



An Interview with James L. Oschman, Ph.D.

Jim Oschman, Ph.D., has written two medical texts on energy therapies. He is considered a leading authority on how various complementary and alternative therapies work from the scientific perspective. This interview about the Barefoot Connections™ technology was conducted in October of 2006.

Q: In an age when there are so many discoveries and health-related technologies emerging every day, why do you think the simple concept of earthing has to be the most profound?

A: I do see new technologies emerging every day and I am often asked to examine them and explain how they work. What is most profound about earthing, and the *Barefoot Connections™* technology, is their very simplicity. I attended a meeting on the east coast, and one of my colleagues came in from the west coast. She had a bad case of jet lag. I told her to take her shoes and socks off and step outside on the grass for 15 minutes. When she came back in, she was completely transformed. Her jet lag was gone. That is how fast earthing works. Anyone can try this. If you don't feel well, for whatever reason, just make barefoot contact with the earth for a few minutes and see what happens. Of course, if you have a medical problem, you should see a doctor. But for ordinary aches and pains, digestive or respiratory problems or sore muscles, there is nothing that comes close to earthing for quick relief. You can literally feel the pain drain from your body the instant you touch the earth.

Q: What exactly is meant by the term “Barefoot Connections™” technologies?

A: It is not always possible to be in barefoot contact with the earth. For example, while it would be a good idea to sleep directly on the earth, this is not very safe or comfortable, especially in the winter. The *Barefoot Connections™* Bed Pad enables us to have the benefits of contact with the earth during the third of our lives we spend sleeping, and you can use your own bed. Sleep is the time when we need to rest and recover from the stresses of our daily activities. If we do not sleep well (and many people suffer from insomnia) we never get a chance to recover, and this makes us susceptible to a wide variety of stress-related problems. As these problems worsen, they can interfere with our sleep even more, and the situation gets even worse. This cycle of discomfort, stress and insomnia can be quickly reversed, simply by installing a *Barefoot Connections™* sleep product on your bed. It may well be the simplest, least expensive and most important change you can make to improve your over-all health and enjoyment of life.

Q: Are there other *Barefoot Connections*TM technologies besides the Bed Pad?

A: Once you feel the benefits of the *Barefoot Connections*TM Bed Pad, you will wonder how you can maintain contact with the earth throughout the day. The other *Barefoot Connections*TM products enable you to do this while you are at home or at work. They consist of floor mats, carpets, shoes, bed sheets and other accessories that bring you the benefits of being in contact with the earth.

Q: How does earthing affect the body's ability to heal?

A: The simplest explanation is that aches and pains and other disturbances in our bodies are often caused by inflammation. And electrons from the earth have natural anti-inflammatory effects, reducing inflammation anywhere in the body. One of the most profound discoveries in modern biomedicine is that many of the chronic and debilitating diseases of our time have the same cause: chronic inflammation. Scientists now realize that many of our aches and pains arise from small regions in the body where an inflammatory response has taken place, but the inflammation has not completely stopped after the healing process. A low level of chronic inflammation can continue for years, damaging normal tissues and wasting energy. Many people take anti-inflammatory drugs or nutritional supplements, but these substances must pass through the digestive tract and circulatory system to reach sites of inflammation. This takes time, and all chemicals can have side effects. In contrast, electrons from the earth are rapidly conducted throughout the body, which is a good conductor. Many scientists now believe that the human immune system evolved over millions of years when we were in barefoot contact with the earth, and that the immune system stopped functioning properly when we started wearing shoes with insulating soles. This happened only about 50 years ago, and chronic disease and insomnia have skyrocketed ever since.

Q: You've had the opportunity to be involved with many athletes. How does earthing effect human performance?

A: I have a friend who ran in a marathon. Part way through the race, he developed a very painful blister on his foot. Recalling the great barefoot runners from Africa who have won many marathons, he decided to finish the race without shoes. Not only was he able to finish the race without pain, he was very surprised at the end to find that his blister was completely gone. The most thorough documentation of the effects of earthing for athletes was from the use of *Barefoot Connections*TM by the U.S. cycling team in the *Tour de France*. Dr. Jeff Spencer was involved in taking care of the cyclists in all seven victories. During the last 3 tours, Lance Armstrong and his team used *Barefoot Connections*TM every night. Dr. Spencer documented the resulting enhanced performance, speeded injury repair and facilitation of recovery.

Q: In the clinical studies, the physiological effects of earthing have been almost immediate. Can you explain this?

A: It is a repeated observation that earthing produces beneficial effects very rapidly. As mentioned, the body is a good conductor of free electrons, and they probably travel virtually instantaneously from the earth to sites of inflammation. Electrons may even be attracted to those sites because electrons have a negative charge and free radicals have a positive charge. Once these free radicals are neutralized, they stop their destructive actions on healthy tissues, and pain goes away immediately.

Q: Certainly earthing can improve quality of life, but what about aging? If stress causes pre-mature aging, do you think we can add years to our lives by re-connecting with the earth?

A: Unquestionably! Many researchers have documented the deterioration of the immune system as we age. There is even a name for the phenomenon, immunosenescence. A prominent medical theory, repeatedly confirmed, states that the general deterioration during aging is caused by free radical damage. This is technically known as oxidative stress, and results in the injury of cells. Earthing greatly reduces oxidative stress and is expected to increase life expectancy and improve health. There is no question that maintaining a functionally “young” immune system is an excellent strategy for preserving the quality of life and slowing senescence.

Q: Do you have any other comments on the value of the *Barefoot Connections*TM products?

A: Beyond the things we’ve already covered, it is important to remember that as a human race, we evolved in connection with the earth; it has always been with us. It’s almost as though our bodies “count on” the grounding influence of the earth. The *Barefoot* systems allow us to maintain that important connection even though or lives have taken us out of direct contact.