

TYPES OF MASSAGE THERAPY: Which is Right for You?

Massage therapy's benefits run the gamut from easing tension and stress to helping recovery after injury to relieving cancer treatment pain. By triggering an involuntary relaxation response from the nervous system, massage can produce physical and emotional benefits. Massage techniques have been used since **3000 BCE** (or earlier). Today, massage therapists employ up to **80 different techniques** to help people relax, recover and rejuvenate. Let's take a look at some of the more common types of massage therapy.



SWEDISH MASSAGE

In the early 1800s, Swedish doctor/gymnast/teacher **Per Henrik Ling** created the Swedish Movement Cure to help relieve chronic pain. It was the precursor to what we know as **Swedish massage**, a style that involves

- Stroking (effleurage)
- Pressing
- Squeezing and kneading (petrissage)
- Striking (percussion)

It's a full-body massage that's best used on those who are new to massage, have a lot of tension and are sensitive to touch.



HOT STONE MASSAGE

Similar to Swedish massage in that it is good for people with muscle pain and tension, massage therapists place **heated stones** on different parts of the body. The stones are used either in lieu of or in addition to their hands to help:

- Reduce muscle tension
- Relieve pain
- Increase blood flow
- Encourage relaxation



AROMATHERAPY MASSAGE

Aromatherapy combines gentle pressure and essential oils to produce relaxation. This massage therapy style has an added bonus: it can help with emotional healing by:

- Elevating your mood
- Reducing stress and anxiety
- Lessening symptoms of depression
- Alleviating muscle tension and pain



DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE

If you've ever had certain spots on your body that are often painful and stiff, **deep tissue massage** may give some relief. The massage therapist uses slow strokes and deep finger pressure to bring relief, but it's not recommended for those who are sensitive to pressure.

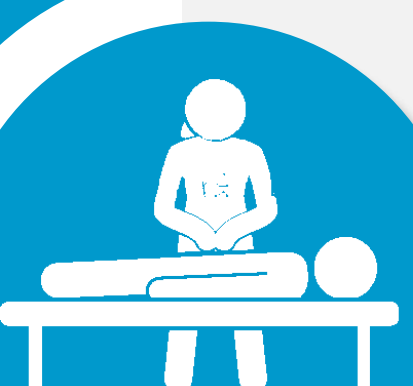
- Good for chronic pain
- Relieves tension from deep within muscles and connective tissue
- Helps with soreness, injury or imbalance
- Uses intense pressure



SPORTS MASSAGE

Athletes are often subjected to repetitive use injuries from participating in a particular sport. **Sports massage** takes various approaches to help athletes before, during or after sporting events. It may involve deep pressure or strokes to help manage pain and prevent injuries. It can:

- Increase flexibility and performance
- Relieve pain, anxiety and muscle tension
- Help prevent sports injuries
- Aid healing after an injury



TRIGGER POINT MASSAGE

A tight area in muscle tissue that can cause referred pain in another area of the body is called a trigger point. Trigger point massage helps alleviate the pain source through isolated pressure and release cycles.

- Uses deep breathing to help identify the source and intensity of pain
- Releases constricted areas of muscle to alleviate pain
- Decreases pain after a single treatment
- Helps manage pain and stress from chronic injuries



THAI MASSAGE

Thai massage goes beyond other types of massage because the therapist uses his or her whole body to move the recipient into a variety of positions. This ancient technique uses gentle pressure and stretching techniques to help relax the person who, unlike with Swedish massage, **lies on the floor** and actively participates in the massage. It can:

- Lower stress
- Boost energy
- Improve range of motion
- Relieve headaches



CHAIR MASSAGE

Athletes are often subjected to repetitive use injuries from participating in a particular sport. Sports massage takes various approaches to help athletes before, during or after sporting events. It may involve deep pressure or strokes to help manage pain and prevent injuries. It can:

- Increase flexibility and performance
- Relieve pain, anxiety and muscle tension
- Help prevent sports injuries
- Aid healing after an injury

Regardless of the type of massage, it can make you feel good and help you relax. Is massage therapy a career that you may enjoy? **Florida Academy** offers a comprehensive 600-hour curriculum (with day and evening classes) that can get you started in a massage therapy career in as little as 20 weeks.