

## General Introduction to Massage Techniques



Just like a Mechanic has many different tools and tricks for keeping your car running smoothly; Massage Therapists have a dozen different techniques and complimentary therapies to keep the human body healthy, happy and balanced.

Massage is thought to be the oldest form of medical therapy practiced on the human body. The different types of massage and the various techniques that encompass them stem from our most celebrated civilizations and their traditional beliefs ancient Greek and Rome, ancient India and China.

Dating as far back as 2,700 B.C., ancient Eastern Chinese cultures practiced massage to heal a variety of ailments from labour pain to paralysis. Ancient Egyptian tombs have been discovered adorned with images of figures being massaged. In addition, according to traditional Indian medicine, a system known as Ayurveda, therapeutic massage was performed using a variety of aromatherapy oils and spices for their healing properties. Even Greek and Roman heroes - such as the great Julius Caesar - underwent daily massages to treat nerve pain.

In Western culture the most practiced form of massage is undoubtedly Swedish massage. First introduced in the 19th century, Swedish masseuses were thought to have borrowed many of their techniques from traditional China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome masseuses. A variety of the most effective massage techniques have also been incorporated into other complementary therapies - aromatherapy, Reiki, reflexology, Rolfing, Amma therapy and osteopathy.

Many of our now popular modern massage techniques were created in order to heal specific health conditions. For example, soldiers who fought in World War I were administered massage for nerve damage and to soothe shell shock in western hospitals during the 1930s.

Massage is still used today for treating a wide range of ages from babies to seniors - in a variety of intensive care, health club, and health clinic and hospital settings. To this day, massage is still used to treat various conditions such as premature birth, various types of cancer, AIDS, osteoarthritis, lumbar back pain, nerve damage, fibromyalgia, paralysis, heart attack, and stroke. Click on the links below to discover an amazing variety of massage therapy techniques. You're almost certain to find a popular style that suits your body perfectly!

The following is a comprehensive listing of the various Massage Techniques. Therapists at Amber Health and Beauty or the Amber Sports Injury Clinic DO NOT carry out every Technique.

<a href="#"><u>Active Release Techniques (ART)</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kinesiology</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Prenatal Massage</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Acupressure</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>La Stone Therapy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Shiatsu</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Alexander Technique</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Lomi Lomi</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Reflexology</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Aquatic Massage Therapy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Manual Lymph Drainage</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Rolfing</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Aromatherapy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Massage Therapy for Animals</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Sports Massage</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Bowen Technique</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Massage Therapy for Babies</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Strain/Counter Strain</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Cranio-Sacral Therapy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Senior Massage</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Swedish Massage</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Deep Connective Tissue Massage</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Muscle Energy Technique</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Thai Massage</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Deep Muscle Therapy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Myofascial Release</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Tui Na Massage</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Esalen Tissue Work</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Neuromuscular Therapy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Watsu</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Feldenkrais</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Neuromuscular Integration and Structural Alignment (NISA)</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Zero Balancing</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Integrative Manual Therapy</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>On-site massage</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Joint Mobilization</u></a>		

## Therapeutic Massage

When you think of therapeutic massage - also called [massotherapy](#) - maybe you picture a 300-pound Swede pounding your back with a clenched fist. Ouch! But therapeutic massage actually encompasses a broad array of approaches and philosophies - and bonus, most of them don't even hurt.

[Lymphatic massage](#) and [manual lymph drainage](#) are both based on the belief that the lymph glands, which play a key role in a healthy immune system, can be manipulated through massage, thereby improving their function. The former method entails a combination of deep, [shiatsu](#)-style pressure and more gentle relaxation methods, while the latter is a circular technique applied in gentle strokes in the direction of the heart.

If your idea of a great massage is emerging from it smelling good, then [aromatherapy](#) might be just the ticket. The masseuse selects scented oils they think will suit your needs - after consulting you - and performs a [relaxation massage](#). Some people enjoy this form of massage, while others find the scents unpleasant. The scientific community has also cast doubts on the efficacy of scents as health treatments.

And if full-on holistic is really your thing, allow us to introduce you to [Thai massage](#). This method uses vigorous pressure to realign your “energy.” According to practitioners, the body has 72,000 energy channels called sen. If someone is going to claim to be an expert in this massage style, however, they should have to prove it: Before handing over your hard-earned dough, ask the practitioner to name all 72,000 sen.

Whether you’re jumping into a pool for [aquatic therapy](#), learning how to move your body studying the [Feldenkrais method](#), or working through some stretches with a [Breema](#) expert, therapeutic massage offers you a diverse range of choices - and some of them might even be based on sound physiological principles!

Most people enjoy massage treatments. If that includes you, then by all means go for it. But be leery of exotic spiritual claims or beliefs based on ancient wisdom. Ancient wisdom said the Earth was flat and the mentally ill were possessed by demons.

The wisdom of the ancients wasn’t always so wise.

## Massage Oil



Oils are applied easily to the skin for a light, even glide and smooth workability. Pure cold-pressed oils are ideal for therapists looking for natural products. Here are some common choices:

- **Almond oil** is an excellent emollient (softening and soothing to the skin) and also helps the skin to balance its loss and absorption of moisture. This oil is one of the most popular of the carrier oils used in aromatherapy and massage, since it is non-greasy, spreads easily and is also great for nourishing the skin. The aroma is light, slightly sweet and nutty.
- **Grapeseed oil** is rich in linoleic acid, an essential fatty acid quite important for the skin and the cell membranes. It is purported to have regenerative and restructuring qualities and has great skin moisturizing properties. Grapeseed oil is a great non-greasy oil to use, but could be enriched by blending it with another carrier, such as almond or wheat germ. This is fine textured, oil with a very light, slightly sweet hint of a nutty aroma, and with a

satiny finish. It contains vitamins, minerals, and protein, GLA, and a small amount of vitamin E.

- **Apricot oil** has moisturizing, nourishing and revitalizing properties and is particularly helpful for dehydrated, delicate, mature and sensitive skin. It is also helpful to soothe inflammation. This finely textured oil spreads easily and is particularly rich in both oleic acid and linoleic acid.
- **Avocado oil** is often used for clients with dry or mature skin, people suffering from eczema, psoriasis or similar skin complaints. It is also very useful when treating sun or climate damaged skin that is dehydrated and under nourished, as it is said to help with the regenerating of the skin and softening of the tissue. Although it can be used pure, it is in most cases mixed with another carrier, such as Almond, or Grapeseed. It is easily absorbed into the skin and deep tissue, and has wonderful emollient properties, making it excellent for use in all massage blends.
- **Jojoba oil** closely resembles that of your own skin; it is an excellent moisturizer and is ideal for all skin types. It can in most cases be used on blemished skin without any problems, as it helps to control acne. Jojoba is also a favorite oil to use as a carrier oil for aromatherapy as it penetrates the skin easily and is suitable for all skin types. The aroma is light to medium, not as sweet as the nut oils.
- **Wheat germ oil** has a high vitamin E content and essential fatty acids, thus it is used extensively in aromatherapy massage blends. It is said to promote a smoother, younger-looking skin, assisting in healing scar tissue as well as stretch marks. It is too sticky to use on its own, but is wonderful when blended with a lighter carriers, such as sweet almond. When it is applied topically on to the skin it is said to help promote the formation of new cells, improve circulation, and help repair sun damage. It is also used to help relieve the symptoms of dermatitis. This carrier is said to stimulate tissue regeneration and is often added to other blends because of its antioxidant properties.
- **Hazelnut oil** is fine in texture, and has great moisturizing qualities. Hazelnut oil can help tone and tighten the skin while strengthening capillaries and assisting in cell regeneration.
- **Holy oil** is an ideal carrier oil due to its molecular structure. It carries essential oils deep into the skin. An excellent glide, non-greasy, odourless, hypoallergenic oil.

## What is Massage Therapy?

Massage therapy, also known as Swedish massage, is the most common form of massage therapy in the United States.

Massage therapists use long, smooth strokes, kneading and other movements focused on superficial layers of muscle using massage oil or lotion.

## How Does Massage Therapy Work?

Massage therapy improves circulation by bringing oxygen and other nutrients to body tissues.

It relieves muscle tension and pain, increases flexibility and mobility, and helps clear lactic acid and other waste, which reduces pain and stiffness in muscles and joints.

## Why Do People Get Massage Therapy?

People get massage therapy for relaxation or for a variety of health conditions:

- Back pain
- Inflammatory conditions such as arthritis and tendinitis
- Stress relief and stress-related conditions
- Headaches and migraines
- Muscle and related conditions such as spasms, strains and sprains
- Repetitive strain injury, such as carpal tunnel syndrome
- Circulatory and respiratory problems
- Post-injury and post surgical rehabilitation

Massage therapy relieves stress. It is thought to help the body's stress response by lowering levels of hormones such as cortisol.

Massage therapy also appears to enhance immune function.

## What a Typical Massage Therapy Session is Like

A typical massage therapy session is between 40 and 90 minutes. Your massage will begin with a brief consultation and review of symptoms, medical history, and lifestyle.

You will be asked to undress (many people keep their underwear on) while the massage therapist is out of the room, and lie face down under a sheet on a padded massage table.

The massage therapist will knock on the door to make sure you are ready. The massage therapist re-enters the room and will then adjust the face rest and pillows to ensure that you are comfortable and properly positioned. Tell the massage therapist if you are too warm or cold.

The massage therapist uses a light oil or lotion on the skin and begins the massage. A full body massage usually begins on the back and then moves down to the legs. You will then be asked to turn over so you are face up. The massage continues on your arms, legs, neck, and abdomen.

You are underneath the sheet at all times, and in North America, only the part of the body being treated at any one time is uncovered.

After the massage, the massage therapist leaves the room so you can get changed.

Take your time getting up. If you sit or stand too quickly you may feel lightheaded or dizzy.

## **Will Massage Therapy Hurt?**

Massage therapy shouldn't hurt. Occasionally there is mild aching when the massage therapist applies pressure over "knots" and other areas of muscle tension. If the pressure is too strong for you, let the massage therapist know.

## **How Will I Feel After a Massage?**

Most people feel calm and relaxed after a treatment. Occasionally, people experience mild temporary aching for a day.

## **Precautions**

Massage therapy is not recommended for certain people:

- People with infectious skin disease, rash, or open wounds
- Immediately after surgery
- Immediately after chemotherapy or radiation, unless recommended by your doctor
- People prone to blood clots. There is a risk of blood clots being dislodged. If you have heart disease, check with your doctor before having a massage
- Pregnant women should check with their doctor first if they are considering getting a massage. Massage in pregnant women should be done by massage therapists who are certified in pregnancy massage.

Massage should not be done directly over bruises, inflamed skin, unhealed wounds, tumours, abdominal hernia, or areas of recent fractures.

## **Additional Massage Tips**

- Don't eat a heavy meal before the massage.
- If it's your first time at the clinic or spa, arrive at least 10 minutes early to complete the necessary forms. Otherwise, arrive 5 minutes early so you can have a few minutes to rest and relax before starting the massage.