

Top 5 Massage Styles

Are you in need of a good massage? A massage is a great way to relax and unwind but there are so many choices. Massage has been practiced for thousands of years so plenty of styles have developed over time. Hot Stone, Sports, Deep Tissue, Reflexology, Swedish, which one is the best for you? Knowledge of the different types of massage will help you decide which form of massage will benefit you best and make your massage experience the most enjoyable. It's important to choose the massage that will address your specific needs and that will also have you feeling relaxed and revived. Experiment with different types of massage to find out what works best for you. Here are a few tips that will help you on your way to choosing the perfect massage for you.

1. Swedish Massage –This is the most widely used massage modality. It employs traditional techniques such as kneading, friction, hacking, tapping and effleurage, and vibration to stimulate circulation, promote relaxation, relieve tension and expand the range of motion. Massage therapists use long smooth strokes, kneading, and circular movements on superficial layers of muscle using massage lotion or oil. Swedish massage therapy can be very gentle and relaxing. This type of massage is good for relieving pain and muscle tension and helps with the removal of lactic acid and other waste from the body. The benefits include pain relief and an increase in flexibility and mobility. If you've never had massage before, this is a good one to try first.

2. Hot Stone Massage – A unique indulgence that most describe as pure bliss. Heated basalt stones and warm oil are applied to the body which sedates the client into deep relaxation while it melts away knots, tension, and stress. The penetrating heat from the basalt stones expand the blood vessels pushing oxygen & nutrients through the body while it pushes toxins out. The direct heat relaxes muscles & allows for manipulation of a greater intensity than with a normal

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massage. Hot stone massage is good for people who have muscle tension but prefer lighter massage.

3. Deep Tissue Massage – Different Styles of massage use slow movement, deep pressure and friction to focus on the body's deeper muscles and connective tissues. Deep work can often be slower than regular bodywork allowing the soft tissues to open at deeper levels. Since deep work requires more time to release the tension in specific areas, your massage will not always treat all areas of your body in one session. The therapist focuses on areas of pain and tension and works to break up scar tissue. Besides alleviating pain it also aids in the release of toxins stored in the muscles, improves circulation, and loosens muscle tissue.

4. Thai Massage – Also called the lazy man's yoga. A type of bodywork that is done fully clothed while lying on a padded mat on the floor. Includes therapeutic stretching, joint mobilization, rhythmic deep tissue compression, deeply felt energy work & assisted hatha yoga poses. A very meditative quality is present in this work.. Thai massage therapists use their legs, knees, hands, and feet to manipulate the body into different positions and stretches. This style of massage focuses on aligning the body's energies, focusing the mind, and increasing flexibility.

5. Shiatsu – Shiatsu: This is based on the principles of the Chinese discipline of acupuncture, and the application of pressure to key points to promote a smooth flow of energy in the body. Shiatsu is done with the use of hand and finger pressure. Traditionally this is performed on a mat on the floor with the client fully clothed. Therapists use their thumbs, fingers, palms, and sometimes elbows to apply pressure. Besides applying pressure they may also use tapping, squeezing, and rubbing. Shiatsu promotes muscle relaxation, improved circulation, flexibility, and the release of toxins. It reduces stress, prevents disease, and reduces blood pressure.