

Massage probably goes as far back in history as the existence of man. It is probably the oldest form of medical treatment and has been used throughout history by all cultures.



## SUN RUN WHOAS

By Peter Roach, RMT

All athletes look for an edge that can help them train more effectively, perform better or overcome injuries quickly. Massage can be a very important part of an athletes' regimen.

The last several decades have witnessed a dramatic rise in the level of athletic performance. Advances in training and conditioning techniques are allowing the human body to become a finely tuned machine. The limits of speed, endurance and strength are pushed every day and each year brings new world records. The leap in performance can be attributed to any number of key factors:

- improved equipment;
- enhanced understanding of how nutrition fuels the body;
- enlightened attitudes about psychological aspects of competition;

- scientific advances in the study of body structure and function.

Therapeutic massage involves manipulation of the soft tissue structures of the body. It soothes and calms, and aids in stress reduction; and it may improve the rate at which the body recovers from injury and illness. Working in conjunction with Duke University, researchers at the Touch Research Institute of the University of Miami School of Medicine have measured the body's biochemical levels after massage therapy and found a dramatic decrease in the levels of cortisol, norepinephrine and dopamine.

Research also has measured changes in levels of endorphins and serotonin after sports massage, which may reduce pain and contribute to reduced levels of delayed onset muscle soreness. Sports Massage Techniques "I

have found that massage therapy can provide a very effective adjunct to more traditional treatment of certain injuries of intercollegiate athletes." -- Bob Grams, MS, ATC Athletic Trainer & Assistant Professor, Seattle Pacific University.

Regular sports massage can:

- reduce the chance of injury, through proper stretching and event preparation, and through deep tissue massage;
- improve range of motion and muscle flexibility, resulting in improved power and performance;
- shorten recovery time between workouts;
- maximize the supply of nutrients and oxygen through increased blood flow;
- enhance elimination of metabolic by-products of exercise.



# Sports Massage

## What is it?

By Marsha Clarke, RMT

### *What is Sports Massage?*

According to John H. Drickx, M.D. (2001) Sports Massage is “a group of massage techniques specifically designed to aid in athletic performance. Includes pre-event massage, post-event massage, and maintenance and injury massage.”

### *Benefits of Sports Massage*

Author, Sharon Hopkins of Sports Massage Therapy.(2008) has observed, “The benefits of sports massage impact the physical, physiological and psychological levels. A state of well being is achieved only when all the three aspects are in balance.”

### *Physical effects of Sports Massage*

Deep tissue massage allows the pores in tissue membranes to open, enabling fluids and nutrients to pass through permitting removal of metabolic waste products such as lactic acid. Deep tissue massage encourages the muscle to absorb

oxygen and nutrients which promote faster healing, through improved circulation, and lymphatic flow. Sports massage lengthens muscle, releasing tension and stress caused by excess physical activity. The methodology is also known to improve the elasticity of tissues. When required massage aids in the break down and remodeling of scar tissue, which often affects the muscles, tendons, and ligaments that impair performance, says Hopkins (2008).

### *Physiological effects of Sports Massage*

Helps reduce pain, and increase relaxation. Sedate or stimulate nerve endings, and increase or decrease muscle tone and length (Hopkins, 2008).

### *Psychological effects of Sports Massage*

Decreases levels of anxiety and stress. As a whole it stimulates a sense of well being and health. Restoring balance to the musculo-skeletal system (Hopkins, 2008).

### *Pre-Event Massage:*

According to Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine, Tish Davidson, (2009) states, pre-event massage acts as a warm-up minutes before the event, it is best performed using relatively light pressure. Aids in warming up tissue, with stimulating techniques, such as rocking, tapotment, petrissage, and frictions. This massage must not be painful, or include high impact techniques. It’s performed in shortened treatments under 20 minutes to increase sympathetic nervous system firing. Stimulating the flow of blood and nutrients to the muscles, reducing muscle tension, preparing for optimal athletic performance. It is important to avoid relaxing techniques, or performing the treatment for more than 20 minutes as this will cause even stimulation techniques to feel soothing, and in turn promote relaxation. This treatment can be performed hours to minutes before performance.

**The use of deep tissue massage, will release adhesions, scar tissue, myofascial trigger points, contractions, and spasms while increasing range of motion, circulation, and lymphatic flow.**



### **Post-Event Massage**

Focuses on relieving muscle contractions, cramping, spasms and pain, while increasing range of motion and flexibility. It promotes blood flow to muscles to remove lactic acid, and metabolic waste buildup. Post-event massage is usually given 1-2 hours after the competition, to return dilated blood vessels to their “normal” condition. Sedating techniques, such as stroking, golgi tendon organ (GTO) release, and slow stretch, are performed in a lengthened session of 60 minutes, to decrease sympathetic nervous system firing, and promote relaxation (Davidson, 2009).

### **Maintenance or Prevention Massage**

Maintenance sports massage is performed at least once a week as a regular part of athletic training programs, although professional athletes with a personal RMT may have maintenance massage daily. Through the use of deep tissue massage, joint mobility is maximized reducing the possibility of injury. Frictions, and slow stretch are



## Sports Massage (continued)

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applied by the therapist to prepare the athlete for optimal performance, says Davidson (2009).

### Injury Massage

Depending on the stage of injury; acute, subacute, or chronic the therapist performs a variety of techniques specialized per stage. Acute (first week of injury): Use of manual lymph drainage, ice, and elevation of limb to decrease swelling. Subacute (two to three weeks of injury): Involves contrast hydrotherapy 3:1 ratio of warm: cool, modified pressure to affected area. Chronic (three or more weeks of injury): The use of deep tissue massage, will release adhesions, scar tissue, myofascial trigger points, contractions, and spasms while increasing range of motion, circulation, and lymphatic flow. This treatment is followed with a specified stretching and or strengthening program as remedial exercise. It is important that the patient is compliant with their home-care to attain most effective healing time (Hopkins, 2008).

### References

- Dirckx, J. (2001). Stedman's Concise Medical Dictionary For The Health Professions: Illustrated 4th Edition. (pp. 930). Dayton, Ohio: Elizabeth Haigh.



- Tish Davidson, (2009). Sports Massage, Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_g2603/is\\_0006/ai\\_2603000680](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_g2603/is_0006/ai_2603000680)
- Sharon Hopkins, (2008). Sports Massage Therapy, Retrieved March 23, 2009, from [www.healthandgoodness.com](http://www.healthandgoodness.com)



## Beware of Plantar Fasciitis

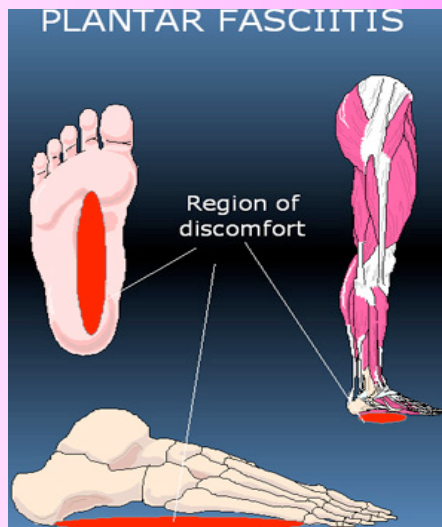
By Peter Roach, RMT

The mere name causes us all to cringe in fear. If you've never experienced this condition, you're lucky. This can be one debilitating problem that last months to years.

My most recent patient suffered for 8 months, trying everything until his wife suggested Low Intensity Laser Therapy. By treatment #4 he wakes in the morning and the first steps no longer hurt. He can walk to work pain free, be on his feet all day and no pain.

Plantar fasciitis is inflammation of the plantar fascia on the sole of your foot. It will usually start as a dull intermittent pain in the heel or arch, progressing to a

sharp, persistent pain. From here a sharp, piercing pain and/or inflammation through the heel or arch will usually occur in the morning or after resting, and gradually disappears with walking.



tightness in calf muscles may also occur. These symptoms may be spontaneous in nature.

Treatments for plantar fasciitis include Massage Therapy to decrease pain and inflammation and strengthen foot muscles to support weakened plantar fascia. Other forms of treatment include cortisone injections which are often very painful, Ultrasound which may decrease inflammatory response, and in extremely rare cases surgery, with an incision over the inner aspect of the heel of the foot with release of the involved fascia from its' attachment to the heel bone.

Fortunately Low Intensity Laser Therapy is providing a safe non-invasive alternative. Ask me about this effective alternative.





## What to expect my personal experience

By Marsh Clarke, RMT

I participated as one of a team of Massage Therapist at the Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon in Halifax, NS. Our team of therapists started with pre-event massage that morning, administering stimulatory techniques to warm up the muscles, just minutes before the runners were to take their position.

During the early morning marathon it started to rain, and rain hard. Along with the obvious challenges the athletes were experiencing, they were subjected to the wet and cold through the entire length of the marathon. As the runners were coming across

the finish line they were quickly cooling down, cramping, and experiencing “pooling” (where the blood pools to the feet and lower legs), thus causing the runner to collapse, and fall into the arms of “catchers” (designated people at the finish line ready to catch the athletes). At this point we would whisk away the athlete and began post-event massage, first applying foil coated reflective blankets to warm the tissue, followed by slow stretch, and GTO release to affected muscles such as quadriceps femoris, hamstrings, gastrocnemius, iliotibial tract, and piriformis, to name a few. Our team was very successful in

eliminating muscle spasms, cramps, contractions, and pain, while decreasing inflammation, swelling, edema, and pain related to acute injuries.

I have continue to volunteer as a registered massage therapist in the medical tent at such events as the Bank of Montreal Vancouver Marathon and the Canada Cup International Wheelchair Rugby events

Sports Massage has become an integral part of my practice, both on the field at events and within the office. If you have any questions, please feel free to catch me in the office.



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