that session."

These are all examples of the kinds of transformative experiences people can have when they are able to allow their consciousness to drop into an altered state. Zero Balancing can help that process happen by freeing up the held-energy in the body and allowing it to flow in its natural state. This has profound implications for how people can live their lives and have lives with more meaning, more self-actualization, and more richness. ZB and conscious



touch can help this process happen.

ZB continues to grow and develop in many ways. The ZB community is continuing to get more rigorous in our research on Zero Balancing with several aims. One is to document the changes that we, as clinicians, see all the time as we saw above.

Misty Rhoads, et al, did a beautiful qualitative and quantitative study of the effects of ZB and concluded: "Zero Balancing is an integrative, low cost, simply administered, holistic therapy... which facilitates wellness in the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of wellness."<sup>1</sup>

Zero Balancers continue to look at the underlying mechanisms of the changes we see. We have done a pilot study with 30 clients who received both a ZB session, and before or after that, rested on the table for 30 minutes with no treatment. The preliminary findings showed that "clients on average received 63% improvement in anxiety, stress and tension, as measured by BOTH the sensors they had on them during the session and their own perceived effects based on a questionnaire after the session. For the time spent resting on the tables with no treatment, the similarly measured change was 12%." Strickland J and Reynolds S (2017).

We have also found interesting EEG changes during ZB sessions and continue to look for new and unique ways to measure the effects of ZB. How can we measure energy more effectively? Do we need new forms of research to study these new forms of therapy? Can we learn more about the underlying mechanisms? I have more about all this in the last chapter in my book. Or you can look at any of the listed references. 

 Find author Jim McCormicks book at [www.HandspringPublishing.com/product/zero-balancing](http://www.HandspringPublishing.com/product/zero-balancing)

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