

# Massage Therapy

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Massage therapy is the manipulation of soft tissue to improve circulation, range of motion, tissue healing, and function while reducing muscle spasm and promoting well-being. Massage therapy is one of the most ancient forms of healing. There are many benefits of therapeutic massage therapy such as: reducing muscle tension and soreness; pain management; decreasing inflammation; improving detoxification; promoting healing from injuries; increasing joint flexibility and range of motion; improving circulation, posture, sleep and digestion; relieving pregnancy discomforts; and reducing stress.

There is scientific research that shows how massage can help with a variety of health conditions including: sports injuries; arthritis; neck and back pain; carpal tunnel syndrome; circulatory problems; digestive disorders; fibromyalgia; headaches; sleep disorders; anxiety and depression; stress; tendonitis; and whiplash.

There are a number of massage modalities that are used in order to achieve optimal wellness including:

**Myofascial Therapy** – Soft tissue therapy used to treat dysfunction in the body by relieving pain and increasing the range of motion of restricted muscle and muscle groups. This technique relaxes contracted muscles, increases circulation and lymphatic drainage, and stimulates the stretch reflex of muscles and overlying fascia.

**Neuromuscular/Trigger Point Therapy** – Uses the neuromuscular system to balance and normalize muscle function and reduce the

pain response. Trigger point therapy is a deep tissue pressure point technique used for spot work to relieve pain and increase mobility.

**Therapeutic Deep Tissue Therapy** – Deep work applied to the belly of the muscle used in conjunction with other modalities. Deep work can be used with active or passive range of motions and muscle stripping.

**Sports Massage** – Enhances sports performance and helps the body to recuperate faster from delayed muscle soreness. Different sports techniques help stretch and relax muscles both before and after a workout. Sports massage reduces the chance of injury by increasing range of motion and flexibility in areas most prone to performance problems. Sports massage techniques include stretching, active and passive range of motion so sports bras and shorts are recommended for treatment.

**Massage Cupping** – Utilizes either glass, plastic, or rubber cups to create negative pressure which loosens adhesions by lifting connective tissue allowing new blood to flow to stagnant areas of the body. Cupping is a powerful modality that is used to drain excess fluids and toxins.

**PNF stretching, or Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation stretching** – Techniques used to enhance both active and passive range of motion with the ultimate goal being to optimize motor performance and rehabilitation. An active PNF stretch involves a shortening contraction of the opposing muscle to place the target muscle on a stretch, this is followed by an isometric contraction of the target muscle. PNF can be used to make quick gains in range of motion to help athletes improve performance.

**Prenatal Massage** – Performed during pregnancy to minimize stress, promote relaxation and prepare the muscles for child birth. Prenatal massage can also be used to improve labor

outcomes. Other benefits of prenatal massage include: relieving headaches, fatigue, leg cramps, sciatic nerve pain, back aches, and edema.