

What is Swedish Massage Therapy?

When most people visualize massage, the modality that comes to mind is Swedish Massage. This is the most well-known kind of body work that is currently performed. One of the main goals of Swedish Massage is to relax the entire body.

Swedish Massage uses long, gliding strokes to rub the muscles in the direction of blood returning to the heart. Being that this is one of the main techniques, Swedish Massage therapy is extremely beneficial for increasing the oxygen levels within the blood. This greatly improves circulation, eases tension, decreases toxins from the muscles and improves flexibility.

A study published by the New York Times which was conducted by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, found that volunteers who underwent a 45 minute Swedish Massage treatment experienced drastic decreases in their cortisol levels. Cortisol is a stress hormone that is released during a stress response. Additional decreases were noted in arginine vasopressin. This is a hormone that can lead to increases of cortisol within the body.

As well, volunteers showed increased levels in their white blood cells, known as lymphocytes, which are an integral part of the immune system. Lymphocytes are responsible for fighting viruses and bacteria and can help fend off colds and the flu.

Swedish Massage Techniques

Other techniques used by Swedish Massage practitioners include: firm kneading, stretching and bending, circular pressure applied by the palms and the hands and percussion-like tapping. Prior to your Swedish Massage appointment, it is recommended to communicate with your professional massage therapist in order to help them customize your massage to meet your particular needs. During the massage, you can provide feedback regarding the amount of pressure and your comfort levels.