

GLOSSARY: THERAPY & TECHNIQUES

This glossary includes some of the most popular techniques and terms used in massage therapy and bodywork. This glossary is included for consumer's informational purposes only.

Acupressure - Acupressure is a form of bodywork based in traditional Chinese meridian theory in which acupuncture points are pressed to stimulate the flow of energy or chi.²

Chair Massage - Chair massage refers to massage given with the recipient seated in an ordinary or special massage chair. Recipients remain clothed in chair massage. It has been called on-site massage when the chair is taken to a public place such as an office or commercial establishment.

Craniosacral - Cranio refers to the cranium, which is the bony part of the head. Sacral refers to the bony bottom of the spine called the sacrum. In the 1900s Dr. William Sutherland, an osteopathic physician, discovered cranio movement. In the 1970s Dr. John Upledger, an osteopathic doctor, helped to further Sutherland's discovery as both an evaluative tool and a corrective one. Craniosacral therapy is a light touch manipulation of the head and bottom of the spine to restore optimal cerebrospinal fluid movement.

Deep Tissue Massage - Deep tissue massage is also called deep muscle therapy or deep tissue therapy. It is an umbrella term for bodywork systems that work deeply into the muscles and connective tissue to release chronic aches and pains.

Hot Stone Massage is a massage technique that uses heated stones to relax and massage sore muscles. The stones can be used for their heat alone, or as massage tools used in combination with essential oils used in aromatherapy. Basalt rocks are generally used because of their heat retention properties, and are usually heated to around 125-150 degrees using hot water. The smooth, rounded stones are then placed along various points on the body to open up energy channels and promote circulation.

Integrated Massage- Integrated Massage uses different hands-on techniques to promote physiological changes. This type of massage often coincides with guided movement and other bodywork techniques to help stimulate atrophied muscles and release compressed soft tissue. The various techniques used are often found in sports therapy programs. Aside from increasing the flow of blood and oxygen to muscles, it also improves joint flexibility. Practitioners credit these benefits to an increase in the production and release of endorphins, the body's natural painkiller

Manual Lymph Drainage - Manual lymph drainage is a gentle method of promoting movement of lymph into and through the lymphatic vessels. It reduces edema, a condition in which the tissues of the body contain an excessive amount of fluid.

Myofascial Release - Myo means muscle and fascia is the elastic connective tissue wrapped around muscles and other parts of the body. During myofascial release restrictions (stuck areas) are located and gentle sliding pressure is applied in the direction of the restriction to stretch the tissues. The stretching of tissues and the heat imparted by the practitioner's hands are thought to help produce a softer consistency of fascial tissues.

Pregnancy Massage - Pregnancy massage is the massage of pregnant women (prenatal) and women after giving birth (postpartum). It address the special needs of pregnant women such as discomforts in the low back, feet and legs.

Reiki - Reiki is a Japanese word pronounced "ray-kee" and means "universal life energy." It is a light touch or no-touch technique for channeling this omnipresent energy to promote healing.

Reflexology - Reflexology is a form of bodywork based on the theory of zone therapy, in which specific spots of the body are pressed to stimulate corresponding areas in other parts of the body. Foot reflexology, in which pressure techniques are applied only to the feet, is the most common form of reflexology.

Rolfing® Structural Integration - Rolfing Structural Integration was developed by Ida P. Rolf as a form of hands-on manipulation and movement education that works with the connective tissues, called fascia, in order to balance the whole body in gravity. The 10-session series may cause deep changes in the body that are emotional as well as physical. The Rolf Institute® of Structural Integration is the original school developed by Dr. Rolf and the only school that teaches Rolfing Structural Integration and graduates Rolfers™.

Shiatsu - Shiatsu (Japanese for "finger pressure") is a system for healing and health maintenance that has evolved over thousands of years. Shiatsu derives both from the ancient healing art of acupuncture and from the traditional form of Japanese massage, amma. The goal of each of the different types of shiatsu being practiced, Zen shiatsu, tsubo point therapy, shiatsu massage and water shiatsu, is balancing energy flow.

Sports Massage - Sports massage is applied to athletes to help them train and perform free of pain and injuries. Massage therapists blend classic Swedish strokes with such methods as compression, pressure-point therapy, cross-fiber friction, joint mobilization, hydrotherapy and cryotherapy (ice massage) to meet the special needs of high-level performers and fitness enthusiasts.

Swedish Massage - Swedish massage is also known as the Western or classic style of massage. It is credited to the Swedish fencing master and gymnastics instructor, Per Henrik Ling. It is a scientific system of manipulations on the muscles and connective tissues of the body for the purpose of relaxation, rehabilitation or health maintenance. Swedish massage therapy is comprised of five basic strokes and their variations: effleurage, petrissage, friction, tapotement (or percussion) and vibration.

Thai Massage - Thai massage is an ancient bodywork system designed to unblock trapped energy and improve vitality by applying pressure along energy pathways called sens. These pathways carry vital life energy. Thai massage uses slow, often meditative, rhythmic pressing by fingers, thumbs, hands, forearms, elbows and feet (which are used extensively) and yogalike stretches coupled with gentle rocking motions.

Trigger Point Massage - Trigger point massage utilizes ischemic compression of individual areas of hypersensitivity in muscles, ligaments, tendons and fascia. These trigger points are defined by their referral of pain to distant locations in muscles, connective tissues and organs. Janet Travell, M.D., pioneered trigger point therapy in the United States.