



Common massage technique-Effleurage, Kneading, Friction, Stroking, Percussion Manipulation, Shaking Manipulation.

Introduction

Massage involves working and acting on the body with pressure – structured, unstructured, stationary, or moving – tension, motion, or vibration, done manually or with mechanical aids. Massage can be applied with the hands, fingers, elbows, knees, forearm, feet, or a massage device. Depending on the application and technique used, massage is used to promote relaxation and well-being, and is beneficial in treating sports injuries and other problems affecting the musculature of the body such as postural misalignment and many painful conditions.

Massage usually involves applying touch with some degree of pressure and movement, the massage therapist must use touch with sensitivity in order to determine the optimal amount of pressure to use for each person.

Effleurage

Effleurage is a unidirectional manipulation in which the therapist's hand passes from distal to proximal with a depth compatible with the state of tissue and the desired effect. Thus, the manipulation may start at one end and proceed to the proximal space, draining the part to be treated, e.g. finger tip to axilla, toe to groin, buttock to axilla, neck to supraclavicular gland. The depth should be such as to push fluid onwards in the superficial vessels. This may be observed especially in the vein of the forearm. The manipulation is performed with the whole hand softly curved and relaxed to fit the part, or any part of the hand which fits the part. Both hands may be used together on opposing aspects of the part or may follow one another. As the manipulation proceeds over a part, the hand must change shape to maintain perfect contact.

The stance of the therapist is very important as these manipulations often proceed over a considerable length of the body, and it must be possible for the therapist to transfer body weight to and from. Walk standing is usual stance adopted, with the weight bearing transferred from rear to the forward foot accompanied, if need be, by either or both lifting of the heel of the rear foot and flexion and extension of the knee and hips. The arm will initially be flexed and become more extended, especially at the elbow as the "reach" is made. Integration of the arm and body movements must be obtained to ensure a smooth movement of the hand along the part, this is achieved if the arm stretch first followed by the body weight transfer. At the end of every line of effleurage there should be a small increase in depth (often called over pressure) and a slight pause (in the space) before the hand is lifted off with minimum flourish and returned to the distal part to start the next line of work.

Kneading

Kneading is a circular manipulation performed so that the skin and subcutaneous tissues are moved in a circular manner on the underlying structure. Circle is described by the part of the hand in contact, with pressure on the upward part of the circle but only for a small segment. The actual range or number of degree for which pressure is exerted varies with the part treated. On the non pressure phase of the circle the hand maintains contact but glide on to the next area of skin a small enough distance to allow the circle to cover at least half the previous area. Great care must be taken to transmit the require pressure to get the necessary depth through the whole hand and not just the heel of the hand. In performing all kneading manipulation use walk standing so that our body weight can move easily from one foot to another.

Kneading is divided according to the part used

1. Whole hand kneading
2. palmar kneading
3. Finger kneading
 - a. Flat finger kneading
 - b. Finger pad kneading
 - c. Finger tip kneading
4. Thumb kneading
 - a. Thumb pad kneading
 - b. Thumb tip kneading
5. Superimposed (reinforced) kneading
6. Elbow kneading
7. Heel of hand kneading

1. Whole hand kneading

Place the hand obliquely to the long axis of the part and maintain full contact using the entire palmar surface to perform the manipulation.

2. palmar kneading

Use only the palm of the hand and allow fingers and thumb to relax off contact with the patient. Great depth can be gained using the palm so take care not to dig in with the bony prominence of the carpus.

3. Finger kneading

a. Flat finger kneading

This is performed with the palmar surfaces of the second to fifth digits with the palm and thumb remain off contact. It is often used to work on less muscular or poorly padded areas.

b. finger pad kneading

This is performed with the finger pads either individually, when index or middle fingers are more commonly used, or with several finger pads together to provide a linear contact. The little finger may be too short, on most people used index, middle and ring finger which can bent sufficiently to allow the pad to create a contact line. These manipulations are often used round joints and along the line of ligaments and in treating scars.

c. Finger tip kneading

This is performed in the same way as finger pad kneading but only the tip of the pad, taking care to keep the nails off contact. Narrow or linear areas are dealt with using several finger tips, and one finger tip should be used on small structure or to work on painful areas when the patient will tolerate only very small contact and no movement of the part.

4. Thumb Kneading

a. Thumb pad kneading

This is performed with the thumb pad. The size of the area to be treated dictates the amount of the pad which is in contact with the patient's skin. On the larger areas such as the forearm, back and leg, the whole pad is used. The manipulation is usually performed by resting fingers on the opposite side of the limbs or mare laterally on the back, but when working on face, or in the presence of any contra indications, the fingers should not rest on the patient. The skin and subcutaneous tissues should moved on the underlying tissues so as to produce a wrinkle on the outer side of the working thumb.

b. Thumb tip kneading

This is performed more frequently with the side of the thumb tip and is useful when the part to be treated has a long, narrow shape-as the interosseus space.

5. Superimposed (reinforced) kneading

This type of kneading can be very deep and is usually performed when the greater depth is required. The contact hand is rested fully on the part, superimposed hand rest on the top of it either obliquely across when working on the opposite side of the body or palm over fingers when working on the adjacent side of the body.

6. Elbow kneading

This is performed by the bent elbow which is placed on the area to be treated. The best available part of the elbow is used to form stationary circular manipulations usually on the muscles of the interscapular region and the back or gluteal region where greater depth is required.

7. Heel of hand kneading

The whole heel of the hand is used, being careful not to dig with the pisiform. The palm and fingers are held off contact and a small circular manipulation is performed. Greater depth can be achieved by reinforcing with the palm of the other hand on the top of the working palm or holding the wrist with the other hand.

Stroking

This is performed superficially to the skin to obtain a sensory reaction either sedative or stimulative and in which direction is not important and is often from proximal to distal.

Percussion manipulation

The percussive manipulations are those in which the treated part is struck soft blows with the hand. They are performed either to assist evacuation from hollow organ or to stimulate either skin or muscle reflexes. Walking standing stance is the stance of choice for this manipulation. Percussion manipulation is divided into;

1. Clapping
2. Hacking
3. Vibration (shaking)
4. Beating
5. Pounding
6. Tapping

1. Clapping

Clapping is a manipulation in which the whole palmar aspect of the hand is used to strike the body part. The hand is however, cupped in such a manner that the centre of the hand does not touch the part, but is hollowed. The fingers are slightly flexed, more so at the metacarpophalangeal joint of the index, middle and ring fingers. The thumb is adducted so that it lies just under the index finger and adjacent palm. The wrist should be used to create the difference between striking a hollow surrounding blow and a slightly sharper blow.

2. Hacking

Hacking is a manipulation in which the skin is struck using the back of the tips of the three medial fingers. The only movement required is that of pronation and supination. The elbows must not flex and extended. The hands are held at a small distance apart so that they rotate alternately, they just clear one another. The arms are in slight abduction, the elbow are flexed to a right angle with the forearm held parallel with the patient's skin and far enough above it to allow only the back of the back of the little, ring and middle fingers to touch when the forearm is in supination. The wrists are well extended to about 50°.

3. Vibration

Vibration involves a movement in which the tissues are pressed and release using an up and down motion. Vibration may be performing with whole hand or the finger tips.

4. Beating

Beating is much less used manipulation in which the loosely clenched fist is used for the strike. The fingers are flexed at the metacarpophalangeal and proximal interphalangeal joint so that there is flat surface composed on the back of the two distal phalanges and the margin of the palmar surface of the palm.

5. Pounding

Pounding is less used manipulation. It is performed by loosely flexing the fingers of all the joints and the thumb lies flat on the lateral side of the hand halfway between adduction and flexion.

6. Tapping

Tapping is performed with the tips of the fingers pads and is used on very small area such as face. The hand is held relaxed over the area to be treated and the fingers tap at the depth to produce a slightly hollow sound. The index, middle and ring fingers may be used together or in any smaller number or these fingers may be used singly in sequence.

Shaking manipulation

All long muscle bellies may be shaken and the manipulation may be performed on the larger muscles such as biceps, the quadriceps and also on the small muscle of the thenar and hypothenar eminence.

Shaking manipulation for long muscles

The length of the thumb should be placed on one side of the muscle belly and all the fingers are placed on the other side of the muscle belly. The palm should be off contact and then hand is shaken rapidly from side to side as we transverse the length of the muscle belly avoiding contact with the underlying bones. Stand in walk standing so that our weight is transferred from proximal to distal on the muscle belly.

Shaking manipulation for small muscle

The tip of the thumb should be placed on one side, and an appropriate number of finger tips placed on the other side of the muscle belly and shaking movement performed.

Conclusion

Anyone can benefit from therapeutic massage when it is done by a fully qualified and competent practitioner. Massage is also applicable for people currently in treatment for medical conditions, people with disabilities, and expecting mothers, although further precautions that may have to be taken to protect the health of the patient. Those who are unsure about whether or not therapeutic massage is for them should consult thoroughly to find if there are any contraindications.