



## **Massage Is Better Than You May Think.**

How many times a week do you grab your back, your neck, or perhaps your calves and say to yourself “I need a massage”?

The word “massage” tends to bring up images of laying face down on a soft, cushioned table in a dimly lit room with soothing music while a tireless expert works every knot out of your muscles. While this may be very true of a relaxation massage, and we are very good at those at i spa Health Studio, relaxation massage is only one side of massage therapy.

While we delight in providing memorable spa day experiences, in truth a lot of the massage work at i spa falls under the category of clinical massage. This type of massage is used to provide relief from symptoms stemming from illness or disease. If you thought massage was just a back rub timed to new age music, read on!

## **What is Massage?**

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines massage as *the manipulation of tissues (as by rubbing, stroking, kneading, or tapping) with the hand or an instrument especially for therapeutic*

*purposes.*

That seems intuitive and aligned with popular images of massage therapist digging strong hands into someone's back or "hand-chopping" their leg muscles to stimulate circulation. Still, we want to go a step further and explore the one really important word in that definition "therapeutic".

Our friends Merriam-Webster have two definitions for "therapeutic". The first states: *of or relating to the treatment of disease or disorders by remedial agents or methods.*

The second is more to the point and our favorite:

*providing or assisting in a cure.*

i spa Health Studio is a full spectrum massage therapy provider. We also work with a wide array of doctors, clinics, and hospitals to provide very specific treatments plans to tissue, nerves, and muscles that have been damaged or affected by trauma.

Trauma is a broad term, and in this discussion we use it to describe any painful impact to your physical being, whether it is caused by injury, illness, or even emotional distress. In these situations, our Licensed Massage Therapist, Adrienne Honeywell, will use massage to restore function to injured soft tissue, muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

Depending on the severity of injury, relief may come from one session or a treatment plan may be required. Treatment will likely involved a combination of massage techniques including different levels of pressure, ranges of motion, and even temperature (hot and cold).

Relaxation massages often soothe away impacts of daily living such as the relief of tight muscles from excessive standing or sitting, or the release of stress and anxiety. However, unless you make changes to eliminate or minimize the impact from the source of your tight muscles or stress, chances are that over time, your body will feel the negative impacts and you will crave another soothing massage.

Clinical massage is different. While some treatments can be very relaxing and soothing, some

sessions can be mildly painful due to the need to restore functionality to areas in the body that have experienced recent trauma like an injury or surgery. The good news is that a clinical massage treatment plan has a specific target – healing. Of course, 100% recovery depends on the nature of the trauma; however, clinical massage will deliver the greatest restoration of health possible.

### You and Massage

So, if the positive impacts of relaxation massage can fade over time depending on different environment and emotional impacts to the body, then is it worth it to ever have one at all?

Absolutely!

Think about the gutters around your house. Every year the gutters get full of leaves and every year, you or someone you hire, has to clean them out, sometimes more than once a year. If you don't do this, leaves and dirt can clog the gutters leading to water leaks, mildew, mold, rodents, critters, structural damage, etc. Just like this analogy, ignoring your body's request for maintenance can lead to repetitive motion injuries, limited range of motion, loss of muscle mass, and more.

Are we saying that massages are necessary for good health? No, but they sure can help improve your overall wellness by relaxing muscles, diminishing pain, nourishing cells, and assisting the body in the removal of waste products and toxins. This keeps you feeling healthier and energized throughout the year. Massage is also known to improve circulation, assist in the reduction of depression/anxiety/anger, improve sleep patterns, and increase energy and vitality. Imagine that! You will be healthier AND less cranky. BONUS!

Some days, all you need is a sweet foot rub from your special someone. Other days, you may need that soothing music, soft, warm table, and expert hands. When you need an expert, call i spa Health Studio at **727.386.4004** for an appointment. Whether you want to release tension with a relaxation massage or work toward restoring health with clinical massage, we will gladly take care of you and put you on the path to wellness.