



Jan 2007 issue

Massage is one of the oldest healing arts: Chinese records dating back to 3.000 years; the ancient Hindus, Persians and Egyptians applied forms of massage for many ailments; and Hippocrates wrote papers recommending the use of rubbing and friction for joint and circulatory problems. Today the benefits of massage are varied and far-reaching. As an accepted part of many physical rehabilitation programs, massage therapy has also proven beneficial for many chronic conditions, including low back pain, arthritis, bursitis, fatigue, high blood pressure, diabetes, immunity suppression, depression etc. As well as relieving stress and tension which can lead to diseases and illness if not treated.

One of the definitions of massage is the application of soft tissue manipulation techniques to the body in order to reduce stress and fatigue as well as improving circulation.

CONNECTIVE TISSUE MASSAGE

Also known as "Bindegewebsmassage", these techniques are designed to specifically affect the connective tissue of the body. CTM was developed in Germany by Elizabeth Dicke. After diagnosis of a serious medical problem, she experimented with different types of massage on herself. She found when she applied light pressure through the skin and connective tissue in one area of the body, there was a related effect at a distant site. The technique consists of the massage therapist subtly hooking her fingers into the skin and superficial connective tissue while performing a dragging or pulling stroke that somewhat stretches the skin. CTM leaves a visible mark that looks somewhat like an abrasion or burn, but which goes away without leaving a scar." In Germany, it is considered a physical therapy technique; in many parts of Europe, it is considered a medical technique. In the United States connective tissue massage is taught in many massage schools.

DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE

Techniques which utilize deep tissue/deep muscle massage are administered to affect the sub-layer of musculature and fascia. These techniques require more advanced training and a more thorough understanding of anatomy and physiology. The muscles must be relaxed in order to effectively perform deep tissue massage, otherwise tight surface muscles prevent the practitioner from reaching deeper musculature. It helps with chronic muscular pain and injury rehabilitation, and reduces inflammation-related pain caused by arthritis and tendonitis.

INFANT MASSAGE INSTRUCTION

Qualified instructors teach parents how to properly massage their infants. Infant massage is also utilized in hospital neonatal care units. This specialized form of touch is successful, not only in the critical weight gain of premature infants, but also in creating a strong bond between parent and infant and exposing a young child to the benefits and pleasures of touch.

LYMPH DRAINAGE THERAPY

Lymph Drainage Therapy is unique in that healthcare professionals learn how to palpate the lymphatic flow. As they develop their skills, they can then identify the rhythm, direction, and quality of the lymphatic flow. Advanced practitioners will be able to precisely map the lymphatic flow to find alternate pathways for drainage.

NIKKON RESTORATIVE MASSAGE (OKAZAKI RESTORATIVE MASSAGE)

Nikkon Restorative Massage was developed by Professor Henry Seishiro Okazaki in Hawaii in the 1920s. He incorporated Japanese, Chinese, and Hawaiian techniques. The goal of Okazaki's style was to restore health and pull toxins out of the body through proper application of pressure using fingers, forearms, and elbows. The result is proper realignment of the body to its highest potential.

PRENATAL/PREGNANCY MASSAGE

Performed by a trained prenatal specialist, many methods of massage and somatic therapies are both effective and safe prenatal, and during labor and postpartum periods of women's pregnancies. Prenatal, specific techniques can reduce pregnancy discomforts and concerns and enhance the physiological and emotional well-being of both mother and fetus. Skilled, appropriate touch facilitates labor, shortening labor times and easing pain and anxiety. In the postpartum period, specialized techniques rebalance structure, physiology, and emotions of the new mother, and may help her to bond with and care for her infant. Specialized, advanced training in the anatomy, physiology, complications, precautions, and contraindications is highly recommended, and many practitioners require referrals from physicians prior to therapy.

SWEDISH MASSAGE

One of the most commonly taught and well-known massage techniques, Swedish massage is a vigorous system of treatment designed to energize the body by stimulating circulation. There are five basic strokes, which all flow toward the heart and are used to manipulate the soft tissues of the body. Therapists use a combination of rubbing, rolling, and tapping movements and some apply oils, to reduce friction on the skin and create a pleasant effect. There are many benefits of Swedish massage which include generalized relaxation and improved circulation which may speed healing and reduce swelling from injury.

THAI MASSAGE

Also called Nuad Bo Rarn, Thai massage has been taught and practiced in Thailand for approximately 2,500 years. Main credit for Thai massage is given to a famous Indian doctor, Shivago Komarpaj who was the personal physician of the Buddha and Magadha king. It is based on the theory that the body is made up of 72,000 energy lines out of which 10 hold top priority. Thai massage also involves peripheral stimulating, meaning it acts as an external stimulant to produce specific internal effects. This point serves as the main division between Thai and Western massage. Thai massage is practiced on a firm mat on the floor instead of a stretcher.

YOGASSAGE

This is a massage modality that enhances the free and natural movements of the body through gentle, sustained stretching and applied pressure. Gentle vibration and energy work with the chakras is practiced to have an integrated effect. Yogassage has been compared to Thai massage but on a stretcher as it mixes and takes elements from both the Eastern and Western cultures during the bodywork.

QIGONG

Its history goes back to more than 3.000 years. This traditional Chinese treatment combines hands-on and hands-off techniques that balance the flow of vital energy through the body, release any blockages, and improve circulation. Qigong is also a combination of timed breathing and gentle flowing movement, meditation all working together to achieve an integrated state of mind and body enabling the balance of the vital energy. Qigong theory is the basis of Traditional Chinese Medicine and is used to treat many illnesses as well as for relaxation. It is estimated that there are about 200 popular types of Qigong practiced in China and around 100 million people practice it.

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