

## Sports Massage

For anyone used to massages being performed as part of a tranquil spa experience, sports massage may sound like a contradiction or unnecessary luxury. This is a misconception, as sports massage is a widely used form of manual therapy that can benefit athletes of all levels as well as anyone looking to improve their workout through better prepared and restored muscles.

### What is sports massage?

Sports massage is designed to prepare athletes for athletic performance or training, maintain their flexibility throughout their activity and ultimately recover from muscle injury. By stretching and stimulating muscles, sports massage therapists help their clients resolve injuries or tension that could negatively impact performance and musculoskeletal health while preventing future injury through increased muscle elasticity.

### Who should get one?

Competitive athletes are not the only people who would benefit from a sports massage. Other sports enthusiasts or performers such as bicyclists, runners, tennis players, swimmers and dancers can also see a reduction in injuries and improved performance thanks to sports massage. In addition, people who work out or strength train, especially “weekend warriors” who may overburden their muscles after periods of less use, are excellent candidates for sports massage.

Less obviously, people such as manual laborers, nurses or mothers who perform heavy or regular lifting or other strenuous activity also can benefit from sports massage. Sports massage may also help anyone with an injury that limits mobility and causes chronic pain.

Massage therapists will tailor their approach and targeted areas based on your type and level of activity.

### How can sports massage help you?

Although sports massage helps different people in different ways, in general it will improve your ability to become stronger and more flexible while preventing and repairing injuries.

Some of the most common ailments sports massage can treat are tendonitis, tennis elbow, muscle strains or sprains, and frozen shoulders. Sports massage can also treat conditions that affect nonathletes.

Regardless of your athleticism, sports massage will reduce tension and increase blood flow to aid in muscle repair and elasticity.

### When should you get a sports massage?

Athletes preparing for an event can receive a brief sports massage a few hours prior to competing or performing as part of their warm up with the goal of improving stamina and performance and diminishing the chance for injury. During an event a trainer can continue to use some massage techniques to extend the benefits started in the spa. Finally, after an event, sports massage techniques can focus on helping athletes recover and relax. Long-flowing strokes can restore proper blood flow and prevent stiffness from setting in between events.

When not performed in conjunction with an athletic event, sports massage will help you by loosening your muscles, reducing inflammation and resolving pain.

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Don't let the moniker “sports massage” scare you. Even if you're not a competitive athlete, your body will thank you for receiving this treatment if you perform any activity that creates wear and tear on your muscles.