



A-Z of Massage Therapies

LYMPH DRAINAGE THERAPY

Lymph Drainage Therapy (LDT) is unique in that health-care 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.

REFLEXOLOGY

Based on an ancient Chinese therapy, reflexology involves manipulation of specific reflex areas in the foot, hands, and ears that correspond to other parts of the body. Reflexology involves application of pressure to these reflex zones to stimulate body organs and relieve areas of congestion. Similar to acupressure principles, reflexology works with the body's energy flow to stimulate self-healing and maintain balance in physical function. This technique is used to reduce pain, increase relaxation, and stimulate circulation of blood and lymphatic fluids. It is especially useful in stress-related illness and emotional disorders. Reflexology is also convenient in cases where an area of the body is traumatized or diseased to the extent that direct manipulation is not appropriate.



SHIATSU

Developed in Japan, shiatsu is a finger-pressure technique utilizing traditional acupuncture points. Similar to acupressure, shiatsu concentrates on unblocking the flow of life energy and restoring balance in the meridians and organs in order to promote self-healing. With the client reclining, the practitioner applies pressure with the finger, thumb, palm, elbow, or knee to specific zones on the skin located along the energy meridians. The treatment brings

about a sense of relaxation while stimulating blood and lymphatic flow. The benefits of this treatment may include pain relief and a strengthening of the body's resistance to disease and disorder.

SPORTS MASSAGE

Sports massage is designed to enhance athletic performance and recovery. There are three contexts in which sports massage can be useful to an athlete: pre-event, post-event, and injury treatment. Pre-event massage is delivered at the performance site, usually with the athlete fully clothed. Fast-paced and stimulating, it helps to establish blood flow and to warm up muscles. During the massage, the athlete generally focuses on visualizing the upcoming event. Post-event massage is also delivered on site, through the clothes. The intent here is to calm the nervous system and begin the process of flushing toxins and waste products out of the body. Post-event massage can reduce recovery time, enabling an athlete to resume training much sooner than rest alone would allow. When an athlete sustains an injury, skillful massage therapy can often speed and improve the healing.

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. Five basic strokes, all flowing toward the heart, are used to manipulate the soft tissues of the body. Therapists use a combination of kneading, rolling, vibrational, percussive, and tapping movements, with the application of oil, to reduce friction on the skin. The many benefits of Swedish massage may include generalized relaxation, dissolution of scar tissue adhesions, and improved circulation, which may speed healing and reduce swelling from injury.

THAI MASSAGE

Thai massage has been taught and practiced in Thailand for approximately twenty-five hundred years. Thai massage is practiced on a firm mat on the floor instead of on a table, instrumental in the effective use of the practitioner's body weight. Except for the feet, the client remains fully clothed, so draping is not necessary.

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