

## EFFECT OF THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE ON HUMAN BODY

Izabella Bakai, Olha Abramiv

Lviv State University of Physical Culture

**Introduction.** Therapeutic massage is a combination of relaxation massage and remedial massage to not only relax your whole body but at the same time, work through some of the muscle issues or “tight spots” you may be experiencing. Massage therapy may improve your circulation, which enhances the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to muscle cells and helps remove waste products or reduce swelling [1, 2, 3]. These circulatory effects of massage may have value in the treatment of some inflammatory conditions, such as arthritis. Massage therapy induces a relaxation response, which lowers your heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure; plus boosts your immune system and generally decreases the physical effects of stress.

The research **aim** is to present effects of therapeutic massage on human body.

**Methods** of research: literature analysis, comparative method and method of structural analysis. The research task is to determine the health benefits of therapeutic massage.

**Results and discussion.** Word on the health benefits of massage therapy for stress relief has spread. In 2006, 39 million Americans -- one in six adults -- had at least one massage, according to a nationwide survey by the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA).

"Americans are looking to massage for much more than just relaxation," says Mary Beth Braun, President of the AMTA. "Massage therapy can be effective for a variety of conditions, including arthritis, lower back pain, insomnia, headaches, anxiety, circulatory problems, and recovery from a sports injury."

According to a 2007 American Massage Therapy Association survey, almost a quarter of all adult Americans had at least one massage in the previous year. And, they have a wide range of reasons for doing so. More and more people -- especially baby boomers -- recognize the health benefits of massage. They choose from among many massage styles to get relief from symptoms or to heal injuries, to help with certain health conditions, and to promote overall wellness.

Before you can decide which massage style is best for you, you need to ask yourself a question. Do you simply want a massage for relaxation and stress control? Or do you need symptom relief or help with a certain health condition? Before booking a massage, let the therapist know what you're looking for and ask which style the therapist uses. Many use more than one style. Or the therapist may customize your massage, depending on your age, condition, or any special needs or goals you have.

The most widely recognized and commonly used category of massage is the Swedish massage. This type of massage is used more than half the world. Swedish massage uses five styles of strokes. The five basic strokes are effleurage (sliding or gliding), petrissage (kneading), tapotement (rhythmic tapping), friction (cross fiber or with the fibers) and vibration. Swedish massage has shown to be helpful in reducing pain, joint stiffness, and improving function in patients with osteoarthritis of the knee over a period of eight weeks. The term "Swedish" massage is actually only recognized in English and Dutch speaking countries, and in Hungary. Elsewhere the style is referred to as "classic massage".

Clinical studies report that Swedish Massage can effectively reduce low back pain and the effectiveness can last for as long as 15 weeks. One study reported that Swedish Massage caused reduction in salivary cortisol indicating its role in management of stress and improvement in mood.

Another most popular massage is traditional Thai massage. It is generally based on a combination of Indian and Chinese traditions of medicine. Thai massage combines both physical and energetic aspects. It is a deep, full-body massage progressing from the feet up, and focusing on energy lines throughout the body, with the aim of clearing blockages in these lines, and thus

stimulating the flow of blood and lymph throughout the body. It draws on yoga, acupuncture and reflexology. Thai Massage is used for management of conditions such as musculoskeletal pain and fatigue. Thai Massage involves a number of stretching movements that improve body flexibility, joint movement and also improve blood circulation throughout the body. In one study scientists found that Thai Massage showed comparable efficacy as the painkiller ibuprofen in reduction of joint pain caused by osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee.

#### The benefits of massage

- Alleviate low-back pain and improve range of motion.
- Assist with shorter, easier labor for expectant mothers and shorten maternity hospital stays.
- Ease medication dependence.
- Enhance immunity by stimulating lymph flow—the body's natural defense system.
- Exercise and stretch weak, tight, or atrophied muscles.
- Help athletes of any level prepare for, and recover from, strenuous workouts.
- Improve the condition of the body's largest organ—the skin.
- Increase joint flexibility.
- Decrease depression and anxiety.
- Promote tissue regeneration, reducing scar tissue and stretch marks.
- Pump oxygen and nutrients into tissues and vital organs, improving circulation.
- Reduce postsurgery adhesions and swelling, spasms and cramping.
- Relax and soften injured, tired, and overused muscles.
- Release endorphins—amino acids that work as the body's natural painkiller.
- Relieve migraine pain.

**Conclusions.** In general, therapeutic massage improves blood circulation and allows the system to function better as a whole. It alleviates pain and reduces the need to take medication. The therapy is not only good for the physical well-being but also lifts up the spirits and creates emotional wellbeing. However, one should keep in mind that these are alternative forms of treatment and cannot replace allopathic treatment.

#### References

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