

Massage

The sense of touch and of being touched by another caring person is of fundamental importance to our physical and emotional growth. Massage provides a feel-good factor, relief and support to people of all ages, from infants to seniors, and from all walks of life. The occasional jogger to the competitive athlete, the DIY or gardening enthusiast as well as the overstressed and overworked can all benefit from massage. It offers a drug-free, non-invasive and humanistic therapeutic approach that taps into the body's natural ability to heal itself. It increases circulation, allowing the body to pump more oxygen and nutrients into tissues and vital organs. It stimulates the lymph system, the body's natural defence, against toxic invaders. It releases endorphins, the body's natural painkiller. It improves range of motion and therefore decreasing discomfort for patients with low back and other joint and muscular restrictive patterns of movement.

History of Massage

Introduction

Massage is the treatment and practice of soft tissue manipulation with physical, functional, and in some cases psychological purposes and goals (Wikipedia). It is a manual therapy involving pressure applied with the hands, fingers, forearms and other body parts at varied speeds, pressure, focus and using a variety of strokes. The term was started by the French explorers in the 1700s and the word massage is a French word meaning 'a method of kneading with the hands'. It is a primary form of communication incorporating the sense of touch. The sense of touch provides us with the most immediate and effective communication system (Parsons 2004). It is intuitive and offers people a way of expressing their feelings and when one receives touch one feels comforted, wanted and cared for. Touch and rubbing is used to comfort a crying baby, a child that falls and hurts themselves, or an upset adult. Research by Vygotsky (1978) suggests that children held in isolation and who do not engage with others do not develop fully. Development of the individual depends upon full social interaction. Touch and interaction with others is essential during the early years for this to occur.

Eastern Culture

Massage may be the oldest and simplest form of health/medical care. According to Braun & Simonson (2008) the ancient river valley civilizations 7000-1000BCE (before the common era) rubbed oil into the skin – ‘anointing’. It was thought to banish the evil spirits that caused disease. Healthcare tended to demonstrate both a spiritual and religious basis. These civilizations also used medicinal plants, controlled breathing and a system of exercises and positions for healthcare. Ancient China used massage and finger pressure to energize, treat paralysis, chills, fever and poor circulation of blood 2600 – 220BCE. A Chinese book from 2,700 BCE, ‘The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine’, recommends 'breathing exercises, massage of skin and flesh, and exercises of hands and feet" as the appropriate treatment for paralysis, chills, and fever. "When this Chinese massage and bodywork made its way into Japan it became known as Shiatsu. Shiatsu is the best known Japanese form of bodywork. India handed down their systems of care verbally through the centuries. The Ayur Veda was not written until around the 3000–1000 BCE. Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of medicine/ healthcare is a holistic approach that attempts to balance the body, mind and spirit to maintain health and prevent illness through combining the use of herbs, diet, fasting, aromatherapy, massage, meditation, yoga, colour and metal therapy. It places great emphasis on the therapeutic benefits of massage with aromatic oils and spices. It is practiced very widely in India and has permeated many complementary therapies all over the world. Therefore, in eastern cultures it can be concluded that in ancient times self-care/ healthcare involved massage, use of medicinal plants, controlled breathing and exercise.

Western Culture

The Chinese are credited with creating the earliest form of massage, India is also known for its long use of massage and in the 6th century AD, the Japanese further developed the art to manipulate energy within the body. From this beginning massage travelled westwards where evidence of its existence is found in Egyptian tomb paintings. Queen Isis (4000BCE) included massage as treatment for health & healing. While in ancient Greece (750 – 500 BCE) the health regimen included exercise, massage, fresh air, rest, diet and cleanliness. Exercise and competitive athletics was very important to the Greeks and this led to the ‘Olympic Games’ being

held there every four years. It is said that wars stopped or were postponed in order for the games to proceed. At this time in Greece 'Gymnastics' referred to a combination of baths, athletics and massage that was thought to prepare a man for life and war. This combination was provided in the gymnasiums. Massage was one of the principal methods of relieving pain for Greek and Roman physicians. Julius Caesar, it is said, had a daily massage to treat neuralgia.

Hippocrates was a Greek physician 460 – 370 BCE who observed health and disease as a result of natural causes and not magic and the gods. He established medicine as science and the Hippocratic Oath that states that doctors must 'do no harm' is taken by all doctors of modern medicine. The main tenants of the oath are that doctors must:

'Respect, honour and share knowledge with their teachers
Treat patients to the best of their ability and only with good intentions
Not to prescribe deadly drugs or treatment
Vow patient confidentiality'

Hippocrates made detailed references to massage around 400 BCE and promoted massaging towards the heart to aid circulation. He recommended that all physicians be trained in massage to promote healing, adjust the tension of a joint, and tighten, relax or build muscle.

"The Physician Must Be Experienced In Many Things, "but assuredly in rubbing.. for rubbing can bind a joint that is too loose, and loosen a joint that is too rigid" (Hippocrates).

His holistic methods included exercise, massage, fresh air, rest, diet and cleanliness. He promoted the concept that the body is capable of curing itself.

Asclepiades of Bithynia (124 to 40 BCE) was a Greek physician who settled in Rome and promoted diet, exercise, bathing and massage. He used movement therapies such as swinging, vibrations and massage. Between 25 BCE and 57CE Celsus wrote 'De Medicina' and mentioned that massage can

Tone a weak body, relax a tense body, headaches, paralysis, fevers, head colds, neck spasm, asthma, lung, liver and spleen disorders, intestinal distress, diarrhea, coughs, ulcers, stomach pain, joints etc.. (Braun & Simonson 2008, p8)

Galen (130 – 201 CE) was a follower of Hippocrates and revolutionized medicine by his work on anatomy and medicine. The experimental method of scientific investigation is said to be his development. He encouraged physicians to practice dissection to discover anatomy and emphasized the need to understand what was going on under the skin. He wrote about the benefits of morning and night massage, added descriptions of massage strokes and emphasized the need for muscle fibres to be rubbed in all directions and used oil for health and well being. However, with the fall of the Roman Empire Europe became a battle-ground with significant influence being exerted by the Church. Massage, like many medical and scientific practices, became suspect. The Dark Ages continued up to the 1400. During this time people who were involved in herbalism, massage and healing were often burned at the stake as witches or denounced as heretics. Church thinking resulted in massage becoming synonymous with witchcraft. However, eventually nuns were granted permission to use massage and baths as inexpensive methods of health care to victims of war in hospitals. Massage was seen as treatment for pain relief, increasing blood flow and for facilitating the healing process. To this extent massage was kept alive and used as part of medical treatments. These Dark times did not affect the Arab World and massage continued to flourish there. So while the western world embraced the techniques that came from the east and promoted massage, exercise and bathing, the Dark Ages almost destroyed them for 1000 years. It was only with the Renaissance that the techniques began to flourish again.

In the middle of the 15th century a period of rebirth and progressive thinking began in Europe that became known as the Renaissance (1450 – 1600). Medicine and art flourished side by side at this time. People like Leonardo da Vinci's (1452 – 1519)

and Andreas Vesalius (1514 – 1564) studied anatomy through cadaver dissection and both left a legacy of detailed drawings of the internal workings of the human body. Vesalius suggested that medicine went to ruin when doctors, despising the work of the hand, delegated to slaves the manual attention needed by patients (Braun & Simonson 2008). Yet, Ambroise Pare, a 16th-century physician to the French court, praised massage as a treatment for various ailments. Another event that caused a divide between the hands-on massage techniques and the learned doctors of the time was the Dualism Theory of Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650). Descartes drew a distinction between the human body and the human being, drawing distinctions comparisons between the body and a machine and stating that the mind was superior to the body. While his writings stated that there were interconnections between the mechanical body and the emotional mind his legacy was to cause a lessening of the value placed on physical endeavour and to elevate the workings of the mind.

It was the 18th century before the dogma and traditions of the church were challenged and a new Age of Enlightenment began. During this time a French Jesuit, P.M. Cibot translated 'The Cong Fou', an Ancient Chinese medical reference book, into French and this reintroduced the notions of the use of controlled breathing, systems of exercise and positions for healthcare.

Per Henrik Ling

Per Henrik Ling was a Swedish poet and educator who spent many years in the East as a military man. When he returned to Sweden he developed a system of 'Swedish gymnastics' based on a study of gymnastics and physiology, and on techniques borrowed from China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome that combined exercises with posture work and was an amalgamation of four elements:

Aesthetics – giving expression to feelings, emotions and thoughts

Educational – developing the innate potential of the body with good posture and control

Medical – correcting bodily defects with active, passive and duplicated movements

Military – strengthening and toughening the body

Physiotherapy, originally based on Ling's methods, was established with the foundation in 1894 of the Society of Trained Masseurs. Ling is also credited with being the father of Physical Education in the west and while it is often stated that he was the father of Swedish Massage that is not quite correct. However, bodywork grew due to Ling's work and specific massage and bodywork techniques were created, promoted and published in Europe and America. But it was Dr Johan Georg Mezger (1838 – 1909) of Holland that promoted the strokes as known today. Although he was a Dutch man he kept to the French terms for strokes as they had already become popular at this time – effleurage, petrissage, tapotement.

Dr Emil Kleen

Dr Emil Kleen in 1888 studied the effects of effleurage, friction, petrissage, and vibration on circulation and lymph. He reported that massage had medical effects and because of this he recommended that massage and manual therapy should be the domain of medical personal only and not the domain of laypeople! Out of his research came the emphasis on the importance of anatomical and physiological education, palpation skills, hands-on techniques, for those performing these skills. Kleen also provided guidelines for therapist self-care, on acceptable lubricants and he provided a general outline for a massage session. However, once again towards the late 1800s massage came into disrepute when it became associated with massage parlours, prostitution and unqualified practitioners. Also it was thought that there were false claims of the effectiveness of massage as a cure for certain ailments and there was a call for legitimization and regulation of the sector. Following this massage once again became associated with the doctors surgery and was only made available through doctors' practices. This continued up to the establishment of the 'Society for Trained Masseures' in Britian in 1894.

Modern Times

During World War One patients suffering from nerve injury or shell shock were treated with massage. St. Thomas's Hospital, London, had a department of

massage until 1934. But during the 1930s and 1940s massage's influence decreased because of medical advancement and breakthroughs in medical technology and pharmacology. Physiotherapists began increasingly to favor electrical instruments over manual methods of stimulating the tissues. However, in many hospitals nurses continued to use massage for pain management and as a relaxation technique to aid sleep.

In the 1970s massage's influence grew once again with a notable rise among athletes and amongst people who were looking for alternative ways of living and self-care systems. It was not until the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta that massage was offered to athletes as part of the medical services provided. Today massage is used in intensive care units, for children, elderly people, babies in incubators, and patients with cancer, AIDS, heart attacks, and strokes. Most hospices have some kind of bodywork therapy available, and it is frequently offered in health centers, drug treatment clinics, and pain clinics

http://www.holisticonline.com/massage/mas_history.htm. Tiffany Field (2000), Director of the Touch Research Institutes, University of Miami School of Medicine and Nova South-Eastern University, Florida, USA has conducted research into the safety and efficacy of massage. From her studies massage has been associated with increased growth in pre-term babies, increased attentiveness in young students with attention deficit disorder, a reduction in pain in a variety of situations ranging from burn patients to PMS, childbirth and headaches, a reduction in the intensity of symptoms of depression and anxiety, enhancement of immune function and beneficial modulations of symptoms in autoimmune conditions. Field's work has been used as a guide for valid methods in education and has provided an evidence base for safe and effective practice. Nowadays, thanks to strict industry standards and regulation of practitioners, massage is a commonly accepted form of complementary medicine. Many people rely on massage to maintain good health and energy, to prevent illness, and for simple relief from stress and other consequences of life in the 21st century

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