

Traditional Thai Massage

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Thai Massage is the physical component of an ancient holistic approach to healing the body/mind that has been practiced by monks within sacred temples throughout Thailand for over 1000 years (some say as much as 2500 years, since the coming of the Buddha in India and his follower, the Ayurvedic physician known throughout Southeast Asia as the Father Doctor *Shivago Komparpaj*). Traditional medicine encompassed manipulation (Thai Massage), application of herbs (topical and oral), nutrition/diet counseling, and spiritual practice (primarily expressed as vipassana meditation). Thai Massage or *Nuad Bo-Rarn* (“ancient healing way”), as it is commonly referred to in Thailand, focuses on the physical manipulation of the body, but the underlying principles incorporate aspects of Buddhism, Yoga, Ayurvedic Medicine, and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

In the Thai view, life force in the body travels along energy pathways known as *Sen* lines, which are broadly similar in theory and location to both traditional Chinese meridians and Ayurvedic nadis. It is believed that there is a direct correlation between physical and energetic imbalances expressed in the body. The therapist seeks to balance these energy pathways (and hence the whole body/mind) through manipulation of the musculoskeletal structure (compressing, pulling, lifting, twisting, supporting, shaking, stroking) sensing and affecting the muscles, *fascia*, joints, and energetic elements throughout the body.

Primary techniques are acupressure, compression and passive range of motion, coupled with conscious mindfulness, compassion and nonjudgment. The client remains comfortably clothed, lying on a floor mat, while the therapist proceeds through a systematic routine. Using his/her own body, assisted by leverage and gravity, the therapist carefully moves the client into a variety of stretches while simultaneously applying acupressure with the thumbs, palms, elbows or feet. With practice and seasoned knowledge, sessions become a flowing revitalizing dance guided more by intuition and energetic sensing than by a formal routine of movements.

Intended outcomes include physical changes such as softer connective tissue, lengthened muscle fibers, more space in the skeletal structure, reduced adhesions, increased circulation and lymphatic flow, deepened breath and revitalized internal organs. Emotional benefits are often experienced as calming, centering, with an increased feeling of comfort, joy and vitality. In this way, both the client and therapist can move together toward greater balance and a return to wholeness.

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TouchAbilities®

Technique	Component	Skill
Acupressure (with thumb)	Compression Energetic Cognitive	Pressing Sensing, Intuiting, Balancing Intending, Focusing
Rhythmic Compression (with thumb, palm, or foot)	Compression Energetic	Pressing Balancing
Passive Range of Motion (stretching, tractioning, twisting, rotating)	Compression Expansion Kinetic	Pushing, Twisting Pulling, Lifting Holding/Supporting, Mobilizing, Stabilizing, Dropping/Letting Go
Rocking	Oscillation	Shaking
Chopping-Cupping-Rapping	Oscillation	Striking
Brushing	Gliding	Sliding
Forearm Rolling	Compression	Pressing, Pushing
Kneading	Compression	Squeezing
Pinching	Compression	Pinching
Circling (with thumb or palm)	Gliding	Planing, Rubbing
Breathing	Breathing	Tracking, Directing
Mindfulness & Connection	Cognitive Energetic	Inquiring, Intending, Focusing Sensing, Intuiting, Balancing