



THE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ADDICTION RECOVERY



Table of Contents

3	What is Holistic Therapy?
5	Types of Holistic Therapy
16	How is Holistic Therapy Different from Other Therapies?
18	Holistic Therapy for Addiction Treatment
20	Integrating Holistic Therapy with Traditional Addiction Treatment Methods
22	What is an Effective Treatment Program All About?
25	How to Make the Best Treatment Program Choices



WHAT IS HOLISTIC THERAPY?

**HOLISTIC MEDICINE USES
DIFFERENT THERAPIES TO
TREAT ALL PARTS OF A
PERSON TO ACHIEVE THE
BEST AND HEALTHIEST
BALANCE POSSIBLE.**

Holistic therapy is a form of healing that takes into consideration the whole person, not just one aspect. This is especially important in recovery programs where addiction commonly affects all parts of a person: the body, mind, spirit and emotions. Holistic medicine, sometimes called complementary or alternative medicine, uses different therapies to treat all parts of a person to achieve the best and healthiest balance possible.¹

The basis of complementary or alternative medicine is the philosophy that a person is made up of a system of interrelated parts, and therefore, what affects one part of the system impacts all parts of the system. When applied to addiction treatment, a person with a heroin habit may be given prescribed medications like Suboxone or methadone to treat the physical cravings. An integrated and comprehensive treatment program will also look at other factors needing treatment, such as stress and eating and sleeping habits. A treatment plan is then developed that addresses these issues as well.



TYPES OF HOLISTIC THERAPY

Yoga

Yoga is a Hindu spiritual discipline with a focus on self-control. The practice uses breathing control, simple meditation and specific bodily postures to accomplish its goals of improved health and relaxation.

The most common yoga practiced is asana. This type of yoga concentrates on physical postures designed to unify the body and provide the physical strength and stamina required for long periods of meditation.²

It's easy to see why asana yoga is an excellent fit within an addiction treatment program. The goals of ridding the body of addictive substances and improving physical strength fit perfectly into yoga's focus as well.

Another aspect of yoga that makes it adaptable to anyone in a treatment program is that you don't need experience or have to be in perfect physical shape to begin yoga. You come as you are, and as you practice, you'll build strength and become more flexible. Also, you'll gain improved balance, strength and coordination and enhance your cardiovascular health, as well as increase your sense of physical confidence and overall well-being.





Evidence has shown that yoga is very effective in the regulation of the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline.³ An imbalance of these hormones may lead to anxiety disorders, depression, stress disorders and substance abuse. When these hormones are unregulated and reach high levels, they are toxic to the body and central nervous system. Yoga helps reduce or balance the stress hormones in the body, decreasing the desire to use substances to cope.

You can tap into this calming effect through yoga any time when you become anxious, sad or bored. It will help put you in a relaxed state and allow you to focus more clearly, which helps to prevent relapse.

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HORMONES IN THE BODY, DECREASING THE
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Meditation

Meditation and yoga go hand in hand. Yoga traditionally is designed to reveal how all living things are connected. Meditation, or mindfulness, is experiencing these connections. The mental stillness you'll experience when you meditate will bring the body, mind and senses into balance, which relaxes the nervous system.⁴

When you are recovering from addiction, the nervous system is one of the most significant parts of you that has been impacted by past substance abuse. When meditation is used as a holistic therapeutic technique in your treatment program, you are improving the system that has taken the greatest hit when you were struggling with addiction. The soothing and calming effects of practicing meditation also help relieve stress.

One study reported that certain types of training, like meditation, increase the functioning of networks that lead to improved regulation of emotions.⁵ This makes meditation a particularly valuable approach to treating addiction. When you meditate and improve this emotional regulation function, you will have more self-control, less cravings, less negative moods and be less reactive to stress.



Not everyone meditates exactly the same. There are five effective ways to meditate, and you can choose one or a combination of methods to meditate in the most comfortable ways for yourself:

- ◆ The use of sound
- ◆ The use of imagery
- ◆ Gazing
- ◆ Breathing
- ◆ Physical sensations



Reflexology

Reflexology is a therapeutic method of applying pressure to hands and feet with specific thumb, finger and hand techniques. No oils or lotions are used for lubrication, so it differs from traditional massage therapy. Reflexology is based on a system of zones and reflex areas that are reflected in a body chart on the feet and hands. The premise is that by pressing on certain areas of the hands and feet, corresponding effects will bring beneficial physical changes to the body.

Reflexologists believe that a block in the body's energy field can prevent healing. Another belief is that by pressing on certain areas of the hands and feet, practitioners relieve stress and pain in other parts of the body. Reflexologists explain that as pressure is applied in the feet, signals are sent to the nervous system to relax or to release "feel good" chemicals like stress- and pain-reducing endorphins. While scientific evidence has not been collected yet to support these theories, the relaxing experience of a reflexology session makes most people feel better afterward.⁶

Biosound Feedback

The Biosound Therapy System is a groundbreaking integration of techniques used to treat clients in addiction treatment programs.⁷ One of the biggest benefits of using the system is the calming effects you'll experience during a session. The core concept of a treatment session is to alleviate racing thoughts and help you reach a calmer, more meditative state.

Biosound integrates biofeedback, music therapy, sound frequency massage and guided imagery into an audio/visual delivery system. This integration allows you to reach a meditative state, triggers a natural relaxation response, synchronizes your heart rhythms with your nervous system and helps you develop mindfulness and awareness.

THE CORE CONCEPT OF A
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Once you reach these states during a session, the benefits include addressing fear, guilt, shame and other emotional traumas associated with addiction. Identifying and working through these negative emotions and traumas are a critical part of effective addiction treatment. These feelings and traumatic events fester if left unaddressed and significantly increase the risks of relapsing.

Biosound is an excellent way to work on these important aspects of recovery in a relaxing, non-confrontational and pleasant way. A biofeedback program is also utilized with the system to teach you certain techniques that can help you manage your emotions.

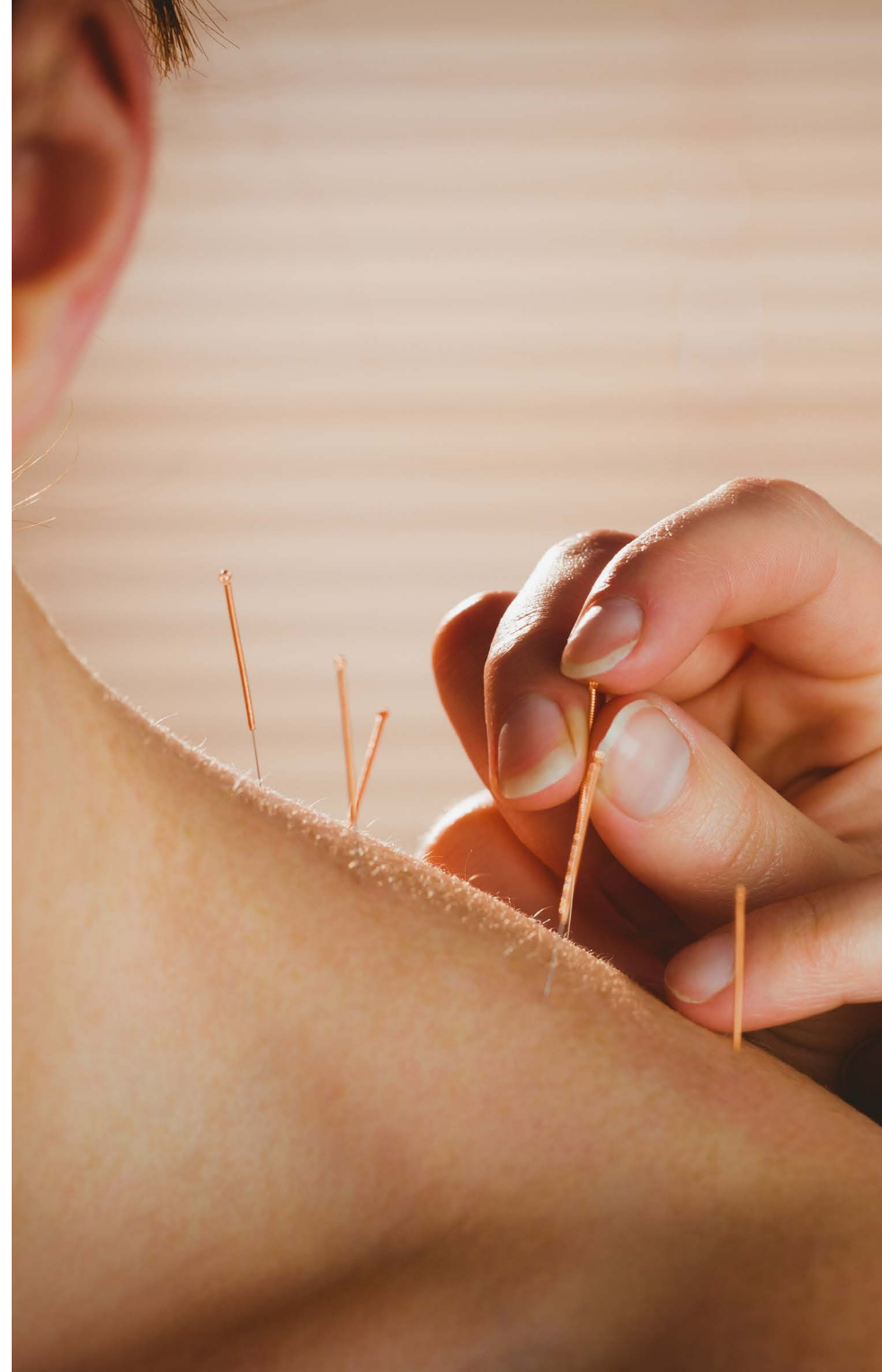
Biosound Technologies uses an environment called a Biolounge. The therapy area combines biofeedback, music therapy, meditation and guided imagery. A vibrational reclining platform immerses you in a sound frequency massage through a monitor mounted by the platform. Many people who have tried it report a total body, mind and spirit experience which contributed to an even greater recovery state of mind.

Using scientific techniques, machines give immediate feedback that is used to evaluate stress levels. With continued practice, you'll become aware of stress triggers by watching the feedback. Your ability to control your response to stress then improves, as this training provides signals to recognize rising tension levels. This allows you to learn how to alleviate stress in a healthy manner—before it becomes unmanageable. With continued practice, you will learn to understand these signals without the help of machines.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is the practice of inserting very thin needles into various parts of the body as a holistic therapy technique. While it has been widely used for pain relief, it is particularly effective in treating addiction.

A 2008 study showed that using acupuncture to treat four body points and two ear points with electrical stimulation relieved opioid withdrawal symptoms. Another study, using only ear points, effectively treated drug abuse. The researchers also found that using acupuncture helped alleviate heroin withdrawal symptoms and decreased the likelihood of relapse.⁸





Massage Therapy

Massage therapy has proven to be an alternative form of medicine that effectively treats anxiety, insomnia and pain.⁹ Considering that these are all common issues for people suffering from addiction, massage therapy sessions are a valuable tool for use in rehab.

Anxiety is a condition found in many who have experienced substance abuse, either as a trigger for using drugs or alcohol or as a condition that develops as a result of abusing these substances. Insomnia is also a condition that develops in these ways. Pain management through massage therapy is especially beneficial for anyone who is recovering from prescription painkiller abuse and seeks to avoid relapse.



Many people begin abusing opiates/opioids because they were prescribed prescription painkillers by a doctor. Once an individual develops a tolerance to these types of medications, more of the drugs are needed to feel the same pain management effects. The cycle continues until the person develops a dependency that can grow into a full-fledged addiction. Many turn to heroin at this stage if they can't obtain the drugs they need from legitimate means, as heroin is usually easier to obtain as well as cheaper.

There are a large number of people in recovery who need pain management care, as they're still dealing with the condition that led them into addiction in the first place. This can be a sticky situation for them, and any alternative method that is proven to help manage pain without drugs is hugely significant. Massage therapy helps manage pain in a completely holistic and drug-free way.



HOW IS HOLISTIC THERAPY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER THERAPIES?



Holistic addiction therapies are non-medical recovery approaches used in conjunction with traditional treatment practices. Holistic recovery is designed to bring the mind, body and spirit into alignment. This type of therapy emphasizes your well-being as a whole while also addressing the physical and mental symptoms of dependence and withdrawal.

Treatment centers offering holistic therapy have many different methods to help individuals overcome addiction. Silvermist's holistic therapies include:

- ◆ Yoga
- ◆ Guided meditation
- ◆ Acupuncture
- ◆ Massage therapy
- ◆ Regular exercise routines
- ◆ Proper nutrition
- ◆ Spiritual therapy

**HOLISTIC RECOVERY IS DESIGNED TO BRING
THE MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT INTO ALIGNMENT.**

A group of people are seen from behind, sitting in a meditative lotus position on mats outdoors. They are facing a bright sunset over a body of water. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light. The people are wearing casual athletic wear. A dark blue semi-transparent banner is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing white text.

HOLISTIC THERAPY

FOR ADDICTION TREATMENT

Holistic therapy programs offer customized, non-medicinal approaches to addiction recovery. Holistic therapists apply treatments for physical and mental addiction symptoms and address emotional and nutritional imbalances.

Loss of sleep, inadequate nutrition and stress are among the conditions holistic therapy can help for a person in recovery. Holistic therapy plans are easily adapted to cater to the needs of each person.

Some of the main objectives of holistic therapy include:

- ◆ Identifying the fundamental motivation for substance abuse
- ◆ Building defenses against cravings
- ◆ Improving physical fitness
- ◆ Increasing self-confidence
- ◆ Decreasing the attraction of drug and alcohol use



INTEGRATING HOLISTIC THERAPY

WITH TRADITIONAL ADDICTION TREATMENT METHODS



Common techniques paired with holistic methods include:

Medically assisted detox – the first step in building the important foundation needed for recovery. Medications are administered in a medically supervised setting to carefully and safely break the dependency on drugs and alcohol.

Comprehensive medical care – derived from a thorough assessment given upon entering treatment. All medical issues are addressed and treated.

One-on-one mental health counseling – to identify and explore the mental and emotional root causes related to addiction.

Attending 12-step groups for emotional support – to give peer-to-peer support for assisting everyone in the group in remaining sober and resisting a fall back into destructive patterns.



**WHAT IS AN
EFFECTIVE TREATMENT PROGRAM
ALL ABOUT?**

The National Institute of Drug Abuse released a guide of what to look for in an effective treatment program:¹⁰

- ◆ No one treatment method applies to all individuals.
- ◆ Treatment needs to be readily available at all times for all who need it.
- ◆ Effective treatment attends to all the needs of the individual, not only drug and alcohol use.
- ◆ Treatment needs to be flexible and should be assessed regularly to see if changes are needed.
- ◆ Adequate time is needed for addiction treatment to be effective; therapy should not be rushed.
- ◆ Individual counseling, group meetings and other therapies are critical components of effective treatment for addiction.
- ◆ Medications are important in treatment for many and are especially effective when counseling and behavioral therapies are also used.
- ◆ Substance abuse with coexisting mental disorders needs treatment for all disorders.
- ◆ Medical detoxification cannot stand alone and should be viewed as the start to addiction treatment.
- ◆ Treatment programs should assess for infectious diseases. Counseling is needed to avoid the risk of infection.
- ◆ Recovery from drug addiction can be a lengthy process. Repeated occurrences of treatment are common and to be expected.

Aftercare

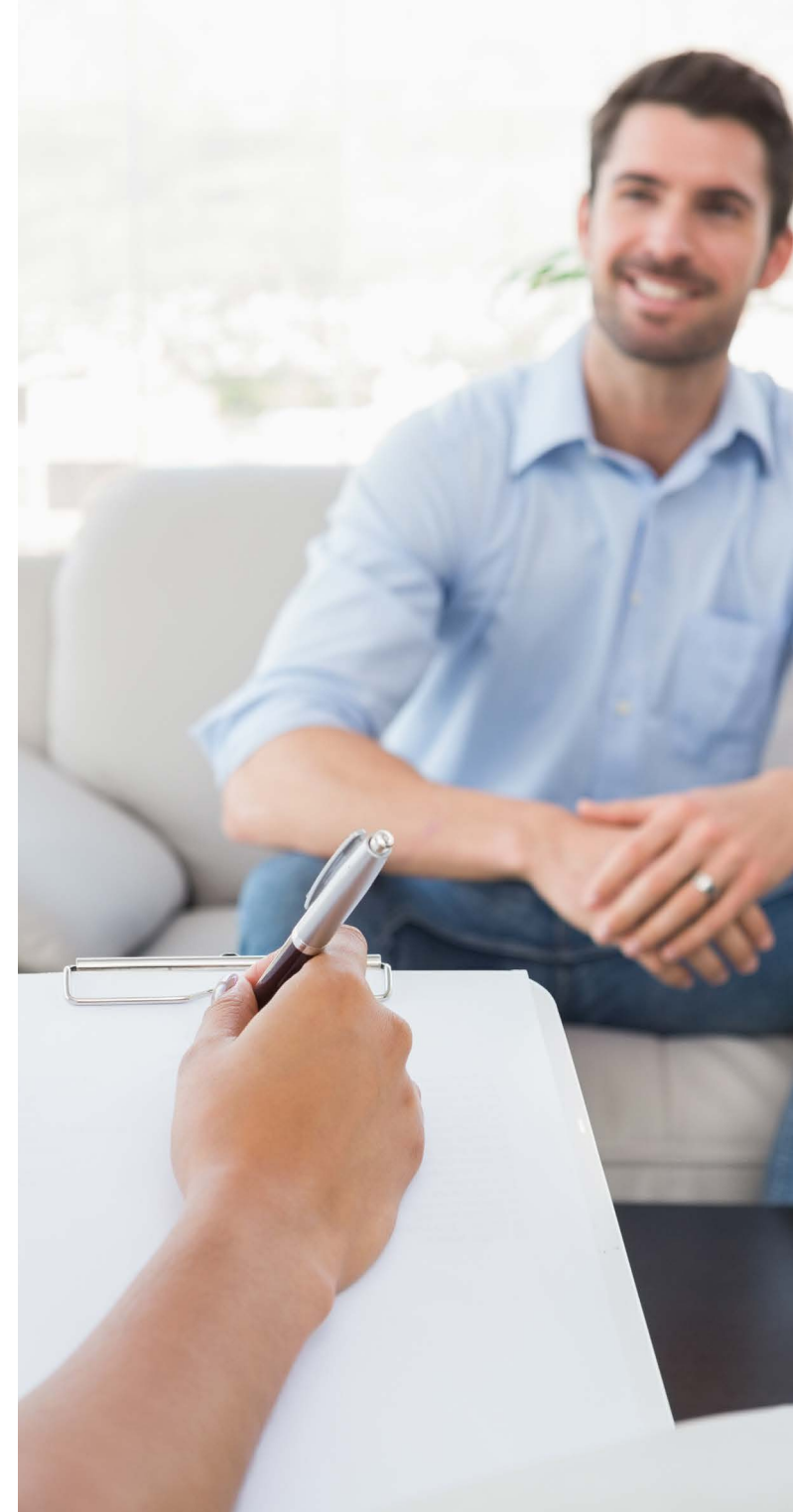
Aftercare planning is an essential part of addiction treatment. For you to achieve the most successful chance of sustained recovery, you'll leave the treatment center with a plan that you agree to follow. Therapists, social workers, psychiatrists and other treatment staff will guide you through the process of identifying what will be best for you.

All aftercare plans are designed to meet your specific needs and may include:

- ◆ A choice in housing such as sober living options
- ◆ Outpatient follow-up treatment for addiction, mental health and physical health
- ◆ Resources to find 12-step programs in your local area

To address continuing holistic therapy options, your aftercare program may also include:

- ◆ Resource lists to find yoga and meditation classes
- ◆ Practitioners of acupuncture referrals
- ◆ A list of local massage therapists
- ◆ An exercise routine customized to your level of fitness
- ◆ Proper nutrition guidelines to continue a road to improved health





HOW TO MAKE THE BEST TREATMENT PROGRAM CHOICES



The definition of holistic means looking at the parts of something as intimately interconnected and understood fully only by looking at the whole. In a treatment context, it means the whole person must be treated by examining and discovering mental, emotional and social factors, and not only the physical symptoms of the disease of addiction.

When you need treatment for drug or alcohol addiction, keep these definitions in mind when seeking an effective rehab program. You'll need mental, emotional, social and physical care to successfully heal and remain sober for the long-term.

When you choose a program that is a blend of traditional medicine (medical detox, medications, psychotherapy and counseling) and holistic therapies, you are choosing the best possible options for your success. Keep in mind the principles of effective treatment. When you put all this together and choose a program based on these criteria, your road to a healthier, rewarding life is paved with promise and success. Don't hesitate to ask questions and use the guidelines you've learned, and you will find the peace and happiness a sober life gives you.

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Located in beautiful rural Pennsylvania, Silvermist offers individualized treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. Silvermist sets the standard for addiction treatment on the East Coast by providing men and women a beautiful and discreet environment filled with all the amenities that support early recovery. Silvermist is grounded in the highest clinical standards and is committed to clinical integrity, community and education.

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