TRE : Stress, Tension and Trauma Release Exercises

What is TRE?

Trauma Release Exercises (TRE) are a profound self help process that intentionally invokes the body’s innate tremoring response in a controlled and sustained way to safely and gently release stress, tension and trauma.

It is easily learned, immediately effective and self empowering as these innate body tremors release the chronic muscular tension from the core of the body where the protective pattern of muscle contraction is created, returning the body to a more calm, relaxed and balanced state.

TRE releases this stored physical energy and tension without the need to remember or recall specific events and without the need to re-experience unwanted emotions or memories, making it a both a safe and gentle way to heal from chronic stress, post traumatic stress and acute trauma.

Founded by Dr David Berceli PhD and originally named and developed for their ability to release severe traumas, they also have a significant impact on reducing general stress, anxiety, tension and pain, (especially in the low back and pelvis,) making them ideal not only for survivors of extreme trauma, but anyone with chronic stress and tension seeking greater wellbeing in their lives.

An excellent 6 minute TRE overview from South African TV is available on the home page of the website www.trauma-release-exercises.com

“It (TRE) is like a new friend I can truly rely on”

Sharon Mullan, Counselor, EFT & SET, Brisbane

What are Neurogenic tremors?

Most people have experienced involuntary shaking (neurogenic tremors) such as ‘shaking like a leaf’ or ‘knocking knees’ after a severe shock or fright, when extremely nervous (such as before public speaking) or even in moments of extreme excitement and joy.

The tremors are the central nervous system’s innate way of discharging excessive tension through the rapid muscle contraction and relaxation of the tremors to calm the body down from an over excited adrenal state.

Neurogenic tremors are innate to all mammals and are easily observed as a horse sends a tremor through its’ entire body after a fall. Other examples are gazelles shaking after escaping a lion attack, ducks flapping their wings after a fight or the rapid vibration felt holding a scared rabbit or guinea pig.

"I was amazed at the result - afterwards my pain was considerably reduced, and my posture and mood much more at ease and less effortful...I saw my psychologist this morning and she said that I looked really well - not at all how I was at lunchtime yesterday, [before] the TRE DVD arrived!"

Hilary, Disabilities Instructor and Craniosacral Therapy Student, Melbourne
What do the tremors feel like?

The tremors have been described as like a massage from the inside out and are mostly experienced as mildly pleasurable often with an associated feeling of heat or release spreading throughout the body.

Some people experience large amplitude tremors with their legs shaking significantly (which tends to be the body breaking up gross and superficial tension) while others experience a more refined and purring like vibration that moves further through the body as it becomes more relaxed.

Every person will have their own individual tremor pattern according to their own unique history, experience and tension patterns. How and where the tremors occur is regulated by each individual’s brainstem just each person will have their own individual heart rate and respiration in response to the same amount of exercise.

"Afterwards, I felt calm, relaxed, centered, grounded and my mind was still and peaceful, (something that happens rarely!)"  
Leigh, Counselor, Melbourne

How do the tremors restore the body to a calm relaxed state?

The tremors regulate the central nervous system’s automated and hyper-aroused fight or flight or freeze response by creating a vibration of contraction and relaxation that releases built up energy and tension held in the muscles and connective tissues of the body. While this shaking is the body’s innate response to being traumatised or overexcited, it is often seen as a sign of weakness and suppressed, leaving the body held in a chronically stressed and tense state.

The tremors release the traumatic experience in the same way that it was created in the body - by the brainstem initiating a discharge of the physical tension associated with the event. The Trauma Release Exercises are designed to invoke the tremors from the deepest core muscle of the body (that flexes us forward into defensive and defeated postures) before spreading throughout the rest of the body.

"Earlier on the day, I had completed a Pilates class, then went along for an osteo appointment (pains in my right shoulder and hip which I have had for 3 months but nothing seems to be fixing.) After completing the exercises, we sat back up for a discussion and to my amazement I no longer had any pain my hip. In the couple of days that followed, the pain hasn't returned to my hip or shoulder. I am so happy that I have been introduced to these exercises.”  
Carolyn, Pilates attendee, Melbourne

Is there an emotional response during the exercises?

TRE allows the release of stress, tension and trauma without the need to remember or recall specific events or re-experience any unwanted emotions. If at any stage a person feels unsafe or uncomfortable, the tremors can be stopped by simply straightening the legs or rolling onto their side and resting.

This is one of the key ways that TRE differs from many traditional approaches of working with trauma and ensures that it is a safe and gentle process for each individual without causing any reactivation or revisiting of past traumatic events.
The vast majority of people will have almost no emotional response at all during the exercises, (even for those who have experienced severe trauma) making TRE accessible to the general public as a self help ‘first aid’ response to stress and trauma.

For those people with extreme symptoms guidance through the exercises under the direct supervision of a health professional is recommended until which time the individual is able to work with the exercises on their own.

“Thank you for a new experience of being able to release stress and trauma so easily. I am looking forward to experiencing the results.”  
Yildiz Sethi, Counsellor/Educator/Family Constellations, Brisbane

Who benefits from TRE?

TRE can benefit anyone who has experienced trauma, post traumatic stress (PTSD) or chronic stress and general anxiety by promoting better sleep and energy levels while reducing stress, physical tension, muscular pain, general worry and anxiety. TRE can also profoundly assist with physical complaints such as low back, hip and pelvic pain as most are either caused or exacerbated by chronic stress and tension in the body.

TRE assists people to reconnect with their deeper self to feel more calm, relaxed, and grounded in the present moment, rather than the thoughts of the past or future being lived out and experienced as chronic physical tension in the body. TRE provides many people with a spiritual experience of a deeper connection with themselves, the present moment and their own internal rhythms.

“I’m passionate about people and healing people, so for me and all the things I’ve tried, this has been the most profound in terms of moving the energy out or moving through the energy –it’s amazing. If I could pass that on to my clients, and they could release their trauma, and if they could actually take charge of their own body and their own emotions through this modality – how great is that?”  
Christine, Bowen Therapist, Sydney

How does TRE help Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

Post traumatic stress disorder occurs when a person continues to re-experience the acute effects of a traumatic event long after the event has ceased, often triggered by memories or experiences that remind them of the event and often in situations they can’t control.

Just as the psychology of a memory can impact the body by re-creating the sensations and physical experience of a trauma, changing the physiology, tension patterns and sensations within the body has a similar reverse impact upon the person’s psychology.

As the tension patterns created during a traumatic event are initiated from deep within the brainstem, talk based therapies may occasionally reach the emotional centres of the brain achieving an emotional release without fully discharging the physical tension created at the time of the traumatic event.

TRE initiates this release mechanism from deep within the brainstem, offering a profound adjunct to talk based and cognitive therapies by providing a physiological self help tool to continually reset the body to a relaxed state without the need for direct ongoing assistance by a therapist.
“I don’t think I actually realised how gently powerful these exercises are in releasing stuff. OK when the tremors happen you know something is shifting and it feels good. This has to affect the whole. The more we all do this sort of work and release trauma trapped in our body the better the whole planet will be. I believe this work is fundamental at where we are on the planet right now, the more we can move from stress, restriction, pain & suffering to love and wholeness the better! Thank you!”  
Lisa Sutherland-Fraser, PA to Surgeon, Melbourne

TRE for Occupational Health & Wellbeing:

As TRE’s can be easily taught to large groups as part of existing staff health and wellbeing programs, they are an efficient and cost effective way of improving staff resilience and an active approach to the management of stress and tension in the workplace.

They have been successfully taught to staff from a range of organisations including hospitals, paramedics, fire fighters, police, defence force, prison services, corporates and schools, and are a powerful self help tool that significantly enhances traditional approaches to occupational health and wellbeing.

If you are interested in a workshop for your staff or organisation, please contact Richmond on 0409 357 964 or via email treaustralia@hotmail.com

“Long flights and stress are just part of the job in the international consulting game. I have found TRE is great for releasing tension stored in the body, letting me regain energy and focus. What makes TRE outstanding is that I can use it anywhere without equipment or outside help. I thoroughly recommend TRE to anyone in a stressful job away from home.”  
Peter Hannigan, Managing Director, Skills Futures, Brisbane

TRE for Health Professionals:

Around the world, a wide range of health professionals are integrating TRE into their practice including psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists, social workers, doctors, physiotherapists, chiropractors, massage therapists, life coaches, pilates instructors, body workers and yoga teachers.

TRE can be taught as a stand-alone workshop or easily integrated into exercise, pilates and yoga classes. It is an effective sports recovery tool and is a powerful adjunct to support the effects of manual techniques and home exercise programs.

TRE is an especially valuable tool for ‘talk based’ therapists, such as counsellors and psychologists as it adds a powerful, body based, physiological adjunct to their treatment of psychological conditions.

“As a psychologist, I am so excited to have discovered Trauma Release Exercises. In my experience, sometimes the talking therapies do not go deep enough. TRE is a pathway into releasing stress and trauma in a simple and private way. Don’t be fooled by the simplicity of this process. It is deep and profound work. I intend to continue with TRE for my own wellbeing. I am also recommending it to my clients as a process that beautifully complements other forms of treatment.”  
Karin Hannigan, Psychologist, Brisbane

For videos of neurogenic tremors, professional training and contacts, please visit:  
www.trauma-release-exercises.com.au