

Bodywork Sampler

Ten Types of Somatic Methods, All Awaiting You

Nora Brunner

A rich garden of bodywork exists, to benefit you at the different ages and stages of your life. Getting the advice of your massage therapist, doing some research on www.massagetherapy.com, and seeking methods to which you are intuitively drawn are your best guides to finding what works for your body and spirit. No need to wait for a medical problem or a new high on the stress-o-meter to get on the table and into the hands of your massage and bodywork therapist.

1. SWEDISH MASSAGE

This technique is typically the starting point for most massage training and client receiving. It involves five kinds of touching and is delivered to soft tissues

2. DEEP TISSUE

Often integrated with other massage methods, deep-tissue work is exactly what it sounds like. Once the outer muscles have been relaxed, the work goes deeper into the fascia, the deep, dense, connective tissue that helps join your body parts together. Deep-tissue work is an excellent remedy for chronic muscular pain, injury rehabilitation, and reduction of inflammation-related pain caused by arthritis and tendinitis.

3. SPORTS MASSAGE

Whether for professional athletes, active kids, or weekend warriors, sports massage has benefits for participants in the active life. For most people, sports massage is handy after muscle exertion



A variety of bodywork methods exist, offering many options to best meet your needs.

by the therapist's hands, which are moisturized with massage oil or lotion. The kneading, rolling, vibrational, tapping, and percussive movements all work inward toward your heart and will stimulate your circulation. Among many benefits, Swedish massage will hasten healing of injuries, reduce swelling, and help dissolve scar tissue adhesions.

to relieve stiffness and soreness. But anyone can borrow from the gym bag of the professional athlete, so to speak, especially if he or she is training for a major event like a triathlon. Sports massage can ease muscles that shorten and tighten to compensate for and protect injured areas. Massage of

Continued on page 2

*Less is always
more when
your less means
more.*

-Vex King

Office Hours and Contact

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In this Issue

Bodywork Sampler

Steer Clear of the Gym

Hot or Cold for Injuries?

Continued from page 1

surrounding areas can relieve ripples of pain that expand from the injury site.

4. CHAIR MASSAGE

Chair massage is provided by a trained professional, with you seated on a padded, ergonomically designed chair and is often delivered in a semiprivate kiosk, fully clothed, without massage oil, and purchased in segments from five minutes to 20 minutes at about \$1 a minute. The focus is applying compression (pressure) to the head, shoulders, neck, back, and arms. Use chair massage for relief from long airplane rides, to relax shoulders weighted down by shopping bags or suitcases, or on your lunch hour.

5. STONE MASSAGE

This modality is truly a hot topic. Stones are warmed and then placed on the body, as well as used as an extension of the therapist's hands throughout the massage. The placement of the stones can be aligned with chakras, meridians, and zones according to the energy system your practitioner follows. Stone work can easily be blended with other kinds of massage and can be a powerful healing and grounding force. It's touted as an effective remedy to ease pain, stress, anxiety, and overactivity. Your therapist may refer to improvements in your flow of earth element or to the function of your root chakra.

6. GERIATRIC MASSAGE

Geriatric massage is a gentle approach tailored to meet the individual needs and comfort levels of seniors. For example, geriatric massage can be done with clothes on and may only address certain parts of the body. Massage for seniors also addresses the need for loving touch, an element that may be lacking in their lives. You can do a favor for the aging members of your family and book a professional massage for them.

7. PREGNANCY MASSAGE

Mothers-to-be can greatly benefit from pregnancy massage. It's worthwhile considering this as a baby shower gift for you or a friend to ease those backaches and swollen ankles. It can help a mother's changing posture and possibly the positioning of the baby in the womb. The beneficial relaxation chemicals a mother's body releases when getting a massage also flow to the baby. And once

the baby is born, massage can help bring mother's strained body structure and physiology back into alignment.

8. BABY MASSAGE

Right after that pregnancy, there's a special way for baby to get started on a lifelong enjoyment of massage. Practitioners can give, and teach parents, baby massage, which provides stimulation to little nervous systems, promoting brain development, and supporting that all-important parent-child bonding.

9. REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology works with the incredible system of nerves and energy meridians rooted in our feet, hands, and ears, which are connected to corresponding systems and organs. Reflexology is a smart way to work with health concerns not ordinarily reachable through regular massage, such as problems in organs or

internal systems. This also goes for areas too damaged or painful to benefit from direct touch.

10. ENERGY WORK

Receiving energy work may mean never being physically touched, keeping all of your clothes on, and remaining seated or standing. Despite this hands-off approach, recipients of energy work often report dramatic reorientations in how they feel and move in the world. Some of the more prominent methods are shiatsu, reiki, Zero Balancing, jin shin jyutsu, and Insight Bodywork.

There are new discoveries every day in the complex relationship between body, mind, and spirit. Whatever your path, keeping an open mind and listening to your body are the guides to your unique situation. Your health and wellness are up to you, so relax and let go of your stress. You deserve it.



Massage is for all ages, including infants, who are often calmed by bodywork.

Steer Clear of the Gym

Take it Easy After Your Massage

Ray Bishop

When booking a massage, consider your schedule, and try to avoid any strenuous physical exertion for at least 24 hours following your bodywork session. Exercising after a session can both increase muscle soreness and compromise the value of the soft-tissue work you've just received. "Strenuous exercise" includes activities such as running, weight lifting, high intensity aerobics, or power yoga classes.

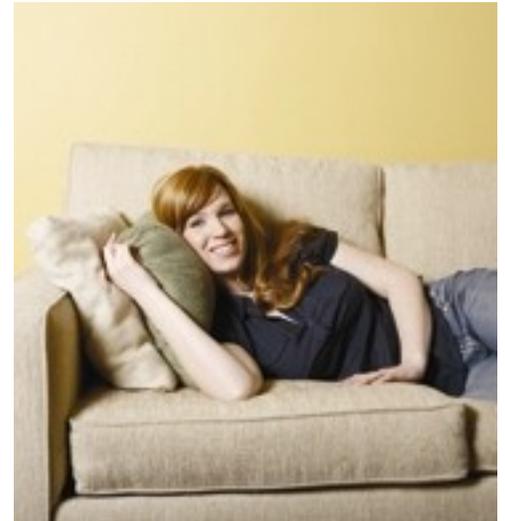
Light exercise such as moderate walking, gentle stretching, or swimming laps at an easy pace is okay for healthy individuals. One widely accepted view in favor of this twenty-four-hour recovery period is that sustained pressure on connective tissue makes it more gel-like. The technical term for this change is thixotropic effect. This state of increased softness lasts about twenty-four hours, so high-intensity exercise may pull or move the tissue back to old patterns or even induce new strain patterns.

Experts usually suggest taking it easy that evening and the following day. To further reduce any bodywork-related soreness, drink at least two liters of water in the next twenty-four hours to hydrate and flush your system. Take a hot Epsom salt bath and drink gently calming teas such as chamomile or passionflower to facilitate sleep and reduce stress that is so commonly seen as a contributing factor in chronic muscle tension and soreness. If you're dealing with an injury, the guidelines should be adjusted, but these basic suggestions seem to work well for most people.

It does appear that healthy people who exercise vigorously five to six days a week sometimes find even these modest recommendations quite challenging. If you're one of these people, consider working out before your session and then take it easy afterward.

To get the most out of your massage, hold off on the workout. When you do hit the gym again, you'll likely discover

your body is more fit than ever, thanks to the healing power of bodywork.



Take it easy and let your massage soak in.

Hot or Cold for Injuries?

How to Know Which is Best for You

Art Riggs

We all know that treating an injury immediately after it happens can help minimize the pain and damage as well as facilitate recovery. But after rolling your ankle in a soccer game, or hurting your back when lifting your toddler, or tweaking your knee when stepping out of your car, what's best? Should you ice it to try to control inflammation, or would heat be better to promote circulation?

While it's difficult to establish a fail-safe rule for when to apply ice or heat, the general directive is to use ice for the first forty-eight to seventy-two hours after an acute injury and then switch to heat.

It Depends

The reality is that many conditions are not necessarily the result of a specific injury. I call these conditions "recurrent acute" and find them by far the most

common: sciatica that occurs when you drive a car; a back that flares up every time you garden; or tennis elbow from intense computer work. In these cases, consistent and frequent applications of ice may prove very helpful over long periods of time, particularly immediately after experiencing the event that causes problems.

Conversely, back or other muscle spasms caused by overexertion rather than injury may benefit greatly from heat immediately upon the onset of symptoms or immediately after exercise in order to relax the muscles and increase circulation. Also, muscle belly pain not resulting from acute and serious trauma generally responds well to heat, which can break the spasms and release the strain. On the other hand, nerve and tendon pain--regardless of

the duration of symptoms, even if you've been experiencing them for months--benefit from ice.

What Works for You

The bottom line: different individuals will constitutionally vary greatly in their reactions. Some people are more prone to the types of inflammation exacerbated by heat, while others find their bodies contracting and tightening at the mere mention of ice. Try each option and pay close attention to how your body and mind respond, and let your gut be your guide. Ultimately, what works best for you is, well, what's best for you.

*Change begins
in a single
moment.
That moment
can be now.*

-Gary John Bishop

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~paula@ohanatherapeutic.com

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