

## The Yoga Component

Recipients of Thai massage can also capture the well-established benefits of yoga without actually doing yoga. As the practitioner gently moves clients into yoga-like poses, tight joints are opened, energy flows freely, and breathing is enhanced. A meditative state becomes part of the process, as both client and practitioner focus on breath and intention. Through the assisted stretches, clients' muscles become less prone to injury, their joints have a greater range of motion, and their whole body enjoys greater flexibility. Many yoga enthusiasts are finding Thai massage adds a whole new dimension to their practice.



## Communication Is Key

As with any form of massage or bodywork, it's paramount that Thai massage clients communicate with their therapists throughout the session. Is the massage pressure too deep? Does the stretch no longer feel good? Is the room too hot? Be sure to let the therapist know if something is not quite right so he or she can deliver the best, most therapeutic work possible and you can experience the full benefits of your Thai massage session.

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## Thai Massage



## What Is Thai Massage?

Developed more than 2,000 years ago in Thailand, Thai massage remains a popular technique that incorporates aspects of yoga, acupressure, energy balancing, and massage. Considered one of the ancient healing arts of traditional Thai medicine (which historically also included herbal practice, nutrition, and spiritual meditation), Thai massage was originally passed from teacher to teacher within the Buddhist temples, while Thai families used it as a healing folk art. Unfortunately, much of the history of Thai massage was lost during the Burmese invasion of Thailand in 1767. Today, Thai massage continues to be a mainstay in Thai medicine, while quickly gaining a new audience in the Western world.



Also known as yoga massage, assisted yoga, or ancient massage, Thai massage respects the body's limits, while encouraging clients to reach their edge of flexibility—but never beyond. Thai massage uses acupressure, massage, and passive-assisted stretching, where therapists help clients move into their stretch. The work is purposely slow as the therapist guides

clients through the movements, being ever mindful of their physical limitations. Some say the combination of movements and focused awareness during a Thai massage session creates a slow, flowing dance between practitioner and client.



## How Is It Administered?

Thai massage is performed on a soft floor mat, with clients fully clothed in loose, comfortable attire suitable for the deep stretching that will be part of the session. Pillows and bolsters may be used for better client support. This interactive form of bodywork can utilize tai chi, rocking and rhythmic motion, massage, and assisted stretching. Practitioners may use their hands, feet, knees, elbows, and legs to facilitate the process. No oil is used during these sessions.

## Benefits Of Thai Massage

The benefits of Thai massage largely mimic those of traditional massage:

- Deep relaxation and quieting of the mind.
- Heightened energy levels.
- Improved body-mind connection.
- Improved circulation and lymphatic flow.
- Improved range of motion.
- Increased flexibility.
- Rejuvenated body and mind.
- Relief for pain and muscle tension.

Experts say there is an interesting dichotomy with Thai massage, as it both relaxes and rejuvenates. After the session, some clients report feeling awakened and energized, while also feeling deeply grounded and at peace.

## The Energy Component

Thai massage is based on an energetic paradigm of the human body and mind. In this tradition, energy is thought to travel on pathways, called *sen*, throughout the body. Through the movement and massage components, the goal in Thai massage is to ensure energy is flowing freely along these pathways as a means for wellness.

