

# Rejuvenate: Thousands-Year Old Massage

Most of us love the idea of being pampered with the healing touch of a skilled masseuse. A good massage can do wonders to help heal, cure, and prevent illnesses. We mainly consider massage a luxury meant as a form of pampering either at a spa or a parlor, but it also has deep roots in holistic health, medicine, and physical therapy. In fact, massage is one of the oldest forms of therapy, dating back as far as 5000 years ago to China, India, and Egypt where it was used to help cure and prevent disease.



## Origins in India

One of the earliest, most recognized forms of massage began in Ancient India. It was through a practice known as Ayurvedic. It was originally passed down from one practitioner to another, and then it was recorded via text. The practice of Ayurvedic is centered on balance with the world around us, and through balance total wellness can be achieved. Different forms of therapy are prescribed to bring balance to people seeking better health, but all are centered around the five senses: sight therapy, aromatherapy, sound therapy, a diet of herbalism, and touch therapy, which we now associate with massage.

## Popularity Spread to Egypt and the Far East

Ayurvedic massage gained in popularity with its effectiveness, and soon the practice began taking on other forms and spreading to Egypt and China. Hieroglyphics were painted on the insides of many Egyptian tombs depicting people being kneaded by others. Egyptians also adapted reflexology, a form of massage which uses pressure points throughout the body to treat illnesses and to maintain wellness.

The Chinese incorporated the art of massage into almost all aspects of their lives. Ancient Chinese medicine featured Chinese doctors utilizing massage therapy to cure illness and promote balance in life. They believed that a lot of sickness and illness was caused by an imbalance of energy, which was able to be restored through touch. Yoga also features massage as a spiritual connection between body, mind, and spirit. Buddhists would practice the art of touch therapy in connection with their spiritual world as well. Massage also became an integral part of Chinese Martial Arts to help alleviate aches and pains and help promote flexibility, agility, and a better understanding of the mind/body connection.



### **The Emergence of Shiatsu**

Buddhist monks brought their practice of massage to Japan around 3000 years ago. It began as a practice of traditional Chinese medical massage, and later evolved to the practice of Shiatsu, which is still a form of massage that is alive and well today. The philosophy behind Shiatsu is to raise energy levels in the patient by manipulating and touching pressure points and muscular points. The raise in energy then increases and fortifies the function of the organs, which gives way to a more healthy and well-rounded individual and a natural resistance to illness.

### **From Japan to Greece and the Western World**

With the success of Shiatsu in Japan and other forms of early massage throughout the world, Greek athletes and Philosophers began to adopt the practice around 2500 years ago. Greek athletes and Olympians began using massage to help maintain peak form in their bodies. Massage was an essential practice for the best athletes in Ancient Greece. Also in Ancient Greece, philosopher Hippocrates began using the method of "friction therapy" to help promote healing and to ward off muscle stiffness and pain associated with many common illnesses and maladies. Hippocrates is

known today as the father of Modern Medicine.



### **Waning of Natural Healing with the Introduction of Pharmaceuticals**

Around the 19th century, western civilizations began to shy away from many different forms of [natural healing](#) as medications became introduced. Doctors began to utilize pharmaceuticals to prevent, treat, and cure illnesses; and for a time, [massage therapy](#) and other natural healing methods were not taken seriously in terms of health and wellness. Massage simply became a luxury for the wealthy as a form of relaxation.

### **A Resurgence of Massage Therapy to Heal and Maintain Wellness**

In recent times, there has been a reemergence in the interest of more natural forms of healing and wellness. Where massage was once considered a luxury, it is not considered a very effective means of complimentary therapy for holistic healers and traditional medical doctors. Massage is used as a legitimate means of relieving stress, relaxation, as well as to help promote healing after surgery, to rehabilitate injuries, and to increase and promote circulation. Massage has come full circle in its demand and effectiveness, with Shiatsu massage still being an effective means of de-stressing and treating the whole person.

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