Beginning Zen Shiatsu - Healing is a Simple Act

Relax!... Be Present… Never Break Contact… Use Natural Movements…

Healing is a simple act. In Beginning Zen Shiatsu we impart the simple ability to be with another human in a healing context. By the end of this course, you will develop a sense of your body’s life force (Ki), and will be able to sense this energy in others. This ability will serve you both as a practitioner and as a human being, as you become more aware and centered in everyday life.

Students learn how to ground themselves in their Hara (center) and to work from their Hara so that their sessions may be effortless and powerful at the same time. You will learn the location of the energy meridians and major acupoints, and will be able to give a full-body treatment.

This course is open to everyone who would like to share this beautiful skill with others. There are no prerequisites.

Zen Shiatsu Chicago
825A Chicago Ave
Evanston, IL  60202
847-864-1130
www.zenshiatsuchicago.org

Practice Class

At least two practice class times are scheduled each month. Please consult the paper schedule at the front desk or the schedule on the website at http://www.zenshiatsuchicago.org/schedule/

Each Practice Class costs $15, and is a 3-hour block of time in which you’ll exchange treatments with another student under instructor supervision. This is a very important opportunity for you to refine and reinforce the techniques that you’ve learned in class.
Beginning Zen Shiatsu

Progressive Education at Zen Shiatsu Chicago

This course is part of the 715-hour program for those with no previous experience, and is part of the 380-hour program for those who are already massage and bodywork professionals. Whether or not you have experience, coming to re-engage with education as an adult learner can be somewhat anxiety-producing. For this reason, we want to reassure you by telling you about the philosophies we follow as an educational institution.

Our school follows a progressive education model, which means that “students progress”. That’s what progressive education means. Every student here can be successful, and progresses at their own rate.

In a class like this, everyone comes in with their own confidence level. It’s normal when you have no prior experience to feel like everything is very new and you are not confident at all. If you already have experience working with the body, you might feel more confidence or you might not. And when all these different confidence levels come together in a class, that itself can be confusing or disorienting. If you’re feeling like it’s all very new it can be disconcerting to work with someone who might already be more familiar with the body.

That’s all normal. So, if, at any point, you ever feel overwhelmed or have a crisis of confidence, please, start by bringing your concerns to your instructor. The first thing we’ll let you know is that it’s normal. We pay very close attention to every student, and we have watched thousands of students go through this learning curve. What the instructor will probably tell you is: don’t worry, you’re doing fine, it’s normal to have that worry right now. And if that’s what they say, please believe them. You’ll have to take it on faith for now, but if they say it, please realize that they mean it.

And we do have tests, but they are very low-stress. Like in this class there will be a written exam where you have certain things to memorize, and there will be a practical exam where you’re meant to put the techniques together to certain extent. Those exams are not meant to somehow weed out people who don’t make the cut. That’s the old method of education. At our school the test is a chance to just engage with the work and see where you’re at with it. If you don’t pass, that’s fine, we’ll just give you some more time to study and come back and retake the same exam. In an intensive class like this one, in particular, it’s not at all unusual if you don’t get everything memorized by Friday for the written test. If that’s the case, you’ll get a full 30 days to go back, re-memorize what you missed and come retake the same test.

It’s just a benchmark, a chance to see how much you did learn and internalize. If you learned half of it, then you just take some time to relearn the other half. In the scope of our whole program that might mean just adjusting your schedule a bit, maybe pushing back the next level a bit until you’ve caught up with the memorization goals.

Again, that’s what progressive education means. Every student progresses at their own rate and is successful in the end. Every student who has a sincere desire in their heart to do this work can do it, and all of our school policies are designed to support that philosophy and get you there at your own pace.
Creating an Atmosphere for Learning and Healing

There is order in our universe. Planets stay in their orbits, waves roll toward the shore, branches grow up toward the heavens and roots down into the earth. Spring always follows winter, winter follows autumn, autumn follows summer and summer follows spring – always. Energy loves order. Working with energy requires flowing with the rhythm of that order. Flowing with that rhythm demands a lot of practice. We need a clear, open mind that knows how to concentrate and pay attention to detail without being so focused that we have tunnel vision and miss important elements.

We need order in our minds, and we need that order reflected in the flow of our spaces – in our treatment rooms, as practitioners, and in our classroom, as students. Below are some practices we will use to promote good energy, order and flow in the classroom:

• Arrive to class ready to learn with a clear, calm, open mind. This means having done the reading and homework assignments, and having practiced the techniques over the week (or at least having gone over the sequences several times in your mind and imagining your own movements).

• When you arrive and hang up your coat, leave any non-class related thoughts hanging there too.

• Reflect the concept of order in the way you place your shoes neatly together on the shoe racks out of the way of foot traffic.

• Enter the classroom calmly and quietly. Choose your place and arrange your things with care and order. Begin relaxing your body and mind.

• During lectures, feel free to take notes. During demonstrations, get up and move to find good sight lines. You may take notes during demonstrations, too.

• During practice time, help your partner. The giver should ask succinct questions about anything they are unsure about (e.g. amount of pressure, placement or hands, etc.). The receiver should answer succinctly (yes/no, your angle is good/off, more pressure would be satisfying, etc.) and offer suggestions to help the giver. Resist conversation as too much will interfering with your ability to concentrate. Also, please refrain from discussing anything other that what you are practicing at the moment.

• Change partners each time your pair up so you can experience as much variety as possible. Practice greeting each other in a friendly manner, but without losing your sense of centeredness and purpose. If you are the giver, you might mention what you are most interested in “getting right” or what you want most feedback on. If you
are the receiver, you might mention anything you want more or less concentration on. For instance, maybe the last person who practiced on you pressed too hard in a certain area and you would like this new giver to be careful there. Do not switch gears into social conversation.

- If you and your partner finish practicing before the others, look around for another pair who has finished early and switch partners. Or, you can follow the instructor around, listening and learning from the corrections she gives to your classmates. Do not engage in social conversation. It is unfair to your classmates because it dissipates the concentration of energy in the room.

- Finally, foster relationships with your classmates. The closer the class becomes, the more the energy of common purpose builds, and the deeper the learning goes. If you can, make dates to practice together or to meet at some of the scheduled practice sessions. Doing so will serve you well in terms of professional practice because building relationship is a big part of healing. The more types of people you can understand and get along with, the more your practice will provide help to others and be successful.
Five Principles of Zen Shiatsu

1. RELAX – Relax means: Be Natural; Don’t Press.
   Be Natural means be aware, without being overly concentrated. Your hara feels open; your head and spine feel lifted; and you feel that there is space between the segments of your spine. Your muscles can relax and function optimally without having to tense up.

   Don’t Press means that you can lean all your weight into the receiver, knowing that there is a degree of penetration that meets and harmonizes with the receiver’s ability to accept the stimulus. Being in that place of harmony, you automatically want to stop and pause for a moment.

2. STATIONARY PENETRATION (not pressure)
   This rule dovetails with Rule #1. Don’t try to “do” too much or be too busy when you give shiatsu. Your hand finds a place on the receiver’s body where the penetration “falls” into the center of the receiver’s body (not just into the muscle) and comes to a natural end, or stopping place. The giver’s hands and arms stay free from tension, using only the energy needed to keep them engaged in the session.

3. PERPENDICULAR PENETRATION
   Zen Shiatsu is given by leaning the body weight of the giver onto the receiver. You lean your weight in at 90 degrees to the contour of the body (not 90 degrees to the floor or table). You “fall” in between the muscle fibers and wait for the receiver’s body to adapt around you.

4. TWO- HANDED CONNECTEDNESS
   Zen Shiatsu practitioners always use both hands. One is called the Mother Hand; the other is called the Messenger Hand. The Mother Hand has three functions: it 1) stabilizes the axial skeleton; 2) listens to the responses of the receiver and notices any changes; and 3) provides comfort and support. The Messenger Hand: 1) moves along the meridians to where it is called; and 2) sends feedback to the Mother Hand.

   You have to keep most of your attention on what you feel under your Mother Hand so that your Messenger Hand knows the appropriate depth of penetration and recognizes which points are having the best effect.

5. MERIDIAN CONTINUITY
   You elicit the best response when you keep continuous contact with the receiver’s body and energy (Ki/Qi). To do this, feel that you are always “in” the meridian, that there is no “out.” When your Messenger Hand moves, it falls into the bottom of the point almost immediately and pauses there for a moment so that the Mother Hand
can feel the full effect. Once that is complete, the Messenger Hand moves to the next point without hesitation, where it rests once again . . . and so on.

This rhythm is very much like the breath at rest, where the inhale is short and the exhale is long. This is the rhythm that lets the receiver relax and really take in the shiatsu, because it is in that extra moment of stillness, at the bottom of the point, that the body is able to assimilate the stimulus.

It is this rhythm that gives you the opportunity to feel what your receiver feels throughout the entire session. This rhythm is how the connection is made between giver and receiver. And, it is that connection that most influences the healing response . . . in both giver and receiver.

**Breakdown of Grade**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian Stretch Journal</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Passing the class requires passing each component with at least 70% as well as an overall grade of at least 70%. A passing grade is required to receive continuing education credit or to move on to Zen Shiatsu II.

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is mandatory for course credit. Absence from two out of the ten 3-hour classes is permissible. Absence from more than 2 classes will result in a failing grade. Tardiness by more than 20 minutes of class start time will count as an absence. Exceptions in the case of emergency may be made, with written consent of the class instructor.

**Written Assignments:**

(1) **Meridian Stretch Journal**

In Class One, we will learn the six Meridian Stretch Exercises. Your assignment is to do these exercises morning and night, Monday through Friday.

Each time you do the exercises, you must write two to three sentences about your experience with each stretch. Where do you feel pockets of tension, and during which exercises? Which exercise is the easiest? Which is the hardest? How do you experience change over time?
Please put a date and time on each entry. Eight total entries should be presented on Friday morning (Mon PM, Tue AM & PM, Wed AM & PM, Thurs AM & PM, Fri AM).

(2) Daily Quizzes/Reflections:

Complete the quizzes as you do the reading each day. They are due at the start of the class period listed. You’ll turn in both the Class 1-3 quizzes at the start of class 3. Reading assignments are specified in this syllabus. The specified readings will be assigned on that day, and discussed at the next class.

**Written Exam** (administered during class nine) - must receive 70% to pass:

* Be able to define the following concepts: Ki, Tsubos, Meridian, Hara, Shiatsu, Yin/Yang
* Know the 5 Principles of Zen Shiatsu and understand the reasoning behind why they are important for both giver & receiver
* Be able to name all the Yin meridians in the legs & arms, and name all the Yang meridians in the legs & arms
* Be able to give a key word for each of the 12 meridians
* Know the direction of flow of energy for all the yin & yang meridians
* Describe the basic principles of Yin/Yang
* Be able to list one major tsubo from each meridian, with its English name, Tsubo number and anatomical location
* Be able to list the corresponding element for each meridian stretch

**Practical Exam** - must receive 70% to pass:

During the final class, all students will practice a full-body treatment using the skills learned in class. Students will be graded based on their adherence to the fundamental principles of Zen Shiatsu:

Relax! Perpendicular Penetration
Stationary Penetration Two-Hand Connectedness
Meridian Continuity

**Exams and Makeup Exams**

It is required to pass both the written and practical exam to receive credit for the course. If either exam is failed it can be retaken within four weeks of the end of the class. If either exam is missed due to absence, it can be rescheduled within two weeks of the end of class. In either case, there is no cost to retake a written exam, and a $50 fee applies to retake a practical exam.
Required Text

**Course Outline & Readings**

**Readings**

- **Ch. 1**
  - **Class 1**

- **Ch. 2**
  - **Class 2**
  - Learn to treat the Gallbladder Meridian in supine and prone positions.

- **Ch. 3**
  - **Class 3**
  - Hara theory and technique. Supine movement fundamentals (rotations of legs and arms).

- **Ch. 4**
  - **Class 4**
  - Yin Leg Meridians and Foot Techniques.

- **pp 24-27, Ch. 6**
  - **Class 5**
  - *Stretch journal assignment due.* Yang Leg Meridians and Alternation Techniques.

- **pp 27-29**
  - **Class 6**
  - Yin Arm Meridians and Hand Techniques.

- **Ch. 7**
  - **Class 7**
  - Yang Arm Meridians, Whole Arm Review.

- **Ch. 8**
  - **Class 8**
  - Introduction to Neck Techniques, Review of all techniques, how to compose a treatment.

- **Class 9**

- **Class 10**
  - Demonstration and Practice of a Full Body Session (practical exam).
Additional Information

Our complete 625-hour Professional Asian Bodywork Program qualifies graduates for professional practice as Certified Practitioners with the AOBTA (American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia). This is the appropriate legal credential for the practice of shiatsu in Illinois.

With the addition of the 90-hour Massage Diploma Adjunct Training, graduates also qualify for an Illinois massage license.

Professional bodywork therapists or health professionals, including but not limited to massage therapists, naprapaths, physical therapists, acupuncturists and nurses may apply for transfer credit for courses that overlap with your previous training. This may reduce the total hours of the certification program by to 380 hours or less, and would reduce the cost proportionately.

Thank you for your participation in Beginning Zen Shiatsu! I hope the skills you have learned will serve you for a lifetime, to help you bring peace and health to yourself and others.