

Thai Massage

Movement and Massage Makes for a Unique Experience

A slow dance--that's how many have described the ancient work known as Thai massage, a modality that incorporates the tenets of yoga with massage and mindfulness. Accessible for just about everyone, Thai massage relies on the partnership between client and practitioner to facilitate therapeutic movement.

Historical Roots

Developed more than 2,000 years ago in Thailand, Thai massage remains a popular technique that incorporates aspects of yoga, acupressure, energy balancing, and massage. Considered one of the ancient healing arts of traditional Thai medicine (which also included

Pho monastery in Bangkok. Today, Thai massage continues to be a mainstay in Thai medicine, while quickly gaining a new audience in the Western world.

What is Thai Massage?

Also known as yoga massage, assisted yoga, ancient massage, and assorted other names, Thai massage respects the body's limits, while encouraging clients to reach their edge of flexibility, but never beyond. Thai massage incorporates acupressure, massage, and passive-assisted stretching, where therapists help clients move into their stretch. The work is purposely slow as the therapist guides clients through the movements, being ever mindful of their

"I am convinced that life in a physical body is meant to be an ecstatic experience."

-Shakti Gawain

Office Hours and Contact

LaRue's Massage & Bodywork

Sonji L. Swafford

951-970-8695

Mon - Fri 9am to 9pm

Sat/Sun 10am to 7pm

<http://www.laruesmassageandbodywork.com>



Performed on a floor mat, Thai massage encompasses acupressure, massage, and stretching.

herbal practice, nutrition, and spiritual meditation), Thai massage was originally passed from teacher to teacher within the Buddhist temples, while Thai families used it as a healing folk art. Unfortunately, much of the history of Thai massage was lost during the Burmese invasion of Thailand in 1767, although some of the traditions remain inscribed on the stone walls of the Wat

physical limitations. Some say the combination of movements and focused awareness during a Thai massage session creates what looks like a slow, flowing dance between practitioner and client.

Thai massage is based on an energetic paradigm of the human body and mind.

Continued on page 2

In this Issue

Thai Massage

De-stressing the Commute

Hot or Cold for Injuries?

Continued from page 1

In this tradition, energy is thought to travel on pathways, called sen, throughout the body. The specific points of energy along those pathways are called nadis. Through movement and massage components, the goal in Thai massage is to ensure energy is flowing freely along these pathways as a means for wellness.

Unlike traditional massage, Thai massage is performed on a soft floor mat. It can be adapted to a massage table, however, for the more frail and elderly. Clients are clothed in loose, comfortable attire suitable for the deep stretching that will be part of the session. This interactive form of bodywork can utilize tai chi, rocking and rhythmic motion, massage, and assisted stretching. Don't be surprised if practitioners use their hands, feet, knees, elbows, and legs to facilitate the process; pillows and bolsters may also be used for better client support. No oil is used during these sessions; however heated, herbal compresses are often incorporated to enhance movement and warm the muscles.

Exploring the Benefits of Thai Massage

As with traditional massage, Thai massage offers numerous benefits:

- Deep relaxation.
- Quieting of the mind.
- Heightened energy levels.
- Improved circulation.
- Improved lymphatic flow.
- Improved range of motion.
- Increased flexibility.
- Rejuvenated body and mind.
- Relief for pain and muscle tension.
- Enhanced body-mind connection.

Experts say there is an interesting dichotomy that exists within Thai massage, as it both relaxes and rejuvenates. After a session, some Thai massage clients report feeling awakened and energized, while simultaneously feeling deeply grounded and at peace.

The Yoga Component

Recipients of Thai massage can also capture the well-established benefits of yoga without actually doing yoga. As the practitioner gently moves clients into yoga-like poses, tight joints are opened, energy flows freely, and breathing is enhanced. A meditative state becomes

part of the process, as both client and practitioner focus on breath and intention.

Through the assisted stretches, clients' muscles become less prone to injury, their joints have a greater range of motion, and their whole body enjoys greater flexibility. In addition to its acceptance among nurses, massage therapists, bodyworkers, and physical therapists, many yoga enthusiasts are finding that Thai massage adds a whole new dimension to their practice.

Conversely, if you're wanting to explore yoga but may be intimidated or not sure where to begin, Thai massage is a great introduction. It can give you a sense of how yoga works with the body, how it's practiced, and how the body will respond. Your practitioner may also be able to recommend yoga classes suited for your needs.

Communication is Key

As with any form of massage or bodywork, it's paramount that Thai massage clients communicate with their therapists throughout the session. Is the massage pressure too deep? Does the stretch no longer feel good? Is the room too hot? Be sure to let the therapist know if something is not quite right so he or she can deliver the best, most therapeutic work possible and you can experience the full benefits of your Thai massage session.

Young or old, healthy or frail, Thai massage offers something for everyone. Whether you're a weekend warrior needing to work out the aches and pains of excess, or a retiree needing to awaken and invigorate an aging body through movement and stretching, the therapeutic nature of Thai massage can address your needs.



The therapist guides the client through the movements in a slow, flowing, yoga-type dance.

De-stressing the Commute

Turning Road Rage into Road Sage

The average American commuter spends an hour a day driving to and from work. During this stressful, stop-and-go time, it's likely that blood pressure increases, adrenaline begins pumping, and muscles constrict and tighten. By the time you get home, you're wiped out and grumpy, and you have less to offer to those you come home to. If this sounds familiar, recognize that you have the power to reduce commuter stress. Here are a few tips to make your commuter time contribute to -- rather than detract from -- your life.

- Employ adjustable back cushions, pillows, wedges, and lumbar supports for a more comfortable commute. For more information, check out www.relaxtheback.com.

- To successfully sidestep the late-afternoon slump often caused by the stress hormone cortisol, keep some healthy snacks within arms reach. Celery, string cheese, water, and nuts -- especially almonds -- are good options for the drive home.

- Borrow books-on-tape/CD from the library. Consider purely entertaining novels to ease the intensity of your drive.

- Learn a foreign language. Libraries also loan out these types of tapes and CD, too.

- Use your commute as an opportunity for spiritual or emotional growth. When stressing about a traffic jam, remind yourself that it's completely out of your control. Remember, attitude is everything.

- Practice breathing. When stress occurs, breathing becomes shallow and constricted. Taking full, deep breaths gives the body more oxygen, helping to regulate physical and mental function. Exhaling fully releases tension and built up toxins.

For more ideas on achieving calm in a busy world, consider reading *Serenity to Go: Calming Techniques for Your Hectic Life* (New Harbinger Publications, 2001) by Mina Hamilton.



Creativity goes a long way on your commute.

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 flare 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 experience 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.

He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.

-Albert Einstein

Have you experienced Thai massage? Try it out and receive a \$10 discount off one hour session!

This year cut out the traditional flowers and spoil them with the ultimate pampering massage. Give your gal or guy a gift they can really enjoy this Valentine's Day! [\$60 for a Sweet Heart Package: One-Hour Swedish or Thai Massage, Hand Paraffin Wax, Peppermint Foot Scrub and choice of warm 100% essential oils.] All wrapped up into one cozy, relaxing environment. (\$100 Value!)

Shower your sweetheart with all the euphoria and joy that a massage can bring. Indulge in a one-hour Swedish/Thai massage to soothe and relax muscles. Your beloved will be swept into a perfect state of tranquility. Using long sweeping movements along with acupressure & stretching, this time-tested massage is designed to combat muscle aches and pain and leave the massaged tension-free.

Promo values expire February 28, 2011

Not valid with any other offer/By appointment only

<http://www.laruesmassageandbodywork.abmp.com>

LaRue's Massage & Bodywork

California Oaks Road
Murrieta, CA 92562



Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals