Nearly everyone has already heard of the term “Kneippe”. A Kneipp treatment in general is perceived as having something to do with water stepping and washing. But Kneipp is much more. It is a holistic therapy, which tries to bring the body, spirit and psyche into agreement and to bring about a state of prevention. The name giver and founder is the catholic minister Sebastian Kneipp (1821-1897). As a student he successfully cured a supposedly incurable withering disease by bathing in cold water and thus became aware of the therapeutic effect of different out-door stimulants.

PERSEVERANCE IS IMPORTANT
According to Kneipps opinion it is the self-healing force which make humans healthy, when we fall out of balance. Self regularization, functions usually only up to certain degrees in illness. As in the great eastern medicine prevention is also at the center of Kneipp therapy. By a stimulation of the self-healing forces tailored to each patient humans get a better internal equilibrium and thus become physically and mentally more resistant.

AGAINST THE EXTREMES – HEALTH GROWS FROM THE CENTER
An important point with Kneipp therapy is balance. Not the particularly strong stimulation brings the best results according to Kneipp, but the medium strength one. The concept of balance is a central theme through the whole of Kneipp therapy. It consists of five elements:

• Hydraulic and balneotherapy,
• Movement therapy
• Nutritional therapy
• Plant therapy and
• Order therapy.
The elements depend on one another. They are there to effect humans in their entirety.

ORDER THERAPY
Here, in the broadest sense psychological health is concerned the most. The patients are to recognize each other as part of his or her social system and to accept their environment. They should forge their resources and recognize their dispositions and from this knowledge develop their own, optimal strategies, in order to meet the requirements of everyday life.

HYDRAULIC AND BALNEOTHERAPY
Therapiert becomes external with water, water vapour or aqueous mashes. Apart from cold and warm washing, castings, windings and the well-known water stepping, medical baths also need to be included (balneo = bathe), where carbonic acid water, radon water or moorlands and peat is used. With the application of waters the principle of: warm – cold – warm applies. A cold water stimulation may be only set, if the patient is correctly warmed up beforehand. The stimulation should be short, afterwards the body must be warmed up by water, movement or bed rest again. According to Kneipp, valid is: to obtain the greatest possible effects with the smallest possible stimulation.

MOVEMENT THERAPY
No sport practices, also no exercise sequences or training times are prescribed. What is crucial is, which physical manipulation fits which patient. Also the duration of the activity must be individually specified. On the other hand, a regular movement is important according to Kneipp, without any exaggeration. It promotes muscle and structure of bone, blood circulation, the cardiovascular system as well as mobility and co-ordination.

NUTRITIONAL THERAPY
There are no strict prohibitions or irrefutable rules. According to Kneipp, versatility is important above all. A balanced nutrition is recommended, which is to consist particularly of regional vegetable food. This can be supplemented by milk and milk products as well as fish and sometimes meat. Processed food, like white flour and white sugar, should be eaten seldom. Coffee and alcohol are not a taboo however. Here moderation is recommended.

PLANT THERAPY
Herbs are used among other things as teas, juices, bath salts or ointments. Also they are not only to be used for alleviation and couriers, but are to be included into the daily routine.