Massage Therapy

What is massage therapy?
For centuries, massage has been practiced as a healing therapy in cultures around the world. It helps relieve muscle tension, reduce stress, and give feelings of calmness. It affects the musculoskeletal, circulatory, lymphatic, and nervous systems of the body in particular.

How can massage help people affected by cancer?
Some health care professionals recommend massage as a complementary therapy. It can help reduce stress, anxiety, nausea, and pain in people who have illnesses such as cancer as well as people who care for them. Many report massage brings a sense of well-being.

Massage helps relax muscles. It can relieve pain and stiffness, increase mobility, ease injured muscles, and reduce the pain of headaches and backaches.

Does massage hurt?
Massage and bodywork do not have to be painful. The amount of pressure—gentle, medium, or firm—can be changed for each person’s preference.

Is massage safe for people with cancer?
Massage is generally safe. The location and amount of pressure can be adapted for each person. Cancer patients may want to avoid massage near tumor sites or areas that had surgery.

Huntsman Cancer Institute’s (HCI) Linda B. and Robert B. Wiggins Wellness and Integrative Health Center offers massage therapy at a reduced cost to people affected by cancer, including patients, caregivers, and staff members.

For more information, or to make an appointment call 801-587-4585, or visit us on the first floor of HCI’s Cancer Hospital, near the pharmacy.

www.huntsmancancer.org/massagetherapy
Types of Massage Therapies Offered

Craniosacral therapy involves light touch on the bones of the skull (including the face and mouth), spine, and pelvis to release tension and improve body movement.

Lymphatic massage, also called lymphatic drainage or manual lymph drainage, is a treatment for lymphedema, a build up of fluid that can occur after lymph nodes are removed during surgery such as a mastectomy. It involves very light, brush-like touches to skin.

Oncology massage is an individualized massage designed to meet the unique and changing needs of people in treatment for cancer or with a history of cancer treatment. A safe massage plan generally revolves around the side effects (short and long-term) of chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery.

Reflexology uses pressure on specific areas of the feet, hands, or ears to relieve a variety of issues and symptoms. Some people report tingling sensations in other areas of the body while the reflex points are being touched.

Swedish massage uses rubbing and kneading of the muscles and soft tissue for relaxation, better tissue function, and improved circulation.

Energy-based therapies are structured, and standardized healing practices used to for stress reduction and relaxation. Trained practitioners move hands above a person’s body to promote healing.

- **Jin Shin Jyutsu** is an ancient Japanese healing art that uses non-invasive, gentle touch in specific areas to encourage healing of body, mind, and spirit.
- **Reiki** is a complementary health approach in which practitioners place their hands lightly on or just above a person, facilitating the person’s own healing response. Reiki is based on an Eastern belief in an energy that supports the body’s natural healing abilities.

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Huntsman Cancer Institute
University of Utah

University of Utah Health Care

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