

OTHER MASSAGE THERAPIES

No hands massage

This type of massage is becoming more common for a variety of reasons. Repetitive strain takes its toll, therapists are just as prone to RSI and carpal tunnel syndrome as typists. The techniques have been designed to use the inside of the forearm rather than the hands to avoid damage to the hands and wrists. Nevertheless it is still a deep and powerful treatment

In many ways, the massage is more physical than Swedish as the therapist uses the couch far more to support their own posture while they work. The therapist also needs to be quite agile to perform some of the techniques.

Rolfing

Rolfing is a holistic soft tissue treatment that aims to improve posture. It is named after an American biochemist, Dr Ida Rolf, who worked on the principle that many health problems were caused by poor posture that drained the body of vitality. Rolfing is a complex manipulation system known as 'structural reintegration'. It combines an osteopathic/chiropractic approach with connective tissue (myofascial system) with rhythms of respiration. The aim is to realign the body so that its physical structures are in straight vertical lines. This realignment releases stress held in the fascia and creates more effective muscle use, thereby conserving energy. The theory is that at this point, gravity would support the body, and physical and psychological well being would be re-established.

Bowen technique

This is a gentle massage treatment that uses pressure and soft tissue massage. The therapist uses rolling movement applied with the fingers or thumb. The moves focus on crucial junctions of muscle, bone and nerve pathway; the blood, lymphatic circulation; and energy flow. The techniques do not generate energy but connect energy already in the body's system.

Synchronized massage

This is performed by two therapists working with movements that are synchronized together to cover the limbs and back. One therapist works on the head while the other massages the feet. It is very relaxing when performed well as it is difficult to focus on both masseurs' technique. The massage still lasts an hour.

Ancient therapies

Tui na

Tui na is a comprehensive oriental therapeutic massage practiced for thousands of years. Similar to other eastern therapies, Tui na follows the flow of energy (Qi)

through the meridians to harmonize the flow of Qi. The energy flows with the five elements of nature. These elements are spring, summer, late summer, autumn and winter. These seasons work with the traditional elements of Chinese medicine. The treatment aims to balance and harmonize the body using an advanced touch. The therapist works with the body using observational and listening skills to achieve a holistic approach.

The treatment includes general massage, trigger release, soft circular manipulation, strain and counter strain, moxibustion and cupping techniques. Tui na is not like a western massage and it can be extremely painful as the techniques used are deep within the muscles, tendons and ligaments to release stagnated energy.

Indonesian massage

Indonesian massage is carried out using a light, tropical, spicy blend of massage oil. The treatment is characteristically carried out using deep thumb work across the muscle fibres.

Balinese massage

Balinese massage is similar to Indonesian massage but there are some differences. The main one being that there is a sequence of laying of the hands for 'spiritual' contact during the treatment

The treatment begins with the client lying face down. Initially the pressure movements are applied over towels to get the client used to the therapist's touch. The thumb is used to apply pressure to release blocked energy. Movements also include wringing, rolling and spider-walking movements along the arms aimed to speed up the microcirculation.

Kahuna

This massage is based on ancient Polynesian/Hawaiian systems. Like Chinese therapies the treatment is based on strong philosophies carried down over thousands of years. Theories were passed down through a family and as such there are several family variations. Lomi lomi is one form and comprises of deep stroking, soothing movements and stretching carried out in an almost a rhythmical dance (tai chi in nature) to channel energy. Movements follow the pattern of breath. Each movement rocks gently into the next to provide blissful relaxation and to promote healing. There are no point techniques like those in acupuncture. Kahi loa is another form of Kahuna and uses light touch and developed mental focus.

Thai massage

Thai massage is an ancient healing tradition. In Thai massage the energy flows along channel called sen. Thai energy powers all physical mental and emotional processes.

Energy must match the demand if these are to function normally. The massage focuses on the main sen channels. Like other treatment the application of pressure along these channels helps to release energy blockages and stagnation. It relaxes the body and greatly improves flexibility.

Thai massage is usually performed on the floor through thin clothes and with bare feet. This is a long treatment and can take up to two and half hours.

Thai massage or Thai bodywork is a lazy way of benefiting from yoga as it comprises of a sequence of applied physical yoga moves. It consists of a flowing sequence of stretches interspaced with pressure along the energy pathways. The complex sequence also incorporates soft tissue pressing, shaking, stretching, pulling, pushing, twisting and joint manipulation