

STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Massage is an ancient healing art, which works on the basis that when the body is calmed and relaxed, mental anxiety is lessened. Perhaps the earliest mention of massage as a therapy for mental and physical stress is found in the ayurvedic tradition of India. It is a common feature in most of the traditional therapies. Massage has been applied daily as a physical and mental relaxant in Indian lifestyles. In Japan, shiatsu practitioners regularly visit people from house to house, asking "Shiatsu today?" Acupressure is the Chinese variation of Indian marma massage techniques, which deals with the acupoints (marmapoints) but without the application of needles. It is a great stress reliever and additionally, very user-friendly. The best part about acupressure is, if needed, it can be applied any time and anywhere.

Of late, the West has also recognized that massage could be an important part of stress management. Oriental massage has been modified further in the West to expand its application as a therapy.

Traditionally, specific massage techniques, using hands, forearms, elbows, or even feet are applied to a patient's body for loosening the muscles and to locate areas of tension and other soft-tissue problems. Practitioners learn to develop a sense of touch to determine the right amount of pressure on specific parts of the body.

Under severe stress, when muscles are over-worked, the body shows many weakening symptoms such as soreness, stiffness, and even muscle spasms. Heightened stress responses accumulate lactic acid in the muscle and waste air inside the body. It exhausts the body and de-motivates the mind to remain energized and active.

Why Massage is Rejuvenating:

- Massage improves circulation of blood and lymphatic fluids. Increased blood flow brings fresh oxygen to body tissues.
- Increased oxygen flow eliminates waste products from inside the body, and enhances recovery from diseases.
- Therapeutic massage boosts circulatory and immune systems to benefit blood pressure, circulation, muscle tone, digestion, and skin tone. It also

improves the performance of the lungs.

- As muscle tone improves, so do the nerves that connect them, including the spinal cord, and the brain.
- Therapeutic massage can promote general well being, enhance confidence, and self-assuredness.

There are many variations of massage therapy and bodywork, which are often confused with each other. The term 'bodywork' refers to therapies that combine massage, such as Shiatsu, Trager, Rolfing, Polarity, and Reflexology.

Contemporary Western massage includes methods based primarily on modern Western concepts of anatomy and physiology, using a wide variety of muscle manipulative techniques. Those are broadly used for personal growth, emotional release, and balance of mind-body-spirit. They include Esalen or Swedish/Esalen, neuromuscular massage, deep tissue massage, sports massage, and manual lymph drainage.

Massage is an excellent relaxant that also increases health and well being.

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