



Hands On HealthCare Massage Therapy, P.C.
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Defining the difference between Medical and Therapeutic Massage Therapy

Very often there can be a fine line between medical and therapeutic massage therapy. For instance, general discomfort usually responds very well to a therapeutic session. If pain or discomfort is due to a tight, over stimulated muscle, you can expect to *feel better* after the session. And often it is a terrific jump-start to *getting better*. However, very often, the muscle and soft tissue need to be *re-educated*. This will enable them to *get and stay better*. An example would be a short, contracted muscle being re-taught to stay properly lengthened, thereby allowing proper blood flow, nerve innervation, full range of motion and a decrease in pain or discomfort. Medical massage incorporates many of the same techniques as therapeutic massage, along with more advanced modalities. The goal of medical massage is to produce permanent changes or in some cases, such as paraplegia, to maintain the health of the tissue. We measure the results of medical massage by noting a reduction of pain or discomfort for longer periods of time between sessions. Below you will find a general guideline outlining the major differences between medical and therapeutic massage. However, I strongly recommend asking the advice of your therapist or if you have any reason to believe that medical massage would be more beneficial for you than therapeutic massage, please don't hesitate to arrange for a consultation. A consultation will consist of reviewing your medical history, a hands-on evaluation and a determination as to whether we believe that medical massage sessions would be in your best interest. We do not charge for consultations.

Medical Massage Therapy Session

Treats the muscles, *fascia and **Trigger Points
Addresses shortened and over- lengthened muscles
Sedates or stimulates muscles
Specific, focused work, based on a treatment plan
Feed back from the client during the session is customary
Often sessions can produce some temporary discomfort
30-45 minute sessions
Each session will generally last longer and longer

Pain, CT Syndrome, TMJ, Sciatica, Herniated Discs
Scoliosis, Migraines, Muscle Spasms, M.S., Whiplash
Injuries, Chronic muscle tightness/tension, etc.

Therapeutic Massage Therapy Session

Treats the muscles, may affect *fascia and **Trigger Points
Addresses shortened muscles
Sedates muscles and the mind
Most often incorporates a full body session
Feedback is welcome, but not usually necessary
Feels Great!
30-60-90 minute sessions
The length of results will vary

Stress, Discomfort, Insomnia
Depression, Fatigue, High Blood Pressure
Muscle tightness/tension, Asthma, etc.

**Fascia is a tough connective tissue that spreads throughout the body in a three-dimensional web from head to foot. Much like a highly fluid, elastic body stocking, it functions without interruption. Fascia comes together at the end of muscles to become tendons, which attach to bones. It has been estimated that if every structure of the body except the fascia were removed, the body would retain its shape. A malfunction of one of the body's systems due to trauma, poor posture, or inflammation can cause a binding, impinging or adhering of the fascia either to itself or to another body structure such as a muscle, bone or organ. This results in an abnormal pressure on any or all of the body's components. Binding and restrictions in one area will affect other parts and areas of the body, similar to pulling on one end of a sweater, another area will be affected. The treatment used to treat myofascial restrictions is referred to as Myofascial Release.*

***Trigger points are accumulations of waste products around a nerve receptor. Trigger points form in muscles and/or fascia, which has been overused or injured. They can present themselves as sharp pain, dull ache, tingling, pins and needles, etc. Active trigger points are those, which cause discomfort. Latent trigger points wait silently in the muscle for a future stress to activate them. It is common to attribute this discomfort to other conditions. The treatment used to treat trigger points is referred to as Trigger Point Therapy.*