

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/088
COMPLAINANT	D Ryan
ADVERTISER	The Shakti Acupressure Mat NZ
ADVERTISEMENT	The Shakti Acupressure Mat NZ Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	18 April 2017
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The advertisement for the Shakti Acupressure Mat on www.shaktimat.co.nz, makes therapeutic claims about the efficacy of the acupressure mat in treating a range of conditions.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, D Ryan, said:

Shakti is breaking the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code, PRINCIPLE 1: Rule 1(b), Rule 1(c); PRINCIPLE 2: Rule 2(a), Rule 2(f).

On their home page (www.shaktimat.co.nz) they quote:

"It stimulates pressure points to encourage healing in the body."

"Shakti Acupressure Mat provides millions with relief from stress, sleep problems, muscle tension, back pain and headaches."

"Take 20 minutes to feel yourself sink into deep relaxation while your whole body receives a therapeutic treatment."

"USE THIS SAFE AND NATURAL METHOD TO HELP REDUCE AND ELIMINATE Sleeping problems, Headaches, Back Pain, Muscle tension, Arthritis, Sciatica, Poor circulation, Stiff joints, Stress"

"First, a rush of circulation to the area radiates warmth through the muscles encouraging healing and flushing out toxins. Next the body releases endorphins - our own natural and effective pain relief. "

"After a 20 minute session the feeling is entirely different and you will feel pain free, relaxed and at ease lying on The Shakti Mat. Within the first week of use you can look forward to better sleep, reduced muscle tension, better circulation and a reduction in stress."

"The effectiveness of The Shakti Mat is supported by medical experts, clinical research and trusted by world-class athletes."

On their FAQ page (www.shaktimat.co.nz/pages/frequently-asked-questions) they quote:

"Is it good for people with fibromyalgia, rheumatism or arthritis to use the Shakti Mat?"

Yes. Many people feel positive benefits with regular use."

(www.shaktimat.co.nz/collections/all/products/shakti-mat-advanced-blue) they quote:

"The Shakti Mat Advanced is designed for those who want a substantially more profound experience in combatting stress, muscle tension and sleep problems by providing circulation and acupressure simultaneously."

(www.shaktimat.co.nz/collections/all/products/shakti-mat-original-orange) they quote:

"The Original Shakti Mat is designed to help combat stress, muscle tension and sleep problems by providing circulation and acupressure"

On (www.shaktimat.co.nz/pages/4-ways-to-use-your-mat-for-better-health) they quote:

"You can expect:...A boost in circulation' Improved energy levels"...An immediate reduction in shoulder and neck tension,....Rapid relief from headaches,...Warmth into the neck and shoulders from a vast boost in circulation,....A release of endorphins, your body's natural feel good hormone,.....Endorphin release will calm the symptoms of a migraine or headache while increased circulation and reduced muscle tension can work to remove the underlying cause."...

You can expect...To be put into a deep, relaxed state,...Relief from upper, lower and middle back pain,...A release of muscle tension. This relieves the pressure on the spine, pinched nerves and restores normal blood circulation to the area

A noticeable reduction in stress. Chronic stress is the leading cause of a vast number of mental and physical ailments today

Using your Shakti Mat as part of your bedtime routine prepares the body for a deep restful sleep."

"You can expect:.....Relief from restless leg syndrome

As we age, our joints and inter-vertebral discs start to degenerate from the lack of nutrients and hydration. Stimulation the Shakti Mat provides increases blood-circulation, which helps bring oxygen, nutrients, pain reducing and anti-inflammatory hormones to the joints, bones, muscles and other damaged tissue."

"As an acupuncturist, I have found The Shakti Mat really valuable for many of my clients. For athletes and sports people it is a useful tool to help with circulation pre and post race and muscle recovery. For people with insomnia or stress, I get them to lie on The Shakti Mat for 10-20 minutes before bed."

Looking at the scientific evidence, there are only low quality (mostly Pilot) studies and there are many serious claims here that are not covered by any studies.

The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Guideline 1(b), Guideline 1(c), Guideline 2(a), Guideline 2(f), Principle 1, Principle 2.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concerns that the advertisement made unsubstantiated claims about the effectiveness of the Acupressure Mat, which were misleading.

The Chair acknowledged that upon receipt of the complaint, the Advertiser had amended the advertisement, removing references which were of concern.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the website, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled**