

# Massage Therapy

At least once in your life you have probably had a muscle spasm or cramp. When the painful tightening began you naturally started rubbing the painful area until the spasm went away. In a small way you were doing massage therapy on yourself; however, massage therapy goes beyond just rubbing one spasmed muscle. Massage is used to treat a variety of problems such as strain or sprain injuries, reducing stress, chronic muscle tension, and traumatic injuries such as sports injuries or whiplash.

The massage therapist realizes that a single muscle spasm is usually related to other problems within the body and tries to focus on the bigger problem of what caused the muscle to spasm. To do this requires a total body approach to massage. When you first meet the therapist and during the massage he/she will ask many questions to help him/her determine how best to massage you. Also, the first massage is usually done on all the major muscle groups to help determine where the muscle imbalances are within the body, some you may not even know about. With this information he/she will then decide which areas of the body will need the most attention and which massage techniques to use. This total body approach will insure you the best and most long-lasting results from your massage.

Most massage is done using oil to reduce friction between the therapists hands and your skin. A towel is used to drape you except for the area being massaged at the time. The massage begins with strokes that are more broad and longer to determine where there is muscle tension. As you become more relaxed the therapist will increase the pressure of the strokes and focus more specifically on those muscles which need the most attention, then finishing each area with broad strokes to reintegrate all the muscles. A massage should for the most part feel good to you, and if for any reason you feel pain or discomfort, please let the therapist know. Your feedback is the best way to insure a massage just the way you want it. If you are more familiar with massage you may want to ask for a specific type of massage, such as Swedish, Shiatsu, Neuro-Muscular, or Trigger Point Therapy.

Massage dilates or open up blood vessels, improving the circulation and relieving congestion.

Massage increases the number of red blood cells especially in cases of anemia.

Massage acts as a “mechanical cleanser” pushing along lymph and hastening the elimination of wastes and toxic debris.

Massage relaxes muscle spasm and relieves tension.

Massage increases the blood supply and nutrition to muscles without adding to their load of toxic lactic acid, produced through voluntary muscle contraction. Massage thus helps to overcome harmful “fatigue” products resulting from strenuous exercise or injury.

Massage improves muscle tone and helps prevent or delay muscular atrophy resulting from forced inactivity.

Massage can compensate, at least in part, for lack of exercise and muscular contraction in persons who because of injury, illness or age are forced to remain inactive. In these cases, massage helps return venous blood to the heart and so eases the strain on this vital organ.

Transverse massage separates muscle fibers, undoing or preventing the formation of adhesions.

Massage may have a sedative, stimulating or even exhausting effect on the nervous system depending on the type and length of massage treatment.

Massage improves the general circulation and nutrition of tissues. It is accompanied or followed by an increased interchange of substances between the blood and tissue cells heightening tissue metabolism.

Massage increases the excretion (via the kidneys) of fluids and nitrogen, inorganic phosphorous and salt in normal individuals.

Massage encourages the retention of nitrogen, phosphorous and sulfur necessary for tissue repair in persons convalescing from bone fractures.

Massage stretches connective tissue, improves its circulation and nutrition of joints and hastens the elimination of harmful particles. It helps lessen inflammation and swelling in joints and so alleviates pain.

Massage helps eliminate of the extremities.

Massage disperses the edema following injury to ligaments and tendons, lessens pain and facilitates movement.

Massage empties the larger ducts and channels and so decreases the autointoxication resulting from the re-absorption of toxic materials in these channels resulting from inflammation or constipation.

