



## Different massage therapy techniques applied by Walk, talk and eat. Health coach Cecilia Swensson.

### **Swedish classic massage**

The most common type of massage is Swedish massage therapy. This is a massage technique which was developed by the Swedish Doctor Per Henrik Ling in the early 1700's. The main aim of Swedish classic massage is to increase the oxygen flow in the blood and to release toxins from the muscles. There are a variety of different techniques used in Swedish Classic Massage.

#### **The different techniques used are:**

- "Effleurage" – Strokes with the palm of the hand
- "Petrissage" - Kneading.
- "Tapotement" – Percussion, brisk hacking or tapping
- "Vibration" - Oscillatory movements that vibrate the body
- "Stretching" - Both passive and active movements

#### **The benefits of Swedish classic massage are many:**

- It increases blood and lymph circulation
- Has a calming effect on the nervous system
- Releases toxins from the muscles
- Improves muscle tone, ability and posture
- Reduces both physical and mental stress
- Helps to maintain muscle elasticity and suppleness
- Promotes health and general well being

#### **Indications for Swedish Classic Massage are:**

Muscle tension and knots

Contractures

General muscle aches and pains

Preventative measures

Relaxation

## **Sport Massage**

Is a specific type of massage administered to athletes before, during and after any sports activity or event. A variety of deeper specific techniques are often used in conjunction with both mobilization and stretching. They can be used either to address a specific need or injury and to enhance the performance of the athlete. In the case of where stress and tension has build up in the soft tissues in the body, due to either over abuse or over exertion, sports massage is an effective component in restoring homeostasis in the muscle tissue.

### **Benefits of Sports Massage:**

- Mobilizes joints and improves the range of movement
- Reduces muscle tension
- Improves muscle tone
- Prevents injuries
- Enhances performance
- Drains away fatigue
- Increases a great sense of well being
- Increases the blood circulation and lymph flow
- Relieves pain
- Reduces the recovery period

## **Neuromuscular therapy NMT**

Neuromuscular therapy is a form of soft tissue manipulation that aims to treat underlying causes of chronic pain involving the muscular and nervous systems. This medically-oriented form of massage addresses trigger points (tender muscles points), circulation, nerve compression, postural issues, and biomechanical problems that can be caused by repetitive movement injuries. Neuromuscular therapy is used to treat many different soft tissue problems.

### **NMT assessments and examinations primarily address**

- ischemia (tight tissue with reduced blood flow)
- myofascial trigger points (hypersensitive points within muscles that give rise to referred phenomena, including pain)
- neural entrapment (pressure on nerves by muscles and other soft tissues), and nerve compression (pressure on nerves by osseous and other bonelike tissues, such as cartilage or discs).
- postural assessment (assessment of the position of the body as a whole)
- and dysfunctional gait patterns (manner of movement when walking)

- with constant consideration for many other perpetuating factors, such as hydration, nutrition, breathing patterns, and psychologic stress.

## **PNF stretching (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation)**

Stretching is an important part of training for any type of sport. PNF stretching was originally developed as a form of rehabilitation for stroke patients. Today, it is also used on specific targeted muscle groups to increase their flexibility, improve their range of movements and enhance muscular strength.

Before any stretching can be performed it is important that the muscles are thoroughly warmed up first to reduce the risk of any injury or harm. This can be in the form of a massage treatment.

### **How is PNF performed?**

The targeted muscle group is firstly passively stretched by the therapist to the point where the muscles are stretched under tension.

Resistance will then be applied by the therapist to inhibit any movement for approximately 5-6 seconds.

The muscle group is then allowed to relax for a period of 30 seconds where a new controlled stretch is performed for roughly 15-30 seconds.

The whole process will be repeated 2-4 times.

## **Myofascial release, Deep Tissue massage (MFR)**

Fascia is a thin, tough, elastic type of connective tissue that wraps most structures within the human body, including muscles, like a 3 dimensional net, without any beginning or end. Osteopathic theory proposes that this soft tissue can become restricted due to psychogenic disease, overuse, trauma, infectious agents, inactivity or dehydration, often resulting in pain, muscle tension, and corresponding diminished blood flow, poor posture and restricted movement.

Myofascial treatment/Structural deep-tissue massage is a specific type of massage therapy that concentrates on the deep layers of muscle and fascia in the body; By using deep finger pressure and slow, firm strokes, the therapist treats a variety of physical ailments. When treating the soft tissue of the body with the fascia as focus the therapist work on several muscular groups and connective tissue in a structural fashion. The fascia gets affected by dehydration, stress, trauma, repetitive movement, inflammation or bad posture. The aim is to restore function to a soft tissue area by normalizing the movement in, and between, different structures.

Over time, deep-tissue massage therapy can help break up and eventually erase scar tissue in the body. It does this by improving lymphatic circulation and drainage to improve flexibility and range of motion in the affected area.

Deep-tissue massage can be an effective treatment for injured muscles. Because it facilitates the movement of toxins from the muscles and helps stretch tight or twisted muscle mass, deep-tissue massage can help promote healing.

## **Strain-counterstrain Technique**

Originally developed by an osteopathic physician, Lawrence Jones, DO, FAAO, strain-counterstrain technique is a method for reducing chronic and/or acute muscle spasm anywhere in the body. The big advantage of this technique is its extreme gentleness to the patient.

All muscles communicate to the spinal cord and brain (central nervous system) via sensory nerves and receptors located in the tendon. These receptors relay information about the length of the muscles and how fast and in what direction the muscle is moving the bones and joints. They also communicate what state of contraction the muscle is in at rest (muscle tone). This is a part of our sensory feedback system which the nervous system uses to decide how to instruct the muscle what to do next (motor output). Our sensory system is highly sophisticated and sensitive. It provides our nervous system with the information to make rapid decisions and to plot a course of action based on the desired activity of the brain while also avoiding injuries.

### **How it works**

- The therapist identifies the muscle in spasm.
- The muscle can be in visible or palpable spasm or can be identified by "tender points".
- The therapist positions the body so the muscle is in a shortened position and holds the position for at least 90 seconds. At times, the position is held greater than 5 minutes waiting for changes in muscle and fascia (tissues surrounding muscles and organs)
- The therapist monitors tissue change and waits for optimum improvement to occur.
- This technique lays the groundwork for rehabilitation of any painful condition.

### **This technique is best used for:**

- Spasm in any area of the body
- Post surgery in any area of the body
- Restoring more upright posture (tightened muscles can pull you into poor posture).
- Chronic pain

### **Contradictions to the above therapeutical massage techniques.**

- Any acute injuries or inflammations
- Pyrexia (fever)
- Fractures
- Tumours
- Certain heart conditions and venous insufficiency diseases

### **Thai Yoga Massage**

With the application of rhythmic pressure on certain energetic points and lines (sen) in the body and the yogic stretching of muscles and joint manipulation, blockages can be released and energy can be restored to its natural flow.

The massage is usually done on a mat on the floor, fully clothed in loose comfortable clothes, without oils and sometimes looks like applied hatha yoga or yoga for two! In Thai Massage the therapist uses her hands, elbows, knees and feet to find the perfect touch needed for the moment. Because this massage is working on the different body layers (koshas) the release works on an emotional, energetic and physical level.

The technique can be sometimes static (sinking deeply in a meditative state) or can move quite dynamically...depending.

Thai massage promotes general health and well-being. It has a double purpose.

- On the preventive side, it activates the free flow of energy and improves fluid circulation, digestion, breathing capacity, body posture, flexibility, as well as releasing nervous tension.
- On the therapeutic side, it can cure a large number of pathologies such as lower back pain, headaches, digestive problems, stress, insomnia, nervous imbalance, neck and shoulder muscular tightness...to name just a few...

## **Tactile Massage**

Tactile massage is a very gentle non-verbal form of massage treatment where the therapist's hands gently activate the touch receptors in the client's body.

It activates a basal physiological course of events such as the release of oxytocin, pain relief, stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system and reduces stress.

The massage is given without applying any pressure to the joints or muscles. Instead a light touch is applied through gentle effleurage and petrissage movements, or by simply just holding the clients hand or even been fully present with a client for a set amount of time.

Tactile massage is administered in a specific way. It is developed after the skins dermatome (the sensory innervations of the skin) and also after the localization of the touch receptors.

Throughout the whole massage the client is completely swept in towels to create a warm and safe environment, this also promotes body awareness. The treatment is individually adapted to the clients needs and both integrity and ethics are shown by the therapist, enabling the client to feel completely relaxed and taken care of.

### **Some of benefits of tactile massage are**

- It activates the bodies own natural pain killers
- Promotes a general sense of well being
- Aids recovery
- Relaxation
- Improves sleep
- Lowers blood pressure
- Increases body awareness
- Reduces stress
- Reduces anxiety
- Improves bowel movement