



Holistic Hea

MASSAGE



*We are
by nature
creatures of touch
and movement.*

by Kristi Antley

Physical contact and emotional expression are among the distinguishing factors that separate humans and animals. As babies, we are cuddled, suckled, stroked, and rocked, creating an immediate bond with our parents. The level and intensity of physical interaction with others (a pat on the back or a high five) evolves throughout life as we become independent, but the need for human touch and deep stimulation remains an essential component to health and well

being. Sadly, this practice is being replaced by texts, emails, and snapchats in our technology-driven world. We are becoming more and more sedentary, losing muscle tone, which, in turn, leaves us more susceptible to accidents.

Right now, at this moment, over 600 muscles are quietly aiding your body in digestion, breathing, elimination, posture, external movements, facial expressions, etc., constantly contracting and expanding to



Relaxing with

accommodate your lifestyle choices. When these muscles are compromised by injury, abuse, or misuse, you experience poor posture, tension, stiffness, spasms, headaches, and back or neck pain. While minor discomfort may be temporarily treated with medication, chronic long-term pain must be dealt with daily and should not be ignored or delayed. Before you reach for another pill or register for surgery, get a second opinion and consider massage therapy, which is a natural, beautiful ancient alternative that alleviates many symptoms without harmful side effects.

What Type of Massage Should You Get?

Massage can help you relax, restore, and heal in so many ways. Learning about different massage types can help you decide which one you should try next.

Certain styles help you with certain situations, like muscle strains, pregnancy, or just a long work week – or it can be fun to treat yourself to a variety of techniques with an experienced therapist you trust.

Some massage therapists focus on just one specialty, like sport massages or shiat-

su, but others can perform several modalities, like deep tissue, hot stone, or Swedish with no problem. Discover a few of the most popular massage types to prepare for your next session and hear from four local massage therapists, all offering a range of massage treatments.

SWEDISH

Swedish massages are great for first-timers. Long, gentle strokes help relax stressed muscles. This type of massage doesn't go too deep, although you can ask your therapist to apply more pressure if you want. Swedish massages are easy to find. Almost every licensed massage therapist offers them. Lexington Massage Therapy offers Swedish massage along with a plethora of other choices for clients. Massage therapist and owner of Lexington Massage, Paul Miller, says that massage began as a personal interest for him – sort of a hobby. “I worked on friends and family in my spare time for about 10 years before I began to consider it as a profession. I was amazed at how I could help alleviate their pain and decided this was what I wanted to do with my life.”



MASSAGE HAS BEEN KNOWN TO REDUCE

- Anxiety
- Digestive disorders
- Headaches
- Stress and blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Muscle strains/sports injuries

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Paul is a Lexington hometown boy and a proud graduate of USC. He became licensed in 2009 and opened his business on Main Street in 2012.

DEEP TISSUE

Some professionals claim there is no such thing as a deep tissue massage because you cannot reach the deep tissues of the body. But people regularly ask for deep tissue massages, and masseuses know that it means slower strokes, stronger pressure, and focusing on releasing knots.

Almost any qualified therapist can perform a wonderful deep tissue massage. Some highly trained therapists can access deep muscles, too, like the psoas, a long postural muscle that runs along the inside

of the lower spine and connects inside the pelvis. Ask about training before requesting anything that seems out of the ordinary, however.

PRENATAL MASSAGE

Also known as pregnancy massage, prenatal massage mostly involves modifications to Swedish or deep-tissue techniques. These modifications help keep the mother comfortable while she carries the extra weight of her baby and protects both the mother and baby from harm.

Always tell your therapist if you're pregnant, even if you're not showing or haven't told friends or colleagues yet. He or she will keep the information confidential and needs to know to keep you safe. Certain strokes

in certain body parts need to be avoided on pregnant women.

HOT STONE MASSAGE

The addition of hot stones makes your massage delightful. Smooth, natural rocks are heated before your massage and placed either directly on your skin or wrapped in towels and placed along the spine. The stones hold heat, and the heat relaxes your muscles. You can combine hot stones with other styles or just enjoy the soothing warmth of the stones.

SPORTS

Sports massage is specifically for athletes or if you need a boost getting back into the gym or onto the field or court. This style isn't about relaxation. Strokes are usually quicker than other styles. Your therapist will probably help you with stretching, too.

Christine Wilson, owner of RNR Massage Studio in Lexington, advises that, "Massage is actually a preventative medicine that incorporates stretching and meditation." She has been a trigger point therapist for over 20 years. "A lot of muscular pain is from very tight muscles and typically relieves the pain immediately. Most people don't realize that headache pain can be caused from shoulder and neck muscles." Christine holds a bachelor's of science in physical education, a master's of science in education, and has been a licensed massage therapist for 24 years.

AROMATHERAPY

Aromatherapy massages include essential oils to help balance chakras, alleviate pain or allergies, or uplift your mood. Usually, these massages are either Swedish or deep tissue, with aromatherapy added as an additional service, but some therapists may specialize in Ayurvedic massage, which concentrates on essential oils paired with specific strokes.

Each of these styles can make you feel amazing, so consider what's going on with your body and choose the one that's right for you. Over time, you might find it rewarding to try all of them. In addition to other services, Lexington's Bella Riley's Aveda Salon and Spa offers an aromatherapy option on its massage menu.

Rachel Romanelli, massage therapist and owner of Bella Riley's remarks, "Most people keep giving every day and eventually find that they are depleted or 'giving on empty' and become run down and exhaustion fueled resentment creeps in. These are in-