

Shiatsu

Massage is ideally placed to help bring us back to a more grounded and calm sense of ourselves. We are living in a time where we can find ourselves lost in a whirlwind of activity, where stress and strain seem prevalent.

Shiatsu can provide a time and place in our week where we are able to let go fully, regenerate and experience ourselves anew.

Frequent, long held emotional states affect our health. The *Telegraph* (20.09.16) reported that scientists have studied 16,000 people over 15 years with the conclusion that they are now calling for Doctors to treat anxiety as a major physiological health risk. For example men who suffer from anxiety it seems are twice as likely to die from cancer.

As well as offering us the opportunity to experience profound relaxation for the mind, Shiatsu promotes the release of endorphins for pain relief, it stimulates the lymphatic system and increases our circulation. The action of Shiatsu on opening joints, lengthening tissues through rhythmic pressure helps to improve our range of motion and joint flexibility; it is great for rejuvenating injured and overused muscles and aids in the recovery from strenuous workouts.

How Shiatsu is given and received

Shiatsu has several key advantages over regular massage. Firstly the recipient does not have to undress, they can remain fully clothed. There are no sticky lubricating oils; nothing extra is applied to the skin. In addition, no special apparatus is needed, just a comfortable mattress on the floor to relax on. It's simple and easy.

Massage is natural and instinctive and follows our innate sense; Shiatsu is an elaboration of 'rub and press', 'push and grasp', which are literal translations of traditional Chinese Massage forms. Shiatsu is applied over the Acupuncture Channel network and Acu-points whilst the type of pressure applied is appropriate to how the body feels. Shiatsu opens what is closed, disperses the parts that feel stuck and tonifies the areas that feel depleted.

How it works

In most traditional cultures the role of Massage was considered a more fundamental part of health care. In the Tang Dynasty of China (618-907 AD) it is recorded that there were 56 massage doctors in the Imperial Hospital – more than the total number of herbalists and acupuncturists.

The compassionate power of touch and its effectiveness has been largely forgotten in the development of modern medical techniques, an approach that can make us feel objectified, disassociated and disconnected from our bodies. Being grounded in our bodies is essential; it is literally the felt sense of how we are.

It is becoming increasingly clear that it is not possible to separate the body from the mind or heart. Our experience of ourselves tells us these sensations, thoughts and feelings are an integrated whole.

We experience the world through touch and we embed our felt sense into our nervous system, into patterns of memory, constructions of mind. We embody our personal world and experience.

Just as any form of abusive touch can be potentially damaging, forms of supportive touch can be immensely healing. This can help explain why body work can have such a profound effect not just on the physical body, but on deep psychological and emotional levels.

We now know that therapeutic touch automatically triggers a coordinated response between the nervous and endocrine systems. These hormonal circulations have far reaching effects. For example Oxytocin, commonly referred to as 'the love hormone' has a well-established reputation in facilitating bonding, eliciting feelings of happiness, a sense of connection, trust, gratitude, enhancing our social functioning, the affairs of the heart. It is released by the most natural of means- being held and supported will do it and it is no surprise to find many oxytocin receptors secreted in the heart, our deep feeling centre.

Shiatsu can give us an opportunity to redress the balance of our rushed lives, calm the mind, soothe our nerves and release our tension. It can improve our sense of well-being and lighten the load; it can change the felt sense and experience of ourselves.

Shiatsu works on the same principles as Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine in addressing a wide range of health complaints.