

# Mindful Wellness

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## Using Thermography to See Into the Body

Lucy Moorman and Gayle Wilson

In the way that ultrasound revolutionized how women experience pregnancy, thermography offers a different way to see what's going on within the body. With widespread concerns about radiation exposure from mammograms and other X-rays, this safe, radiation-free screening method helps diagnose and document many diseases. Its imaging can provide information about what is occurring in the body based on an intricate map of skin receptors and blood flow.



Jacky Groenewegen, a certified thermography technician and owner of Mindful Wellness Medical Thermography, in West Chester, Ohio, uses a multidisciplinary approach to wellness and the treatment of pain and dysfunction. A licensed massage therapist since 2005, she opened a thermography lab in January 2014 after extensive training through the Professional Academy of Clinical Thermology (PACT). Groenewegen says, "The most exciting thing about thermography is that it is completely safe and painless. It works without compression or radiation and can show breast abnormalities earlier than any other test." Annual thermograms are recommended starting at age 20 to establish a baseline and closely monitor changes over time. This proactive wellness approach enables monitoring of responses the body has to various treatments.

For anyone that winced while their soft breast tissue was pushed, prodded and squished between two screens of glass, thermography is an excellent alternative to breast cancer screening. It uses heat detection via an infrared camera to locate areas of temperature differences. Many diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, stroke and arthritis cause an increase or decrease in temperature. Breast disease can be detected by looking for areas of excessive or increasing heat (inflammation) that could be the result of blood vessels feeding a growing tumor. Inflammation is considered a primary indicator that our bodies are trying to fix something, and fevers are symptoms of many diseases. Thermography is the only system that allows us to view inflammation and congestion in the body in this way.

Thermography is used for breast health screening, thyroid dysfunction, lymphatic congestion, vascular and nervous system disorders, abdominal inflammation, muscle disorders and more. It is used for both men and women and has been available since the 1950s. It was cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 1982. Although it is not currently covered by insurance, most health savings and flex spending accounts will completely cover the cost. Thermography is around \$250, with a full-body scan averaging \$499.

Groenewegen states, "A University of Wisconsin study found 70 percent of tumors can be identified by thermography eight to 10 years before a mammogram. This gives almost a decade head start to take control and seriously address or reverse a health issue. This can be profoundly empowering, allowing an individual to make lifestyle changes to fully address a health threat. The Cincinnati area is sorely under-served in thermography, so the opportunity to provide it to the community excited me."

Scans are quick and convenient and interpreted by three board-certified PACT doctors, including Dr. Alexander Sepper, a gynecologist with more than 30 years of experience and a Ph.D. in thermology. After a scan, the patient receives a report that consists of the doctors' detailed interpretations of the images and recommendations. The patient can then choose to review all or some of the results with their chosen practitioner(s). "It's important to have a wellness team assist along the way," says Groenewegen.

In addition to thermography, Groenewegen is also trained in several other modalities, such as massage and healing touch that work with the lymphatic system, soft tissue and mind/body therapies.

*Lucy Moorman is a writer and massage therapist. For more information visit [lucymoorman1.blogspot.com](http://lucymoorman1.blogspot.com). Gayle Wilson is a frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings. For more information, visit [DashWriter.com](http://DashWriter.com).*

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