

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE

INTRODUCTION: Massage is the manipulation of superficial and deeper layers of muscle and connective tissue to enhance function, aid in the healing process, and promote relaxation and well-being.

HOW IT WORKS: Treatment involves the manual or mechanical manipulation of the body with pressure, tension, motion, or vibration. Target tissues may include muscles, tendons, ligaments, fascia, skin, joints, or other connective tissue, as well as lymphatic vessels and organs of the gastrointestinal system. There are more than eighty different recognized massage modalities.



INDICATIONS: Massage is useful on patients of all ages for pain relief, relaxation, detoxification, and general stress relief.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Massage is contraindicated when it could cause worsening of a particular condition, unwanted tissue destruction, or spread of disease. Massage can spread malignancy, thrombi, atherosclerotic plaques, and infection. Absolute contraindications include deep vein thrombosis, acute infection, bleeding, broken bones, and open wounds. Relative contraindications include incompletely healed scar tissue, fragile skin, calcified soft tissue, skin grafts, atrophic skin, inflamed tissue, malignancy, and inflammatory muscle disease.

TREATMENT PROTOCOLS/INDICATIONS FOR SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES:

- *Craniosacral Massage* (same as Craniosacral Therapy) - Consists of light, direct finger pressure concentrating on the fluids, bones, fascia, and membranes of the craniosacral system to free restrictions of movement and energy.
- *Healing Energy Massage* - Consists of gentle touch to stimulate and balance the flow of nonvisible energy through and around the body. Useful for the relief of pain, stress-related and chronic conditions, injuries, and fibromyalgia.
- *Lymphatic Drainage Massage* - Consists of gentle, steady, light touch with the hand or fingertips to stimulate the flow of lymph (a colorless liquid containing water, proteins, fats, hormones and waste products) through the body; stimulates the immune system, reduces sensitivity from allergies, and can relieve constipation, edema, colds, sinusitis, insomnia, and eye and ear problems.
- *Relaxation Massage* - Consists of smooth, flowing skin contact to promote general relaxation, improve circulation and range of movement, and relieve muscle tension.
- *Swedish Massage* - Consists of gliding, rolling, kneading, tapping, and shaking strokes — combined with active and passive movements of the joints — to relax muscles, loosen joints, stimulate the skin and nervous system, and speed blood return from the extremities.
- *Myofascial Release Massage* - Consists of long stretching strokes (with fingers, palms, elbows, or forearms) and/or gentle traction to release tension in the fascia, the soft connective tissue between muscles and bones; coaxes muscles in spasm to relax, breaking adhesions in the fascia, improving blood flow, and restoring flexibility and mobility.
- *Trigger-Point Massage* - Consists of concentrated finger pressure to release acute or chronic muscle tension or spasms at tender spots called trigger points. Trigger points can themselves be painful, can cause pain in other areas of the body, and can limit range of motion.
- *Deep-Tissue Massage* - Consists of deep, slow finger pressure, kneading, and palpation of contracted muscles, tendons, and fascia to release chronic tension.
- *Hot Stone Therapy* - Involves placement of smooth, heated stones on tension points or acupuncture points (e.g., along the spine, in the palms of the hand, between the toes), along with Swedish massage performed with a heated stone in the therapist's hand.