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Massage Therapy

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Massage therapy refers to manual soft tissue manipulation to reduce pain and improve function. Massage therapy is usually performed with a hands-on approach although some techniques may involve the use of a mechanical or electrical apparatus to stimulate or soothe soft tissues of the body. Massage may reduce the negative effects of adhesion and scar. Massage therapy is often effective at pain associated with muscle spasms. Americans are turning to massage therapy for relief from injuries, relief from chronic and acute conditions, to help deal with the stresses of daily life, and to maintain good health.

Massage therapy approaches range from very gentle superficial contact to deep, forceful manipulation and mobilization of soft tissues and muscles. It involves kneading and stroking soft tissues and muscles. Massage therapy is used to complement other forms of therapeutic intervention. The effects of therapeutic massage vary with each individual. It promotes the reduction of soft tissue adhesions, facilitates good circulation, helps improve range of movement, improves lymph circulation thereby increasing the local effectiveness of the immune system and generally helps to reduce stress levels leading to better mental outlook. Massage therapy has been shown to lower stress and anxiety levels, reduce blood pressure, and improve function following injury. It helps overcome the swelling and pooling of fluids at the site of tissue injury or trauma. Massage therapy is often used in conjunction with other forms of physical intervention such as joint mobilization and manipulation to help reduce muscle spasms and muscle tension.

An increasing number of research studies show that massage therapy reduces heart rate, lowers blood pressure, increases blood circulation and lymph flow, relaxes muscles, improves range of motion, and increases the release of endorphins (enhancing medical treatment). Although therapeutic massage does not increase muscle strength, it is an excellent compliment to a strengthening and conditioning program. It also can hasten and lead to a more complete recovery from exercise or injury.