

HOW ARE CLINICAL AND "REGULAR" MASSAGE DIFFERENT?

Those practicing **Timberlake Method Somatic Release** treat musculoskeletal pain and dysfunction by using the body's built-in release mechanisms. While all massage procedures can be beneficial when properly applied, the clinical massage therapist uses very specific procedures most likely to benefit your specific dysfunctions.

WHAT TYPES OF DYSFUNCTIONS RESPOND TO CLINICAL MASSAGE?

Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction—pain and/or physiological dysfunction originating from identifiable points within muscles and their fascial tissues. These locations are known as trigger points because they often trigger distant reactions.

Former White House Physician, Janet Travell, MD, and others have developed extensive maps of such referred pain. They have also identified nearly a hundred dysfunctions that can have myofascial trigger point origins. Some of these are: carpal tunnel syndrome, TMJ dysfunction, PMS, headache, diarrhea, dizziness, cardiac arrhythmia, indigestion, tennis elbow, urinary frequency, sinusitis, deafness, and blurred vision.

Fascial Plane Dysfunction—The body's own version of "Saran Wrap," fascia covers, most of the body in large, continuously connected sheets. Injury, postural patterns, and chemical imbalances can cause these sheets to distort and bind to themselves and nearby tissues. Since all major blood vessels and nerves follow these fascial sheathes through the body, properly aligned and released fascia is vital to good health and the proper operation of the circulatory and nervous systems.

Neurovascular Dysfunction—The smallest muscular activity requires that countless nerve impulses be sent to the muscle to be activated, and to all of the adjoining and opposing muscles. As an example, in the simplest motion of flexing your elbow, you must tighten the biceps and other associated muscles while simultaneously relaxing the triceps and other associated muscles. The combined nervous activity and muscular response must be precisely timed and exactly proportionate.

For more complex movements like rotating the head or taking a breath, the amount of coordinating activity is multiplied astronomically. Unfortunately, the mechanism responsible for such coordination can break down and muscle fibers or whole muscles can actually lock in opposition to their normal activity.

Tonus System Dysfunction—When overused (either by a single, too strenuous effort or by extended, repetitive activity), muscles can lose their ability to understand how to relax. Referred to as hypertonic, such muscles are overly tight, tend to harbor myofascial trigger points, and cause stress on the muscles that oppose them and the joints that they cross.

Dermatogenic and Spondylogenic Dysfunctions—If a nerve is pinched where it leaves the spine or anywhere along its route, the area that nerve serves will feel pain. Many people have experienced such a problem with the sciatic nerve. It originates in the low back, but when pinched can make the knee, shin, or heel hurt. This is an example of dermatogenic pain—literally—pain in an area of skin.

Spondylogenic dysfunction occurs when the joints of the spine are compressed or otherwise impaired and cause their own special trigger point type pain or dysfunction.

Both of these are successfully treated with clinical massage by loosening the muscles and other soft tissue that surrounds the affected joint or nerve.

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES USED IN CLINICAL MASSAGE?

Massage therapists trained in clinical massage can use a variety of body work procedures appropriate to the person/condition being treated. Most of these procedures will involve releasing the body from a dysfunctional holding pattern that has developed as the result of the client's accommodating to a recent or old injury or misuse. Among these procedures are:

Neurovascular / Myofascial Therapy—a method of carefully searching for and treating ischemic locations and the trigger points that are often the key factors in chronic and severe pain. This type of therapy is widely acclaimed and extremely successful in pain relief.

Fascial Release—very gentle, subtle manipulation of the fascial planes to release and normalize fascial sheathes. Because the subtleties of this therapy require a well-trained, sensitive therapist, few patients have previously been able to experience its benefits.

Positional Release—a very gentle release wherein the dysfunctional part is placed in a position of complete, pain-free relaxation and allowed to normalize its function during a 90 second period of neurovascular reorganization.

Post-isometric Muscle Release—gently facilitated joint movement to assist a muscle in regaining a normal, relaxed length. The client actively participates.

Energy Release—passive touch used in such a manner as to help the client's nervous system release and normalize dysfunctional holding patterns.

Swedish Massage—a systematic application of procedures known to enhance circulation of blood and lymph (among other benefits).

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM CLINICAL MASSAGE THERAPY

The procedures described above are helpful for an incredible number of symptoms that arise when musculoskeletal problems exist. It is impossible to list with any completeness the disorders that have been successfully treated. Instead, we have listed below some general symptoms that may indicate muscular problems that can be treated and which could be the unsuspected origins of serious physiological dysfunctions:

- *Any chronic muscle or joint pain.*
- *A known condition of referred pain, such as “when my neck gets tense I get a headache.”*
- *Any recurring symptoms that seem to accompany or are precipitated by muscle tightness.*
- *Tight muscles that are limiting the mobility of a joint.*
- *Chronically fatigued muscles.*
- *Low energy level, especially when accompanied by muscle aches and pains.*
- *A recent muscle injury that generates pain or dysfunction in areas not seemingly involved in the injury.*
- *Any visceral dysfunction that tests negative for conventional causes.*
- *Muscle pain that recurs in an area with no apparent new cause.*
- *A tendency for pain to spread to other muscles whenever a simple strain or injury occurs.*

Massage Therapy is **not** a cure-all. A competent therapist will advise you on its applicability to your symptoms.

GLOSSARY

ACCOMMODATION OR COMPENSATION— Involuntary activities of the body allowing us to more easily tolerate painful conditions. For instance, you may have learned to twist your hip slightly to accommodate a sprained ankle. A holding pattern is a compensation that has become permanent. The original compensation may have been for physical or psychological trauma.

FASCIA—Connective tissue abundant in protein and capable of great binding strength. It covers all muscle cells, all muscles, many muscle groups, viscera, and the entire body just under the skin. Fascia has a rich nerve supply and is well adapted to healing. When injured, it often heals indiscriminately, binding together tissues that should not be bound. Abdominal adhesions are a well known example.

HOLDING PATTERN—see “Accommodation.”

ISCHEMIA—The flow of blood is intricately controlled, allowing the nervous system to limit or stop blood flow to small portions of our muscles. When long term, this causes ischemia, a lack of oxygen and nutrition. Myofascial trigger points are aggravated (or caused) by ischemia.

PHYSIOLOGICAL DYSFUNCTION—An adverse alteration of function. Can result from disease and infection, but also from musculoskeletal problems. Only by correcting the real cause can the problem be corrected. No amount of medicine will permanently cure the headache caused by recurring trigger points.

RELEASE—The activity of the body as the nervous system recognizes and normalizes accommodations.

TONUS—The activity within every muscle of the body in which some fibers tighten while others relax. This process is constantly alternated and repeated for all muscles 24 hours a day.

TRIGGER POINT—In muscles and other soft tissue, an identifiable location that causes pain or dysfunction somewhere else. See “Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction” under “TYPES OF DYSFUNCTIONS.”

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CLINICAL MASSAGE

How Specific Body Work Can Help The Pain & Dysfunction of Specific Problems

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