

## FEMININE FORCES

Womb healing is growing in popularity for its ability to treat a range of female health issues, and may be key to unlocking a woman's sensuality and creativity

Writer Beverly Cheng

YOUNG PREGNANT WOMAN EXPECTING A BABY. HAPPY PARENTS IN A NURSERY.



Unless you're thinking of getting pregnant, chances are you haven't thought about your womb lately.

Also known as the uterus, it's where a foetus develops once a woman is pregnant, and an organ connected to hormonal balance, menstruation and sexuality. Despite its importance in maintaining feminine health, I only considered it upon a friend recommended a womb-healing workshop by chance.

On a chilly spring day in Toronto, I find myself amongst a group of women gathered in a revamped factory co-working space. We sip herbal tea while waiting for the womb healing circle to begin, and after introductions, our guides Clare Kenty and Deborah Brody fling open the doors and invite us into the large, dimly lit space with burning sandalwood incense. We sit on

cushions strewn on the floor encircling a beautiful altar adorned with multicoloured crystals and sacred artefacts, with rose petals and glowing candles of all shapes and sizes.

Before we begin the group meditation, participants are asked to set an intention, and share it aloud. Some women are searching for direction in their professional lives, while others in our circle were recovering from sexual trauma. A few of us want to get pregnant and others are recovering postpartum. We join hands briefly in a sacred circle and choose from a deck of angel cards. I draw the Pacha Mama card, earth and fertility goddess revered in South America, or Mother Nature in the West, which seems fitting since I was initially attracted to womb healing to find out more about my own fertility.

It's clear how disconnected I am from

this part of my body when asked to press my palm into the area and breathe deeply into it. Standing still with knees slightly bent, we're told to visualise our energy flow from the top of our heads down to every point of our bodies and into the womb, before releasing it through our yoni. Kenty burns sage and Brody plays singing bowls, filling the room with an earthy, herbal aroma and ethereal vibrational sounds. Some of the women in the circle gyrate while others make whooping sounds as we're encouraged to let go of every inhibition. Truth be told, I'm quite overwhelmed. But when we're finally asked to lie down and ground ourselves, I'm rendered into a deep state of relaxation and connectedness. With my warm hands still placed on my womb, I begin to feel the slightest sensation and newfound awareness.



When asked why there's a need for monthly womb-healing circles, Brody says, "Women have been through so much collectively throughout history that's been passed from mother to daughter over many generations. We've endured sexual aggression and suppression, and been denied the full expression of our innate feminine qualities which has led to unresolved trauma stored in our bodies that then manifest into diseases. By

reconnecting with our wombs and each other, we can build communities and be well again."

## THE PHYSICAL REALM

"Your womb is directly above your pubic bone," says Shoshana Weinberg, Four Seasons' senior spa director Asia Pacific and wellness industry leader, as she directs

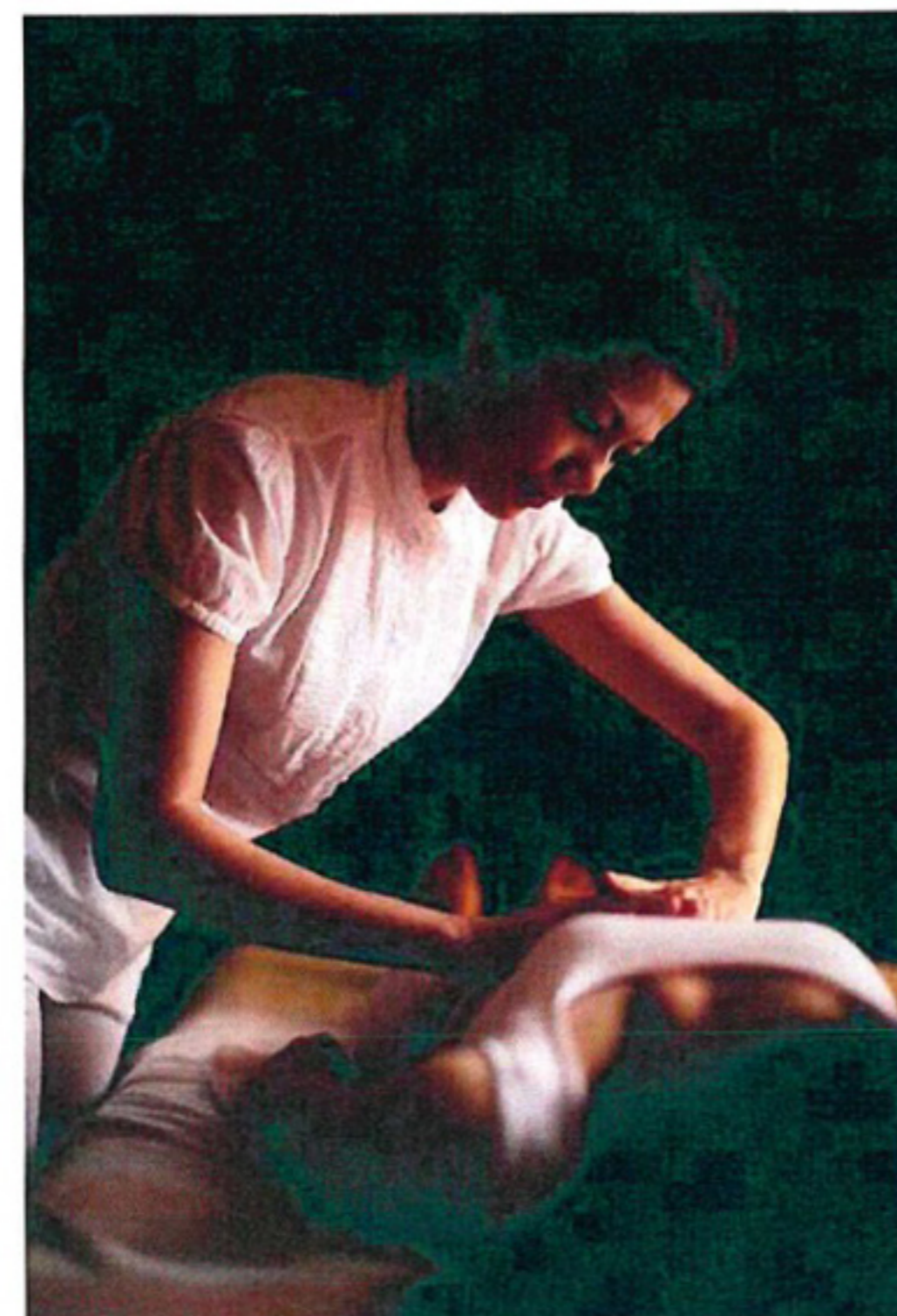
me to feel my way to my womb while standing straight. After having trouble conceiving, Weinberg sought out the Arvigo Mayan massage method and attributes the treatment to helping her become a mum of two. She later discovered that the treatment benefited many other women.

The Arvigo massage technique is based on the Mayan belief that the womb is a woman's centre and if it is out of balance, so is she. Having a 'wandering womb' whereby the uterus is prolapsed or tipped to one side is believed to cause constricted blood flow into the uterus and its neighbouring ovaries, bladder and bowel, which if untreated can produce a range of symptoms such as endometriosis, fibroids, polycystic ovaries, PMS, painful menstrual cramps, chronic constipation, digestive issues and urinary tract infections.

By externally massaging the ligaments, tissues and muscles surrounding the uterus and ovaries, the treatment manipulates it back into alignment to restore your body's natural balance and flow. Similar womb massage methods have been passed down from midwives from Latin America and Southeast Asia.

"A key indicator of a good womb positioning is if your period is bright red with no clots, and you don't have any period pains, cramps, back aches,

WOMAN: JEFFREY J. JARRELL; UTERUS: JEFFREY J. JARRELL; UTERUS: JEFFREY J. JARRELL; UTERUS: JEFFREY J. JARRELL



## FREE FLOW

"Women are very disconnected with their wombs because it's an organ we can't see," explains Dr Amy Morris of Awaken Chiropractic in Singapore. She runs womb healing and self-care workshops, and is one of the only practitioners in the city to perform womb-lifting therapies. The Thai stomach massage technique Dr Morris practises realigns the womb to help alleviate symptoms including menstrual disorders, menopause, fertility challenges, while assisting in regulating hormonal imbalances. She believes the treatment can aid women suffering from past sexual trauma or who have low libidos.

"The body is wise and when we look deeper at certain physical symptoms, we see that it can be caused by an emotional blockage or trauma from the past," says Dr Morris. "As women we have so much power in our bodies that's forgotten, and when we get in touch with that power by releasing emotional and traumatic blockages, we can actually become more healthy, vibrant and creative beings."

The womb's connection to sexuality and pleasure are also evident in reiki and crystal healing, as the organ is the sacral chakra energy centre, believed to relate to sensuality and creativity. "When this chakra is blocked, a person can feel a lack of sexual desire, emotionally repressed, undeserving of pleasure, numb or disconnected from others," explains Sonia Samtani, founder of All About You Centre in Hong Kong. "Often the cause of our sacral chakra being blocked is unresolved guilt that needs to be released."

By freeing the emotional bondages of past experiences, women can become more in touch with their true selves and tap into their inner prowess and creativity. Dr Morris' goal is to improve the health and confidence of her patients through her womb-healing work. "I want women to return to a state of empowerment that gives them the freedom to embrace their sensual, flowing feminine qualities," she says. "We live in a masculine-driven world, and of course there's value to the masculine qualities of presence, focus, achievement and drive. However the feminine forces are ones that are flowing—creativity, emotion and intuition. When we can combine the two there's more magic and power in the world." Womb healing may be key to restoring this natural balance and order, one woman at a time. ✓

headache or a bloated stomach, says Karen Loke, founder of Restoring Mums and mother of three. "Most people call these symptoms 'PMS' and treat themselves with painkillers and medicine, but part of the cause is their womb is not in the right place."

Loke believes that womb wellness is especially important for women who have recently given birth, which she learnt firsthand after putting on weight and showing immediate signs of ageing after the birth of her first child. She followed midwives in her native Malaysia who imparted their knowledge of postnatal massage in restoring the physiques of new mothers. She found more anatomical and scientific-

backed trainings in Arvigo and Mercier techniques, and has since developed her own range of treatments at Restoring Mums fusing multiple mediums.

In addition to womb-healing therapies, Loke also offers relaxing prenatal massages and postnatal services range from belly binding to massages designed to get new mums back into shape. The now mother of three says, "Malays believe that a womb reflects a woman's health. If it's not in place, it will affect how you age. The first step to anti-ageing is taking care of your womb after you've given birth. I believe that maintaining your womb can make you look much younger after childbirth."

