

1528 Plumas Court
Yuba City, CA 95991
530-751-5166

Deep Tissue Vs. Deep Pressure

By Nicole Brown,
CA Certified Massage Therapist



There is some confusion about the meaning of the terms “deep tissue” and “deep pressure”. I will try to clear that up for you so you get exactly the kind of massage you are looking for.

On the intake form there are three choices for pressure; light, medium, and firm. Sometimes people write in 'deep tissue' next to the firm option. Deep Tissue is not a pressure, it is a technique, or modality. I have to clarify this in the session because there are very drastic differences between deep pressure and deep tissue, and two very different experiences.

What Is Deep Tissue Massage?

Deep Tissue is a modality, or technique, using stretching techniques, direct (ischemic) pressure, and slow stripping strokes using the forearm, for smaller spaces the knuckles are used, to more deep and underlying muscles for the purpose of relaxing, lengthening or elongating muscles back to their normal resting length and to release high tension holding patterns within the muscle structures and its tissues to alleviate pain and dysfunction.

Deep Tissue is also the knowledge of the layers of the muscles, and knowing the appropriate pressure at the correct time on those layers. The purpose of deep tissue is to release, lengthen and elongate muscle fibers and works with, not on, tissue. Deep tissue massage is not painful, not hard, and can be quite nurturing. If there is any pain during the

session then there is unhealthy tissue involved which needs to be addressed first in order to proceed.

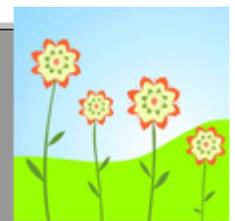
Many stretching techniques performed allow for greater penetration of deeper muscles more easily without ripping in to muscle or causing any pain. The slower the stroke the more physiological change we are creating with the muscle. Deep Tissue requires patience as we are waiting for the muscle to respond to the pressure.

What Is Deep Pressure Massage?

Deep Pressure Massages teeters on the edge of pain and discomfort. It is a pressure beyond firm that challenges the clients tolerance for pain. More effort is exerted as more pressure is applied directly to the body at all times. A massage should never consist entirely of deep work as it can overwhelm the client, their body and the body's systems.

Studies have shown that Deep Pressure massage for autism has calming effects in both children and adults. Parts of the cerebellum find the deep pressure soothing, especially those with autism and other cerebral or psychiatric disorders.

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In any case, everybody's definition of massage pressure differ. Clear communication need be exercised on what one's definition of deep is. This especially would be true with hypersensitivity, where the skin and nerves are very sensitive to the touch. Studies also show that Deep Pressure massage, when performed correctly, aids hypersensitivity, whereas light touch can irritate the already sensitive skin. Deep Pressure massage can de-sensitize the client's sensitivity to being touched.

Understanding Acupressure

By *Audrey Moore*

*CA Certified Massage Practitioner, Spa Manager
Skin Care Therapist*



Understanding Acupressure and How It Can Help Your Pain, Depression, and More...

Acupressure is a healing art, with origins in ancient Chinese medicine. Finger pressure is used on points throughout the body to stimulate the body's natural self-curative abilities. It encourages the release of tension in the muscles, increases circulation, and increases the flow of the body's vital life force. Like acupuncture, acupressure accesses the energy of the body through the points and meridian pathways to influence health and well-being. Symptoms are considered an expression of the state of the whole body. For instance, a tension headache may originate in the shoulder and neck area. By applying pressure on the points in the shoulder and neck, you can not only relieve the headache, but bring the entire body into balance- before the stress can cause problems in other areas of the body.

Brief History of Acupressure

When there is pain, it is natural to hold the place where it hurts. Everyone at one time or another has used his or her hands spontaneously to hold tense or painful places on the body.

The Chinese discovered more than 5,000 years ago that pressing certain points on the body not only relieved pain where it occurred, but also other parts of the body were benefited. Eventually, they found that pressing certain points helped to relieve other specific health conditions. Physicians began to chart these points and developed ways to relieve pain, dysfunctions, and other problems in the body.

How Acupressure Works

Acupressure points are places on the skin that conduct bioelectrical impulses in the body. When the points are stimulated with pressure, pain-relieving endorphins are released, relieving pain in the affected area.

Tension tends to concentrate around acupressure points. When a muscle is chronically tense, the fibers contract due to the secretion of lactic acid caused by fatigue, trauma, stress, and other factors. As a point is pressed, the muscles relax, increasing circulation and removing toxins.

Acupressure can also balance emotions by releasing tension caused by repressed feelings. When blood, oxygen, and energy circulate properly, we have an increased sense of health and well-being.

All acupressure techniques are intended to correct imbalances, working to regulate all systems of the body.

How Acupressure Can Benefit You

Many of the health problems in our society - from bad backs to arthritis - are the result of living unnaturally. Stress, tension, lack of exercise, poor eating habits, and poor posture contribute to the epidemic of disease in our culture. Acupressure is a way to help your body fight back and balance itself in the face of the pressures of modern life.

Some conditions that are improved with acupressure:

Pain- including arthritis, back pain, headaches and migraines, and sciatica

Ear, Eye, Nose, Throat Disorders

Circulatory Disorders-including High Blood Pressure

Gastrointestinal Disorders- including Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Constipation, Diarrhea, and Food Allergies

Gynecological Disorders-including PMS, Menopause, Complications in Pregnancy, Morning Sickness, and Infertility

Immune Disorders- including, Chronic Fatigue and Allergies

Addictions

Emotional Problems-including Anxiety, Insomnia, Stress, and Depression

Respiratory Disorders- including Asthma and Colds and Flus

Chances are a couple of these affect all of us. Please come in and try acupressure for your next bodywork session. I look forward to showing you how acupressure can make a difference in your life.

Hormonally-drive Hyperpigmentation & Acne

By Jennifer Nagy-Cordray, BS
California Certified Massage Therapist
Skin Care Therapist



Hormonal fluctuations are responsible for a multitude of actions in the body, including regulating growth, metabolism, digestion, sleep, and skin function and texture. These fluctuations can result in noticeable changes in the skin, most commonly hyperpigmentation and acne.

Hyperpigmentation

While men can develop hormonally-induced hyperpigmentation, the American Academy of Dermatology cites 90% of all cases of melasma (the most common type of hormone-driven hyperpigmentation) as occurring in women.

Cause. The process by which the skin produces pigment (melanogenesis) is complex and can be provoked by hormonal fluctuations or cutaneous inflammation. Hormonal shifts in the body can include: oral contraceptive use, pregnancy, lactation, hormone replacement therapy or perimenopause, and thyroid or hormone disruptions. Inflammatory triggers can include:

UV exposure, acne breakouts, bug bites, dermatitis or friction.

Treatment. Melasma is a challenging condition to treat because there is no definitive cause for the characteristic jagged and patchy pigmentation. It is crucial that patients follow a consistent treatment regimen that includes gentle ingredients to avoid creating unnecessary irritation in the skin.

Hydroquinone is the only U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved skin lightener with proven efficacy in improving signs of hyperpigmentation on the skin. Chemical peels are also an effective addition to a hyperpigmentation treatment plan, being performed as often as every three weeks until improvement is shown. However, hydroquinone and chemical peels are commonly contraindicated during pregnancy and lactation—the time when many women develop melasma. For patients who can not use hydroquinone, look for ingredients including: arbutin, kojic acid, lactic acid, azelaic acid, rumex extracts, licorice extract, mulberry extract, undecylenoyl phenylalanine and phenylethyl resorcinol.

Bear in mind that those who are pregnant, may become pregnant or are lactating should consult their OB/GYN prior to adding any products or treatments to their regimen. Developing a comprehensive regimen that includes multiple ingredients listed above will target the melanogenesis process at many different steps and will help reduce the appearance of pigment on the skin—and further prevent its formation.

Acne

While acne can occur at any age, the most common period is during puberty, when the body's hormones are going through dramatic fluctuations.

Cause. Triggered by a chain reaction, hormonal acne usually starts with the 5-alpha reductase enzyme that is responsible for the conversion of testosterone into dihydrotestosterone (DHT). DHT stimulates androgen receptors at the base of the follicle, resulting in a swelling of the sebaceous gland and a surge of sebum production. Therefore,

the more DHT present in the skin, the more likely the occurrence of acne. Additionally, cortisol—the stress hormone—can contribute to breakouts by releasing neurotransmitters that increase sebum production and inflammation in the skin.

Treatment. Due to the volatility of hormonal changes, hormonally induced acne can be difficult to control. Consistency is key in patients with hormonal acne; ensuring balance in the skin with a regular skin care regimen reduces the risk of future breakouts. The combination of daily care products and professional treatments can encourage dramatic, positive change in the patients' acne breakouts by increasing cell turnover, decreasing bacteria and oil production, introducing anti-inflammatory ingredients and enhancing circulation. Knowing the mechanism of action in ingredients is vital to recommending the right products to your patients.

An antibacterial cleanser containing liquid benzoyl peroxide (BPO), gluconolactone, salicylic acid or alpha hydroxy acids (AHA) can be beneficial. BPO instantly penetrates the pore, eliminating bacteria trapped in the follicle.

An alcohol-free toner containing AHAs with anti-inflammatory agents and antioxidants should also be recommended. AHAs in toners help further reduce the impaction of dead skin cells on the surface of the skin.

Corrective products containing BPO; salicylic, azelaic, kojic and lactic acids; licorice extract or retinoids should be recommended. Salicylic acid is less irritating than BPO and works by breaking down oil in the follicle and providing antibacterial benefits.

An antibacterial and anti-inflammatory moisturizer is helpful for acne. Daily use of a lightweight antioxidant and broad spectrum sunscreen designed for breakout-prone skin should also be recommended.

Due to hormone volatility, hormonally driven hyperpigmentation and acne can be extremely

challenging to treat. The most important element in treating any skin condition is compliance with a regimen. Incorporating a variety of active and key ingredients that are proven efficacious for specific skin concerns is vital to improving and preventing the development of hyperpigmentation and breakouts over time.

Working Parents

By Katie Miller, CMT



Being a busy working mom, I completely understand when my clients tell me how tired they are; and how difficult it is to find time to take care of themselves. I'm sure just about all moms would agree, we would do anything for our children. We find the time for sports, homework, dental appointments and a million other things. However, when we need an hour to destress and take care of ourselves, it seems impossible. We condition ourselves to think that taking time to care for our bodies is somehow less important than everything else. The truth is; carving out some "me time" to refresh and relax away from caring for everyone else, is the fuel that will keep you upbeat rather than beat-up. Stress plays a major role in how our bodies function and how we react to stressful situations, which happen often with kids.

This does not only apply to mothers, but, really anyone who feels as though they just can't find time to take care of themselves. It really is crazy how many of us feel as though we are not worthy enough to be put on our own schedules. Remind yourself that to be able to care for others, you must be healthy yourself. An emergency could come up at any time and if we are already at our wits end, these emergencies are sometimes more than we can handle.

Studies show that massage helps lower levels of cortisol, a hormone responsible for the feeling of stress in addition to boosting feel-good chemicals in the brain. Massage is also often recommended for naturally reducing chronic pain and discomfort. Take the time you deserve and need, put yourself on your schedule and follow through. Make yourself a priority, your family will thank you.

5 Reason to Let Your Mind Wander

By Jennifer Nagy-Cordray, BS
California Certified Massage Therapist
Skin Care Therapist



Our Staff Hypnotherapist, Dr. Esther Wright-Dankman, had a recent workshop for Self-hypnosis. She spoke to me about the benefits of self-hypnosis; relaxation, de-stress, and creating positivity in your life and your direction, to name a few things. I thought...preaching to the choir...but am I doing this for myself? She spoke about that hypnosis was none other than a state of daydreaming. We all can understand that state. I began to peel back the layers of daydreaming and found how healthy it was for all of us.

When we were kids, we viewed the world as a blank canvas. One day we were teachers, the next day we were chefs, and by the end of the week we were firefighters. Back then, we had a limitless imagination; but as time went by, many of us transformed into adults whose heads are more grounded in reality than in the sky -- and that mindset may be hurting us more than it's helping. Despite daydreaming's bad reputation, there are serious benefits to getting lost in the corners of our own brains -- and, if harnessed correctly, the positives of using our imagination can outweigh the negatives. If you're someone who has your head in the clouds (and feels guilty about it), fear not: Below are five reasons everyone should embrace their imaginative side.

It's a different kind of intellect.

When we think of someone who is whip-smart, we picture someone focused, grounded and adaptable - - and while these are all ideal traits, there's something to be said for those daydreaming, imaginative souls. According to Scott Barry Kaufman, a psychologist and author of *Ungifted: Intelligence Redefined*, daydreamers use their smarts in a way that goes beyond a multiple-choice test to encompass the ability to achieve goals.

"We all have goals and dreams in life -- things we want to accomplish out there in the real world," Kaufman told The Huffington Post in 2013. "And while the kinds of skills that are measured on IQ tests are important ... there are so many more characteristics that come into play in helping us to reach those dreams and goals in a long-term way." Studies have also found that daydreaming may not be as mindless as we think: During the process, our brains may be more highly engaged, according to a 2012 study.

It's important for a child's development.

Whether it's believing in Santa or that the playground sand is lava, childhood indulgences have meaning beyond a few moments of bliss. Research shows imagination is not only crucial to children's cognitive development, it also plays a role in their understanding of reality later on. There's also key evidence that shows children's imaginative sides allow them to take someone else's perspective, The Wall Street Journal reported.

It has the potential to enhance your memory.

Our imaginations aren't just for creating fictional scenarios in our heads -- they can actually help sharpen the memories we already have. According to the American Psychological Association, self-imagination (or imagining something from a personal perspective) can be an effective way to recall specific information on command. As a result, imagination could help in memory rehabilitation for those who may have suffered from impairments due to a brain injury.

It may make you more empathetic.

In her 2008 Harvard commencement address, *Harry Potter* author J.K. Rowling explained that not only is imagination crucial to creativity, but it's also imperative to an empathetic experience. "Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and therefore the fount of all invention and innovation," she said. "In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared."

It could be a portal to self-discovery.

The core of imagination starts with an idea -- and the direction that idea takes has the potential to open up a world of opportunities. Psychologists have theorized that individuals who have realized their full potential and purpose usually do it through their ability to imagine those possibilities first.

After learning some skills for self-hypnosis from our own Dr. Esther Wright-Dankman, I believe I have been more effective to help my clients during their massage therapy session; allowing them to have a positive daydream. The result is they are more rested, relaxed, and energied after the session. I can see it on their face and body language. Myself, I have been sleeping better. I have been a light sleeper all my life, now I am more rested, which effects everything I do!

While there is some research on the downsides of dreaming about your successes (one study found it may deplete you of the energy required to actually *go* for your goals), there is evidence that specific types of imagery can help you achieve the dreams you devise in your head. "In addition to helping to focus your attention by stimulating attentional networks in the brain, imagery can actually help your brain to map your path to your goal outside of conscious awareness," Harvard Medical School assistant clinical professor Dr. Srini Pillay, M.D., wrote in a recent blog. "Imagining activates brain regions that can unconsciously map your path to success."
