

Back to Life After Cancer

How Subtle Body Balance by the Goethert Method Supports Recovery

A cancer diagnosis is always a profound shock, and the subsequent treatments can be extremely hard on patients. Even once the disease has been overcome or surgery has been completed, life rarely returns to what it was before. Something has fallen out of balance, and the healing process can be long and demanding. Persistent pain, physical limitations, depleted energy reserves, and emotional strain are common. A novel approach that includes the subtle body in the recovery process can help restore equilibrium.

The subtle body surrounds and permeates the physical body for as long as we live. In a healthy state, it can be felt by hand at a distance of around 15 centimeters from the body. Its function is to maintain our life force and animate the physical matter of our body. This subtle “life force field” is likely what distinguishes living beings from inanimate matter.

When the Subtle Body Suffers

Medical crises – and particularly exhausting treatments such as chemotherapy – can also impact the subtle body. Understanding how to restore its function is therefore essential. *Subtle Body Balance* (SBB), developed over decades of research and practice within the Goethert Method, reactivates and mobilizes the subtle body’s healing potential.

Integrating the subtle body into recovery may improve well-being, reduce pain, strengthen the autonomic nervous system, support self-healing mechanisms, and accelerate a patient’s return to an active life. Most of us become aware of how vital inner balance is only once inner disorder and its consequences have set in. But where does this balance come from?

There is, in fact, a part of us – the subtle body – that strives to maintain this equilibrium. It appears to carry within it the ideal state of physical and inner health, consistently trying to restore it. Heart rate variability (HRV) measurements have even demonstrated that the subtle body is directly connected to the autonomic nervous system. This makes it highly relevant for lifestyle medicine and post-treatment recovery.

Case Study: Sabine, Breast Cancer Patient

Sabine’s story illustrates how profoundly cancer can disrupt physical and emotional balance. After being diagnosed with breast cancer in her late fifties, she had to close her naturopathy practice, which she had built over decades. Surgery was followed by chemotherapy, then a second surgery to remove remaining tissue. Medically speaking, she has now overcome the disease – yet returning to everyday life is anything but easy. A year after completing her cancer treatments, Sabine comes to my practice and describes her daily struggles.

The employment agency is sending her to training programs and internships as she hopes to retrain as an office administrator. But an overwhelming fatigue makes it nearly impossible for her to function. She repeatedly falls asleep at the computer, often at the moments she tries hardest to concentrate. Her energy drops sharply after noon; in the evenings, she sometimes experiences memory lapses and cannot recall what she did or where she left her belongings.

Despite exhaustion, it still takes her an eternity to fall asleep. She wakes multiple times during the night – especially when her pain increases in the late hours. Her nerves have been damaged by treatments and surgery. She experiences persistent pain in her feet, hands, legs, shoulders, and head, as well as along her scars, which feel like burning hot needles. Since the breast surgery, she cannot lift her left arm.

The Subtle Body – A Forgotten Masterpiece

Hoping for relief, Sabine joins a study examining the effects of Subtle Body Balance. Over three months, she undergoes several 24-hour HRV measurements to assess her physiological condition, and detailed interviews track changes in her well-being. During this time, she receives six SBB sessions from a trained practitioner and learns exercises she can use daily.

All interventions take place exclusively at the subtle-body level, making it possible to understand how this long-overlooked aspect of human nature influences recovery.

Even after three decades of studying and treating the subtle body, I am still amazed at what this intricate system can achieve once it regains its natural function and vitality. As Sabine's case shows, improvements may occur in:

- Regulation of the autonomic nervous system
- Pain perception
- Self-healing capacity
- Emotional balance
- Concentration and mental presence
- Physical mobility
- Muscle relaxation
- Breathing
- Sleep quality
- Immune function
- Circulation, blood pressure, and temperature regulation

One insight has proven especially important: recovery begins when a person becomes *aware* of their subtle body. The Subtle Body Balance treatment was developed from this discovery. The method is easy to learn and can be integrated into various therapeutic modalities.

How Subtle Body Balance Reactivates the Subtle Body

The aim of SBB is to “switch on” the subtle body – to activate it as a whole and restore its functionality. The approach is strikingly simple: the practitioner guides the individual to *perceive* their subtle body directly. Not as an abstract idea, but as a tangible sensation – much like feeling or touching the physical body.

Each session begins with instructions to sense the subtle body by holding the hand about 15 cm (6 inches) in front of the chest. Most people manage this on their very first try. This simple, self-generated contact creates immediate, noticeable, and measurable effects. It is a form of self-care we were never taught, yet it is astonishingly accessible.

Additional techniques follow, and after only three sessions, most patients can perform these exercises independently at home.

SBB also includes a 20-minute treatment on a treatment table. The practitioner gently scans the patient's subtle body from head to toe without touching their physical body. What happens can be described as passive activation or frequency-based resonance.

The practitioner's active subtle body sends out a signal – like a tuning fork – that brings the patient's subtle body into healthy vibration. No intention, manipulation, or energy “transfer” is involved. The healing effect arises from the interaction between two subtle bodies. Even experienced practitioners of energy work are often surprised by the distinct quality of SBB.

A New Experience – Even for Professionals

Sabine, an experienced naturopath, assumed she was already familiar with subtle-body work through kinesiology and energy techniques. After experiencing Subtle Body Balance, however, she realized the Goethert Method offered a fundamentally different approach.

She had never known she could feel her subtle body so precisely – and that it could feel so good to touch it with her hand. Although she was not physically touched during the treatment, she could clearly sense where the practitioner's hand was, accompanied by an intense inner flow.

Unlike energy techniques, she did not feel acted upon; instead, she sensed something within herself coming alive and moving into action.

HRV Results: A Remarkable Physiological Response

The HRV measurements confirm Sabine's experience. As in nearly all study participants, her autonomic nervous system reacts the moment her subtle body is touched – whether by her own hand or by the practitioner. Her vagus nerve activates instantly: the pNN50 value rises up to 600 percent above her daily average. Subtle Body Balance clearly stimulates autoregulation and self-healing, which is especially beneficial for Sabine, whose vagus nerve had previously shown very low activity – a common feature in severe illnesses that impair the body's natural recovery mechanisms.

In addition to parasympathetic activation, the metrics associated with mental and physical readiness – the very qualities Sabine struggled with – also rise. Her heart rate during SBB drops even lower than in deep sleep, showing not the slightest sign of stress.

Strengthening the Entire System

Her autonomic nervous system – responsible for the body's internal regulation – enters an ideal state for a measurable period, and with each session, this effect lasts longer. Dr. Alfred Lohninger, the renowned HRV expert overseeing the study, described this pattern as *“training for the autonomic nervous system.”* Each session leads to stronger activation than the one before. After her fifth session, Sabine's Total Power reaches a peak of 11,650 msec² – a value usually seen in high-performance athletes. Given her medical history, this is astonishing.

High HRV indicates that repair processes are underway and that the body's rhythms are returning to coherence – the very balance we depend on for health. The subtle body appears capable of restoring this balance, forming the foundation for healing and well-being. Even more encouraging: the improvements are sustainable. Within three months, Sabine's average Total Power doubles compared to her baseline measurements.

A Clear Turning Point

Sabine herself describes the transformation vividly:

“Since the treatments, I feel more centered – like a focused martial artist who acts from stillness. It is a feeling of strength, safety, and being grounded. I have more trust in myself and in life. I no longer worry obsessively about the future; I look ahead relaxed. I'm more active, everything flows more easily – and I even sing again, something I couldn't do during my illness.”

Alertness and Focus

Since her third session, she has practiced the SBB exercises on her own:

“After feeling my subtle body, my mood lifts. I’m less drowsy and less affected by what’s around me. When I get tired around midday, 10 minutes of subtle-body sensing brings my concentration back – I’m even more alert than after drinking coffee.”

Sleep

Her sleep has also improved:

“After the third session, I slept through the night for the first time in ages – eight hours straight. I felt rested in the morning. Since then, I sleep more deeply. If I wake at night and sense my subtle body, I fall asleep much faster. During the day I’m more awake and able to process things.”

Pain

Her once-constant pain has significantly diminished:

“The pain at my scars comes less frequently, usually at night. Then I sense my subtle body, and the discomfort eases – I don’t need medication.”

Mobility and Strength

After her very first Subtle Body Balance session, she was able to lift her left arm for the first time since surgery. She feels her muscles responding differently, her body warmer and more alive. She no longer craves quick carbohydrate boosts – her strength now comes from within. Her immune system seems stronger too: despite exposure, she did not catch her husband’s cold. Friends tell her she looks healthier, more radiant.

This matches my own impression: during her sixth session, she appears upright, awake, and fully present. She no longer mentions fatigue or pain. She tells us about her successful first day at a new job. Sabine has returned to life.

Conclusion

The Goethert Method is a powerful support for people navigating serious illness or recovering from surgery. The lingering aftereffects of demanding treatments can be eased with Subtle Body Balance. These treatments activate the subtle body’s healing forces, helping patients regain balance, vitality, and trust in their bodies. As the study shows, patients rediscover their inner coherence – and become fully themselves again.

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Literature

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Ronald Goethert, author and founder of the Goethert Method, is a leading expert in subtle-body health. His groundbreaking research, extensive practical experience, and deep knowledge form the foundation of seminars, subtle-body therapies, and professional Subtle Body Balance training programs.