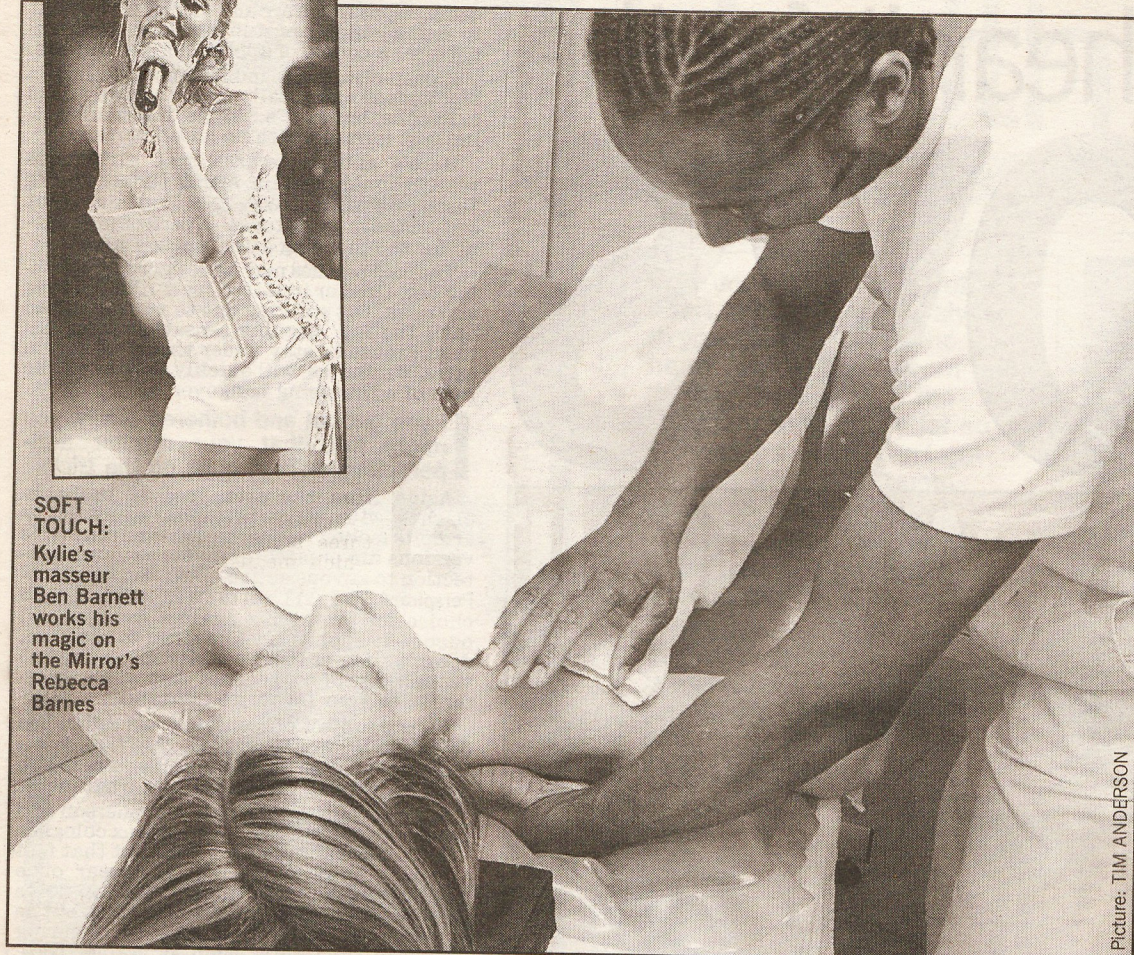


## SOFT TOUCH:

Kylie's masseur Ben Barnett works his magic on the Mirror's Rebecca Barnes



Picture: TIM ANDERSON

# Healing hands of Kylie's man

**B**EN Barnett has what many men would think is the best job on the planet – massaging Kylie Minogue.

The holistic massage therapist has provided hands-on healing and relaxation for Kylie for more than two years – and if he's good enough to be masseur to the pop princess, he's good enough for me ...

Ben's method of transformational massage works on a physical, mental and spiritual level.

He combines Reiki hands-on healing with guided meditation and Hydrotherm massage, which involves lying on a warm, water-filled bed.

Ben tells me: "It's similar to any massage in that it's hands-on and I work against the skin using oils, but it's different in that I combine Hydrotherm and Reiki with intuitive direction – helping clients focus on emotional issues."

Ben outlines the instant yet lasting benefits of the massage.

His massage therapy has been a blessing to the Aussie pop diva – and it worked wonders on **REBECCA BARNES**

on the Hydrotherm bed, looking forward to leaving a week of late nights behind me and emerging a new woman.

Ben asks me if there are any areas I'd like him to concentrate on, and I tell him that hours working at my computer have left me with a tense, aching neck and shoulders.

He begins the massage, starting with my feet and working upwards, non-stop all over my body, his technique far lighter and gentler than other masseurs I've been to.

And while others tend to work in silence, Ben's soothing voice prompts me to become more aware of my thoughts and my body's feelings and responses, while encouraging relaxation from top to toe.

He explains that 'letting go' in this way can sometimes stimulate a

slight fluttering around my abdomen, nervous 'butterflies'. Ben tells me that this is connected to attachment, vulnerability and the fear of loss.

Despite the feeling, my treatment is incredibly relaxing and, as promised, my mind feels amazingly clear and focused. Later, as I embark upon the chaos of London's Oxford Street, my whole body feels energised and the tension in my shoulders and neck has loosened up considerably.

I feel noticeably more awake, alert and energised. And the massage has given me such a terrific mood lift that I end up hitting the shops, Kylie-style.

● Treatments with Ben Barnett cost from £38 per hour. For an



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Ben outlines the instant yet lasting benefits of the massage.

These include giving clients "a greater understanding of the connection between the emotional and physical" and a feeling of deep relaxation to leave them feeling mentally clear, refreshed and energised.

"I'd do a session with Kylie after she'd been on stage," he tells me. "I'd get her to focus on her breathing, which relaxed her voice. The Hydrotherm also had a positive physical effect and I'd stretch her limbs so she wouldn't hold muscle tensions the next day. It was about getting the body into a state where she'd recover as quickly as possible."

"I also got her to focus on where certain emotional issues were held in the body. Afterwards she'd get a feeling of lightness." I lie on my back

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And while others tend to work in silence, Ben's soothing voice prompts me to become more aware of my thoughts and my body's feelings and responses, while encouraging relaxation from top to toe.

He explains that 'letting go' in this way can sometimes stimulate a release of pent-up feelings and emotions – some people break down in tears. And it's not as silly as it sounds – I'm beginning to feel a

slight fluttering around my abdomen, nervous 'butterflies'. Ben tells me that this is connected to attachment, vulnerability and the fear of loss.

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## Benefits of massage:

*Massage can ease muscle tension and help anxiety, stress and insomnia. It can produce physical effects in the blood and lymphatic system, and can stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers.*

## Healing massage:

**Shiatsu.** Based on

traditional Chinese medicine, Shiatsu originated in Japan. Therapists may use arms, elbows, knees and feet – as well as fingers and hands – to stimulate pressure points over the meridians, through which a person's life-force is believed to flow.

**Ayurvedic.** Ayurveda, which means 'the science of life', originated in Southern India and is one of the oldest forms of

holistic therapy. Ayurvedic massage helps to relieve stress and is believed to balance internal forces.

**Reiki.** Pronounced 'raykee', this ancient method of hands-on healing is thought to have originated in Tibet, then came to Japan a century ago. Healing energy is believed to be transmitted through the therapist's hands, breaking up energy blockages.