

My Self-Discovery into the Healing Benefits of Vibroacoustic Therapy

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27 July 2024

Summary

I recently had to retire from my career due to injuries at work. I have been on a personal journey to find the best self-care options for chronic knee pain. My body is still young and not ready for total knee replacements in both knees at this time. I am diligently searching to find an alternative to that invasive surgery. Through my searching I was introduced to sound healing and vibroacoustic modalities. This paper uses me as the clinical trial over the last four months.

I have been traveling a long road, a journey searching for a better quality of life. I have had two severe knee injuries in the past 8 years, which forced my early retirement from my former career as a Law Enforcement Officer for Ca State Parks. I was told by my doctor after my first injury that I would need to have a knee replacement fairly soon as the damage done to my meniscus was extensive and had to be removed. I did all of my therapy they prescribed, and continued swimming daily. I was doing very well; then winter came along and my knee was screaming in pain. The doctors told me it was arthritis and that there was nothing they could do about it. I could take ibuprofen for pain, or get a knee replacement. I continued to live with the pain and became depressed as it didn't seem to matter if I worked out or not, I had constant pain in my knee. I started to gain some weight as depression set in. Two years later, I injured my other knee at work, compromising the meniscus resulting in identical injuries in both knees. Now I was hobbling with both knees severely injured. I could no longer perform duties befitting of a law enforcement officer and had to retire from service. It was very depressing for me as I was still young, I felt like my career that I really enjoyed ended abruptly and I was in a lot of pain without many choices.

I began to research what my alternatives were to surgery for my knees, as both knees now were candidates for replacement. I knew the longevity of a knee replacement was only 15-20 years and that meant if I lived a long life I would need second replacements and that seemed out of the question for me. I found a pain management center that provided alternative ways for dealing with pain and healing. They provided wellness classes that focused on the whole person, not just the injury. The program included yoga, meditation, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, art, and physical therapy. Taking these classes started to help me shift my perspective of pain. I was eager to learn more. I had been receiving emails from a former yoga studio I attended about Sound Baths, and found similar content on sound healing and sound baths popping up on my Instagram page. I wondered what this new phenomenon was? I started researching and found that the Sound Healing Center in Sausalito was having an open house in a few days. My husband Vince and I attended the open house and learned about sound healing and vibration and how using vibroacoustic therapy (VAT) via an instrument known as a vibroacoustic bed, known as a sound lounge, was being used for pain management with great success. Was this what I had been searching for? I had to know more!

First of all, what is vibroacoustic therapy? VAT is a noninvasive form of therapy that uses sound vibrations to encourage relaxation, relieve pain, and increase overall well-being. According to an article published in the Journal of Music Therapy, VAT works by using specific sound frequencies to stimulate the body's natural healing mechanisms. The treatment is comprised of three elements: first it uses specialized equipment, such as the sound lounge, to deliver low-frequency vibrations (20-120Hz) to the body, which penetrates deep into the body, tissues, organs, and cells, as well as music, second, music listening, and third, therapeutic interaction (Campbell, Hynynen, & Ala-Ruona, 2017, Music and Medicine An interdisciplinary

Journal). VAT has been used for pain management in postoperative conditions and syndromes such as fibromyalgia. The results from the above study suggest that VAT is beneficial for chronic pain and mood (anxiety/depression) relief and that a self-care intervention has the potential to prolong positive outcomes. The participants had improved symptoms after VAT session of immediate pain relief, greater range of movement, could relax during treatments even occasionally falling asleep during treatment, calmed mind, working on both psychological and physical levels. Participants also reported a decrease in use of analgesic medicines. Participants found the experience positive, empowering, and VAT was effective when nothing else was.

Vince and I both received a demo session on the sound lounge, each of us were astounded at the level of relaxation that we received in only 11 minutes! The vibration of the music integrated in the sound lounge massaged our muscles and washed waves of peace and tranquility deep into our bodies. It was as if we just had a day at the spa, it felt like we had a massage experiencing peace, tranquility and deep relaxation. What else could this amazing lounge provide? I found out that by playing certain frequencies through the sound lounge one could target specific pain receptors such as those associated with arthritis, ligaments, tendons, muscles, bones, nerve endings, and more. Even more astounding that there were frequencies to help promote the digestive system, endocrine system, respiratory system, circulatory system, chronic fatigue, brain, depression, asthma and more. After experiencing the state of bliss and tranquility the sound lounge brought us, I knew right away this was a healing modality I needed to invest in for my well being.

I have been using the sound lounge for about 4 months. While initially purchased to assist with pain management, it has been working deep into my body and soul in unbelievable ways. In the realm of pain management, I have been playing specific frequencies for the promotion of

health and healing for my knees, mostly the tones for arthritis, muscles, ligaments, tendons, nerves, and cell regeneration. I listen to these tones daily along with relaxing or uplifting music, some using binaural beats to promote calmness in the morning session. In the evening if I am in pain I will play the same tones again and then a calm relaxing sleep song before bed. I find with pain management this has brought my pain levels on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, from a 6 to a 1. This is life changing as I do not feel the pain of my knees during sleep if I do this regiment nightly. When I do not use the lounge at night, I notice the pain at night. I used to have to take something like Tylenol PM just to sleep before the sound lounge. I rarely need to do that anymore since the steady use of the sound lounge. I would dread going to bed because it was so uncomfortable and I would take the Tylenol PM's so that I could hopefully pass out and not be woken up by the aching pain in my knees. I now sleep much more restfully after using the sound lounge. It has honestly made a huge difference in the pain in my knees. I just may be able to stave off having knee replacement surgery if I can keep the pain at these levels for the rest of my life. What a tremendous relief knowing that I can truly manage my pain and live a productive and pain free life, by simply relaxing on a sound lounge that actually aids in the self healing of painful areas in my body!

The sound lounge has also been an emotional rescue. As a retired Law Enforcement Officer, I have had a lot of suppressed trauma compartmentalized deep inside my body. It wasn't until I retired that I started really processing some of the things I took part in or witnessed in the field. I had some intense arrests, sketchy psychiatric contacts, intense accidents, losing patients in medicals or drownings, and suicides. I had been suffering from some level of depression, lack of self worth and definitely a ton of stress. Retiring resulted in taking a good look at what was important in my life. Why was I so short tempered, quick to anger, tired, and treating my loved

ones without a lot of compassion? It was the trauma I had not fully dealt with which I had tucked away over the years to keep my hero complex in check. I had to be alright because it was my job to perform all these tasks and be alright in the end. I was the one people turned to when there was a crisis, at work and as the mom at home. I didn't have time to not be ok. Sessions on the sound lounge brought immediate peace and relaxation to my mind and body. Listening to the calming music and feeling the vibration in the lounge massaged my muscles and urged my soul to let go of the tension built up both physically and emotionally. My mind could turn off the endless loop of whatever nonsense it was saying at the moment and I could be free. Free to just relax, float, disappear into the oneness of the universe in bliss, get lost in the music and vibrations and ultimately be at peace. What an amazing gift it is, to shut off the world and mind for 20 minutes. It's completely refreshing, revitalizing, renewing to the body and soul, bringing a sense of wholeness back to self. It has made me feel more joyful, rested, connected to God and my family, and has given me back my sense of self worth. I am worthy and good enough. I have something fantastic to share with others.

I am currently enrolled in classes for sound healing to explore more about the various modalities sound healing uses to impact our health, including lowering blood pressure, reducing stress and anxiety and of course, promoting relaxation. It can also enhance cognitive abilities and help increase dopamine levels in the brain that improve mood. It is my intention and desire to continue healing myself, my husband and my family using the vibroacoustic therapies via the sound lounge and other instruments including voice healing. As I learn through experience, my goal is to create a place to aid my community, and ultimately my fellow Law Enforcement Officers and Retirees in healing through the vibroacoustic therapy as well. My objective is to demonstrate the power of the sound lounge right after a significant event has happened. How the

sound lounge can bring a sense of relaxation and calmness to the anxious mind and body and bring the officers back into the present. It would be life changing to be able to rid oneself of the trauma before it sets in deeply. I aim to show the value and spread the word of the truly amazing capabilities the sound lounge and vibroacoustic therapy can have in saving people's lives, as it has been invaluable in my healing and recovery from pain and trauma.

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