

**SPOTLIGHT ON...**

# ROLFING

*Could this unique type of bodywork help you?*

**Rolfing – it sounds painful but the practice itself can be life-changing for anyone suffering from poor posture, discomfort, tension and pain. So what’s it all about? We spoke to James ‘Jim’ McMahon, one of the few Rolfers in Ireland, to find out more.**

**What is Rolfing?**

“The name itself came from Dr Ida Rolf. It would have originally been a slang term, you know, ‘Did you get Rolfed?’” says Jim. Jim says that the practice, which began in California, was considered to be quite “hippy dippy” at the time but while the medical community is now waking up to the importance of fascia (or connective tissue) within the body, Dr Rolf was speaking about it back in the 1960s.

Rolfing recognises the body as a seamless system of tissues rather than separate parts. The connective tissue (or fascia) surrounds everything and Rolfing works to realign and balance the body through releasing any tension in the connective tissues.

Jim explains that someone might come to him with a sore shoulder but the pain itself may not even be caused by the shoulder.

“This is not exclusive, but it might be linked to the right hip. Something is going on in the right hip and that’s what’s knocking the shoulder out or it could be the left knee or the left

ankle... There’s very few straight lines in the body, but ultimately we are a system of compensations. So if we walk in a particular way, the body generally has adapted around the restrictions. It’s amazing. Our bodies are just incredible,” says Jim.

Jim goes on to explain that our bodies are always looking for the greatest ease of movement that they can have.

“[Our body] is never out to get us. It’s never like, ‘Well you stayed up late last night and I’m going to show you!’ It gets up in the morning and says, ‘Right, let’s go as best we can.’ So when something is going wrong, it’s generally saying: ‘Okay, I’m after adapting as much as I can adapt, now I have to start shooting off the signals to tell you I’ve gone to the limit of adapting.’”

The best thing about Rolfing is that it’s a practice everyone can benefit from. Jim tells me that in his own practice he sees babies, pregnant women and that his oldest client is 95 years of age. So what is the



By Arny Wall