

The Medium Sized Book of



complete with

**A - Z
of
Unnatural Remedies**

Kay Santillo

Foreword

"A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones." Proverbs 17:22

It's good to laugh! From the ancient wisdom of Proverbs, through countless generations of commonsense beliefs, to current psychological studies, the consensus is that humour helps us to cope. Responding with humour and laughter in a stressful situation reduces tension, leads to better problem solving and helps us to feel more confident and in control. It may even help us to recover – there is more than one account of people laughing themselves back to health. Indeed, many psychotherapists regard humour as beneficial to the therapeutic process, because humorous detachment allows us to see ourselves and our problems from a different perspective.

All this is a roundabout way of saying that the last motive I had in mind when compiling this book was to belittle anyone's suffering. In fact, quite the opposite. I know how much humour and laughter (and perhaps a sense of the ridiculous) has helped me through some very difficult times in the past and it is my sincere hope to bring a smile to your face as you either read through, or dip into, this collection. Or if not a smile, then maybe a lopsided grin will put a sparkle in your eyes; a cheerful chuckle uplift your mood; or an involuntary guffaw alarm the person next to you. Go on – it'll help your bones not to dry up!

Kay Santillo, 1999.

ABNORMAL MOTIONS

Although not usually classified as a disorder in itself, *abnormal motions* are a good indication of an underlying problem. Many people find it embarrassing to talk about their motions, normal or abnormal, and for this reason delay seeking help. It is inadvisable to try to flush the problem out of one's consciousness as if it never existed, but remember that most of us suffer from isolated incidents of *abnormal motions* from time to time. Group incidents at any time, however, are of a more distressing nature.

Have you ever:

- ✦ Noticed your feet going in a different direction to your intentions?
- ✦ Been stared at while gesticulating for a bus, taxi, or high speed train to stop?
- ✦ Wanted to gatecrash the Stock Exchange?
- ✦ Been an active spectator at a football match?
- ✦ Tried (badly) to imitate John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*?
- ✦ Embraced your mother-in-law involuntarily?
- ✦ Smiled and shaken the hand of a canvassing politician?
- ✦ Managed a whole length of butterfly stroke at the local swimming pool?
- ✦ Taken part in a charismatic church meeting?
- ✦ Swatted a fly that was actually a piece of dirt on your window/sandwich/supervisor's bottom?
- ✦ Lunged unsuccessfully to catch a stray ball from the tennis court you were passing?
- ✦ Enjoyed Line Dancing?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you have a potential motion problem. Rather than delay, make a move today. Many people have been in your position, but have survived to lead motionally normal (though rather boring) lives. Take heart, because to be aware of any problem is a step in the right direction. However, do try to make sure it is not an abnormal step.



ESSENTIAL HYPO-TENSION

There is some controversy whether this condition is a life-challenging disorder or a life-enhancing survival drive. In other words, it seems essential to be tense about hypodermic syringes – no doubt many of us can remember going to be immunised when children and being told, “This won’t hurt!” However, it goes without saying (though not in this case) that most encounters with hypodermic syringes are for our own benefit and that a morbid fear of needles, especially in our adult years, is cause for concern – not to mention embarrassment.

Have you ever:

- ✚ Run out of the room at the sight of a syringe?
- ✚ Pretended you were up-to-date with your tetanus jabs?
- ✚ Closed your eyes when you saw a syringe on TV?
- ✚ Asked your partner/neighbour/mother-in-law/vicar to take your child to be immunised, as you had developed a sudden, inexplicable illness?
- ✚ Dreamt about being chased down the road by a horde of angry syringes?
- ✚ Felt overcome with a sense of impending doom at the words, “I’ll just need to take a blood sample...”?
- ✚ Hit the nasty person approaching you with the syringe?
- ✚ Experienced your whole arm going numb at the mere mention of the word “vaccination”?
- ✚ Dreamt about approaching your worst enemy with a giant hypodermic syringe?
- ✚ Approached your worst enemy with a giant hypodermic syringe?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are suffering from *essential hypo-tension*. Try not to be alarmed, as there is a point to your fear. However, you should use the fear to your advantage, rather than allow the fear to use you (and if you are a masochist, on no account use hypodermic syringes without medical advice). There are, in fact, several techniques you can try to alleviate this condition, such as auto suggestion or thought countering. Or, if all else fails, you could start your own *Just a Little Prick* self-help group.



GOLF HANDICAP

This will be a familiar problem to many families, usually occurring when one member of a couple takes up the sport of golf to the detriment of the other member. Although children can be affected in the crossfire (very dangerous when golf balls are involved), the main symptoms are exhibited by the one left at home while the other is, quite frankly, out enjoying her/himself.

Have you ever:

- ✦ Purposely shrunk your partner's favourite and very special golf pullover/socks/underwear in the wash?
- ✦ Given your partner's golf clubs away to charity?
- ✦ Planned to introduce a large colony of moles (or a colony of large moles) to the golf course at dead of night?
- ✦ Written to the Golf Club secretary saying your partner had defected to the five-a-side football team?
- ✦ Felt you hated the sight of your partner's balls?
- ✦ Sabotaged all your partner's self-help golf DVDs?
- ✦ Tried to seduce your partner when golf was on TV?
- ✦ Used your partner's handicap as a weapon against her/him?
- ✦ Had dreams where you stuck hundreds of golf tees into your partner's anatomy?
- ✦ Told your family and friends that your partner loved receiving golf diaries, golf tees and those cute little golf ball novelties for birthdays and Christmas?
- ✦ Become incensed at your partner bragging about her/his good strokes?
- ✦ Planted a bomb in the clubhouse?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are suffering from *golf handicap*. It is quite likely that your partner is (almost) as unhappy about the situation as you are and therefore, it would make sense to adopt a completely different approach to the problem. Try taking up your own all-consuming hobby, although eating as a pastime is not a very healthy choice. Why not try weight lifting, or origami? Or if you really want to beat your partner at her/his own game, simply choose a hobby that needs balls.



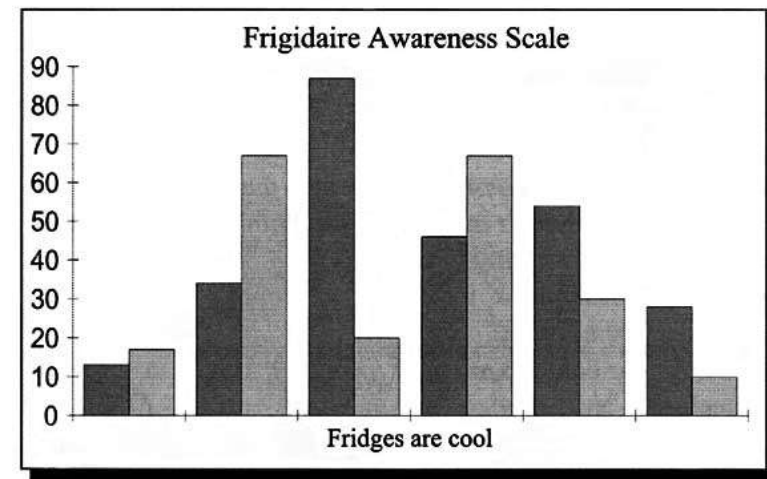
INAPPROPRIATE FRIGIDITY

This is a little understood phenomenon affecting both males and females. Manifested commonly during the teenage years, the habit often lingers into adulthood, even persisting in a few unlucky individuals into advanced older age. Sufferers will find themselves unnaturally preoccupied with the contents of their (and anyone else's) fridge, either overtly or covertly using any excuse to go and open the fridge door.

Do you:

- + Own more than one fridge?
- + Use copious amounts of cling film in order to spend more time fiddling around in the fridge?
- + Feel compelled to open the fridge door every time you walk past the fridge?
- + Walk past the fridge specifically so you will feel compelled to open the fridge door?
- + Visit fridge showrooms just for pleasure?
- + Arrange everything in meticulous order, with special places for yoghurts/milk/cheese/leftover pieces of quiche?
- + Hit anyone who messes around with the contents of your fridge, even though they are living with you and are only looking for something to eat?
- + Surreptitiously look inside other people's fridges when visiting their homes.
- + Assess the contents of other people's fridges for neatness and originality on your uniquely compiled *Frigidaire Awareness Scale*?
- + Collect fridge magnets?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are prone to *inappropriate frigidity*. While a certain amount of frigidity is normal and perhaps even necessary on occasions, to take it to the extreme is both time consuming and obsessive. In order to further assess the situation, try making a chart of how many times you visit the fridge daily (and nightly in severe cases). A count of 50 indicates you are heading for trouble by heading for the fridge far too often. A count of 100 indicates that drastic action is necessary. How about becoming involved with the washing machine instead?



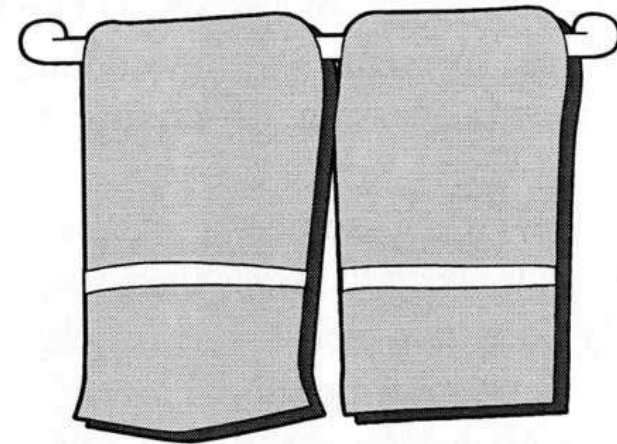
IRRITABLE TOWEL SYNDROME

This is a little understood phenomenon that is chafing away at the lives of a small but increasingly at risk section of the population. If any of the following symptoms are familiar, you (and your family) may be suffering from this disturbing condition, which may lead to a future chronic problem with piles.

Do you:

- + Feel compelled to touch towels on display in shops?
- + Experience anger when towels are not folded perfectly?
- + Straighten towels every time you enter the bathroom?
- + Enter the bathroom just to straighten towels?
- + Derive secret but intense pleasure from watching towels swaying gently in the breeze on the clothes line?
- + Start to drool over pages displaying towels in catalogues?
- + Become furious at the sight of a scrunched up towel?
- + Cut off threads that are hanging off towels (even if the towels are not yours)?
- + Give towels as gifts for weddings, birthdays, Christmas, baptisms, passing of driving tests, funerals, etc?
- + Become annoyed when someone catches you placing towels against your cheek to assess their softness?
- + Fight anyone who wipes their hands (or any other part of their anatomy) on your own personal towel?
- + Feel overcome with wonder at the sight of a towel bale?
- + Refuse to associate with anyone who keeps their towels less than spotlessly clean?
- + Attack anyone who suggests you have no need to buy any more towels?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are suffering from *irritable towel syndrome*. However, do not panic! Help is at hand and can be found from specially trained sales assistants at all good departmental stores. Should you not be able to make it to the store, however, why not symbolically wash your hands of this most distressing condition. Then wipe your hands in a soft and comforting towel. Hold the towel up to your face, inhaling deeply as you revel in the sensuous aroma of that incredible towel fragrance...



MANIC SUPPRESSION

This little acknowledged emotional disorder is now becoming quite rare, due to the current emphasis on recognising and expressing one's feelings. In previous centuries, it was manifested mainly by females who were traditionally dominated by fathers and husbands. However, some sensitive males were also known to have exhibited the tell-tale behaviour, characterised by periods of unnatural silence, broken suddenly by spasmodic eruptions of either inane chatter or insane laughter. Or inane laughter or insane chatter. Or even both.

Have you ever:

- ✚ Started to laugh hysterically when you actually felt like throttling someone?
- ✚ Forced yourself to be nice to the woman down the road who lets her dog wee in your garden?
- ✚ Laughed aloud in the middle of the night at the memory of someone making a complete idiot of themselves?
- ✚ Wished you could shout something obscene in the middle of a meeting?
- ✚ Giggled to yourself as you were making a list of nasty names about someone you dislike intensely?
- ✚ Enthused to your mother-in-law about her thermal underwear?
- ✚ Muttered some very rude words while smiling at your teacher/supervisor/boss?
- ✚ Slapped your opponent playfully on the back while telling her/him how great her/his score is?
- ✚ Not expostulated during sex?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you may be prone to *manic suppression*. While it is socially beneficial not to have tantrums or frequent displays of emotion at your age, try to learn to express yourself more openly. Certainly you will feel relieved. Certainly you will attract more attention. A word of warning, though – by all means let it out, but it may be wise to keep a little bit in on certain occasions. That way you're much less likely to be arrested.



MENOPAUSE

This umbrella term covers a wide range of symptoms – one could say that once *menopause* begins, it never rains but it pours. This is not actually true, but it has a nice flow to it. At a certain time in people's lives (usually women) they simply feel they would benefit from having a rest from men. This rest may be for an indeterminate amount of time, although some people are determined that it will: a) never happen to them; or b) last forever. Could you perhaps be menopausally challenged?

Do you:

- ✚ Dislike strange men coming to your house in order to carry our necessary repairs?
- ✚ Invite strange men into your house in order to carry out unnecessary repairs?
- ✚ Have hot flushes willy nilly?
- ✚ Become unreasonably irritable when there is a man in the house?
- ✚ Become unreasonably irritable when there is no man in the house?
- ✚ Think you are emotionally out of control?
- ✚ Know you are emotionally out of control, but don't give a toss, it's your life after all, goddamit?
- ✚ Feel like hitting men?
- ✚ Like the feel of hitting men?
- ✚ Prefer stroking men, even if it is the unsuspecting meter reader?
- ✚ Become hot and sticky in bed at night?
- ✚ Become extremely hot and sticky in bed at night?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are probably experiencing *menopause*. There is no need to change your life, however, as this is mostly a perfectly natural phenomenon. It is only on the very odd occasion that it may turn into an imperfectly unnatural phenomenon. If this should happen, try not to panic. Why not enquire about the possibility of HRT (Hormonally Radical Treatment) which should enhance your life in a most interesting way?



MORNING SICKNESS

It is common for many people to experience mild *morning sickness* from time to time (specifically morning time). However, for some people it is a wretched problem, throwing up many disturbing and bizarre behaviours. In some cases, sufferers simply refuse to wake up. In other cases, *morning sickness* is characterised by a chronic reluctance to rise – by despondently heaving under the sheets, reluctantly hurling off the bedcovers and finally lurching into the bathroom.

Do you:

- ✚ Consistently 'forget' to set the alarm clock?
- ✚ Only start to feel properly awake when it is three o' clock in the afternoon?
- ✚ Detest the alarm clock?
- ✚ Not know the existence of something called the dawn chorus?
- ✚ Frequently pretend to lose the alarm clock?
- ✚ Feel you are at your best at three o' clock in the morning?
- ✚ Fervently wish no one had invented alarm clocks?
- ✚ Hate the sight of the postperson, dog walker, or anyone who looks alert and energetic in the morning?
- ✚ Occasionally throw the alarm clock across the bedroom in disgust?
- ✚ Feel murderous towards anyone who makes you get up before midday?
- ✚ Regularly sabotage the alarm clock?
- ✚ Think people who rise with the sun are emotionally disturbed?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you suffer from *morning sickness*. Try to remember, though, that you are not alone (particularly if you have gone to bed with someone). It may be that you have a small problem with the adjustment of your body clock – if this is the case, a new battery usually works wonders. Also, remember that the morning is only a few hours long and the afternoon will soon be on its way. If you are afraid you may be suffering from *afternoon sickness* too, simply remember that the evening will soon be on its way. In the unlikely event that you may also be suffering from *evening sickness*, you are unfortunately very sick.



PERIOD PROBLEMS

Period problems are experienced by men and women alike. While many of us may have a favourite time in history, this will not affect our lives to any large degree (although incidentally, the number of history undergraduates has remained fairly constant over the years). It is quite common to be interested in, for example, stories of World Wars I and II, Victorian times, or Elizabethan times. However, when simple interest turns into extreme fascination and finally into unhealthy obsession, it is time to act.

Have you ever:

- ✚ Wished you had been born in another era?
- ✚ Enjoyed any fictional programmes on television about time travel backwards?
- ✚ Secretly harboured more than a passing interest in codpieces?
- ✚ Wanted to be an archaeologist?
- ✚ Thought Henry VIII was a rather spunky monarch?
- ✚ Wondered what it would be like to wear a codpiece?
- ✚ Seriously considered life membership of the National Trust or English Heritage?
- ✚ Got a buzz from going to one of 'those' parties dressed as a historical character?
- ✚ Dreamed about someone wearing a codpiece?
- ✚ Decided it would be fun to go and see a battle re-enactment on a Bank Holiday?
- ✚ Taken part in a battle re-enactment on a Bank Holiday?
- ✚ Thought codpieces were sexy?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are at risk from *period problems*. However, this is not one of the more serious conditions, as symptoms only happen at (or because of) certain periods. Also, the main problems are manifested only at the extreme end of the scale – eg, when an individual prefers to lose his/her identity by dressing in outlandish clothes belonging to another era and pretending to live in a world that has long since gone. Some of these disturbed individuals can be seen at places of historical interest, trying to convince tourists that reality is in the past. This, of course, is complete nonsense, as everyone knows reality is in the future.



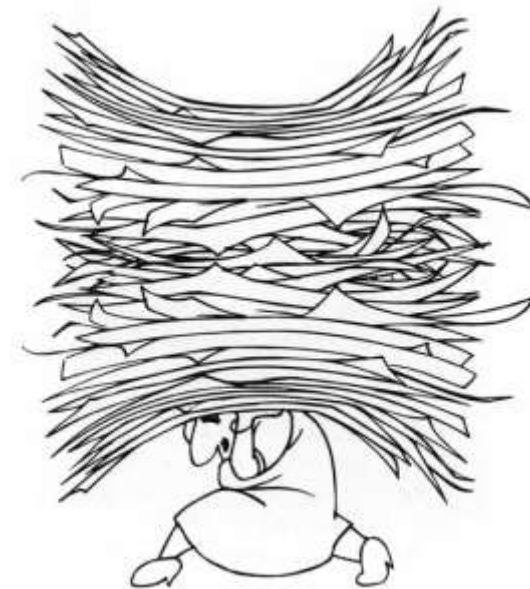
POST TRAUMATIC DRESS DISORDER

This is a problem which escalated rapidly throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, due to the unprecedented increase in mail order catalogues, but has tailed off now in light of the rapid rise in internet ordering (or disordering, as the case may be). Having affected mainly females in the past, records are now revealing a number of mixed stressors. While traditionally referring to clothes, the following list of symptoms can also be applied to all forms of mail order goods.

Have you ever:

- ✦ Had recurring nightmares about receiving the wrong goods?
- ✦ Experienced flashbacks of how terrible you looked in the size 12/14/16/18 etc, size dress when you tried it on?
- ✦ Lost sleep over which particular item/s to order?
- ✦ Become totally disillusioned at the quality of all mail order goods you have ever received?
- ✦ Imagined delivery vans were carrying out a personal vendetta against you when they drove right past your house once again without delivering the goods you had ordered six weeks previously?
- ✦ Hated yourself when you broke your latest vow never to order anything through the mail again?
- ✦ Begun to think either you or the catalogue compilers were colour blind?
- ✦ Noticed your index finger becoming sore from riffling through so many catalogue pages?
- ✦ Felt suicidal to discover your order was out of stock?

If three or more of these symptoms sound familiar to you, you are probably suffering from *post traumatic dress disorder*. It is time to take control of your life! All you need is the willpower to carry out three vital steps. Step one simply involves gathering all the mail order literature you possess in one (huge) pile. Step two is to leave that pile untouched for at least a week. Finally, step three is to take the whole lot to your local recycling facility. Remember, though – you have to put it all in!



PREMATURE EXASPERATION

This annoying habitual reaction can ruin the quality of your social life. Just when you really want to make a good impression, you spoil your image with a profane utterance or a silly expostulation. Of course, there is nothing wrong with exasperation *per se*, the trouble comes when you articulate or manifest your exasperation before the optimum moment to do so has arrived, leaving you feeling inept and dissatisfied.

Have you ever:

- ✚ Thrown your sticky toffee pudding on the floor in a fit of insane rage, before realising you had very badly wanted to eat it?
- ✚ Thrown yourself on the floor in a fit of insane rage, before wishing you hadn't just made a complete idiot of yourself?
- ✚ Slammed the door in the faces of a smart looking couple with briefcases because you thought they were planning to convert you, before finding out they were actually your long lost relatives from Reykjavik?
- ✚ Yelled something rude out of the window, before noticing your next-door-neighbours were sitting in their garden?
- ✚ Threatened dramatically to leave home, before suffering the indignity of your partner packing your case for you?
- ✚ Squashed a banana (or any other soft fruit) against a part of your partner's anatomy?
- ✚ Posted a very vitriolic letter of complaint to your MP/bishop/doctor/mother-in-law before fully realising the consequences of your action?
- ✚ Thrown yourself off a bridge?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are prone to *premature exasperation*. The quality of your life (and those with whom you are prematurely exasperated) may be at risk. Well meaning individuals may tell you that all you need to do is count to ten in order to allow your exasperation to diminish. This is rubbish – two thousand is a far more realistic figure. Furthermore, the desired outcome will be enhanced if you are able to count in several different languages. By the time you have completed the task in Russian, Icelandic, Esperanto and Urdu, your mind will be completely off the subject ... or any subject for that matter, so do take care not to throw yourself off any bridges.



PREMENTAL TENSION

Prevalent among the student population in its severest form of exam nerves, premental tension is nevertheless also experienced in various degrees by the population at large. Even small people can be afflicted by an unpleasant sensation of nervousness prior to any mental challenge, such as a job interview, an IQ test, a computer course, or a game of Scrabble with a fiercely competitive opponent.

Have you ever:

- ✦ Severely wished you could have a medicinal glass of brandy/whisky/double pink gin with a vodka chaser in order to face going to a job interview?
- ✦ Told the psychologist you had to abstain from the IQ test, as you had just decided to become a Jehovah's Witness?
- ✦ Pretended to be suffering from a genetically inherited disease that had resulted in complete computer illiteracy?
- ✦ Thought people voluntarily taking part in *Mastermind* were masochists?
- ✦ Told your mother you would kill her if she beat you again at Scrabble?
- ✦ Felt mentally challenged by filling out the form for your lottery ticket?
- ✦ Decided you would never put yourself through the stress of applying for a grant/overdraft/bus pass ever again?
- ✦ Refused to take part in the pub quiz in case you were last?
- ✦ Pretended you had to go to your mother's/milkman's/third cousin-in-law on your father's side's funeral on exam day?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are prone to *premental tension*. A certain amount of tension before undertaking anything mental can be beneficial, though, providing you do not let it go to your head. Moreover, it is a periodic occurrence which happens to most people and is no cause for concern (except for students, who need to pass their exams). However, if you have answered yes to eleven or more symptoms, you are advised to seek psychological help.



REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURY

Despite having been formally recognised only recently, *repetitive strain injury* has been informally recognised for years. It can apply to many situations in life, from the working environment to the social environment. If you think you are strained in some way because of something you do repeatedly, you may be at risk. So, if you think you are strained in some way because of something you do repeatedly, you may be at risk. Remember, if you think you are strained in some way because of something you do repeatedly, you may be at risk.

Do you:

- ✦ Find your arm aches after you have been out on a mild/reasonably mild/extremely mild drinking session?
- ✦ Feel you will go mad if have to wash one more dish/iron one more shirt/eat one more chocolate nut truffle?
- ✦ Feel overcome with déjà vu as you explain to your son/daughter why they cannot drive your car again?
- ✦ Inadvertently scream as you put the hundred and first piece of paper into the photocopying machine?
- ✦ Deliberately scream as you put the hundred and first piece of paper into the photocopying machine?
- ✦ Start to mutter incoherently at the sight of another customer queuing up with an overflowing shopping trolley at your checkout till?
- ✦ Dream during the night of something you have been doing all day.
- ✦ Dream during the day of something you have been doing all night?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, it is likely that you are suffering from *repetitive strain injury*. It is time to train your brain to ease the strain, by telling everyone that in future you are going to relax, chill out, hang loose. This should involve no strain whatsoever, except perhaps on your credibility. If anyone refuses to believe you, just keep repeating yourself.



SUBSTANCE ABUSE

This insidious problem is present to some extent in most of the population – usually due to carelessness when reading/not reading instructions on bottles/jars/containers of any kind. Although often considered to be trivial, the consequences in some cases can be unusual, alarming, or downright dangerous, resulting in unscheduled visits to A & E. This, of course, depends on the actual substance involved.

Have you ever:

- ✦ Squirted your armpits (or any other person's armpits) with air freshener/hair lacquer/insect repellent?
- ✦ Cleaned the dining room table with shoe polish?
- ✦ Cleaned your shoes with furniture polish?
- ✦ Told someone to "smell this" while knowing it is revolting and will in all probability make them want to revolt (in an absolutely revolting manner)?
- ✦ Covered your partner in strawberry and mango flavoured yoghurt in anticipation of something wonderful and then gone to answer the doorbell?
- ✦ Carelessly picked up a tube of superglue in the deluded belief it was *Cold Sore-Eze*, before smearing it over your (or any other person's) cold sore?
- ✦ Used Tabasco sauce to create a nice orange colour for the children's part jellies?
- ✦ Believed those adverts for substances that allegedly clean ten years' worth of gunge from your bath/oven/sink/that nasty smelly bit that you can never reach behind the U-bend?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, it is definitely time you started to read labels. Then, of course, you will have to apply them – the information on the labels, that is, rather than the actual substance – to what you are about to undertake (particularly if you are an undertaker). It is possible that you are hankering after a more adventurous lifestyle and have purposely stopped reading labels altogether. This will no doubt result in a certain amount of notoriety at your local casualty department, not to mention a couple of law suits. In this instance, you should be warned that the evidence against you will be substantial.



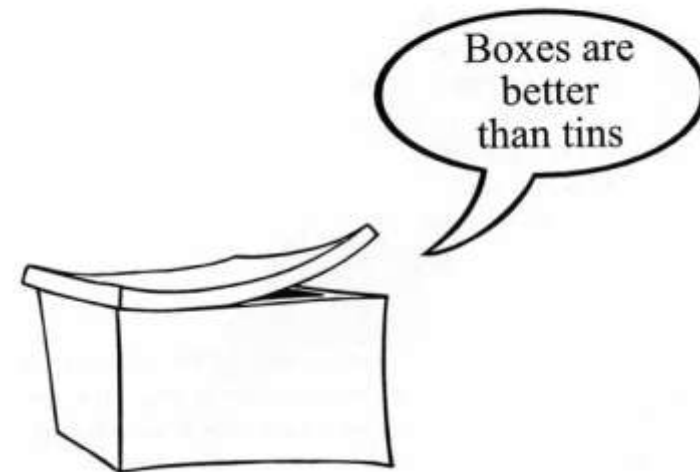
TINITIS

This strange affliction is not to be confused with *tinnitus*. Some sources, in fact, prefer to use a hyphen (ie – *tin-it is*) in order to distinguish between the two complaints, but this source considers that to look rather silly. Sufferers of *tinitis* can easily be spotted in the gift-food section of departmental stores at Christmas time, staring with glittering eyes at the tempting displays of tins containing biscuits/sweets/coffee/tea/nuts – anything really, as the contents of the tins are irrelevant. Could you perhaps be tainted with *tinitis*?

Do you:

- ✚ Keep a small/medium/large cupboard for your empty tins that you have no use for, but cannot bring yourself to throw away?
- ✚ Frequently find yourself exclaiming in shops how lovely/pretty/useful a tin is?
- ✚ Buy tins of biscuits at Christmas/Easter/Whitsun/Lent, even though you are on a diet?
- ✚ Find yourself incapable of throwing any tins away?
- ✚ Eat lots of tinned food?
- ✚ Feel very upset when a tin starts to go rusty?
- ✚ Have favourite tins?
- ✚ Keep strange items in tins?
- ✚ Polish tins?
- ✚ Dream about tins?
- ✚ Become irritated when people say 'can' instead of 'tin'?
- ✚ Become offensively agitated when someone carelessly dents one of your tins?

If you have answered yes to three or more of these symptoms, you are heading towards an obsession with tins. You may already have a case of full-blown *tinitis* – or, if the obsession is at its peak, a case full of blown tins. The time to act is now. Also, it is probably time to knock your tin obsession on the head. In fact, why not knock a tin? Dent it, scratch it, kick it, throw it away, because after all, it's only a tin! Get over it! Why not try boxes instead? Lovely little colourful boxes of all different shapes and sizes, just waiting, asking, begging you to put something inside them...



MORE SENSITIVE HEALTH ISSUE TOPICS

complete with

ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

AIR SICKNESS

Due to air pollution, the incidence of *air sickness* has risen sky high in recent years. Some industrial areas have specific problems, although toxic exhaust fumes cause tiredness and irritation in most built up areas. *Air sickness* can sometimes be a contributory factor to *jet gag syndrome*.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Buy an oxygen mask
- ❖ Don't breathe

ATHLETE'S FOOT

This complaint is mainly experienced by those who partake regularly in sports that heavily involve feet. Even light-footed sporting people can be susceptible. Despite advances in trainers, many sporting people have not greatly improved. They also frequently suffer from hard, flaky, itching skin between the toes.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Give up sport
- ❖ Give up trainers
- ❖ Play mind games

ATTENTIONAL DEBIT DISORDER

Attentional debit disorder is the term used to describe those who suffer undue anxiety when checking their bank statement. However, undue anxiety is a misnomer, as the anxiety occurs

with realisation of all the bills that are due. Basically, the sufferer's attention is (over)drawn to all the money overdrawn.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Don't look at any bank statements
- ❖ Win the lottery

BIPOLARISED DISORDER

This problem can manifest in two ways. Occurring mainly in summer when wearing polarised sunglasses, some people simply notice *double vision*. A minority, however, experience an adverse reaction to their polarised sunglasses and suffer uncomfortable mood swings as a result. Due to this merry-go-round of emotions, they see-saw in and out of depression, often until the arrival of autumn.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Try squinting
- ❖ Avoid the park

CATAPLEXY

As the name would suggest, this condition is concerned with cats – particularly cat owners who are concerned about their cats. Sufferers experience a chronic state of confusion as they fail to find any rhyme or reason for the behaviour of their pet, until a final stage of cat perplexity is reached.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Give your cat a stiff talking to – he or she needs to know exactly who is top dog.
- ❖ Trade your cat for a gerbil
- ❖ Don't worry – be happy!

CHAPPED LIPS

The term *chapped lips* originated centuries ago, when maidens would suffer dry, cracked lips from being kissed excessively by their chaps. Nowadays, gender equality, political correctness and the sale of lip balm renders this condition quite rare.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Don't kiss anyone
- ❖ Slap on the lip balm and enjoy yourself

CHRONIC FLUSHING

This condition first appears in young children who start to exhibit an unhealthy fixation with toilet procedures. Possibly due to too strict a regime of potty training, the young child will continually flush the toilet, looking anxiously into the toilet bowl (even though the toilet has not actually been used). More rarely, this condition continues into adulthood. Whilst not dangerous, it is nevertheless an undesirable state of affairs, particularly during water shortages.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Stay out of the bathroom
- ❖ Run live electricity to the flush handle (although this may result in a hot flush)

CIRCULATORY PROBLEMS

This complaint is experienced in a variety of ways by those suffering from *social anxiety*. Often occurring at parties, the symptoms may include feeling unable to mingle, being rooted to the spot, avoiding people's eyes, feeling terrified at having to speak and a generalised fear of making a complete idiot of yourself. This fear is particularly severe if you happen to be an

idiot. NB – large parties in small rooms cause circulatory problems of a completely different kind.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Have a drink
- ❖ Have another drink
- ❖ Have another drink until you cease to care what anybody thinks of you at all
- ❖ Don't go to parties

DENTAL CARES

Dental cares are often confused with *dental caries*, although *dental cares* are often related to *dental caries*. The whole problem is open wide to misinterpretation and many dental patients are needlessly/needfully filled with terror.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Develop a crush on your dentist
- ❖ Practise having out of body experiences

DOUBLE VISION

It is safe to say that almost everyone experiences *double vision* to some extent, which is hardly surprising seeing that most people have two eyes. However, there seems to be no forthcoming cure in the foreseeable future and the problem usually deteriorates with age or heavy drinking (or in doubly troubling cases, both).

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Don't drink
- ❖ Don't get old
- ❖ Only look out of one eye

EATING ORDER DISORDER

Usually experienced by unconfident people, *eating order disorder* occurs when there is difficulty ordering food (eg, because of too soft a voice, or any other speaking problem). A lesser known but currently disappearing form of *eating order disorder* is when a child is chastised for eating food in the 'wrong' order.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Practise shouting at waiters
- ❖ Deliberately eat your food in the 'wrong' order in front of your parents when they have visitors

ERECTILE PROBLEMS

This difficulty is mostly a problem to male members of the population, specifically those employed in the building trade. It may not always be a medical problem, although it is often caused by a previous underlying condition, such as a bad back/neck/shoulder/ankle, etc. Occasionally *erectile problems* can give rise to *sick building syndrome*.

Alternative Suggested Solution:

- ❖ Change your job

FAINTNESS

Faintness is sometimes experienced by people with low self-esteem. A general lack of confidence results in faintness manifested in ways such as a faint voice/faint writing, etc.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Attend assertiveness classes
- ❖ Speak up
- ❖ Press harder

FEAR OF DYEING

This is a common fear, although members of the upper class are also afflicted. Although dyeing is not absolutely essential to living, it is a choice that can colour one's outlook on life.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Pretend to be colour blind
- ❖ Feel the fear and dye it anyway

FORCEPS DELIVERY

This unusual problem only affects those who are afraid of a *forceps delivery* or those who have experienced a *forceps delivery*. In either case, there is little to be done and everything will probably come out all right in the end.

Alternative Suggested Solution:

- ❖ Don't order any forceps

FROZEN SHOULDER

This complaint is most prevalent among fashion victims, caused simply by wearing the wrong clothes in cold weather. Although mainly affecting women wearing skimpy off-the-shoulder clothing, it is also known to affect men who strut along beaches wearing nothing but swimming trunks/shorts/thongs.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Wear see-through clothing
- ❖ Make your own fashion statement by wearing a comfy cardigan over your shoulders

FUNCTIONAL DISORDER

People who suffer from a *functional disorder* usually have a

strong antipathy towards machines and thus experience difficulty in discovering how a machine actually works. Their frustration at failing to find out how to make a machine carry out its proper function often leads to anxiety, mental strain, sweating, nausea and the machine being kicked.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Read the manual
- ❖ Go back to nature

GHASTLY ENTERITIS

This complaint is one of the lesser recognised social problems, experienced when people trip over on entering a room (usually a crowded room). Any bad entrance in any way constitutes ghastly enteritis and acute embarrassment may be suffered. Occasionally ugly embarrassment is suffered by an unfortunate few.

Alternative Suggested Solutions

- ❖ Wear a mask when entering a room
- ❖ If you trip on entering a room, look indignantly behind you as if you had been pushed

GLUE EAR

This problem is prevalent among model makers, who in their enthusiasm and agility, bend too close to their model during gluing. Similar problems are encountered in *glue cheek*, *glue chin*, *glue forehead*, *glue nose*, etc.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Don't use glue
- ❖ Pretend the model hanging off your face is the latest fashion accessory

GROIN IRRITATION

This issue is sensitive in both a physical and tasteful/tasteless sense. Many people are reluctant to divulge their irritation of groins to anyone, with the exception of the feminist movement against male groins

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Try to develop groin acceptance – everybody has one
- ❖ Scratch when you want to

HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

This disease is commonly thought to afflict animals, but it actually afflicts children (and a few childish adults) who have a compulsion to put their hands and feet into their mouths – though not usually at the same time. The resultant problems include an enlarged mouth, wet hands and feet, wrinkly fingers and toes and social problems (due to sufferers opening their mouths and putting their foot into it).

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Apply sticky tape to the mouth area
- ❖ Wear foul tasting socks and gloves

HAY FEVER

Most people who suffer from *hay fever* do so in the summer, as hay barns can be very cold places in winter. Some people thus look upon hay fever as a self-inflicted problem, but they are mostly spoilsports.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Don't worry about your temperature
- ❖ Make figurative hay while the figurative sun shines

HEAVY-METAL POISONING

This complaint is restricted to those who have spent too much time listening to heavy-metal music. The problems encountered are headaches, numbness, a vacant expression and eventually deafness. Unfortunately, *heavy-metal poisoning* can also affect parents of heavy-metal music users, who may suffer from secondary poisoning and/or emotional problems.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Have the electricity disconnected
- ❖ Insist on earphones
- ❖ If you are have *secondary heavy-metal poisoning*, play your music of choice even louder

HIVES

This condition is experienced naturally enough by bee keepers who are unnaturally allergic to the hives in which they keep their bees. The allergy manifests as swelling under the skin, which is often accompanied by a stinging sensation.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Build a special bee-house for your bees
- ❖ Try keeping wasps instead

INFECTIOUS LAUGHTER

Although one of the less serious complaints, *infectious laughter* can sometimes be detrimental to the sufferer, as well as those unfortunate/fortunate enough to be affected by the sufferer. While a little laughter is of great benefit to wellbeing, taken to extremes it can result in aching ribs, blurred vision, physical exhaustion and loss of social credibility. At its worst, it can lead to mass hysteria.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Think of something that makes you cry
- ❖ Sellotape the corners of your mouth downwards
- ❖ Take life more seriously
- ❖ Practise morbidity

INFLAMED TESTEES

Classed as a social problem, *inflamed testees* are most often encountered in educational establishments during exam time. Due to mounting pressures, testees can become overwhelmed and exhausted, resulting in performance restriction.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Keep a cool head
- ❖ Drop out

INN DIGESTION PROBLEMS

Although a self-inflicted complaint, this condition nevertheless afflicts a sizeable number of the population, particularly on Bank Holidays and throughout the summer months. It has reached an all time high in recent decades, due to the variety of food now on offer in inns and/or *Pub Grub*.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Don't choose heavy/fatty/starchy/sugary/appetising food
- ❖ Just stick to drinking in inns

IRON DEFICIENCY

Once common in the Dark Ages, iron deficiency is experiencing a come-back, as people fail to see a need to iron their clothes. It is immaterial whether they are right or wrong, although some traditionalists view this as a slur on the fabric of society.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Always buy non-iron clothing
- ❖ Cease to care

JET GAG SYNDROME

This distressing phenomenon is unsurprisingly restricted to those who travel by jet (some of which are prone to *air sickness*). A peculiar alternative manifestation of this affliction occurs when forced to sit next to a passenger who continuously tells jokes.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Get in first with the jokes
- ❖ Stay at home

JOINT PROBLEMS

This umbrella term covers a range of drug related problems. Some practitioners in the medical field thus prefer to keep it under a smokescreen of political incorrectness by refusing to treat the issue (of joints) at all.

Alternative Suggested Solution:

- ❖ Just say no – it may not solve your joint problems, but it will help you to get out of some very tricky situations

KNOCK-KNEE

A small percentage of people seem to have an obsession with knees, which is expressed in various ways. For instance, some GPs will carry out the knee reflex test whenever anyone enters the room. This can be very trying for receptionists and practice nurses. Some people are compelled to touch each other's knees, while others derive pleasure from using their knee to inflict pain on male members of the population.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Cover up your knees
- ❖ Experiment with your elbows instead

LABRYNTHITIS

This amazing condition has an unbalancing effect on some people, afflicting them with a desire to become lost in labyrinths. It is thus a danger to people who like to visit certain stately homes. Some believe it is an unconscious desire for escapism, although some labyrinths are very difficult to escape from.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Never join the National Trust or English Heritage
- ❖ When in labyrinths, learn to leave a trail

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Once mistakenly linked to *tick allergy*, *learning difficulties* refers to the view adopted by humanistic psychologists that acceptance of one's life not being easy is the key to a healthy outlook. Once someone has accepted that life is full of difficulties, s/he can proceed with living life to the full – whether it is a life full of difficulties or not. However, many people find this philosophy full of difficulties.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Rebel against life
- ❖ Tell any humanistic psychologist you meet that you think s/he is completely mad

LIMP

Limp is the medical name for anything on the body that is limp – but only when it is a problem. It is, of course, the opposite

problem to *stiff* (the medical name for anything on the body that is stiff – but only when it is a problem). It can therefore be a rather vague medical term, varying in degrees of urgency.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Walk with an erect posture – it just might help
- ❖ Try not to mind too much

LISTLESSNESS

Listlessness is experienced by those who feel their life is unmanageable without making lists. While lists can be useful memory aids, one of their main setbacks is that they can be lost. Sufferers should try not to lose sleep over lost lists, although a few may reach the stage where they feel incomplete without a pen in their hand. If this happens, enlist help immediately.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Dispose of pens, pencils, lipsticks and anything that writes
- ❖ Make a list of the benefits of life without lists
- ❖ Learn to rely on your memory

LUMP IN THROAT

Lump in throat sometimes occurs as a form of mass hysteria at weddings. In this case, the 'lump' is caused by strong emotions that people attempt to suppress. However, the outcome is short-lived, as most people are able to swallow their feelings or vomit. Note that on the odd occasion a 'lump' may actually be due to inadequate mastication.

Alternative Suggested Solutions

- ❖ Masticate adequately
- ❖ Never attend weddings

MOTION SICKNESS

This phenomenon is often displayed by fathers of newborn babies on their first close encounter with the contents of a dirty nappy. While it is unusual for actual vomiting to occur, the condition often results in pathological avoidance of the noxious experience (ie, the noxious nappy). The other common cause of *motion sickness* is dog excrement – closely followed by cat excrement, horse excrement, hamster excrement, guinea pig excrement, elephant excrement, etc.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Avoid excrement
- ❖ Delude yourself into thinking that excrement is a wonderful, natural feature of existence

OVERACTIVE THIGH

This condition is often classified as a social disorder, although its origin may very well be physiological. Characterised by uncontrolled upper leg fidgeting, it is extremely irritating to the onlooker – particularly if sitting in close contact. If standing up, the sufferer may look as if a trip to the toilet is overdue.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Pretend to be limbering up for a jog
- ❖ Use your disorder as a conversation starter

OVERBREATHING

This annoying condition usually occurs either when people feel compelled to stand right next to someone and breathe in their face, or when someone tries to read the newspaper over someone else's shoulder. Occasionally, overbreathers express themselves on the telephone.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Keep your distance
- ❖ Cut the telephone line

PHOTOSENSITIVITY

This unusual problem affects certain people who experience anxiety when looking at photos. Extreme cases may develop into *photo phobia*. Some psychologists believe that sufferers may have been traumatised as children by being forced to look at relatives' old photo albums, holiday snaps, slide shows, etc.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Spill something nasty over your relative's photo album, so that it will be most unlikely s/he will show you their photos ever again
- ❖ Attempt self-help therapy by buying yourself a camera
- ❖ Force yourself to take some photos with the camera

PILES

This condition often occurs with people who have a tidiness problem, as they strive to achieve perfect tidiness in their home or workplace (or in severe cases, other people's homes or workplaces). Unable to let things stay strewn about, they are compelled to create neat piles of sometimes extraordinary heights.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Seek employment with someone who has an untidiness problem
- ❖ Seek employment stacking shelves in your local supermarket
- ❖ Have a bonfire

PINS AND NEEDLES

This condition is a constant hazard to those who sew and knit – and to those who sit next to them while they sew and knit. If a pin or needle should become lodged in the body, seek medical attention. Note that if you are afraid of succumbing to *pins and needles*, it is best to avoid the blood donor service and those who practise *puncture* (see the section on remedies).

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Invest in a heavy duty magnet
- ❖ Wear body armour

PLASTIC SURGERY ALLERGY

Unknown in the last century, *plastic surgery allergy* is on the increase. On the face of it, the easiest way to combat this complaint is avoidance. However, also on the face of it (not to mention the face of others) this strategy seems to be unpopular with plastic surgeons.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Only visit surgeries made of natural building materials
- ❖ Only deal with real surgeons

PREMATURE BOLDNESS

This is the opposite condition to *manic suppression* and usually suffered by extroverts (and the people accosted in conversation by them). Not serious in itself, care should nevertheless be taken with the choice of person with whom one is bold.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Keep your tongue clenched between your teeth
- ❖ For introverts – if you can't beat them join them

PRICKLY HEAT

This reaction is sometimes experienced by those who visit saunas. It is often caused by using towels that are not soft (and is thus rarely suffered by someone who has *irritable towel syndrome*).

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Petition sauna owners to use fabric softener
- ❖ Try to develop *irritable towel syndrome*

RHINOTIS

This unusual complaint is basically a fixation on rhinos. The cause is unknown, although certain psychiatrists implicate the rhino horn as a perceived phallic symbol. However, this speculation only gives rise to a certain amount of guilt on the part of the sufferer (and a certain amount of ridicule on the part of the psychiatrist).

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Cultivate an interest in fluffy bunnies instead
- ❖ Make friends with your psychiatrist

SEASONING AFFECT DISORDER

Connected with certain types of eating problems, this condition occurs when someone habitually overuses seasoning of any kind. In this case, the people most affected are those who eat the highly seasoned food. Salt and pepper are the most common additives, while curry powder and chilli are gaining in strength.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Glue the holes on your salt and pepper dispensers
- ❖ Develop a taste for highly seasoned food

SEAT EXHAUSTION

Commonly known as *numb bum*, this condition is easily identified by the pained expression on sufferers' faces, usually at formal public events (and particularly school concerts). A somewhat cheeky solution is to shift regularly from side to side.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Wear padded underwear
- ❖ Carry a cushion
- ❖ Avoid formal public events, particularly school concerts
- ❖ Stay standing

SERIAL INTOLERANCE

This condition is opposite to the little understood phenomenon of *serial tolerance*, which afflicts a vast number of people who sit for hours watching television programmes that have very little depth, enjoyment or meaning. *Serial intolerance* is thus the more understandable condition, as sufferers find themselves completely unable to watch television serials at all. In the event that they are exposed to serials, symptoms can range from depression and hysteria to terminal insanity.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Sell the television
- ❖ Enjoy your good sense

SICK BUILDING SYNDROME

Although a modern day ailment, *sick building syndrome* can also occur at night. The sufferer simply feels sick of the building that s/he is in, although actual vomiting rarely takes place (except at hospitals, public houses and nightclubs). People blame this phenomenon on concrete, poor ventilation, or the architect.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Choose an outdoor job
- ❖ Vomit anyway as a form of protest

SKIN ERUPTIONS

This general complaint covers all kinds of skin disorders (although skin disorders can be very unkind). It most often refers to *moles*, *hamsters* and *ferrets*, but it can also refer to noxious skin secretions.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Don't keep small, furry pets
- ❖ Stay away from curries

SLIPPED DISC

In previous years, this complaint was mostly experienced by record collectors who dropped a record (disc) and consequently suffered back pain when bending over to retrieve it. When music cassettes were popular, the condition decreased significantly. Compact discs that are all too easy to slip through one's fingers led to another sharp rise, but now that the music scene has changed yet again, it is hard to keep a grip on the situation.

Alternative Suggested Solution:

- ❖ Listen to the radio

STITCH

Stitch is another hazard to those who sew and those who sit next to them when they are sewing. It particularly affects the over-zealous sewer who runs out of material and then in a burst of reckless enthusiasm, carries on stitching her/his person – or someone else's person, as people with *stitch* are not picky.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Don't use sharp needles
- ❖ Try gluing the material together
- ❖ Train to be a surgeon

STRETCH MARKS

Stretch marks occur when parts of the body are stretched in an extreme and unreasonable way. Causes can include pregnancy, childbirth, ballet, yoga, gymnastics, attempting to retrieve coins that have fallen down the side of the settee, trying to fit into clothes that are way too small and imaginative lovemaking. Sometimes body parts may retain a certain amount of elasticity, but often *stretch marks* are a precursor to *limp* (see *limp*).

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Keep your body parts close to yourself
- ❖ Lead a boring and unimaginative life

TAXIC SHOCK SYNDROME

This kind of shock is experienced by people who are forced, unaccustomedly, to take a taxi ride. Upon arrival at their destination, news of the extortionate fare sends them into a state of dazed confusion, in which they reach automatically for money they may or may not possess, with a wide open, vacant gaze and incoherent or gibberish speech. They then feel a need to talk compulsively about this experience for some time.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Pay
- ❖ Don't pay
- ❖ Take the bus

THRUSH

Thrush is a rare delusional disorder, known as a fungal complaint but also manifested (logically) as a lungal complaint. Whereas sufferers of the fungal strain think they are fungi, sufferers of the lungal strain think they are birds (specifically thrushes) and thus experience a compulsion to sing and twitter. Twittering is now growing rapidly, thanks to the internet. In the past, the odd case of *sparrow*, *jay* and *finch* were noted, while massive numbers of *tit* cases are constantly being exposed.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Have singing lessons
- ❖ Imagine you are a bird who has eaten a magic mushroom

TICK ALLERGY

Not to be confused with *tic allergy*, *tick allergy* is rife among today's schoolchildren. Unwilling to lose credibility with their friends, they deliberately make errors in their schoolwork in order not to appear intelligent. A controversial explanation of this phenomenon is that the errors are not deliberate at all.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Educate children to be non-judgemental about intelligence
- ❖ Educate children

TUNNEL VISION

Once common in the Dark Ages, ancient knowledge of this problem has recently been unearthed by historians. Now the condition has come to light, many people's eyes have been opened to the plight of sufferers and up-to-date research is underway. However, the effects of tunnel vision seem to be far reaching and the outlook is very dark indeed.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Visit an optician regularly
- ❖ Don't enter tunnels
- ❖ If you find yourself in a tunnel, make sure you emerge

VARIOUS VEINS

This problem can occur in men and women alike, although not at the same time (unless in mid-gender change). All of us have veins, but some people are unfortunately prone to vein problems, even when standing up. Pregnancy and childbirth often heighten both the situation and the veins.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Make a feature of your *various veins* by colouring them brightly with a felt tip pen
- ❖ Don't become pregnant

WEIGHT PROBLEMS

Weight problems are becoming more widespread, as more people attempt to become fit by taking up weight lifting. Problems vary according to the weight of the weights and injuries are often self-inflicted as the weights are accidentally dropped.

Alternative Suggested Solution:

- ❖ Don't actually lift up the weights

WHIPLASH INJURY

This complaint is currently being taken very seriously, as cases of such abuse continue to make their mark. Sufferers should not be afraid to come forward for treatment, despite the occasional risk of whiplash backlash.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Keep it under cover
- ❖ Whip the seine who whipped you

WIND PROBLEMS

Usually occurring in winter, wind problems affect those of a light stature who cannot keep themselves upright in a strong wind. Wind problems are thus often mistakenly assumed to be drink problems.

Alternative Suggested Solutions:

- ❖ Put weights in your shoes
- ❖ Hang on to someone who is heavy
- ❖ Don't drink before going out in the wind

A – Z OF UNNATURAL REMEDIES**ABSENT HEALING**

There is some controversy whether *absent healing* should be included as an unnatural remedy. However, when healing is not absent, it usually takes place when the client is absent. Cases when the healer is absent are missing from the records.

ANTHROPOSOPHICAL MEDICINE

Inspired by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), anthroposophical medicine is basically an extension of mainstream Western medicine. It should not be sought by anyone with a speaking disorder.

ASTRONOMICAL DIAGNOSIS

Similar to *astrological diagnosis* (which claims that types of diseases individuals may be prone to can be revealed by consulting astrological charts), *astronomical diagnosis* can be distinguished by its close association with *astronomical misdiagnosis*, commonly known as an *astronomical cock-up*.

AUTO SUGGESTION

This easy, effective strategy can be used to combat a wide range of emotional disorders. In fact, many people probably employ this coping device without even knowing they are doing so. In its most basic form, it simply involves thinking of cars whenever an inappropriate thought occurs. For example, when someone is on the verge of a panic attack due to a situation that is perceived as stressful, thinking of cars will divert the negative thought pattern into a neutral one, thus alleviating the anxiety. However, this will not work particularly well if the person is afraid of cars.

AROMATHERAPY

Traditionally assumed to involve the use of essential oils derived from plants, *aromatherapy* can actually be used widely and inexpensively in everyday life. Smells are everywhere! From the tempting odour of coffee, the appetising smell of newly baked bread and the heady aroma of active armpits, the emphasis here is to be open, creative and prepared to enjoy. Note that inessential oils are also efficacious.

BACK FLOWER REMEDIES

Not to be confused with Dr Edward Bach's healing system of floral remedies, *back flower remedies* are far simpler. The mere act of lying face down and having flowers strewn across one's back is incredibly relaxing, if not a little unusual. While any flora will suffice, it is usually better to avoid varieties such as thistles, deadly nightshade and vegetable low fat spread. Note that it is useful to work with a partner, as heaping flowers onto one's own back may be problematical, even slightly dangerous.

BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

There has been considerable controversy over *behavioural therapy* for a number of years. While some believe that the use of conditioning techniques to modify behaviour is morally ethical, others maintain that the behaviour of behavioural therapists is morally questionable.

BIOENERGETICS

This is the study of energy relationships in living organisms. As a remedy for stress, *bioenergetics* in the leisure industry is becoming very popular, as more and more people join their local gym. Failing that, an exercise bike is a useful addition to any home, providing it is not used solely as a clothes airer.

BIORHYTHMS

The study of *biorhythms* is practised unwittingly by a number of people (intelligent and otherwise) who daily keep a watchful eye on their bowel movements. While there is a real benefit of early detection of any abnormalities, there is also an unreal danger that this could escalate into a case of full-blown scatology.

CAT SCANS

The technological breakthrough of *CAT scans* has been of great benefit to countless animal lovers who have a tendency towards neuroticism. This applies particularly, of course, to owners of cats who have gone missing. The *CAT scan* can also be very useful in locating the cats themselves.

CHARISMATIC HEALING

Embraced by some factions of the Christian religion, *charismatic healing* is typified by the laying on of hands, ecstatic utterances and rather a lot of hugging. Although frowned upon by more traditional Christian factions, it seems to be highly beneficial to those who practise it. To those who have perfected it, it may sometimes even result in healing.

CLAY THERAPY

Similar to *mud therapy*, *clay therapy* has the added advantage of being widely available in evening classes, as more and more people discover the therapeutic value of throwing their own pottery (particularly at someone else).

COGNITIVE MAPS

Not to be confused with Ordnance Survey maps, *cognitive maps* are a useful aid for those experiencing memory problems. By thinking of a well known route (eg, from bedroom to bathroom,

or from workplace to pub), simply imagine what needs to be remembered in strategic places along the route. The more bizarre the better! To think of the vicar by the bidet, for example, can be quite entertaining. The only problem with this remedy, of course, is that it can sometimes be difficult to remember the cognitive map itself.

COLOUR THERAPY

This can be a useful diversion strategy for those suffering from *social anxiety*. As a way of diverting anxious thoughts and feelings from fears of social inadequacy, the sufferer makes a point of noticing the colours of clothes that people at a social event are wearing. It is surprising how much positive feeling (even pleasure) can be derived from noticing someone is wearing clashing colours. As social confidence grows, however, there is a danger that the sufferer may become socially undesirable, due to over-use of critical and unkind remarks.

COPPER THERAPY

Copper therapy is simply a specialised offshoot of *mineral therapy*. Whereas any old mineral will suffice for those who partake in *mineral therapy*, *copper therapy* appeals to those few individuals who hanker after copper. Collecting copper coins is an offshoot of this offshoot.

COUNSELLING

Although there has been a forward motion with this form of therapy in recent years, its success remains difficult to understand. While suited to a certain type of person, the vast majority of people find the proposal of a formal meeting very restricting (not to mention deadly boring) and would far rather get on with any other business they possibly can.

CRYSTAL THERAPY

Similar to *gem essence therapy*, *crystal therapy* can be rather expensive. While many people derive pleasure from collecting crystal in the form of cute little animals, there is a hardcore of followers who prefer the elemental approach of working with raw materials to enhance balance and wholeness. Note that *crystal therapy* in this sense has nothing to do with balls.

CUPPING

Cupping involves the application of a vessel to the skin and the subsequent creation of a part vacuum by heat or suction. It is thus hoped (except by certain manufacturers) that one day a whole vacuum may be created this way.

CYMATICS

Employed by *The Beach Boys* with their *Good Vibrations*, *cymatics* is the study of the relationship between matter and vibrations. Used to treat muscular disorders, bones and joints, there is now no doubt that vibrations definitely do matter.

DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPY

Dancing can be an effective form of non-verbal therapy (with the exception of Line Dancing), particularly for those with behavioural problems. Occasionally, though, the dancing itself can unfortunately result in behavioural problems.

DIETARY REMEDIES

FASTING

Fasting is basically abstinence from food – all or some – for differing amounts of time. Such varying duration means that some fasts are quick, while others are lamentably slow.

FIBRE DIET

The importance of fibre in the diet is now extremely well documented. Many people, however, still find difficulty in a high fibre regime, preferring to wear their clothes comfortably instead.

FOOD ADDITIVE FREE DIET

Some people find it difficult to adhere to this diet, as they are far too stuck in the rut of adding all sorts of sauces, spices and sweeteners to their food.

GRAPE CURE

Complete abstinence from grapes has been found to cure many people from eating grapes. In serious cases requiring date grape cure, dates are also involved.

HAY DIET

Promoted by William Hay in the 1930s, this diet is a favourite among horse owners. Lovers of shredded wheat are also quite amenable. The majority of people, however, find this diet a little too difficult to swallow.

NATURAL FOOD DIET

The name of this diet is considered a misnomer by some people, who fundamentally believe that all diets are unnatural. This, of course, is actually a misnomer in itself, as everyone who eats has a diet.

WHOLE FOOD DIET

This diet should never be attempted by young children or the elderly, who require their food to be cut up in small pieces in order to avoid choking.

DRUGS

Although regarded as a mainstream remedy (if not the main remedy) *drugs*, with their many strange and insidious side effects, can easily be classified as an unnatural remedy.

ELECTROCOMPULSIVE THERAPY (ECT)

Once hailed as a relaxing therapy for stress related disorders, ECT is rapidly being regarded as a disorder in itself. The current compulsive nature of television, computers, home cinema, photography and iPods in all walks of life is becoming an obsession with the majority of society. Some of the medical profession believe that shock tactics are urgently required.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Although regarded as one of the self-indulgent fringe therapies, *encounter groups* with their aim of raising self awareness, are becoming more prevalent. Groups can be encountered in most towns and cities, although their original alliance with the hairdressing profession has now been cut short.

EXPRESSIVE THERAPY

This simple remedy for stress build-up is unknowingly practised daily by thousands. The expression of anger or frustration by profane utterances is sometimes all that is needed to release harmful tension. Many people frown upon this form of therapy as being socially undesirable, but its uses are widespread (depending on the number of profane utterances known).

FAITH HEALING

Although some people have no faith in *faith healing*, others say faith is healing in itself. On the other hand, healing has been known to lead some people to faith. Some have even been led to faith in *faith healing*. Others would say God knows why.

FREE ASSOCIATION

This unnatural remedy is practised naturally by extroverts, particularly those who brainstorm. However, it is a useful

learning experience for those who suffer from any form of *social anxiety*. Instead of avoiding people and thus perpetuating the anxiety, the sufferer needs to take the bull by the horns. Should there be no bull available, all that is needed is to go out into the world and fraternise (or freely associate) with people – anyone and everyone – it’s all good therapy. It should be noted that on occasions, *free association* may be misleading, as some social scenarios require entrance fees.

GEM ESSENCE THERAPY

Vibrations from gemstones are believed to relieve mental and emotional problems – for instance, emerald is thought to improve memory. However, the purchase of gemstones and a vibrator make this therapy one of the more expensive ones (if not one of the more enjoyable ones).

HEALTH FARMS

Opinion is muddled on the benefit of *health farms*. While some consider the amount of exercise necessary on a farm aids the health of mind and body, others consider the early hours of rising and the farm environment in general to be a source of stress. Note that some farms will offer optional courses of group therapy at harvest time, when large numbers of people can benefit together by forking in the hay.

HERBAL MEDICINE

Herbal medicine basically involves the use of plants to cure disease. Frowned upon by certain members of the medical establishment, it is nevertheless carried out on a daily basis in hospitals nationwide. Although, strictly speaking, many friends and relatives prefer to bring flowers to a patient, the theory is the same. This form of therapy has become so traditionalised

that many hospitals have a shop selling plants and flowers on the premises.

HIP NO! THERAPY

This is another simple but effective remedy for a wide range of problems. For example, if someone is trying to free themselves from any sort of substance abuse, it uses a form of diversion that is both mental and physical and thereby doubly effective. When about to reach for the cigarette packet, a quick slap on the hip while simultaneously shouting “no!” will interrupt the desire for a cigarette and thus allow the person time to remind themselves they have actually given up smoking. In the case of emotional disorders, the *hip no!* action can serve to divert from negative thinking. If one hip should become badly bruised, use the other one. Note that it is inadvisable to use other people’s hips.

HOLISTIC THERAPY

Not to be confused with the more wholesome theory of *wholistic medicine* (which treats the client as a whole person), the rising popularity of holistic therapy is giving cause for concern, with its unfortunate emphasis on treating the client as a hole person.

HOMEOPATHY

Homeopathy is the clinical term for home remedies, which can cover anything from wild nettle soup, to rancid cooking-oil lotion, to curry powder poultice.

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

This basically involves clients being guided to take responsibility for their own life. This should not be confused with clients being guided to take their own life - in which case, inhumanistic psychology is suspected and a lawsuit taken out.

HYDROTHERAPY

This covers several different forms of water beneficial treatment.

The main types are as follows:

FLOTATION THERAPY

In this therapy, the client floats in a tank that has a high concentration of salts dissolved in the water. The aim is total relaxation, so that clients leave feeling extremely buoyant.

HERBAL BATH

As the name suggests, herbs are placed in the bath when bathing. Although any type of herb may be used, it is advisable not to have the water too hot when using curry plant or other spicy herbs, as the fumes may become overwhelming.

MORONIC IRRIGATION

This form of *hydrotherapy* involves water being injected into the client's rectum and flowing out through a two-way tube. The name is self explanatory.

SITZ BATH

Unsurprisingly, this treatment involves sitting in a bath. In order to improve blood circulation in the legs, two hip baths are used. The client firstly sits in one hip bath filled with hot water with legs dangling outside in a basin of cold water. A transfer is later made to a hip bath full of cold water with feet dangling in a basin of hot water. Known alternatively as water torture, this is not recommended for those of a delicate constitution.

TURKISH BATH

These baths can be a delight. After spending time in a hot and then a warm room, the bather washes, dries with a rough towel (making this extra therapeutic for those with *irritable towel syndrome*) and has a *message* (see *message*). The experience is concluded either by a cold shower or a plunge into a cold pool. This is not quite so much a delight.

WAX BATH

Used for those with arthritic and rheumatoid problems, the affected part is dipped several times into wax that has been melted in a thermostatically controlled tank, until the part is coated in wax. Later, the wax is removed and the part (usually still attached) is held under cold running water. For those with emotional problems, a therapeutic and much cheaper *wax bath* can be achieved by placing candles around the edge of the bath.

IMPACT THERAPY

Practised by parents for thousands of years, *impact therapy* is now legally frowned upon. Indeed, although there is the ever present danger that some children may be abused by this method, it once brought inexpressible relief to countless frustrated parents everywhere. Nowadays, impact therapy simply refers to a pressure treatment for pain relief in joints and muscles, although its impact in this area is little known.

INCIDENTAL MEDITATION

This form of meditation is unconsciously practised by many people who find their day to day lives too stressful. Seeking respite, they drift away in their minds to another place, pondering on many different subjects under the sun. Happily, incidental meditation is just as beneficial in bad weather.

INHALATION THERAPY

Basically a stronger version of *aromatherapy*, *inhalation therapy* is the application of substances in a vaporised form through the mouth or nose in order to clear the bronchial tubes and thus cure respiratory diseases. Note that certain vaporised substances should be approached with extreme caution, as they may actually be a causal factor in respiratory diseases.

IRIDOLOGY

An offshoot of herbal medicine, *iridology* (or *iris diagnosis*) is rapidly becoming popular. The only drawback is its restriction to certain times of the year when irises are in flower.

KNEESIOLOGY

Not to be confused with *kinesiology* (balancing health by testing muscle reaction), *kneesiology* concerns the wellbeing gained from the appreciation of knees. It has recently been documented how blood pressure is lowered by the simple stroking of knees, particularly those of an attractive other. However, if an attractive other is not available, stroking one's own knees is not without its own peculiar benefit. Note that *kneesiology* is thus a natural unnatural remedy for *knock-knee*.

MANIPULATIVE THERAPY

This therapy ostensibly involves the manipulative therapist working on a client's body with her/his hands in order to ease muscular tension. However, in order to avoid misunderstanding and lawsuits, the manipulative therapist should show her/his credentials before manipulation commences.

MEGAVITAMIN THERAPY

It has recently become much easier to follow this therapy, due to the proliferation of giant economy size packing of all known and unknown vitamins. Note that it may be necessary to make a mega protest if the government attempts to ban such sales.

MESSAGE

Commonly the province of the upper classes in bygone years, (*message* being an upper-class corruption of *massage*), *message* is now popular with all. Oil is used for different kinds of *message*

strokes, with the aim of stimulation and relaxation. Most people do not mind the mess of the oil, as the benefits are widespread.

MINERAL THERAPY

This unusual pursuit is prevalent among members of Mineral and Mining Clubs. While the general population might not understand the pleasure and wellbeing derived from scrabbling around spoil heaps in the hope of finding mineral samples, the members of such groups are generally healthy, if not a little unbalanced.

MUD THERAPY

This unusual therapy can allegedly be effective for alleged skin disorders, as long as the regime is adhered to (along with the mud). Note that mud therapy has no connections whatsoever with mud wrestling, although some might consider this a therapy in its own (muddy) field.

MUSIC THERAPY

One of the most popular theories practised today, people derive untold pleasure from listening to music (except when singing along to songs such as *Music was my First Love*). Indeed, *music therapy* is simply the rhythm of life received as a healing force. Note, however, that the use of poor quality personal music equipment on public transport can have a very detrimental effect on fellow passengers.

NATUROPATHY

Traditionally understood as a method of activating the body's healing forces, *naturopathy* now also refers to the embracing of a naturist lifestyle. Great care should therefore be taken when engaging the services of a naturopathic therapist (especially one who embraces).

PATTERN THERAPY

Used as an umbrella term for therapies which claim that shapes and patterns influence human life and can help to cure disease, *pattern therapy* is also unsurprisingly used by those who enjoy sewing and knitting.

PRIMER THERAPY

The theory behind *primer therapy* is simply that by concentrating on eye and hand co-ordination, the mind is taken away from debilitating worries. Closely allied to *art therapy*, *primer therapy* can also be applied to (or as) undercoat or gloss coat. Note that a few people are unsuited to *primer therapy*, which frustrates and upsets them to the point that they actually scream.

PSYCHODRAMA

Psychodrama can be classified as a form of *electrocompulsive therapy*. It therefore almost goes without saying that care should be taken if this form of therapy is sought, as many people find psychological dramas inherently disturbing.

PUNCTURE

Overshadowed by the ancient Chinese therapy of *acupuncture*, *puncture* is a method that should be used with extreme caution and only by trained needle experts. The benefits of puncture are sparsely documented and research in this area is full of holes.

RADIONICS

The face of *radionics* has changed broadly in recent years with the advent of digitalisation. Once a useful therapy for those who enjoyed tweaking tuning knobs, the greater benefit of *radionics* is now found by hard-core users who band together in Radio Amateur clubs.

REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology is an ancient Oriental practice concentrating on the feet. The tickling reflex is activated on a client's foot by a trained reflexologist, usually resulting in beneficial laughter. Sometimes the client will also find this procedure mildly amusing. Do bear in mind that some reflexologists wear protective clothing as a guard against an adverse reflex action on the part of the client.

SOUND THERAPY

Closely allied to *cymatics*, *sound therapy* is based on gaining health from good vibrations (not to be confused with good vibrators). Each part of the body is believed to have natural resonance and to respond to sounds that vibrate in harmony with it. Thus the therapist will direct harmonious waves (good vibrations) at troubled body parts. Most clients (and therapists) therefore prefer to work on a one-to-one basis.

SYSTEMATIC RELAXATION

Favoured by many males, this form of self-help therapy is practised widely at evenings and weekends. Several levels of relaxation can be attained, with the ultimate goal of falling asleep. While many people like to work their way through the different levels, some are able to attain sleep almost instantly.

THOUGHT COUNTERING

Another self-help remedy for a wide range of conditions, *thought countering* is simply the replacement of unhelpful, potentially damaging thoughts by neutral non-emotive ones. When someone is in a fearful/ stressful situation, the process of transporting oneself by imagination into a shop, about to purchase a desirable item at the counter, will help to alleviate the fear. Note that this remedy will be counter productive for shopaholics.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Typified by the maxim 'I'm OK - You're OK', *transactional analysis* basically involves the building of better relationships. While some people find it a little hard to work with, many others find it OK.

VOICE THERAPY

Humans express themselves by the way they speak. However, some people have difficulty expressing themselves in an appropriate way and so the voice therapist will address this with special vocal and breathing exercises. Sometimes the client will be allowed to join in. A less expensive variety of *voice therapy* is simply to find an open space and to use one's voice in any way one likes. Note that this kind of exercise is best undertaken alone and in a remote setting, away from small babies and housing estates.

ZONE THERAPY

Once the original name for *reflexology*, *zone therapy* now refers to a form of sexual healing involving the erogenous zones. It currently enjoys the position of being one of the most up and coming therapies.

