

Swedish Massage Techniques

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Technique Components ^(1/3)

- **Direction of Movement:**

- For Relaxation or Reduction of Edema
- Direction is Centripetal or in the direction of blood flow and parallel with the muscle fibre Direction
- Example: For treatment of Fibrotic areas, direction of techniques are in a cross -fibre direction or in the Direction of Restriction.

- **Duration of Technique:**

- Technique applied depends upon the size of area massaged, Pathological condition and the client's tolerance
- Example: Acute Lumbar Pain for short time
- To reduce edema , techniques applied for 20 min or more.



Technique Components (2/3)

- **Pressure:**

- For relaxation, the pressure applied from light to moderate. Deeper pressure used to reach to Deeper Structures and for the treatment of adhesions.

- **Part:**

- Various part of hand or arm of therapist used
- For focused effect thumb and elbow used. For general pressure, full surface of palm used.

- **Rhythm of Movement:**

- Even Rhythm is used.

- **Rate of Movement:**

- For relaxation, rate of movement is slower
- For stimulating effect, techniques are applied more quickly.



Technique Components ^(3/3)

- **For Relaxing Effect:**

- Technique should be Slow, less pressure, rhythmical and repetitive manner Decrease SNS firing.

- **For Stimulating Effect:**

- Technique should be brisk, more erratic and less predictable patterns increases SNS firing.



Introduction to Swedish Massage

- Foundation of modern Western massage therapy
- Developed through the system of Per Henrik Ling
- Based on anatomical and physiological principles
- Uses structured, systematic strokes
- Aims to:
 - Improve circulation
 - Reduce muscle tension
 - Promote relaxation
 - Prepare tissues for deeper work



Swedish Massage Techniques

- **Five primary techniques:**

- Effleurage
- Petrissage
- Friction
- Tapotement
- Vibration

- **Each technique has:**

- Specific hand positions
- Direction of application
- Therapeutic purpose



Stroking

- **Lightest** technique used for massage.
- This technique can be given in **any Direction**.
- It can be performed **over** the sheets.
- Often used as **introductory** or **closing** techniques.
- At the end of massage, stroking from head to the feet can create an awareness and sense of connection to entire body.
- **Palmar surface** of hand or fingers is used with equal pressure.
- **Superficial Technique** can be done centripetal or centrifugal.
- Can be done **without** lubricant.
- **Temperature** Difference can be palpated



Effects of Stroking:

- Soothing Technique
- Decreases SNS firing
- Reduces Pain Perception
- Reflexive Effect on the circulatory system bcoz of light pressure.



Effleurage – Definition

- Means to glide, stroke or touch lightly.
- Spread the lubricant.
- Introductory Technique (Beginning and ending a massage)
- Usually performed with Palmar surface of hands, Forearms and Ulnar border
- Pressure varies from light to deep
- Palpation of temperature, muscle tone, texture
- Tenderness will not always palpated
- Prepares the tissue for deeper technique
- Can be used as a transition stroke from one technique to another or move from one area to another.
- Direction is always **Centripetal** (toward the heart) (venous return)



Types of Effleurage

- **Superficial effleurage:**
 - Light pressure
 - Used at beginning/end of treatment
 - Promotes relaxation
- **Deep effleurage:**
 - Slower, firmer pressure
 - Affects muscle and fascia
 - Assists venous and lymphatic return



Physiological Effects of Effleurage

- **Repetitive and sweeping Effleurage is used to :**
 - Enhances venous return
 - Supports lymphatic drainage
 - Warms tissues helps increases local circulation
 - Reduces Edema
- **Slow Rhythmic effleurage has:**
 - Sedative Effect
 - Reduces sympathetic nervous system activity
 - Reduces Pain
 - Reduces Muscle Hypertonicity.
- **Quick & Erratic Effleurage:**
 - Stimulating



Contraindication of Effleurage

- Distal to an Area of inflammation
- Distal to an injury in the Acute and Early Sub Acute Stage
- Distal to infection
- Not used over open or contagious skin lesions.
- Long strokes in Hypertension



Petrissage- Definition

- **Petrissage means “to knead”**
 - A lifting, squeezing, compressing technique
 - Muscle is grasped and lifted away from underlying structures
 - Produces rhythmic compression and release
 - Deeper than effleurage
 - Tissue is warmed up because of increased pressure
- **Types of Petrissage:**
 - Squeezing
 - Muscle stripping
 - Wringing
 - Picking up
 - Skin rolling
 - Kneading
- Part of hand used: Palm, fingertip, thumb, forearm, knuckle
- Kneading is always performed **Centripetally**.



- **Wringing – Definition**

- Hands move in opposite directions
- Tissue is lifted and twisted gently
- Similar to wringing out a towel
- Usually applied to larger muscles (e.g., back, thigh)

- **Picking Up – Definition**

- Muscle is lifted between fingers and thenar eminence or the palms of the hands
- Gently squeezed and released
- Tissue is lifted away from underlying bone



- **Skin Rolling – Definition**

- Skin is lifted and rolled between fingers and thumbs
- Primarily affects superficial fascia

- **Effects:**

- Mobilizes superficial fascia
- Improves skin elasticity
- Breaks superficial adhesions
- Increases local blood flow



- **Muscle Stripping – Definition:**

- Deep gliding pressure along length of muscle
- Usually performed with: Thumb, Reinforced fingers, Elbow, Ulnar border of hands
- Moderate to deep pressure Applied along muscle fibers

- **Effects:**

- Lengthens muscle fibers
- Breaks adhesions
- Improves tissue extensibility (more flexible)
- Reduces chronic hypertonicity



Kneading Definition

- It is a petrissage technique in which soft tissue is:
 - Lifted
 - Compressed
 - Squeezed
 - Released
 - using the hands in a **rhythmic, circular motion**, similar to kneading dough.
- It primarily affects **muscle and deeper fascia**.



- **Kneading usually done with:**

- Palmar surface, ulnar border of hand, forearm
- Therapist performs short, rhythmical unidirectional, circular movement.

- **Types of Kneading:**

- Palmar Kneading
- Thumb Kneading
- Finger Kneading
- One-Handed & Two-Handed Alternating Kneading
- Olecranon Kneading



Effects of Petrissage

- Increases local circulation
- Enhances lymphatic flow
- Breaks minor adhesions
- Reduces muscle tension
- Improves muscle elasticity
- Stimulates parasympathetic response (when slow and rhythmic)
- Muscle Hypertonicity is reduced
- Muscle Stripping & Skin Rolling is used to treat trigger points
- SKIN ROLLING is used to check superficial fascial restriction.



Contraindication of Petrissage

- Acute conditions
- Local injury
- Severely atrophied (weak) or atonic muscles
- Moderate to severe varicosities.



Vibration

Technique involving rapid oscillatory movements.

- May be superficial or deep depending on application.
- Used at any time during massage
- No lubricant is required.
- Can be performed with one or both hands.
- A rapid shaking or trembling movement transmitted through the hand into tissues.
- Produced by quick alternating contraction and relaxation of therapist's muscles of forearm.
- Can be easily performed if therapist keep his upper arm and shoulder relaxed.
- Can be applied stationary or while moving along tissue.



Types of Vibrations:

Fine Vibration:

- Short or Very Rapid
- Invisible oscillations of arm and hand
- Usually relaxing

Coarse Vibration:

- Larger, More observable, More stimulating

Static Vibration:

- Keep the hand in continuous contact with tissue without sliding over client's skin.

Running Vibration:

- Keep the hand in continuous contact with tissue and then the vibrating hands glides over the client's skin.



Effects of Vibration:

- Fine vibration → Sedative effect
- Coarse vibration → Stimulating effect
- Useful in painful Areas & Hyposensitive Areas (post surgery chronic disuse)
- Used if there is a need of Sensory Re-education (Example: After cast Removal)
- Loosens mucus (when applied over thorax)
- Used to Decrease Muscle Tone (when applied to muscle tendon for 30 sec)



Contraindications of Vibration:

- Uncovered open contagious skin lesions
- Coarse vibration may causes a temporary increase in Spastic paralysis
- Severe osteoporosis
- Acute thrombosis
- Acute inflammation



Tapotement – Definition

- Can be used at any time during the treatment.
- In case of Heavy tapotement, always use the sequence from light to heavy than back to light
- No lubricant is needed.
- All types of tapotement are Percussive and rhythmic done with two hands alternatively applying the pressure.
- Part used: Finger tips, ulnar borders of hands, full palmar surfaces of hands or fists.



Types of Tapotement

- **Light Tapotment:**

- Hands are light and springy, with the wrist relaxed, no force created beneath the skin.
- Superficial technique

- **Types:**

- Pincement
- Tapping

- **Pincement:**

- Tissue is gently plucked between the thumb and fingertips.

- **Tapping:**

- Tissue is tapped with the fingertips.



Types of Tapotement:

- **Heavy Tapotement:**

- Hands are firm, wrist relaxed, deeper force that carries below the skin surface.

- **Types:**

- Hacking
- Clapping or
- Cupping
- Beating

- **Hacking:**

- Performed with ulnar Border of hand
- For less force hand is relaxed
- For greater force hand is stiff.



- **Clapping or Cupping:**

- Hand is in Cupped shaped position with fingers and thumb together,
- with wrist pronated,
- the tissue is struck with alternating hands. Audible “Clapping” Noise.

- **Beating:**

- Hand in loose fist.
- Can be performed while using extensor surface of phalanges of the digits, or the ulnar surface of fist.



Effects of Tapotement

- Stimulating and increases SNS firing, used for generalized fatigue.
- Increases local circulation
- Loosens mucus with respiratory conditions
- **Heavy tapotment** may elicit stretch reflex of the muscles temporarily increasing their tones.
- It also causes **reciprocal inhibition of the antagonist.**
- Example:
 - Tapotment to the quadriceps increases their tone but same time create a relaxation of the hamstrings.



Effects of Tapotement

- **Light tapotement:**

- Stimulates hypotrophied muscles (weak muscle which has less muscle mass)
- Example: In case of Polio, Bells Palsy, Frozen shoulder (Deltoid).

- **Light tapotement:** Good for

- Desensitizing area such as amputation sites
- Tissue just after cast removal



Contraindication of Tapotement:

- Over the bony area,
- Fractured bone,
- Insomnia
- And spastic muscle



Practice Questions

➤ **What will be the mechanical effect of Massage?**

Ans: Decreasing Blood Pressure

➤ **What is the reflexive effect of massage in which body system?**

Ans : Neurological

➤ **What is the effect of massage on healthy person?**

Ans: Increases flexibility, Increase Relaxation, Decreased stress level

➤ **What are the psychological effects of massage?**

Ans: Decrease stress, Anxiety, Depression



Practice Question

➤ **How is pain processed to the spinal cord?**

Ans: Through Nerve Receptors

➤ **Where is the pain modulated in the brain?**

Ans: Thalamus and Cortex

➤ **How can massage address the source of pain?**

Ans: The nociceptive (painful) nerve firing will be blocked by the massage

➤ **How does massage helps for muscle spasm?**

Ans: Increased blood circulation and supply oxygen to the muscle.



Practice Question

- **Which hormones are secreted in the body during muscle spasm?**

Ans: Bradykinin & Histamine

- **Which is the best technique for improving Respiratory Function?**

Ans: Tapotement

- **What is the effect of tapotement on Respiratory system?**

Ans: Dislodging the mucus from blocked bronchi

- **Which hormone level decreases after massage to reduce anxiety?**

Ans : Cortisol



Practice Question

- **Which Swedish technique is MOST effective for increasing superficial circulation during the introductory phase of treatment?**

Ans : Effleurage

- **The primary mechanical action of petrissage is?**

Ans:Lifting and squeezing tissue

- **Rapid tapotement would MOST likely produce which nervous system response?**

Ans:Sympathetic stimulation

- **Friction is contraindicated in?**

Ans:Acute inflammation



Practice Question

- **Slow, rhythmic vibration applied at the end of treatment primarily aims to?**

Ans: promote Relaxation

- **A client presents with acute ankle sprain (24 hours post-injury). What Swedish technique is appropriate over the injured site?**

Ans: None



Thank You



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