

Introduction to Massage



Massage is the most fundamental of all healing techniques. Massage is so basic to nature that we do it automatically.

- You are walking across a room, and you accidentally bump your elbow on the edge of a table. Pain shoots up your arm. Instantaneously you grab your elbow and without thinking, you begin to rub it..... This is massage.

- As I write this article my dog is sitting next to me watching and when I have a moment or two I rub his head and rub his back..... This is massage.

- My wife gives me a hug when I enter the house after a long day at work. I find myself caressing her shoulders and back..... This is massage.

The point is that massage is the most naturally healing thing you can do. The nurturing touch is simple, instinctual, and more powerful than we can imagine. Some of the many studies on touch show conclusively that it reduces stress, alleviates depression, reduces pain, boosts the immune system, and helps premature babies catch up in their development. Without touch we close down. With touch we love, communicate, and nurture one another. So massage is not just a profession for a special few; it is part of the healing touch we all possess.

Because massage is naturally healing, its therapeutic use dates back as far as mankind. Ancient Greek, Roman, and Oriental medical treatises describe in detail how and when massage should be used. In the Western world it fell out of favor in the Middle Ages as the church regarded the body as sinful. But, by the 1800's, a new interest in massage was started in Sweden, and today there are many popular modalities of therapeutic massage and bodywork.

Massage professionals have spent years observing the benefits of using certain strokes and have developed systematic techniques to relieve the pain and stress of mankind. There are literally dozens of these therapies, each with their own association dedicated to supporting its members and promoting the benefits of their work.

This site is dedicated to massage, all massage, every kind of massage. We invite you to explore our web site to learn about the various techniques and their benefits, to help you find a massage professional, to learn of the associations, the schools, and the available research being done. We want our site to be growing always so we welcome your contributions to it. Thank you for visiting.

Benefits of Massage

The two most obvious benefits of massage are increased circulation and flexibility.

From a physiological or mechanical engineering point of view, massage increases the lubrication between muscle fibers and allows the muscle to move optimally. Muscle fibers are designed to work independently of each other. When muscles dry out, or dehydrate, the fibers stick together and the muscle becomes stiff or ridged. As fluid is reintroduced, the muscle softens and regains its flexibility. As circulation increases between the muscle fibers, nutrients reach the cells and toxins are carried off more efficiently.

Aging is largely a process of dehydration. The less water in the body, the more quickly we age. As we dehydrate, we begin to shrink and as our muscles become smaller, our skin begins to wrinkle. Drinking lots of water and having regular massage is a great way to get rid of wrinkles.

At post mortem, muscle dehydration is found at every area of disease. This would lead one to believe that good circulation could possibly keep one healthy. Degenerative diseases like cancer and muscular sclerosis are anaerobic and can not live in an oxygenated environment. Because blood carries oxygen to the cells, circulation is necessary for optimal health. The Bible teaches that life is in the blood. If this is true, we need the best circulation we can get. Massage increases circulation, hence, increases oxygen to the cells. It's time to get a massage.

From a psychological point of view, massage creates a sense of being cared for, of being nurtured. Massage helps us become more aware of our bodies and the feelings we value. Human touch connects one person to another and the feelings shared are healing and energizing emotionally. Safe touch is an important part of life. Massage by a responsible professional is a relaxing way to enjoy safe touch.

Looking at massage from a physics point of view, we see that electromagnetic energy is transferred from the giver to the receiver and back. This energy transfer can not be duplicated by gadgets or machines. The oriental cultures call this energy Chi´ or life energy. The world renowned nuclear physicist, Professor Serge Sitko, of Vidguk in the Ukraine, has developed equipment that is able to record this energy in the millimeter range of radio waves. This human energy transfer is an important part of the healing process. Many believe that this is simply love being transferred from one person to another.

Massage gives one a feeling of comfort and relaxation like a mini vacation from

the pressures of life. A clinical study at the University of Miami School of Medicine, touchresearch.com, shows that massage increases mental alertness and accuracy in mathematical calculations. A group was given mathematical problems both before and after a series of massages and accuracy increased some 20%. Massage also increases beta waves in this study which shows that one is more relaxed after a series of massages. This relaxed state lasts longer as the cumulative benefits of more massage at regular intervals are experienced.

Weekly massage will make you look and feel years younger. You owe it to yourself to give massage a try. You will be so very glad you did.

For more information contact us today for your Free Consultation with the Doctor and the Massage Therapist

Techniques

At this time we are aware of over 200 massage techniques. In order to aide in your decision to participate with massage therapy we have listed the most popular types of techniques in alphabetical order along with a classification of light, medium or deep if applicable. Should you need further assistance, please feel free to Contact Us.

II. Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils for curative and rejuvenating effects. Dating back to ancient Egypt, India, and the Far East, this simple therapy has been used for centuries to reduce stress and tension, refresh and invigorate the body, soothe emotions, and clear the mind. After an initial discussion with the client, specific essential oils are used in conjunction with other appropriate techniques, such as massage, acupuncture, or reflexology. Used in oils, the essential oil is absorbed through the skin and into the body to affect physiological change. When inhaled the aroma directly affects the limbic area of the brain that is related to emotions and memories.

III. Chair Massage

When a ten or twenty minute relaxation session is needed, this is the technique for you. You are massaged fully clothed in a special chair designed to relax you. Because the chair is completely portable, you may see chair massage at the airport or health club, or you may want a practitioner to come to your office or business to massage the staff or guests at a party. Rated Light. Rated Medium

IV. Deep Tissue Massage

Deep Tissue Massage is designed to reach the deep portions of thick muscles, specifically the individual muscle fibers. Using deep muscle compression and friction along the grain of the muscle, its purpose is to unstick the fibers of the muscles and release both toxins and deeply held patterns of tension. Rated Deep

Hot Stone Massage

Developed in the Midwest for use in health spas, this technique uses stones that have been heated. These stones are positioned on the body and some are gently moved about with light pressure being exerted on the warm stones.

V. Infant Massage

Becoming increasingly popular, infant massage is usually taught to new mothers as a way of bonding with their newborn and of encouraging infant health. Promoted by Vimala McClure, it incorporates nurturing touch, massage, and reflexology in a loving, fun, one-on-one interaction. A study at the University of Miami showed that infants who received 15 minutes of massage a day gained weight 47% faster and demonstrated other physical and neurological benefits

VI. Lymph System Massage

In the 1930s, a Danish doctor, Hans Vodder, noticed the connection between swollen and blocked lymph glands and colds, infections and other ailments. Since the lymph system is designed to remove bacteria and toxins from the body, he reasoned that massaging the lymph system would improve the flow of lymph and benefit the patient. Together with his wife, a massage practitioner, they developed a specific technique that massages the lymph nodes and lymph system using light rhythmic strokes. A characteristic of lymph system massage is that the strokes are always with the muscle fiber, rather than cross-fiber, because the lymph system runs in the direction of the muscle fiber. Rated Light

VII. Myofascial

Release Therapy All muscles, arteries, bones, organs, etc. are held together by a Saran wrap kind of tissue called fascia. Developed in the

late 1960's by John Barnes, Myofascial Release works by the manipulation of the fascia that connects and surrounds muscles. Because the fascia is body-wide, a tension or trauma in one part of the body can affect another part. The fascia responds to the trained touch to release the adverse effects of inflammation, tensions and trauma.

VIII. Neuromuscular Therapy

Neuromuscular Therapy is a program of recovery from acute and chronic pain syndromes by utilizing specific massage therapy, including the pressure of trigger points, to eliminate the causes of pain patterns. This approach brings about balance between the musculoskeletal system and the nervous system. It enhances the function of joints, muscles, and movement, and it releases endorphins, the body's own natural pain killers

VIII. Postural Integration

Dr. Jack Painter developed postural integration after studying various forms of bodywork. His ten-session system consists of deep tissue techniques, movement, and breathwork. Recognizing that the body traps negative emotions, Painter's technique pays special attention to the fascia and the release of emotional blocks in a psychotherapeutic manner with the aid of intentional deep breathing.

IX. Pregnancy Massage

Pregnancy places strong demands on a woman's body and is a time for the body to be nurtured and pampered. This massage not only relieves the tensions and aches caused by the extra weight and shift in the center of gravity to the body, but it reduces swelling, soothes the nervous system, acts as a tonic, reduces fatigue, and enhances energy.

Reflexology

Popularized in the United States by physiotherapist Eunice Inghram in the 1930s, this is an acupressure type technique performed on the hands and feet and is based on the ancient Oriental theory that meridian lines or pathways carry energy throughout the body. Because each zone or part of the body has a corresponding reflex point on the feet, stimulating that reflex point causes stimulation in the natural energy of the related organ. Crystalline-type deposits and/or tenderness indicate a dysfunction, and pressure is applied to clear out congestion and restore normal functioning and health.

Rolfing

Also called structural integration, Rolfing was pioneered by American biochemist Dr. Ida Rolf in the 1930s. She maintained that when one part of the body is out of balance or misaligned, the rest of the body attempts to compensate until the entire structure is weakened. Even from birth, the general pressures of life and gravity push our bodies out of alignment. By manipulating the myofascial tissue in a ten session series, each building on the previous one, Rolfers assist the body to reorganize, lengthen, and integrate itself into wholeness. Rated Deep

Sport Massage

This special form of massage is typically used before, during, and after athletic events to prepare the athlete for peak performance, to drain away fatigue, to relieve swelling, to reduce muscle tension, to promote flexibility and to prevent injuries. Depending on the needs of the athlete, a variety of techniques are used including classic Swedish strokes, cross-fiber friction, pressure-point work, and joint mobilization.

Swedish Massage

Swedish massage is now known as "traditional" massage. In the 1820s a Swedish doctor, Dr. Per Henrik Ling, developed the first modern method of massage through his study of physiology, gymnastics, and the massage techniques borrowed from China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Swedish massage includes long gliding strokes, kneading, friction, tapping, and shaking motions. It is effective for most ailments, because massaging the skin, the body's largest organ, sets up a chain reaction that produces a positive effect on all layers and systems of the body. It affects the nerves, muscles, glands, and circulation, and promotes health and wellbeing. Rated Medium

