

Swedish Massage

What is Swedish Massage?

It's a traditional full-body superficial muscle tissue massage style with no particular focus that induced relaxation. It's widely popular among many different lifestyles. Swedish massage is the most common form of massage, it involves a combination of effleurage (stroking), petrissage (kneading), tapotement (percussion), compression, vibration, friction, nerve stroke, and Swedish gymnastics. This technique manipulates the soft tissues and concentrates on the muscles and connective tissues of the body for improved circulation, relaxation, pain relief, stress relief, overall health maintenance, and well-being.

Why would I get a Swedish Massage?

Swedish massage is commonly used by the general population to reduce muscle tension. It uses lower levels of pressure when compared to other methods and combines gentle long flowing strokes with friction and rhythmic pressure to achieve the desired results.

What Issues is Swedish Massage Helpful For?

- Pain Management
- Relaxation
- Increased circulation
- Decreased fatigue
- Reduction in Anxiety and depression.
- It has also been said that one hour of full body massage is the equivalent of 8 hours of a good night's sleep.

Benefits of Swedish Massage

- Increase the level of oxygen in the blood
- Decrease muscle toxins
- Improve circulation and flexibility
- Ease muscle tension
- Rehabilitation for muscle injuries
- Stress relief
- Decrease levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which increases sugars in the bloodstream
- Increase the number of lymphocytes, which are white blood cells that boost the immune system

How is Swedish Massage Performed?

The techniques used within Swedish massage are the four main techniques that make up the core of nearly all different massage therapies and are taught to every therapist when they begin. There are four

main movements that are used to soothe muscles and improve their condition, improve blood circulation, and help you feel relaxed. This will be done using your choice of lotion, oil, or gel.

These four movements are called effleurage, petrissage, kneading and tapotement, but others can be incorporated also.

- **Effleurage** (also known as stroking) – This movement is done with the palm of the hands or fingers to cover a large surface area and it should be slow and rhythmic. This movement is usually made towards the heart and increases the blood and lymph flow whilst also relaxing the patient.
- **Petrissage** – Petrissage (from French Petrir meaning to knead) is traditionally linked with the kneading movement, squeezing, and rolling. Typically, the movement is applied with the balls of the thumb or fingers. When the soft tissue is compressed with bone underneath it helps to eliminate waste from the body among many other benefits.
- **Kneading** – This is a deep movement that can be applied to many parts of the body, the action is very similar to that of kneading bread. It uses the whole hand to grasp, then lift and release the muscle or muscle group and repeats with the alternate hand. The kneading action can improve elasticity and flexibility by creating movement between muscle bands.
- **Tapotement** – These are fine vibratory movements that can be applied with the fingers or hands, working very quickly and rhythmically. There is a variety of applications including hacking, cupping, beating, and pounding.
- **Friction** – In Swedish massage, friction refers to a firm and focused rubbing technique that is applied to a specific area, usually using just the fingers or thumbs. Compression is often applied in a circular rhythm (Circular Friction) or in a perpendicular rhythm (Transverse Friction). The combination of precision and pressure makes friction ideal for softening and realigning tense muscle fibers or treating joints, such as the elbow.
- **Vibration (Shaking)** – As the name suggests, the vibration technique is applied by rhythmically shaking an area of the body to loosen and relax the body. The intensity and pressure of the technique depends on the area of the body that is being treated, but it can be performed in many ways, such as using both palms across a large area, or the back or the fingers on a small and sensitive area, like the face. It is especially useful for soothing nerves and treating areas with lots of scar tissue.
- **Compression** – is an effective massage technique performed by laying hands over a muscle area and pushing down onto the tissues. Hands are then lifted and moved to a different area and then repeated. The pressure of compressions can range from light to very deep. Compressions can also be performed with a slight rocking movement that can encourage the parasympathetic nervous system and promote relaxation.
- **Swedish Gymnastics** – a form of kinesiotherapy in which certain systematized movements of the body and limbs are regulated by resistance made by therapist.
- **Nerve Stroke** – are extremely light, quick strokes, often performed with just the fingertips, either directly on the skin or over the linens. This technique is used to stimulate the nerves of an area, while maintaining the relaxed results already achieved. There is generally no specific

pattern, and the strokes are switched up frequently due to the benefits of connecting the mind with the nerves that are being stimulated.

Are There Any Side Effects?

Some side effects that could possibly occur

- Muscle Soreness and Fatigue
- Headache
- Sleepiness
- Inflammation
- Nausea
- Bruising
- Aggravate existing injuries

What to Do Before a Swedish Massage?

Gather Health Information

Prepare relevant health information for the therapist. If you have any pain in your body or an injury, let the therapist know. Preparing the information ahead of time will ensure you do not forget anything when you arrive. You may also choose to include information pertaining to any allergies you have or preferences on aromatherapy scents.

Hydrate Your Body

Stay well hydrated by drinking water.

Take a Warm Shower

Take a warm shower before the massage to loosen up your muscles and help put you in a relaxed state. A fresh, clean body will also make the experience more pleasant for your massage therapist.

Wear Comfortable Clothing

Wear loose, comfortable clothing to the massage appointment. This will help you continue to feel relaxed and make the process of undressing easier.

During The Massage

Communicate what you are feeling during the massage.

Are there any Contraindications?

Yes, as with any form of massage, there are contraindications (reasons you should not have a massage).

- When you are feeling extremely weak and are possibly clinically exhausted.
- If you have taken alcohol or drugs within the last 12 hours.
- Flu or a fever (with a temperature).

- Infectious or contagious diseases or skin conditions. (Including the common cold and influenza)
- Open wounds
- Diabetes (seek permission from your GP)
- Bursitis

Some contraindications only apply to localized areas of your body. You may be able to have a Swedish massage, but the therapist will need to avoid the area. Local contraindications include:

- The abdomen during the first 3 months of pregnancy.
- Contagious skin disorders (e.g., athletes' foot, or verrucae).
- Skin disorders (e.g., psoriasis, eczema, or dermatitis)
- Varicose veins.
- Minor or major surgery (within the last 18 months).
- Recent fractures, sprains or strains.
- Hernia, sunburns, scar tissue, edema, abrasions, bruising or inflammation.

What To Do After a Swedish Massage

- Schedule a follow-up massage appointment ...
- Drink plenty of water after the massage ...
- Eat nutritious meals after the massage ...
- Avoid drinking alcohol and coffee ...
- Take a warm bath after the massage ...
- Relax and make sure you get enough sleep ...
- Avoid running or exercising immediately after the massage...
- Do some gentle stretching ...