



## General approach to massage and classification of massage

### Introduction

Massage therapy has a long history in cultures around the world. Today, people use many different types of massage therapy for a variety of health-related purposes. Massage therapy is often considered part of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), although it does have some conventional uses. This discussion provides a general overview of massage therapy and suggests sources for additional information. Massage is referred to by some people as an art perhaps because its practice involves coordination of high order and the use of great skill to achieve the integrated body movement allows the application of appropriate manipulation at the correction depth and speed to achieve maximum effect.

The practice of using touch as a healing method derives from customs and techniques 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. In addition, it helped reduce stress and produce deep relaxation.

### General approach to massage

In professional settings massage patients are treated while lying on a massage table, sitting in a massage chair, or lying on a mat on the floor, while in amateur settings a general purpose surface like a bed or floor is more common. Aquatic massage and bodywork is performed with recipients submerged or floating in a warm-water therapy pool. The massage subject may be fully or partially clothed or unclothed.

### Self preparation

The practitioner should start preparation of himself/herself long before contact with the patient. Attention to personal appearance, hygiene and manicure are all important. As close contact will inevitably occur, the practitioner should wear protective clothing which is easily laundered and which allows freedom of movement while maintaining decency. Long hair must be restrained so that it cannot come into contact with the patient, equally necklace or other jewellery should be discarded as also wristwatch. Rings should be removed as they can cause discomfort to the practitioner when performing manipulation and to the patient during most manipulation.

Cleanliness is important so one should wash the hand before and after each treatment. Cultivate warm hand by always using warm water for washing and it also helps to keep our hand covered when outside temperature is cold.

The range of movement of all the joints of our forearm and hand should be full. If we have stiff hands, we should do a series of stretching exercises aimed at increasing our range of movement. The most important large range movements are:

- \*Full abduction/extension of the thumb to give a wide grasp- as octave span
- \*Full flexion and extension of the wrist or at least 80° of each movement.
- \*Full pronation and supination of the radio-ulnar joint.



### **Hand exercise**

To obtain the full range of movement, the following exercise should be practice. Before exercise check our shoulder relaxation:

1. Touch the finger tips of one hand with the finger tips of the other and press so that our thumb and little finger are separated widely.
2. Push the fist of one hand between two adjacent fingers to the other hand so that they are separated into wider abduction. Keep the fingers into same plane and repeat for each finger.
3. Place the thumb together as in prayer and thumb resting on the chest, push wrist downward and extend them without separating the heel of the hand.
4. Place the hands in the prayer position and keeping together turn them down and up trying to touch the abdomen and chest alternately at each rotation. Next move two hands alternately so that they pass one another at mid point.

### **Relaxation**

Relaxation of the hands is very important so that we always use our hand in full contact with the patient and moulded to the shape of the body we are touching, with awareness of the tissue and their state.

Relaxed hand contact is one in which the hand conforms to the contour of the part. The natural rest position of the human hand is with the finger and the thumb a little apart and very slightly flexed at each joint and can easily be adjusted with any size of body part. This is the contact which is used in many massage manipulation.

Co-ordinated and integrated movement of our body is essential for the comfortable and prolonged performance of massage manipulation without fatigue and physical stress on the practitioner.

We should stand in walk standing stance and practice transferring our weight forward and backward while maintaining our arm stretch away. We should practice stretching our arm through

- Across the couch
- Along the couch

These movements along the length of the patient and across the patient are the key movements in massage.

### **The environment**

The treatment area should be well heated and well ventilated but not draughty. The padded treatment couch may be covered with fresh linen.

Linen we may needed

- A small blanket and covering cotton sheet
- Large and washable blanket or sheet
- Standard size pillows and pillow cover
- Small or half size pillow and pillow cover



### **Treatment couch**

An adjustable height couch is most useful, of the type that has an elevating mechanism at each end and a removable section to accommodate the nose when the patient is in prone lying position. The couch should be covered with a small blanket if it is made up of cold material, with a cotton sheet on the top.

### **Contact material Powder**

- Talcum powder is the most common contact medium. It should be non perfumed if possible, or a baby powder may be selected.
- Corn starch BP, which is sterilisable, is a heavy powder which absorb sweat very readily and should be used in the presence of profound sweating by either the patient or practitioner.

### **Oils**

- Pure lanolin-which has a drag effect on skin due to its thick and heavy texture, is used to obtain a slight pull on the skin. Lanolin cream which is a water based cream is used when less drag is required.
- Liquid oil- the most commonly used liquid oil is probably olive oil, and liquid paraffin may also be used to provide a gliding effect and to lubricate the skin. The disadvantage of such oil is that they became rancid and if left in contact with the skin, can smell offensive.

### **Water based lubricants**

The water-based lubricant most commonly used is “ung eucerin”. This light cream is used to give moderate lubrication and it absorb rapidly.

### **Soap and water**

Soap and hot water, with or without the addition of oil, is used for scaly skin which may be caused by prolonged immobilization in a cast or by use of some medications which promote and increase skin healing and at the same time cause the skin to become dry and scaly

### **Preparation of the patient**

Ask the patient to undress so that the part to be treated is adequately uncovered. we should be aware that some manipulation, to be effective, must extend to the lymph glands lying in proximal space.

**For treatment of the upper limb:** Unclothe from the neck to finger tips and especially remove all straps.

**For treatment of the lower limb:** Unclothe from the groin to the toe- remove trouser, do not pull them up.

**For the treatment of the back:** Unclothe from the head to the buttock. Pants/briefs can remain, but must be pulled down to leave the area above the gluteal cleft exposed.



**For the treatment of the neck:** unclothe from the head to the level of the lowest point of origin of trapezius, i.e. 12<sup>th</sup> thoracic vertebrae.

**For treatment of the neck:** unclothe from the hairline to just below the clavicle.

Ensure the patient is kept warm by the use of covering, e.g. if patient is sitting wrap in a blanket leaving the arm to be treated free.

If the patient is in prone lying position, we may need

- Two head pillow crossing one another to create an inverted and open triangle so that patient's nose rest below the crossing
- A pillow under the abdomen to raise and thus flatter the lumbar spine
- A pillow under the ankles to flex the knee slightly.

Small sheets are very useful for placing in direct contact with the patient and to protect the blanket. Sheets are more easily washed and less likely to retain any powder we used.

### **Palpation and developing sensory awareness**

Palpation is a skill that is acquired by practice. It requires that our hands should be relaxed, in firm comfortable contact, and aware of what is under them. The term "thinking hand" implies that our mind is envisaging the structure that our hand is feeling and is alert both to identify the structure and to be aware of variation from normal in the state of the structure.

To learn how to palpate, practice the following procedure. Place the hand on a series of varying size, rounded structure in turn, starting with large ones that require an almost flat hand, for example

- A cushion or part-filled hot water bottle
- A smaller bottle or rolling pin
- A broomstick handle

### **Examination of the part**

Before performing massage on either a model or patient, we should examine the part on which we are going to work. After carrying out a complete examination and assessment we are aware of the problems that the patient has. The procedure of examination is as follows

- Look: look at the skin state of dryness, oiliness wetness, hairiness and completeness. Apart from these observe for bruises, abrasion and laceration. Look also at the state of subcutaneous tissue-is the skin emaciated or well padded and if the skin former or taut. Is there any oedema or excess reddening.
- Feel: run the hand down the length of the part on every aspect. Think as we do so and be aware of not only the temperatures of each area, the degree of muscle tension and joint posture but of any flinching area which is painful or ticklish are touched or not. Make sure that problem area can be approach with caution.



### **Ticklish patients**

People who are ticklish can be massaged without discomfort to them provided we observe the rule of always putting our hand in very firm contact as we start working and never lifting the hands off by trickling i.e. by lifting our palm off first, then phalanx, until only our finger tips are in contact. We should never move one hand component especially fingers in relation to one another once we have placed our hand in contact.

Light work tickles, so always perform the manipulations at the maximum depth tolerable by the patient and to produce the required result.

### **Classification of massage manipulation**

The massage manipulation can be classified into:

#### **1. Stroking**

#### **2. Effleurage**

- Light effleurage
- Deep effleurage

#### **3. The petrissage massage**

- Kneading manipulation
  - i. Whole hand kneading
  - ii. Palmar kneading
  - iii. Flat finger kneading
  - iv. Finger pad kneading
  - v. Finger tip kneading
  - vi. Thumb pad kneading
  - vii. Thumb tip kneading
  - viii. Both hand or superimposed kneading
  - ix. Elbow kneading
  - x. Heel of hand kneading
- Picking up manipulation
- Wringing manipulation
- Rolling manipulation
  - i. Skin rolling
  - ii. Muscle rolling
- Shaking manipulation

#### **4. The friction manipulation**

- i. Circular friction
- ii. Transverse friction



## **5. Tapotment or percussive manipulation**

- i. Clapping
- ii. Hacking
- iii. Vibration
- iv. Beating
- v. Pounding
- vi. Tapping

### **Conclusion**

Massage has survived and continues to evolve till present date, because it is the most fundamentals means of giving care, affection and aid between human beings. Its healing qualities differ from other modalities because massage confers its benefit through character and healing intention of those who gives and received it. The true value of massage comes from the intrinsic, inherent needs of human to have contact with one another.