



Choosing a Reiki Practitioner

by Pamela Miles, Reiki master

Pamela Miles is an integrative health care consultant in New York City and Reiki master practicing since 1986 who has pioneered Reiki practice in hospitals and academic medical settings, including Harvard, Yale and the NIH. A leading spokesperson for Reiki practice in the media (*The Dr. Oz Show*, *U. S. News & World Report*, *Allure*, etc.), she is the author of *REIKI: A Comprehensive Guide* and various peer-reviewed medical papers and magazine articles. More resources available at ReikiInMedicine.org.

The following questions are useful when interviewing a prospective Reiki professional, or evaluating information from websites. Most of them simply gather information that needs to be evaluated as a whole; the last one is a deal-breaker.

When were you trained to each level that you practice?

It's optimal for each level of Reiki training to be given separately, with adequate time to practice before going to the next level. You need only a First degree practitioner to give you hands-on treatment.

How many hours was your training at each level?

Eight to 12 hours of a group class is adequate for First or again for Second degree. There is much controversy about Reiki master training. Traditionally, becoming a Reiki master was a serious commitment to teach that was offered to only a handful of senior students. This is rarely honored today. Most Reiki masters don't even teach, so you really have to consider what being a Reiki master means to the individual, and what's important to you.

Was your training in-person with a Reiki Master?

Internet training does not replace the onsite presence of a qualified Reiki master and her availability to provide you continuing support.

What clinical experience do you have?

Have you offered Reiki treatment to people outside your family and friends (and pets, if applicable)?

This question will help you get to know the practitioner better, and provides valuable information for you to factor into your choice. Remember that a practitioner need not be a professional to give you a treatment, but if someone is advertising himself as a professional and charging you, he should have the training and experience to back it up.

What happens during your Reiki sessions?

I'd take it as a bad sign if the practitioner gets all cosmic on you at this point. What you're looking for here is a down-to-earth description of the experience, that you will lie fully clothed on a treatment table, that the practitioner will place hands lightly and non-invasively, how long the session will last, that you will be receiving a Reiki-only session (no crystals, no massage, etc., unless, of course, that is your choice).

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Where will the Reiki session take place?

Expect a professional to have a private, dedicated treatment space and to offer you a choice of silence or soft background music during your Reiki treatment.

What is the fee and how/when is it paid?

Fees for Reiki treatment vary enormously depending on location, the practitioner's level of experience, and whether she practices Reiki full time or has another source of income. Keep looking until you find a situation that is financially comfortable for you. Remember you can also forego treatment from someone else, and choose to learn to practice First degree self-treatment, a one-time investment that pays lifelong dividends.

What is your unique perspective as a Reiki practitioner?

This is where the practitioner has a chance to shine and show you how professional he is, or you may watch him dive off the deep end...

Do you practice Reiki self-treatment every day?

Here is the absolute DEALBREAKER. (Did I emphasize that enough?) Daily self-practice is how we develop our understanding of Reiki. Someone who recognizes Reiki as a spiritual healing practice (like meditation and yoga) and who actually practices daily self-treatment is able to support you with greater depth and confidence than someone who regards Reiki merely as a treatment for others, or for when she's not feeling well. Why would you want to receive a treatment from a practitioner who doesn't value Reiki enough to use it to protect and maintain her own health and well-being?