

BOWEN

SUPPLIES By Helen

**Helen Mary
Perkins** MAR BTAA

Therapist • Trainer • Speaker



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Therapist – Tutor – Speaker

The personal touch always wins!

Helen Mary Perkins' services fall into three main areas: she works as a complementary therapist and a trainer/instructor, as well as being European distributor for Bexters (soda crystals and bath crystals) and Bowtech Ease. As winner of the awards: Best Bowen Therapy Training Provider - UK and the Best Health & Wellness Product: Bowtech Ease, we profile the work of this highly-respected complementary therapist.

Helen Mary Perkins is a gifted and highly-respected complementary therapist, with an in-depth understanding and knowledge specifically of Bowen Therapy and reflexology. Her career path has taken her from family-run beauty salon in the eighties, to award-winning entrepreneur, via the Australian outback where she worked in often challenging conditions within the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

This unconventional route has brought many opportunities and helped to shape Helen's approach to holistic health and wellbeing. Her business has evolved and expanded over the years and falls into three categories. Today, she works as a therapist and trainer as well as running an online shop (Bowen Supplies by Helen) selling specialist health and wellness products she first discovered in Australia.

Helen is also in demand as a speaker, at home and overseas and is just as happy sharing her knowledge and expertise with a small local group or large-scale conferences with hundreds of delegates.

In her role as therapist, she works with a variety of clients seeking relief from everyday ailments like neck and shoulder pain, caused by long hours working at a computer or bent over a hand-held device. She also treats chronic long-term conditions, such as multiple sclerosis and arthritis, as well as those who simply wish to indulge in some 'me time' and relax from the stress of a hectic lifestyle. Some clients are referred by their GP or other medical practitioner. Some of her most rewarding work is at a local hospice in her home town in Peterborough, where she leads a team of voluntary complementary therapists, providing services to patients, staff and carers.

Helen especially enjoys training and inspiring the next generation of therapists and is one of just 12 registered instructors in the UK, accredited by the Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia to teach the original Bowen Technique, as developed by founder Tom Bowen. She has also developed several unique training programmes that have been accredited by the relevant professional bodies.

Staff and client care

As a dedicated therapist with several overlapping business interests, Helen could not function without support. She gives clear direction and has built a trusted team, to whom she delegates specific tasks to keep everything running smoothly. Team Helen includes her PA Julia, an order fulfilment assistant, a part-time marketing/communications consultant and all-round good guy and IT expert Robert - not to mention Billy the cat whose purring provides a calming presence, when needed!

In terms of client care, Helen provides an empathetic and sensitive environment, which generates a high level of referrals as well as repeat business. Customer service is also top priority for the online shop. Orders are processed and despatched efficiently within 24-48 hours (depending on weekends) and every effort is made to meet special requests. Social media and a quarterly e-newsletter keep customers updated with special offers and incentives.

The firm uses all the standard tools to work smart and keep communication channels open 24/7, which is especially important in terms of running an online business, where order processing and timely despatch is vital. At the same time, the team are keenly aware that as a respected and high-profile complementary therapist, in Helen's field of expertise it is the personal touch that makes all the difference.

Online shop

Helen set up her online business, Bowen Supplies by Helen, in 2008 to raise awareness of natural health and wellness products (Bexters Soda Crystals and Bowtech Ease), that she discovered while living and working in Australia. Having used them and recorded the benefits in her own clinical practice, she was determined to make them more widely available when she returned to the UK. Easy to use at home, they offer effective relief from injury and many everyday ailments.

Thanks to Helen's efforts, they are now used by a variety of professionals, including Bowen therapists, reflexologists, physiotherapists and

other complementary practitioners to enhance treatment. Bowtech Ease, originally developed by an Ayurvedic practitioner in Australia to relieve bunions, was subsequently found to be equally effective at relieving pain and inflammation on all joints. This aromatherapy oil has been recognised with three awards since 2015, including this one from LUX!

Helen comments on the firm's online business: "The website enables us to reach a much wider audience to raise awareness of the benefits of these products which are natural, safe and effective. At the same time, we are mindful of ever-changing European legislation to ensure we remain compliant with all relevant rules in areas like packaging and transportation. One example, is the sending of liquids overseas, by air. This adds an extra layer of complication for the wider health, wellness and beauty industry, but reliable courier companies are well-placed to advise so it is not really a problem."

Staying ahead of the competition

Helen has developed her own method of reflexology which she calls the Reflex Resonance Technique™ (RRT), combining intuition and sound. This was inspired in part by her time in Australia, where she explored the age-old beliefs of the indigenous Aborigine people, for whom sound and healing go hand in hand. This experience, which also saw her working in often primitive conditions in the Outback within the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), inspired her to follow her own instincts and ultimately led to the creation of RRT.

Furthermore, she has developed a training course teaching this method to other reflexologists, who wish to enhance their skills and offer an additional service to their own clients. This unique programme has been independently accredited by several professional bodies, pushing back the boundaries as she guides students to harness the intuitive powers that have been ignored or largely forgotten in the hurly-burly of modern life. In recent years Helen, has been invited to present this fascinating method at international conferences in South Africa and Australia.



She has also developed a specialist two-day training course - for Bowen therapists wishing to learn more about working in the palliative care sector – as well as an introductory course for people who may be considering becoming a Bowen therapist. Helen's palliative care programme has attracted the attention of the medical profession and is being considered by the NHS in England.

Wider industry trends

In today's fast-changing world, Helen says the biggest trend is the demand for a fast service, both in the form of questions that need actioning from all communications such as Facebook, telephone and text and orders from all over the world that need to be processed. "Some postal services are notoriously slow and certain courier companies are careless and slapdash which keeps us on our toes in terms of customer service," said Helen.

Both Helen and her PA keep their smart phones turned on, to check orders coming in and their communication consultant is alerted, when questions need to be answered. Careful packaging of products is vital for orders, that might be mishandled, and a special cool pack is used for hotter country destinations, to ensure goods arrive in good condition.

Regulations and legislation

Voluntary regulation of the complementary therapy sector helps to maintain standards and protect clients. Helen's specialisms, Bowen Therapy and reflexology, are among a wide range of therapies covered by the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council, which has government backing

through the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care. The industry's professional bodies also remain alert to any changes that might impact members and provide practical support as necessary.

While this is voluntary at present, there are some specific areas governed by more stringent requirements, as Helen explains: "One example applies to those of us who work in the field of palliative care. Recently, I was privileged to be asked to contribute to an advisory document presented to an NHS hospital palliative care unit as part of their review of guidelines for the use of complementary therapy, such as Bowen in the treatment of patients facing end-of-life care.

"I firmly believe that maintaining professional qualifications, combined with experience and ongoing CPD (compulsory professional development) training, puts therapists in the very best place to respond to any changes in legislation or regulation."

Developments in the health, beauty and wellness market

Quite rightly, there always seems to be the need for evidence-based scientific facts, which can help maintain high standards. However, training, wider choice, referrals and testimonials for products and services will by popular demand ensure the industry continues to thrive. The team is also well-placed to meet the growing demand for natural health and beauty products.

Helen says: "In a world where technology seems to be king and we hear more about developments

in artificial intelligence (AI), I am encouraged by the growing interest in a more natural approach to keeping ourselves healthy and well. The healing power of touch, combined with listening skills and emotional interaction, be it one-to-one or in a like-minded group during training or a speaking engagement, will hopefully over-rule computer programmes in a future where machines may perform many tasks which we humans carry out today. A robot carrying out a massage? I don't think so!"

Future developments

Helen is exploring opportunities to raise further awareness by supporting therapy centres, at home and overseas, who already stock and use their products and wish to develop their retail offering. Posters and other point-of-sale materials can be supplied to help them grow their customer base, as well as build their therapy business, while having the added benefit of buying local. She is also considering supplying a slightly larger roller ball, alongside the popular 10ml bottle, for use on larger areas to relieve soreness on the neck, back and shoulders, or calf and thigh.

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