Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) affects around five to ten per cent of the adult population and the majority of these are women. It can occur regularly or intermittently and while it does affect younger people, it’s more common in those in their fifth and subsequent decades of life. Diabetes, anaemia, uraemia, alcoholism and rheumatoid arthritis are all associated with the condition and RLS risk increases with pregnancy.

The condition itself, as the name implies, involves unease, pain, twitching or restlessness in the legs that occurs after going to bed and is usually improved by movement. The cause of RLS isn’t well understood but, from an orthodox medical perspective, it’s thought to be associated with iron deficiency. In one third to one half of sufferers there is a familial history. Anti-depressants, calcium channel blockers, antihistamines and several other classes of drugs may also be associated with RLS.

Medically, there’s no real solution to this problem, which is why most sufferers tend to end up in non-medical healthcare clinics. In some cases it may be worth trying tryptophan and magnesium as a means of dealing with RLS, but this is usually only effective if there are clinical signs of a tryptophan and/or magnesium deficiency already present. Iron, folate or vitamin E may also be lacking in this condition and dealing with any deficiencies in these areas can have benefits in RLS. Any or all of these measures may relieve the condition in time, but the appropriately selected homeopathic medicine can provide fast and prolonged relief.

A number of notable authorities in homeopathy have mentioned remedies that you may find useful for the sufferers of this condition. Following is a list of suggested homeopathic remedies for RLS accompanied by some of their more relevant differentiating symptoms.

**Arsenicum album**

The *Arsenicum* type is characteristically anxious, fearful, obsessive, tired (particularly after the slightest exertion) and restless. There is uneasiness in their lower limbs; they must move their feet constantly and cannot lie still at night. They often complain of cramps in the calves. Symptoms are improved by heat and elevating the head and worse from cold and wet weather.

**Causticum**

Idealism, sensitivity to authority and an intolerance of injustice may be seen in the person who responds to this remedy. They have a history of rheumatic, arthritic or paralytic complaints and respiratory congestion. They have restless legs at night with numbness, tearing pains in the joints, and their knee joints are subject to cracking sounds. Symptoms are improved by warmth or dampness and wet weather, and are made worse by cold, dry weather.

**Kali carbonicum**

The person who responds to *Kali carb* is often dogmatic and conservative, and may be susceptible to arthritic complaints, respiratory tract congestion and asthma. Their RLS is often characterised by jerking, twitching, stitching or tearing pains which often wake the sufferer at around 2 to 4 am. Symptoms are better for warm weather and worse for cold weather.

**Lycopodium**

The *Lycopodium* type may appear to suffer from feelings of inferiority or egotism and often has associated digestive disorders involving flatulence and/or issues to do with the liver. They often end up with their feet sticking out from under the bedclothes. This type’s RLS symptoms are commonly more pronounced from 3 to 8 pm and are more noticeable on the right side. Symptoms are better after midnight, better for uncovering and from getting cold. They are worse from the warmth of the bed.

**Magnesia carbonica**

This remedy type often displays a sad and taciturn nature with hyperacidity, dryness of mucus membranes, a sour body odour and a craving for meat. The legs and feet feel tired; the legs become restless, particularly the lower legs, and this is particularly noticeable after sitting for long periods. The symptoms specific for RLS here involve cramping, sharp pains and weakness of the calves, and jerking of the legs. Symptoms are worse for the warmth of the bed and changes in the weather.

**Phosphorus**

The type of person who may benefit from *Phosphorous* for the treatment of RLS will often appear to be anxious, excitable, impressionable, and in need of sympathy. In addition, they’re often tired, have a thirst for cold drinks and have a marked tendency to haemorrhage. Their RLS symptoms may include cramping of the toes, numbness, jerking, and stiffness of the joints. Symptoms are better from lying on the right side, better in the open air, worse at twilight and at a change in the weather.

**Rhus tox**

The *Rhus tox* type has an affinity for joints, tendons and most areas of fibrous tissue, and produces pain and stiffness that requires motion for improvement. The *Rhus tox* picture also involves an increased susceptibility to infections. Mentally, the remedy can produce nocturnal anxiety, restlessness and depression. The RLS symptoms here involve a constant need to move the legs and there is often pain which is worse on the first movement. Continued movement tends to provide some measure of relief. Symptoms are better from continued motion, heat and rubbing, and are worse from cold, wet, rest and before storms.
**Sepia**

This remedy is particularly useful for women suffering from RLS where it is accompanied by a history of weakness, venous congestion, uterine disorders, yellowing of the skin, depression, ascending symptoms and a feeling of coldness. The specific RLS symptoms that may correspond to *Sepia* are restlessness, twitching and jerking in limbs that can occur at any time of the day and frequently appear night and day. Symptoms are improved by exercise, pressure and heat, and are worse for cold, dampness and before a storm.

**Tarantula hispanica**

*Tarantula* is associated with profound restlessness and a general over-stimulation of the nervous system leading to hyperactivity, rages and impatience. Interestingly, the restlessness seen here is modulated by music and dancing—the more vigorous the better. The RLS symptoms include extreme restlessness with jerking, numbness and twitching. Symptoms are better for exertion, music, rubbing, pressure and are worse for coition, rest and cold. (Note that there is some dispute about the correct name for this remedy—it can be found as *Tarentula hispania*, *Tarentula hispanica* or the one used here, which is the most likely to be correct and is taken from the *German Homœopathic Pharmacopoeia* of 2008.)*

**Zincum metallicum**

Those of a hypersensitive nature and an over-stimulated nervous system prone to producing twitches and other involuntary movements, including RLS, may benefit from this remedy. The mental state here may show signs of either over- or under-stimulation, and mental and physical fatigue. A sensory hypersensitivity may also be seen. RLS symptoms here include fidgety, trembling and twitchy feet which must be constantly moved. Symptoms are better from discharges, pressure and warmth and worse from exhaustion, noise, touch and after the consumption of alcohol. Material doses of zinc are commonly used by practitioners in the hope of relieving restless legs but this frequently has little effect. The reason for this is often found to be a diminished ability to absorb dietary or supplemental zinc. The use of *Zincum metallicum 6C* prior to ingesting elemental zinc has provided the solution to this problem.

**References**
