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Massage Therapy

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Exploring Options with Your Doctor

When seeking complementary care, it's a good idea to stay in close contact with your medical doctor. Ideally, you, your doctor, and your complementary care provider will work as a team. Together, you can ensure that the care you receive is right for you. And you can make sure that one type of care doesn't adversely affect another. Discuss with your medical doctor any concerns he or she may have about your receiving massage therapy. Treatment may increase blood flow and put pressure on soft tissue and muscles. This may not be right for you if you have inflammation, swelling, or certain injuries or wounds.

Understanding Massage Therapy

Massage therapy is away to increase circulation to tense, strained muscles and other soft tissue. Behind this treatment is the belief that improved circulation and relaxation lead to better health and well-being.

Healing through touch

Massage therapy can be used to increase blood flow, relax muscles, relieve stress, and revitalize the body. The method of massage that's used depends on the goal. It may include vigorous kneading and rubbing. Or it may be a more subtle, gentle touch, such as light tapping.

Massage therapy may be done using a wide range of techniques. The type you have depends on the massage therapist's training as well as your preference. Here are some common types of massage therapy:

Swedish massage: Long strokes and kneading motions to relax muscles

Sports massage: Various techniques to enhance athletic performance and aid recovery after exertion.

Oriental massage: Pressure applied to targeted points that are thought to release the body's own healing energy.

Take the time to learn about massage therapy. Think about your goals. What do you expect from massage therapy? How do you believe it may help you? Answering these questions and others can help you decide if massage therapy is right for you.

Why seek this care?

Massage therapy can relieve many aches and pains. Your discomfort may have come from simply going about daily tasks or after doing physical activity. No matter what the cause, massage therapy may give you a boost in circulation as well as pain relief. This may help you feel both relaxed and revitalized. Other benefits may include improved joint motion and reduced stress.



Questions for the massage therapist

Before you decide whether to get massage therapy, talk with a massage therapist. Asking him or her some of these questions may help you make an informed decision:

- What is your training? How long have you been practicing?
- What massage techniques do you use?

Have you treated problems like mine?
What can I expect from a typical visit?
How long will treatment take and how much will it cost?
Do I need to prepare in any way?
Will I need to undress?

The qualified therapist

Some states license massage therapists, issuing minimum training guidelines. Choose massage therapists who are certified or licensed. Look for a CMT, LMT, or RMT designation after their names. Some therapists also may have training in other fields, such as chiropractic or physical therapy.

Questions Worth Asking

Could massage therapy injure me or interfere with my medical treatment?
What professional experience have you had working with massage therapists?
Can you recommend a qualified massage therapist?

Learning More

Discuss with friends and family any experiences they may have had with massage therapy. The people who know you are often your best resource. Also, research massage therapy in your local library or by contacting either of the following organizations.

American Massage Therapy Association
1-847-864-0123

National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage
1-703-610-9015

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