



Definition and brief history of massage

Introduction

The practice of using touch as a healing method, derived from customs and techniques are rooted in ancient history. Civilizations in the East and West found that natural healing and massage could heal injuries, relieve pain, and prevent and cure illnesses. What's more, it helped reduce stress and produce deep relaxation.

Massage therapy began as a sacred system of natural healing. However, cultural shifts rendered it a disreputable form of indulgence for extensive periods of history. Enduring these turns, massage has experienced resurgence in modern times. Today, massage therapy stands as a highly respected holistic healing method practiced across the world. Here's how massage has evolved into the relaxing and therapeutic practice it is today.

Definition of massage

Massage therapy is the scientific manipulation of the soft tissues of the body for the purpose of normalizing those tissues and consists of manual techniques that include applying fixed or movable pressure, holding, and/or causing movement of or to the body.

Etymology

The word comes from the French *massage* "friction of kneading", or from Arabic *massa* meaning "to touch, feel" or from Latin *massa* meaning "mass, to handle, touch, to work with the hands, to knead dough". In distinction the ancient Greek word for massage was *anatripe* and the Latin was *frictio*.

History of massage

Massage therapy history dates back thousands of years to ancient cultures that believed in its medical benefits. The first written records of massage therapy are found in China and Egypt.

2700 BCE: The first known Chinese text is called "The Yellow Emperor's Classic Book of Internal Medicine." This book was first published in English in 1949, but has become a staple in massage therapy training and is also often used as a textbook for teaching many other forms of alternative medicinesuch as acupuncture, acupressure and herbology.

2500 BCE: Egyptian tomb paintings show that massage therapy was also a part of their medical tradition. Egyptians get the credit for pioneering reflexology. Their studies and traditions greatly influenced other cultures such as the Greeks and Romans.

1500 and 500 BCE: The first known written massage therapy traditions come from India, but practice may have actually originated around 3000 BCE or earlier. Hindus used the art of healing touch in the practice of Ayurvedic medicine. Ayurveda is a Sanskrit word which translates as "life health" or "life science." It is regarded as the basis of holistic medicine, combining meditation, relaxation and aromatherapy

A Form of Massage Emerges in India

Started practicing massage in approximately 3,000 BCE*, possibly earlier, it is believed to be of divine origin and passed down orally through generations; Ayurveda is the traditional holistic medical system in India. Ancient seers and natural scientists developed this system based on centuries of studies, experiments and meditations.

Texts detailing Ayurvedic principles and practices were written sometime between 1500 and 500 BCE. Based on these texts, Ayurveda was widely adopted throughout India and Southeast Asia.

Ayurveda views that individuals incur illnesses and diseases when they live out of harmony with their environment. To treat their conditions, individuals must restore their natural mental and physical balance by reestablishing harmony between themselves and the world around them. At that point, they can begin to heal naturally.

Based on the patient's health imbalances, constitution and the time of year, Ayurveda recommends how to use the five senses to interact with the environment in order to create balance. Treatments in Ayurveda include diet and herbalism, aromatherapy, color therapy, sound therapy and touch therapy

The Beginnings of Massage Therapy in the East

The earliest records on the history of massage therapy indicate that it was first considered a divinely-created system of natural healing. In India, a form of massage called Ayurveda appeared as early as 3000 B.C., and spread throughout the region, including Southeast Asia.

The goal of this ancient practice was to achieve natural and holistic (mind and body) balance through harmony within the individual and with the environment. This balance, in turn, led to physical healing and internal well-being. The treatments include the use of scents, colour, sound, and touch therapy, in addition to special diets and herbs.

Written accounts of massage therapy began to appear in China around 2700 BC. The ancient Chinese developed massages for medical uses and relaxation. They combined traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts, and spiritual beliefs from Buddhism and Taoism. These practices focused on correcting imbalances or deficiencies in the body's energy pathways. Some of the techniques that survive to modern times include specialized exercise, acupuncture, acupressure, and herbal remedies.

The ancient Egyptians also began developing their own form of massage therapy around this time. Written records and tomb paintings depict individuals getting massages. It is believed that what is now known as reflexology was created by Egyptians around 2500 B.C. Reflexology focuses on specific points of the body to heal and rejuvenate.

From China, massage therapy was brought to Japan by Japanese monks who were studying Buddhism. This was around 1000 B.C. The monks adopted aspects of traditional Chinese medicine, including massage techniques. Over time, this gave rise to the Japanese form of massage called Shiatsu. Similar to Chinese massage, shiatsu aims to raise an individual's energy levels to optimize function and natural resistance to illnesses.

Massage Therapy in Western Civilizations

After hundreds of years, as contact and trade among nations increased, the principles and practices of Eastern massage therapy reached the Western world.

Around 800 B.C., athletes in Ancient Greece began using massage to condition their bodies before competitions. Hippocrates, considered the father of Western medicine, used

“rubbing” and massage to treat injuries. The use of plant oils and herbs for medical conditions was also popular at the time. A form of aromatherapy was used by Greek women as beauty treatments.

Massage therapy is one of the oldest health care practices known to history. References to massage are found in Chinese medical texts more than 4,000 years old. Massage has been advocated in Western health care practices at least since the time of Hippocrates, the "Father of Medicine." In the fourth century B.C. Hippocrates wrote, "The physician must be acquainted with many things and assuredly with rubbing" (the ancient Greek term for massage was rubbing). The roots of modern, scientific massage therapy go back to Per Henrik Ling (1776–1839), a Swede, who developed an integrated system consisting of massage and active and passive exercises. Ling established the Royal Central Gymnastic Institute in Sweden in 1813 to teach his methods.

Modern Day Massage Therapy

After experiencing a period of decline in popularity, the benefits of massage therapy were rediscovered by Western medicine around the 1600s. But it wasn't until the 19th century that massage therapy began to be more widely recognized.

In the 1800s, the Swedish doctor Per Henrik Ling combined massage with his knowledge of physiology and medical gymnastics to create the Swedish Gymnastic Movement System. Today, he is credited with developing the basis of the technique now known as Swedish massage.

Modern massage therapy continues to re-discover and adapt ancient practices from cultures all over the world. Massage now enjoys recognition as a natural healing method to complement medical treatments. Many people now use regular massage therapy to reduce stress, maintain wellness, and prevent disease.

The massage techniques affect the muscular, skeletal, circulatory, lymphatic, nervous, and other systems of the body. The basic philosophy of massage therapy embraces the concept of *vis Medicatrix naturae*, which is aiding the ability of the body to heal itself, and is aimed at achieving or increasing health and well-being.

Golden Age of massage

The period from 1980s to 1990s was the golden age in massage history. It is the contention that the golden age of massage around the world was the last 30 years of the 20th century. Although it is as old as humankind, massage began to emerge as independently and widely used therapeutic modalities in the 1950s and 1960s, fully coming into its own in the 1980s and 1990s. During those decades massage was more widely accepted, recognized, used developed and organized than any other period in its long history. And it continues to develop into the new millennium.

As technological society advance, the needs for human contacts also grows and massage continue to respond to that needs. Massage is increasingly applied more diverse venues. Introduction of the massage chair in the 1980s gave meaning to the phrase “have table, will travel”. The publicity surrounding the use of massage in sports had a dramatic impact on the popularity of massage. Massage also became further integrated into other form of therapy, education and spiritual endeavour. Massage school dramatically increase in quality and numbers. Professional association and publication proliferated, generating exciting and meaningful avenues of networking information dissemination and political and cultural involvement was never seen before in this field. Regulation of massage field increased, helping the business and ethics of massage to become more evident. All of these factors help to alter significantly the

public perception of massage and the image of massage as connected to prostitution in fading into the background. The field of massage has moved from the fringes of many other human activities to become a world into its own course in a few decades- THE GOLDEN AGE OF MASSAGE.

Purpose of massage

Generally, massage is known to affect the circulation of blood and the flow of blood and lymph, reduce muscular tension or flaccidity, affect the nervous system through stimulation or sedation, and enhance tissue healing. These effects provide a number of benefits:

- reduction of muscle tension and stiffness
- relief of muscle spasms
- greater flexibility and range of motion
- increasing ease and efficiency of movement
- relief of stress and aide of relaxation
- promotion of deeper and easier breathing
- improvement of the circulation of blood and movement of lymph
- relief of tension-related conditions, such as headaches and eyestrain
- promotion of faster healing of soft tissue injuries, such as pulled muscles and sprained ligaments, and reduction in pain and swelling related to such injuries
- reduction in the formation of excessive scar tissue following soft tissue injuries
- enhancement in the health and nourishment of skin
- improvement in posture through changing tension patterns that affect posture
- reduction in stress and an excellent stress management tool
- creation of a feeling of well-being
- reduction in levels of anxiety
- increase in awareness of the mind-body connection
- promotion of a relaxed state of mental awareness

Differenttypes and methods of massage

1.Active release technique 2.Acupressure 3.Anma massage 4.Amma Massage Therapy/Amma Therapeutic Massage 5.Ashiatsu 6.Ayurvedic Massage 7.Biodynamic massage 8.Champissage massage 9.Esalen massage 10.Foot massage 11.Hilot massage 12.Infant massage 13.Kum Nye 14.Lomilomi and indigenous massage of Oceania 15.Lymphatic drainage 16.Medical massage 17.Myofascial release 18.NeuroMuscular Therapy 19.Pediatric massage 20.Shiatsu 21.Sports massage 22.Stone massage 23.Swedish massage 24.Tantric massage 25.Thai massage 26.Traditional Chinese massage 27.Trigger point therapy 28.Tuina 29.Watsu

Conclusion

Considering the long history of massage, the potential for growth and research of the healing properties of therapeutic massage and body work has gained great momentum over the last fifty years, and the public demand for massage therapy is at an all-time high. As a preventative practice, therapeutic massage is used in spas, gyms and work places all over the country. Using massage therapy to promote balance and maintain internal and external health is something that is now a standard part of the modern lifestyle.