

Healing Massage: Basics and Benefits

For centuries, people have relied on the healing properties of massage for relief from pain and stress. It is a relatively easy practice to learn, and the benefits are priceless.

Healing massage is very beneficial to both the body and the mind. The practice involves stroking, pressing and kneading different areas of the body to alleviate pain, tension, and other discomforts. Body massage is one of the most common and most widely used forms of massage, and uses a series of different strokes and. Throughout a body massage, the movements will vary in speed and in pressure, ranging from the most delicate touch with the fingertips to more focused deep tissue work. Most therapists who perform healing body massage start by keeping their hands relaxed. The begin working slowly with a different kind of rhythm, gradually building up speed and pressure as the process goes on.

Effects of Body Massage

Many reports and findings have revealed that a regular body massage session can bring numerous benefits for the clients. In fact, it has been suggested that even though a single body massage will be enjoyable, its full effects are cumulative. In other words, the benefits are more fully realized through a series of treatments.

One of the predominant benefits of healing massage is that it helps to tone and strengthen every mechanism of the body. It's no wonder that athletes depend on qualified body massage therapists to help prevent any unnecessary strain or injuries that could occur due to excess tension or stress.

Regular body massage can have a very beneficial effect on the nervous system. It has the ability to either stimulate or calm the nervous system, with the final effect depending greatly upon what is required by the client. Body massage can perform miracles for those suffering from fatigue. It reenergizes the body, and leaves the recipient with a feeling of replenished energy. Best of all, healing massage has the strong potential to bring a general feeling of well being to the recipient. It has a restorative affect not only physically, but also spiritually and mentally.

Basic Strokes

Once you've learned the effects that healing massage can have on the body, mind and spirit, it's time to learn the strokes. There are a variety of strokes involved in therapeutic massage, and it's important to be able to differentiate the individual strokes both in theory, and in practice.

- * Draining: this is a light-to-medium stroke that is used to stretch and relax the muscles. It's a commonly used technique that is also believed to improve blood circulation.
- * Kneading: commonly applied to specific areas of the body, kneading is determined by a firm stroke. This technique can alleviate muscle tension and enhance circulation.
- * Gliding: from feather-light to firm and reassuring, the gliding stroke is often used while applying oils to the body
- * Hacking: this "stroke" is really more of a technique. Hacking is a series of chopping motions alternating up and down the body. The hands are left open and held perpendicular to the body, palms facing together.
- * Pulling: Used predominantly on the muscles of the legs and the trunk, this technique is as it sounds. The healing massage therapist will use alternating hands making a pulling motion, gradually progressing up the body.

When performing each of these strokes, it's important to note that they should be applied firmly in the direction of the heart. The return stroke, on the other hand, must be given with a lighter touch. At the end of the session, the recipient should have experienced a one long series of rhythmic strokes.

If you have the opportunity to learn healing massage through a class or workshop, go for it. The strokes are simple to master, and you will have the power to bring comfort and relief to clients or loved ones.