

## Beauty / PART I



# Massage revisited

□ By Nicola Roberts

It is becoming more and more apparent that massage techniques from around the globe are more popular than ever. Many traditional beauty/therapy salons are changing their décor and are reflecting changing ideals.

## Korean massage

This is designed to rebalance and realign the meridians (energy lines of the body) and it encourages the free flow of chi energy throughout the body. The procedure is usually performed on the floor on a mattress rather than the conventional therapy couch so that the therapist can use their whole body weight as pressure. This massage is aimed at restoring the energy balance of the body which in turn should promote the body's powers of self healing and resistance to stress. This treatment is suitable for anyone and is especially good for stimulating the circulation therefore promoting the elimination of excess fluid and water.

## Indian head massage

For thousands of years Indian massage has been an integral part of Indian family life. The technique has been handed down through the generations and it is part of the Ayurvedic healing system, which promotes maintenance of health and wellness. It is different from many types of massage because the client remains fully clothed and is sat in an upright position. Everyone can receive Indian head massage: the elderly, disabled and pregnant ladies and it

is well known for alleviating symptoms of stress, anxiety and mental tension. The massage is performed by working through the upper back, shoulders, arms, ears, scalp and face. Again a special treatment couch is not needed, only a low backed chair to enable the therapist to reach down the back. Indian head massage is ideal for people with conditions including eye strain, headaches, insomnia, sinus congestion and stress.

## Thai massage

Over 2,500 years ago, Thai massage originated in Northern India. It was begun by a doctor, has many links with Buddhism and is traditionally taught at Buddhist temples. Traditional Thai massage reflects the four 'divine' states of mind of Buddhist teaching: loving kindness, compassion, vicarious joy and equanimity. The routine is extremely slow and methodical and it involves the use of pressure points and stretches along the energy lines (meridians) of the body. This procedure again is very different from conventional massage as it does not involve the use of oil or moving of the tissues over the bones, muscles, flesh etc. The client remains fully clothed and the therapist uses his or her thumbs to apply pressure. This massage is ideal for the individual seeking deep relaxation and is recommended for realigning imbalances within the body. It also stimulates internal organs to function more effectively and reduces muscle stiffness, tension and can help create better muscle tone.

## Swedish massage

This seems to be one of the most conventional forms of massage which is found in many massage centres in Europe and the USA. It was developed by a Swedish psychologist and fencing master – Per Henrik Ling, who discovered that by using a series of movements he helped make himself feel better and generally improved his health. Following his studies he developed his classical massage which is based on the techniques he used: effleurage, petrissage, tapotement, frictions and vibrations. Traditionally the massage was performed with talc to ensure a deep grasp of the body tissues. The client lies on a treatment couch and the therapist performs deep movements towards the heart and lighter pressure on the return strokes or over muscle fibres. Swedish massage is not performed on the face, only the body, and in many situations it is used in conjunction with steam or sauna therapies which relax the tense muscles prior to the massage. In recent years the massage has changed slightly and in many places they may incorporate the use of oil and may include the treatment of the head and neck.

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