

# Reiki and the Dying

A Guide for Reiki Practitioners



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We all die, but we live in a culture that fears death and generally tries to hide death from public view. We often avoid thinking about or preparing for our own death or those of our loved ones, so it is not surprising that many people fight death when the time comes for them to transition from this life.

As Reiki practitioners, it is important to remember that it is possible to bring healing to someone even when there is no change in their physical state or even in delaying death. Sometimes the most healing thing we can do is to let the Reiki energy offer comfort and reassurance to a dying person so they are able to let go of this life in peace. In the whole process of staying present with the person through this process, we can support someone in the process of this transition to ease their passage into the next phase of their journey, potentially help heal old emotional wounds they may still be carrying, and help relieve any physical pain they may be experiencing to bring them added comfort and peace during their remaining time in this life.

This guide provides some suggestions for Reiki practitioners of all levels to use Reiki to support people during this time. These tips can be used for someone who is dying in hospice care, in the hospital, or at home. An increasing number of hospitals and hospice facilities are now offering Reiki through trained staff members and/or volunteers to their patients. However, if you plan to work or volunteer in a hospital or hospice program, make sure you understand what is and is not allowed by that particular facility in the treatment of their patients.

### Tips for Giving Reiki to the Dying

- Give Reiki to any parts of the person's body that are particularly painful or uncomfortable to help relieve physical discomfort. Touch may be particularly comforting at this time, but if the person is in enough pain to make that challenging, remember that Reiki can still be shared by holding your hands just above the body.
- Hold the person's hand to provide comfort and support and allow the Reiki to flow through that connection to wherever it is needed. The sense of connection and comfort from someone holding our hand is very powerful.
- Administering Reiki to the person's chest area may be helpful in allowing the heart to release its attachment to this life and welcome the transition.
- Administering Reiki to the standard positions around the person's head may help the person to feel more secure and thus to release this life peacefully.



- Sometimes people who are dying hold a lot of fear in their knees. Treating their legs, knees, and feet with Reiki may help to release some of this energy and tension to facilitate their trust in the process so they can let go.
- At this time, a full Reiki treatment—either done intuitively or with the standard hand positions—may also be a great aid in providing comfort during the person’s final days. This is particularly true if the person has been ill or in pain for some time and is suffering.

## Distance Reiki

If someone you know is dying and you are not able to be present with them due to distance, distance Reiki can also be done for the dying using the usual techniques. This will not only bring them comfort, but it may also help your own process of letting go of your loved one by knowing that you were able to ease them through this transition. It can be a way for you to say goodbye even when you are not able to be physically present.

## Reiki for Caregivers

Although being present for someone as they transition from this life can be a very powerful experience, the process of providing care for the dying can be very stressful. Many hospice employees find that receiving Reiki can help them deal with the stress and sadness that comes with the job.

For people who are providing care to their loved ones at home during this time, the stress of the caretaking is amplified by the grief they are experiencing at the impending loss of someone they love. Giving Reiki to these caretakers as well as to the person who is dying can be of great benefit in allowing everyone to approach the time of death with the greatest amount of peace and comfort possible.

If you are the caregiver, be sure to keep up your practice of self-Reiki treatments during this time, but also remember that the process of giving Reiki to your loved one provides Reiki to you as well as to the receiver. By giving your loved one Reiki during this time, you can provide healing to both of you.

## Bereavement

Reiki is also an important source of emotional healing and can be a great help during the time of grief that family and friends experience after the loss of a loved one. While Reiki will not eliminate the pain or loss or the need to work through the stages of grief, it can help ease the process and assist people in letting go. Of particular help during times of grief are the hand positions on the head, the upper chest (near the heart chakra), the lower abdomen, and the lower back. This is true for self-Reiki when you are experiencing grief and bereavement and for helping others through their own grief.



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## About the author

Kenetha Stanton began practicing yoga in 2001 for the stretching and stress relief benefits, but she found that with regular practice, yoga also better grounded her in her body, giving her a greater ability to be present in the moment and to non-judgmentally observe her thoughts and emotions. As a former scientist who tends to live too often in her head, this grounding proved to be better than any therapy she'd ever tried for treating her ongoing struggles with depression.



In 2011, she completed CITYOGA's 200-hour teacher training program with Nikki Myers and Marsha Pappas and became a registered yoga teacher (RYT-200) with Yoga Alliance to be able to share her passion for yoga with others. She teaches beginning, gentle, and hatha yoga. She plans to continue her studies in methods for using yoga therapeutically for personal transformation.

Kenetha has also been a Reiki Master since March 2010 after studying with Christine McKenna of Heart Spirals in Bloomington, IN. She is currently working toward her Master/Teacher certification.

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