

MASSAGE POCKET GUIDE

FAST FACTS

- Research has found that massage therapy alleviates pain and discomfort, while providing mental relaxation
- A survey conducted by the American Massage Therapy Association found that in a 12-month span, 19% of adults received at least one massage
- 78% of adults who receive massage use it to address stress, pain relief, soreness, stiffness or spasms, injury recovery, migraines, prevention, pregnancy or prenatal, and general wellbeing

WHAT IS MASSAGE THERAPY?

Massage therapy is a healing practice that is thousands of years old. It is the manual administration of pressure to the body's soft tissue including muscles, tendons, ligaments and connective tissue. Massage therapy is typically performed to loosen and relax tissue, but can also be performed to treat serious health issues, like chronic pain.

HOW DOES MASSAGE THERAPY WORK?

Massage therapy works on your body's relaxation and mechanical responses:

- **Relaxation Response**—During a massage, changes in your parasympathetic nervous system occur; Your breathing and heart rate slow, your muscles begin to relax and your blood pressure decreases; Serotonin is released, increasing positive mood and thoughts
- **Mechanical Response**—Massage increases circulation (lymph and blood) and relaxes tissue; Improved circulation can decrease swelling and inflammation in soft tissue; As muscle tissues relax, muscle contractions and spasms are decreased; An increase in circulation and relaxation of muscle tissue decrease pain

What is the evidence?

Massage has been shown effective for the following:

- Fibromyalgia pain, anxiety and depression¹
- HIV anxiety and hyperventilation²
- Breast Cancer symptoms including negative emotions and fatigue.³
- Cancer pain levels, anxiety and fatigue⁴

If you or your healthcare provider would like to read more research on massage therapy's effect on a particular health concern you would like to treat, the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) provides an in-depth look at the effectiveness of massage therapy: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/massage>

What can I expect to happen at my first Massage Therapy session?

Prior to your first massage, the clinic or therapist will provide you with some form of a medical consultation. This will either be a written or verbal questionnaire where you detail the reason you

have chosen to visit a massage therapist, your medical history, any physical or mental conditions you are currently suffering from and any medications you are taking. Inform your massage therapist of any open wounds, broken bones or allergies you have so that you do not experience any negative side effects. Once you have completed your consultation, the therapist will discuss with you the treatment you will receive and the concerns s/he plans to address through massage therapy.

What conditions does Massage Therapy treat?

Massage therapy is used to treat both physical and mental health conditions and address symptoms related to chronic health concerns including:

- Chronic and Acute Pain
- Cancer symptoms
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Fibromyalgia
- Headaches
- HIV/Aids
- Premature Infant Care

Are there precautions, side effects or safety concerns I should be aware of before I start massage therapy?

Massage therapy is widely considered a safe practice when performed by a trained and qualified practitioner. Nevertheless, there is potential risk involved as there is with all conventional and integrative medicine practices.

Precautions

- Prior to engaging in massage, you should talk to your doctor and massage therapist if you suffer from:
 - Bruises
 - Open wounds
 - Areas of weak skin
 - A blood clot in a vein
 - A bleeding disorder
 - Low blood platelet counts
 - You take an anticoagulants (blood thinning medication)
- For some pregnant women, massage is not safe. Please talk to your healthcare provider if you are pregnant.
- Cancer patients should take special caution when receiving massage. A massage therapist should not massage any area that has recently received radiation treatment and the site of the tumor(s).

Side Effects

- Bruising
- Pain
- Allergic reaction to massage oils and or creams used by the massage therapist

Massage therapy should be used along side any conventional treatments you are receiving; massage therapy is not meant to take the place of conventional care. However, it is possible that overtime you could reduce your dependence on traditional forms of treatment and/or medication. Any decisions regarding treatment should be discussed with your doctor(s) prior to making changes to your treatment plan.

What training/certifications does a massage therapist need?

Massage therapists are regulated by 44 states and the District of Columbia. In some states, there may be regulations at the county and/or city level. If you would like to see the specific guidelines required by your state, county or city, please visit the [American Massage Therapy Association](#) (AMTA).

How can I find a massage therapist located near me?

When looking for a massage therapist, make sure to receive information about his training and what conditions he treats. The [AMTA](#) provides a search by location and technique.

How much will a massage therapy session cost?

The cost of massage therapy treatments vary based on location, provider, and services needed. In some rare cases, hospitals and health centers offer massage therapy that can be covered with health insurance. Some insurance companies offer discounts if you see a practitioner they recommend.

What are the Different Types of Massage Therapy?

Swedish Massage—Gentle massage that involves long strokes, kneading, deep circular movements, vibrating and tapping

Deep Tissue Massage—Slower movements while applying more force on the body's soft tissues to help muscles heal from injury

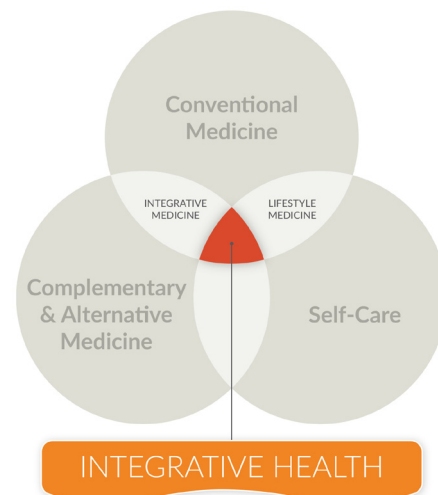
Sports Massage—Designed to treat injuries and soothe the bodies of athletes and others who are very physically active

Trigger Point Massage—Breaks down tight muscle fibers that typically form on muscles that are overused or have been injured

Chair Massage—Performed using a special chair while the client is fully clothed and sitting up; Addresses the upper body

What is integrative health?

Integrative health is the pursuit of personal health and wellbeing foremost, while addressing disease as needed, with the support of a health team dedicated to all proven approaches - conventional, complementary and self-care.



Sources:

- 1 Li, Y.H., et al. (2014). Massage Therapy for Fibromyalgia: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *PLOS ONE* 9(2): e89304.
- 2 Gregory, R., et al. (2017). Effects of massage therapy on anxiety, depression, hyperventilation and quality of life in HIV infected patients: A randomized controlled trial. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* 32: pp. 109-114.
- 3 Pan, Y.Q., et al. (2014). Massage interventions and treatment-related side effects of breast cancer: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Clinical Oncology* 19.5: pp. 829-841.
- 4 Boyd, C., et al. (2016). The Evidence for Massage Therapy (EMT) Working Group; The Impact of Massage Therapy on Function in Pain Populations—A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials: Part II, Cancer Pain Populations. *Pain Medicine* 17 (8): pp. 1553-1568.