



## Natural Awakenings' Bodywork Guide

In 2010, the nonprofit Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, in Los Angeles, published the results of research done by its department of psychiatry and behavioral neurosciences that confirmed centuries of anecdotal evidence: People that undergo massage experience measurable changes in the responses of their immune and endocrine systems.

For millennia, therapeutic touch has been used to heal the body and reduce tension. Today, more than 100 types of bodywork techniques are available, with modalities ranging from massage and deep tissue manipulation to movement awareness and bio-energetic therapies. All are designed to improve the body's structure and functioning. Bodywork may be used to help reduce pain, relieve stress, improve blood and lymphatic circulation and promote deep relaxation; some therapies simultaneously focus on emotional release.

The following list includes many of the better-known bodywork systems. Finding an approach that improves one's mental and physical health is a highly individual process; with professional guidance, several modalities may be combined for the greatest personal benefit.

**Acupressure:** Based on the same system as acupuncture, acupressure stimulates body pressure points using fingers and hands instead of needles, in order to restore a balanced flow of life energy (*qi* or *chi*, pronounced "chee"). This force moves through the body along 12 energy pathways, or meridians, which practitioners "unblock and strengthen." Common styles include *jin shin*, which gently holds at least two points at once for a minute or more; and *shiatsu*, which applies firm pressure to each point for three to five seconds. (Also see Shiatsu.) *Tui na* and Thai massage stimulate *qi* through acupressure hand movements, full-body stretches and Chinese massage techniques. (Also see Tui na.) Other forms of acupressure include *jin shin do*, *jin shin jyutsu* and acu-yoga. Learn more at [Acupressure.com](http://Acupressure.com).

**Alchemical Bodywork:** Synthesizes bodywork techniques and hypnosis to address emotional sources of chronic tension and pain held in the body and facilitate their release. Practitioners are typically certified in massage, often in conjunction with hypnotherapy certification. Learn more at [AlchemyInstitute.com](http://AlchemyInstitute.com).

**Alexander Technique:** This awareness practice helps identify and change unconscious, negative physical habits related to posture and movement, breathing and tension. While observing the way an individual walks, stands, sits or performs other basic movements, the practitioner keeps their hands in easy contact with the body and gently guides it to encourage a release of restrictive muscular tension. The technique is frequently used to treat repetitive strain injuries or carpal tunnel syndrome, backaches, plus stiff necks and shoulders. Learn more at [AlexanderTechnique.com](http://AlexanderTechnique.com).

**Amma Therapy:** A specialized form of bodywork therapy, amma (which means "push-pull" in Chinese) combines energetic, rhythmic massage techniques on specific acupressure points to facilitate blood circulation, lymphatic drainage and muscular relaxation. Suitable for individuals in varying degrees of physical condition, amma addresses challenges related to stress and anxiety; neck, shoulder and low back pain; and digestive health.

**Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy:** Developed by American Ruthie Hardee, it combines elements of traditional Thai massage, barefoot shiatsu and Keralite foot massage (*chavutti thirummal*) for the treatment of chronic low-back and hip pain. Using overhead wooden bar supports, the therapist employs body weight and gliding foot strokes to apply compression massage along strategic points in the back muscles to relieve irritations on the spinal nerve caused by inflammation and swelling. Learn more at [DeepFeet.com](http://DeepFeet.com).

**Aston Kinetics (or Aston Pattern-ing):** Created by bodywork visionary Judith Aston in 1977, this integrated system of movement education recognizes the influence of the body-mind relationship on well-being. It incorporates bodywork, massage, ergonomic adjustments and fitness training in order to ease acute or chronic pain. Learn more at [AstonKinetics.com](http://AstonKinetics.com).

**Ayurvedic Massage:** It's one part of *panchakarma*, a traditional East Indian detoxification and rejuvenation program, in which the entire body is vigorously massaged with large amounts of warm oil and herbs to remove toxins. With the client's permission, oil is also

poured into the ears, between the eyebrows and applied to specific *chakras*, or body energy centers, in techniques known respectively as *karna purana*, *shirodhara* and *marma chikitsa*. These treatments, modified to meet the needs of the West, powerfully affect the mind and nervous system—calming, balancing and bringing a heightened sense of awareness and deep inner peace.

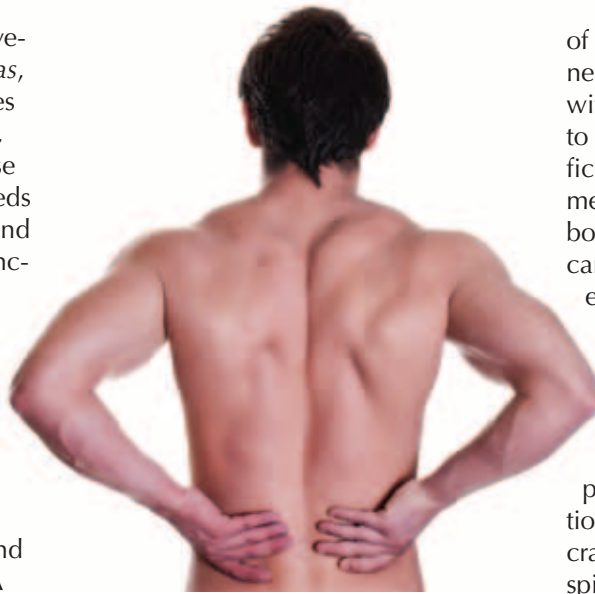
Ayurvedic massage techniques are grounded in an understanding of the primordial energies of the five elements—ether, air, fire, water and earth—and of the three basic types of energies, or constitutions, that are present in everyone and everything—*vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. A knowledgeable therapist selects and customizes various ayurvedic massage techniques by selecting the rate and pressure of massage strokes and the proper oils and herbs. Learn more at [AyurvedicMassage.com](http://AyurvedicMassage.com).

#### **Bioenergetics plus Core Energetics:**

A combination of physical and psychological techniques that identifies and frees areas of repressed physical and emotional trauma in the body. Deep breathing, various forms of massage and physical exercises release layers of chronic muscular tension and defensiveness, termed “body armor”. The unlocking of feelings creates the opportunity to better understand and integrate them with other aspects of oneself. Core Energetics is based on the principles of bioenergetics, but acknowledges spirituality as a key dimension of healing. Learn more at [usabp.org](http://usabp.org).

**BodyTalk:** Developed by chiropractor and acupuncturist Dr. John Veltheim, BodyTalk is based upon bioenergetic psychology, dynamic systems theory, Chinese medicine and applied kinesiology. By integrating tapping, breathing and focusing techniques, BodyTalk helps the body synchronize and balance its systems and strengthens its capability of self-repair. BodyTalk is used to address a range of health challenges, ranging from chronic fatigue and allergies to addictions and cellular damage. Practitioners are usually licensed massage therapists (LMT) or bodyworkers. Learn more at [BodyTalkSystem.com](http://BodyTalkSystem.com).

**Bowen Technique (also called Bowtech and Bowenwork):** This



muscle and connective tissue therapy employs gentle, purposeful moves, through light clothing, to help rebalance the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The practitioner’s subtle inputs deliver signals to the ANS at specific locations—muscles, tendons, ligaments or nerves—and the body responds in its own time, within its vital capacity. The technique is named after its originator, Australian Tom Bowen, who also introduced the concept of inserting periods of rest between a series of movements within a treatment session. Sometimes called the homeopathy of bodywork, Bowtech addresses imbalances and both acute and chronic pain. Learn more at [Bowtech.com](http://Bowtech.com).

**Breema Bodywork:** Often described as a cross between partner yoga and Thai massage, Breema is a movement technique designed to restore vitality at an energetic level. It employs standardized sets of movements, based upon more than 300 sequences, none of which require strong exertions or muscular contortions. Breema techniques, which identify and emphasize nine principles of harmony, can be administered by a practitioner or by the individual as Self-Breema. The therapy originated in the Kurdish village of Breemava, in Western Asia. Learn more at [Breema.com](http://Breema.com).

**Chi Nei Tsang (CNT):** Principles of *kung fu* and *Tai chi chuan*, known as *chi-kung* (or *qigong*), support this holistic approach to massage therapy. CNT literally means, “energy transformation

of the internal organs,” and practitioners focus mainly on the abdomen, with deep, soft and gentle touches, to train the organs to work more efficiently. It addresses the acupuncture meridian system (*chi*) and all other bodily systems—digestive, respiratory, cardiovascular, lymphatic, nervous, endocrine, urinary, reproductive and musculoskeletal—along with unprocessed emotional charges. Learn more at [ChiNeiTsang.com](http://ChiNeiTsang.com).

**Craniosacral Therapy (CST):** The practitioner applies manual therapeutic procedures to remedy distortions in the structure and function of the craniosacral mechanism—the brain and spinal cord, the bones of the skull, the sacrum and interconnected membranes. Craniosacral work is based upon two major premises: the bones of the skull can be manipulated because they never completely fuse; and the pulse of the cerebrospinal fluid can be balanced by a practitioner trained to detect pulse variations. CST, also referred to as cranial osteopathy, is used to treat learning difficulties, dyslexia, hyperactivity, migraine headaches, temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders, chronic pain and ear, eye and balance problems.

**Deep Tissue Bodywork:** In this method, stretching and moving the connective tissue that envelops the muscles (fascia) works to lengthen and balance the body along its natural, vertical axis. Distortions of the connective tissue may be caused by internal reactions and complications due to accidents, emotional tensions or past unreleased traumas. The practitioner uses slow strokes, direct pressure or friction across the muscles via fingers, thumbs or elbows. Deep tissue massage works to detoxify tissue by helping to remove accumulated lactic acid and other waste products from the muscles. The therapy is used to ease or eliminate chronic muscular pain or inflammatory pain from arthritis, tendonitis and other ailments, and help with injury rehabilitation. Learn more at [DeepBodywork.com](http://DeepBodywork.com).

**Feldenkrais Method:** This distinctive approach combines movement training, gentle touch and verbal dialogue to help students straighten out what founder Moshé Pinhas Feldenkrais calls, “kinks in the brain.” Kinks are

learned movement patterns that no longer serve a constructive purpose. They may have been adopted to compensate for a physical injury or to accommodate individuality in the social world. Students of the Feldenkrais Method unlearn unworkable movements and discover better, personalized ways to move, using mind-body principles of slowed action, conscious breathing, body awareness and thinking about their feelings.

Feldenkrais takes two forms: In individual hands-on sessions (Functional Integration), the practitioner's touch is used to address the student's breathing and body alignment. In a series of classes of slow, non-aerobic motion (Awareness Through Movement), students "relearn" better ways for their bodies to move. Feldenkrais therapy is useful in the treatment of muscle injuries, back pain, arthritis, stress and tension. Learn more at [Feldenkrais.com](http://Feldenkrais.com).

**Hakomi:** A Hopi Indian word that translates as, "Who are you?" Hakomi is a body-centered psychotherapy that relies upon touch, massage, movement and structural and energy work to help enable individuals change their "core" material—memories, images, beliefs, neural patterns and deeply held emotional dispositions. Originally created by Ron Kurtz in the mid-1970s and later refined, the technique views the body as an interactive source of information about the unconscious mind. Learn more at [HakomiInstitute.com](http://HakomiInstitute.com).

**Hellerwork:** Expanding upon the principals of Rolfing, Hellerwork combines deep tissue bodywork with movement education and the dialogue of the mind-body connection. Joseph Heller, the first president of the Rolf Institute, believed that specific movement exercises could help individuals move more efficiently, maintain alignment and mobility and enjoy fuller and easier breathing, as well as increased energy. Although primarily a preventive therapy, Hellerwork also helps alleviate stress-related disorders and musculoskeletal aches and pains. Learn more at [Hellerwork.com](http://Hellerwork.com).

**HEMME Approach:** Derived from elements of physical medicine, chiropractic, osteopathy and physical therapy, HEMME (history, evaluation, modali-

ties, manipulation and exercise) was developed in 1986 by Licensed Massage Therapist Dave Leflet to treat soft tissue injuries and impairments. Pain relief results from restoring alignment and improving myofascial dysfunction. Learn more at [HemmeApproach.com](http://HemmeApproach.com).

**Hoshino Therapy:** Professor To-mezo Hoshino's technique integrates the principles of acupuncture with the art of hand therapy. Accredited as a doctor of acupuncture, he found that in cases of arthrosis (osteoarthritis) and other painful ailments associated with soft tissue aging, acupuncture afforded only temporary relief. Hoshino Therapy is often used to ease soft tissue disorders such as bursitis, tendonitis, muscular tension and back pain.

**Hot Stone Therapy:** (See LaStone Therapy Stone Massage)

**Integrative Therapeutic Massage:** (See Neuromuscular Therapy)

**Jin Shin Jyutsu:** A form of acupressure refined from ancient Japanese traditions, *jin shin jyutsu* acts to harmonize the life force within. Practitioners evaluate pulses, body conformation and symptoms to customize sessions designed to alleviate discomfort while addressing its cause(s).

Utilizing the hands as jumper cables to reawaken bodily energy, sequences of vital energy-points are held to guide, redirect and reestablish harmony in spirit, mind and body. Learn more at [jsjinc.net](http://jsjinc.net).

**LaStone Therapy Stone Massage:** This soothing form of massage employs smooth heated or cooled stones to elicit physical healing, mental relaxation and a spiritual connection with Earth's energy. Stones are placed at different spots on the body for energy balancing or may be used by the therapist on specific trigger points. Warm stones encourage the exchange of blood and lymph and provide relaxing heat for deep-tissue work. Cold stones aid with inflammation, moving blood out of the affected area and balancing male/female energies. The alternating heat and cold of thermotherapy helps activate all of the body's healing processes with a rapid exchange of blood and oxygen and an alternating rise and fall of respiration rate as the body seeks homeostasis. Learn more at [LaStoneTherapy.com](http://LaStoneTherapy.com).



**LooyenWork:** This painless, deep-tissue approach works with the connective tissue and fascial components by combining the techniques of Rolfing, postural integration and Aston patterning to free tension, remove adhesions and improve freedom of movement. It was introduced in 1985 by Dutch-born bodyworker and counselor Ted Looyen after he received treatment for a serious back injury and decided to develop a massage therapy that would promote recovery from injuries without aggravating the initial trauma. LooyenWork can also address the release and processing of intense emotions.

**Manual Lymphatic Drainage:** This gentle, non-invasive, rhythmical, whole-body massage aims to stimulate the lymphatic system to release excess fluid from loose connective tissues, thus helping to remove toxins. Lymph glands are part of the body's defense against infection; blockage or damage within the system may lead to conditions such as edema, acne, inflammation, arthritis and sinusitis. By stimulating one of the body's natural cleansing systems, it supports tissue health. It's also been effective in assuaging lymphedema following mastectomy surgery. Learn more at [VodderSchool.com](http://VodderSchool.com) and [LymphNet.org](http://LymphNet.org).

**Massage:** At its most basic, this ancient hands-on therapy involves rubbing or kneading the body to encourage relaxation, healing and well-being.

Today, more than 100 different methods of massage are available, most of them in five categories: traditional; Oriental or energetic; European; contemporary Western; and integrative, encompassing structure, function and movement. Massage offers proven benefits to meet a variety of physical challenges and may also be a useful preventive therapy. Learn more at [amtaMassage.org](http://amtaMassage.org).

**Metamorphic Technique:** This non-invasive practice can help individuals overcome limiting beliefs that may keep them stuck in particular patterns manifested in physical, mental or emotional problems. During a “Meta” session, the practitioner uses a light touch along spinal reflex points on the feet, head and hands of the individual. Some people prefer to lie down and may fall asleep during a session, while others prefer to sit up and chat. The practitioner does not attempt to direct energy or outcomes, and sessions do not address specific symptoms or problems. Rather, they help individuals connect with their own life force. Learn more at [Metamorphic Technique.org](http://MetamorphicTechnique.org).

**Myofascial Release:** This whole-body, hands-on technique seeks to free the body from the grip of tight fascia, or connective tissue, thus restoring normal alignment and function and reducing pain. Therapists use their hands to apply mild, sustained pressure in order to gently stretch and soften fascia. Developed in the late 1960s by Physical Therapist John Barnes, myofascial release is used to treat neck and back pain, headaches, recurring sports injuries and scoliosis. Learn more at [MyofascialRelease.com](http://MyofascialRelease.com).

**Neuro-Emotional Technique (NET):** This mind-body therapy seeks to restore well-being by removing certain biochemical and bioelectrical charges stored in the brain and manifested as illness or imbalances in the body. NET combines techniques and principles from Traditional Chinese Medicine, chiropractic and applied kinesiology to remove blocks to the body’s natural vitality, allowing it to repair itself naturally. Chiropractor Scott Walker formulated NET in the late 1980s. Learn more at [NetMindBody.com](http://NetMindBody.com).

**Neuromuscular Therapy (NMT):** Specific massage therapy and flexibility

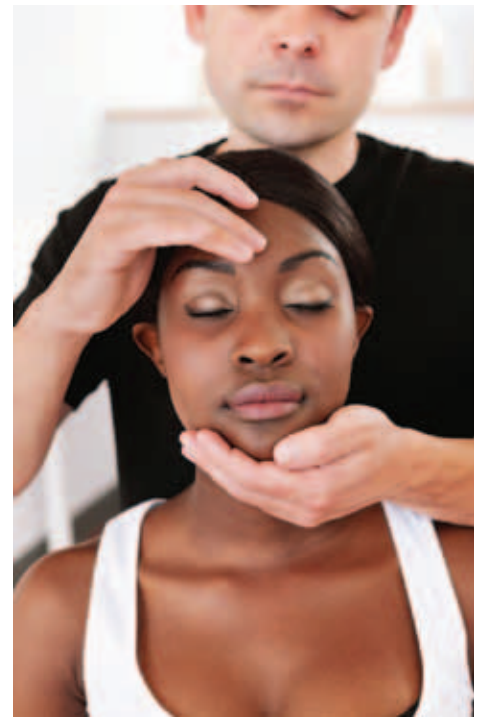
stretching help balance the musculo-skeletal and nervous systems, emphasizing the interwoven roles of the brain, spine and nerves in causing muscular pain. Its goal is to relieve tender, congested spots in muscle tissue and compressed nerves that may radiate pain to other areas of the body. (Also see Trigger Point Therapy.) Learn more at [MyofascialTherapy.org](http://MyofascialTherapy.org).

**Ortho-Bionomy:** A gentle, non-invasive system of healing, ortho-bionomy reminds the body of its natural ability to restore balance. British Osteopath Arthur Lincoln Pauls developed the technique to stimulate the body by using gentle movement, comfortable positioning, brief compression and subtle contact to relieve joint and muscle pain and reduce stress. Learn more at [Ortho-Bionomy.org](http://Ortho-Bionomy.org).

**Osho Rebalancing (or Rebalancing):** This offshoot of Rolfing focuses on compassionate, gentle touch, combining deep tissue massage, joint tension release, energy balancing and verbal dialogue to relieve tension and physical pain, enhance relaxation and facilitate emotional healing. Rebalancing is usually done in a series of 10 to 12 sessions that work synergistically, although each session is complete in itself. Learn more at [Osho.com](http://Osho.com).

**Pfrimmer Deep Muscle Therapy:** A highly refined system of corrective treatment, Pfrimmer is designed to aid restoration of damaged muscles and soft tissues throughout the body. Fully trained practitioners use specified movements to stimulate circulation and help regenerate lymphatic flow, promoting detoxification and oxygenation of stagnant tissues. Registered Massage Therapist Therese C. Pfrimmer developed this therapy in the mid-20th century and applied it to recover from her own partial paralysis. Learn more at [Pfrimmer.org](http://Pfrimmer.org).

**Physical Therapy:** Traditional physical therapy evaluates difficulties with mobility or function to focus on rehabilitation that entails restorative treatment and instruction on how to make efficient use of the body in daily activities. Physical therapists use massage, exercise, electrical stimulation, ultrasound and other means to help the patient regain functional movement. Learn more at [apta.org](http://apta.org).



**Point Holding (Body Electronics):** This variation of acupressure requires multiple practitioners to hold acupressure points, sometimes up to two hours, to remove energy blockages, balance the flow of energy within the body’s meridians and help the client achieve associated emotional release.

**Polarity Therapy:** Combinations of therapeutic bodywork, nutritional guidance, yoga-style exercises and counseling aim at heightening body awareness. Polarity therapy asserts that energy fields exist everywhere in nature and their free flow and balance in the human body is the underlying foundation of good health. Practitioners use gentle touch and guidance to help clients balance their energy flow, thus supporting a return to health. The practitioner’s hands do not impart energy, but redirect the flow of the receiver’s own energy. The receiver then recharges himself with his own freed energy. Learn more at [PolarityTherapy.org](http://PolarityTherapy.org).

**Postural Integration (PI):** This psychotherapy method simultaneously integrates deep tissue and breathwork, body movement and awareness with emotional expression. Practitioners use gentle manipulation, bioenergetics, acupressure and Gestalt dialogue to help individuals increase their sense of emotional and physical well-being. Learn more at [icpit.info](http://icpit.info).

**Raindrop Therapy:** Based on a healing ritual of Lakota Native Americans, in which warm fluid substances are dropped onto the spine, the intention is to relax and open the body's energy centers. Modern raindrop therapy also blends aromatherapy, soothing heat and gentle massage. Essential aromatic oils are allowed to methodically drip onto the spine from a height of five or six inches. The oils are then gently brushed up the spine and lightly massaged over the rest of the back, followed by application of a hot compress to facilitate oil absorption and muscle relaxation.

**Reflexology (Zone Therapy):** Reflexology is based on the idea that specific reflex points on the soles of the feet and the palms of the hands correspond with every major organ, gland and area (zone) of the body. Using fingers and thumbs, the practitioner applies pressure to these points to treat a wide range of health problems. Zone therapy, an earlier name for this natural healing art, sometimes refers to a specific form of reflexology. Learn more at [Reflexology-USA.net](http://Reflexology-USA.net).

**Reiki:** A healing practice originated in Japan as a way of activating and balancing the life-force present in all living things, Reiki literally means "universal life-force energy". Light hand placements channel healing energies to organs and glands and work to align the body's energy centers, or *chakras*. Various techniques address emotional and mental distress, chronic and acute physical problems or pursuit of spiritual focus and clarity. Today Reiki is a valuable addition to the work of chiropractors, massage therapists, nurses and others in the West. Learn more at [Reiki.org](http://Reiki.org).

**Rolfing Structural Integration (Rolfing):** Deep tissue manipulation of the myofascial system, which is composed of the muscles and the connective tissue, or fascia, by the practitioners' hands helps restore the body's natural alignment and sense of integration. As the body is released from old patterns and postures, its range and freedom of physical and emotional expression increases. Rolfing can help ease pain and chronic stress, enhance neurological functioning, improve posture and restore flexibility. Learn more at [Rolfing.org](http://Rolfing.org).

**Rosen Method:** It's named for Marion Rosen, a physiotherapist who discovered that when clients verbalized their emotions and sensations during treatment sessions, their conditions would more quickly improve. The non-invasive method uses gentle, direct touch; practitioners, taught to use hands that "listen" rather than manipulate, focus on chronic muscle tension and call attention to shifts in the breath to help individuals achieve greater self-awareness and relaxation. The technique is often effectively used to treat chronic health conditions. Learn more at [RosenMethod.com](http://RosenMethod.com).

**Rubinfeld Synergy Method:** This dynamic system for integrating the body, mind, emotions and spirit combines touch, talk and compassionate listening. Practitioners, called synergists, use gentle touch and verbal sharing to access each of these four levels simultaneously, releasing pain and fears held in the body/mind. The modality, created by Ilana Rubinfeld, who received a lifetime achievement award from the United States Association for Body Psychotherapy in 2002, facilitates pain management, ease of movement, positive body image and self-esteem, as well as recovery from physical and emotional trauma. Learn more at [RubinfeldSynergy.com](http://RubinfeldSynergy.com).

**Shiatsu:** The most widely known form of acupressure, *shiatsu* is Japanese

for "finger pressure". The technique applies varying degrees of pressure to balance the life energy that flows through specific pathways, or meridians, in the body. Shiatsu is used to release tension and strengthen weak areas in order to facilitate even circulation, cleanse cells and improve the function of vital organs; it also may help to diagnose, prevent and relieve many chronic and acute conditions that manifest on both physical and emotional levels. A branch of shiatsu that originated in the United States, called *ohashiatsu*, includes meditation and exercise. Learn more at [ShiatsuSociety.org](http://ShiatsuSociety.org) and [Ohashiatsu.org](http://Ohashiatsu.org).

**Soma Neuromuscular Integration (also called Soma):** Rooted in structural integration, soma was developed by Bill M. Williams, Ph.D., an early student of Ida Rolf. Through a 10-session format, the modality manipulates the fascia and muscles to release chronic, stored structural aberrations, realign the body and integrate the nervous system. This allows the individual to process experiences more effectively and with greater awareness, which can lead to enhanced learning and perceptual abilities. Learn more at [Soma-Institute.org](http://Soma-Institute.org).

**Sports Massage:** The specialized field of sports massage employs a variety of massage techniques and stretching exercises designed to minimize the risk of injury, tend to sports injuries and support optimum performance.

**Structural Integration:** (see Rolfing Structural Integration)

**Swedish Massage:** This is the most commonly practiced form of massage in Western countries. Swedish massage integrates ancient Oriental techniques with contemporary principles of anatomy and physiology. Practitioners rub, knead, pummel, brush and tap the client's muscles, topped with long, gliding strokes. Swedish massage is especially effective for improving circulation; relieving muscle tension and back and neck pain; promoting relaxation; and decreasing stress. Practitioners vary in training, techniques and session lengths.

**Tantsu:** This land-based version of *watsu* was developed by Harold Dull as an alternative way to experience watsu's free-flow and interplay of breath, movement and stillness. Practitioner and client experience breathing, listening and



moving as part of a partnered “dance”, without any specific intent to heal or fix something. Learn more at [Watsu.com](http://Watsu.com).

**Thai Massage:** A form of body therapy, also called *nuad bo-ram*, Thai massage incorporates gentle rocking motions, rhythmic compression along the body’s energy lines and passive stretching to stimulate the free flow of energy, break up blockages and help restore general well-being. One of the branches of Traditional Thai Medicine (TTM), it is performed on a floor mat, with the client dressed in lightweight, comfortable clothing. No oils are used. Thai massage aids flexibility, inner organ massage, and in oxygenation of the blood and quieting of the mind. Learn more at [Thai-Institute.com](http://Thai-Institute.com).

**Therapeutic Touch (TT):** This contemporary healing modality was developed by natural healer Dora Kunz and nursing professor Dolores Krieger, Ph.D., in the 1970s. Therapeutic Touch is drawn from ancient practices and used to balance and promote energy flow. The practitioner “accesses” the area where the body’s energy field is weak or congested, and then uses his or her hands to direct energy into the field to balance it. Nurses and other healthcare practitioners apply TT to relieve pain, stress and anxiety, and to promote wound healing. Learn more at [TherapeuticTouch.org](http://TherapeuticTouch.org).

**Touch for Health (TFH):** Created by Chiropractor John F. Thie in the

1970s, Touch for Health is a widely used kinesiology system aimed at restoring the body’s natural energies through acupressure, touch and massage. Muscle-testing biofeedback first identifies imbalances in the body’s energy flow to organs and glands; it is designed to then help rebalance that energy to improve overall health, while strengthening a person’s resistance to common ailments and physical complaints. Many TFH techniques can be successfully practiced by clients at home. Learn more at [TouchForHealth.us](http://TouchForHealth.us).

**Trager Approach (also known as Psychophysical Integration):** This system of movement reeducation addresses the mental roots of muscle tension. By gently rocking, cradling and moving the client’s fully clothed body, the practitioner encourages him or her to believe that physically restrictive patterns can be changed. The Trager Approach includes “mentastics”, simple, active, self-induced movements a client can incorporate into regular daily activities. Trager work has been successfully applied to a variety of neuromuscular disorders and mobility problems, as well as everyday stresses and discomforts. Learn more at [Trager.com](http://Trager.com).

**Trauma Touch Therapy (TTT):** An innovative, somatic approach, TTT addresses the needs of those that have suffered trauma and abuse, including

sexual or emotional, witnessing or being victimized by violent crime, battery, war or surgical trauma. The intent is to create a safe, nurturing environment in which the individual can slowly explore healthy touch and investigate sensation and feeling in their body. Certified therapists encourage empowerment and choice; individualized sessions support the psychotherapeutic process.

**Trigger Point Therapy (Myotherapy):** This massage technique is used to relieve pain, similar to Neuromuscular Therapy (NMT). Practitioners apply pressure to specific “trigger points” on the body—tender, congested spots of muscle tissue that may radiate pain to other areas—in order to release tension and spasms. Treatment decreases the swelling and stiffness associated with muscular pain and increases range of motion. Learn more at [MyofascialTherapy.org](http://MyofascialTherapy.org).

**Tui Na:** A manipulative therapy integral to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), *tui na* (“tui” means to push and “na” is a squeezing, lifting technique) that employs Taoist and martial arts principles to rebalance the body. Practitioners possess more than 365 hand techniques; most are variations of pressing, rubbing, waving, shaking, percussing or manipulating movements. Tui na is used to relieve arthritic joint pain, sciatica, muscle spasms and other pains in the back, neck and shoulders.

It may also help ease chronic conditions such as insomnia, constipation, headaches and stress associated with tension. Learn more at [Tui-Na.com](http://Tui-Na.com).

**Watsu (Water Shiatsu):** This uniquely nurturing therapy combines the acupressure and meridian stretches of Zen shiatsu with yoga-like postures, all performed in water; this takes weight off the vertebrae and allows for movements not possible on land. In the most basic move, the Water Breath Dance, the practitioner gently floats an individual in their arms, letting the person sink a little as they both breathe out, then allowing the water to lift them as they both breathe in. This connection is maintained in all the stretches and moves and returned to throughout the session. Pioneered by multilingual author Harold Dull in 1980, watsu's goal is to free the spine and increase the flow of energy along the body's meridians; he also developed *tantsu*, which replicates watsu's nurturing stretches on land. Learn more at [Watsu.com](http://Watsu.com).

**Zen Shiatsu:** Founded by writer Shizuto Masunaga, this method of acupressure includes the practice of Buddhist meditation and integrates elements of shiatsu with the goal of rebalancing and revitalizing *chi*, or life-force energy. A client lies on a mat or sits in a chair, fully clothed, while the practitioner uses one hand to "listen" and the other to



provide the appropriate pressure. Full-body stretches and pressures may be used to release areas of chronic stagnation and blockage; clients are encouraged to breathe deeply into their lines of tension. Zen shiatsu can be effective in conditions where emotional disturbance or stress is an underlying factor.

**Zen-Touch Shiatsu:** This hybrid of shiatsu, acupressure and Asian/Eastern bodywork was created by American Seymour Koblin in 1984. It differs from other forms of shiatsu, including Zen

shiatsu, by its combined use of light, or "hands off the body", energy work and extensive, passive stretching methods. Practitioners apply gentle pressure while stretching the client's limbs gradually, maintaining an attitude of compassion, respect and energetic empathy that serves to stimulate the flow of *chi*, aiding circulation and vitality. Learn more at [SeymourKoblin.com](http://SeymourKoblin.com).

**Zero Balancing:** Developed by Fritz Smith, a doctor, osteopath and acupuncturist, zero balancing addresses the relationship between energy and structures of the body. Practitioners use moderate finger pressure and gentle traction on areas of tension in the bones, joints and soft tissue to create fulcrums, or points of balance, around which the body can relax and reorganize. The goal is to clear blocks in the body's energy flow, amplify vitality and contribute to better postural alignment. Learn more at [ZeroBalancing.com](http://ZeroBalancing.com).

Please note: The contents of this *Bodywork Guide* are for informational purposes only. The information is not intended to be used in place of a visit or consultation with a healthcare professional. Always seek out a practitioner that is licensed, certified or otherwise professionally qualified to conduct a selected treatment, as appropriate.

*Updated 2013*