

◀ Recharge Your Brain.

The sound therapy system allegedly allows the ears to relax from these low frequency sounds, which in turn helps the rest of our health.

It's also used to help combat depression, dyslexia and chronic fatigue.

'We've had a lot of success with autistic children who have the classic clapping, flapping, squalling and waving response of autism. Many of the children who have used the therapy have had a reduction in symptoms in two weeks,' Rafaele says.

The sound therapy system uses four tapes of specially recorded classical music by composers Mozart, Haydn, Bach and Telemann – with constantly alternating high and low frequencies to ease the built-up tensions in the ear.

'With the electronic ear on top of the music to maximise the higher frequencies, you're really helping to rebalance the auditory system,' Rafaele explains.

Julie Welsh, from Wandella on NSW's south coast, used the sound therapy system on her daughter Emily, 9, who suffered from learning difficulties.

'Emily knew she couldn't grasp things as quickly as other kids so she completely withdrew – she was very anxious and teary. After three weeks of sound therapy – they also have fairytales with an electronic ear for kids – her teacher rang me to ask what had happened.

'She had started putting her hand up in class, her concentration improved dramatically and she was much happier. It's the best money I ever spent.'

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW Sound therapy needs to be listened to for at least two to three hours daily during downtime, although you can do it during other activities. However, it may not show any effect for up to 100 hours. But many people with sleep disorders report improvements within a week.

VERDICT As a chronic insomniac, I did notice being overcome by waves of much-needed sleepiness after just two weeks of listening to tapes for an hour at night.

However, I found that if it is played too loudly, the electronic ear can be quite piercing so it's important to keep the volume low. On the downside, however, there's no money-back guarantee.

Although there isn't much in the way of scientific studies to prove that sound therapy works, there are numerous studies that do report the benefits of classical music in improving concentration, even without the electronic ear.

It's also theorised that classical music, due to its complexity, stimulates neuron-firing patterns in the brain. So the treatment may be worth a try.

For more details call 1300 557 796 or visit www.soundtherapyinternational.com.



Soul food

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Soul food

New Idea's Jane Worthington puts new-age treatments to the test

As I wandered through a haze of patchouli oil at Melbourne's Mind Body Spirit Festival, trying desperately to avoid aura-kneading gurus and mystical mumbo jumbo, I wondered what they could possibly peddle to us next.

Would the sensory deprivation tank send me around the bend? Would the crystal singing bowls harmonise my jaded body? Would my spirit guide really like me and did I really want to meet him/her?

As a health reporter for many years, I have written endlessly about natural therapies. But until now, in practice at least, I was a 'natural therapies virgin' – apart from the odd vitamin tablet.

Nevertheless, as Australia continues its love affair with all things new-age and natural – 200 million doses of echinacea

are taken each year alone – I decided to see what all the fuss was about.

The verdict? Like everything else in life you get the good with the bad.

Several stallholders at the festival refused point-blank to be interviewed, others smacked of blatant commercialism.

Crystal balls and aura reading will never be my cup of carrot juice when it comes to reliable health predictors. There were, however, some natural health practitioners who were so confident in their abilities that they put themselves up for a warts-and-all review for New Idea. Here are a few favourites.

SOUND THERAPY

Ever thought about going on a 'hearing diet' to improve your sleep?

Could listening to classical music filtered through a high-frequency electronic

ear help improve communication, get rid of tinnitus – a ringing in the ears – or provide relief from attention deficit disorder (ADD). And would you fork out \$374 for the treatment?

Well that's exactly what I asked at the sound therapy stand. I don't have ADD, but as a chronic pillow-puncher, alarm-clock glarer and herbal sleeping pill popper, I jumped at the chance to get some quality time in the land of Nod.

What most of us don't realise is that modern life is gradually deafening us. And we don't know how to reduce the exhausting crescendo around us.

'In the modern world we are constantly confronted with low-frequency noises, such as the humming and buzzing of electrical appliances, computers, phones and TVs,' says Rafael Joudry, author of *Sound Therapy: Music to*