

## Specialty

### IASTM Technique

## What is the Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization (IASTM)?

Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization or IASTM is the use of tools or instruments which enables clinicians to efficiently locate and treat soft tissue adhesions and tightness. The technique was derived from Traditional Chinese Medicine called Gua Sha. Gua Sha was reportedly applied along meridians to move the “bad chi” out through the skin.

Historically, many different materials have been used such as butter knives, sea shells and rocks to apply the soft tissue treatment. Currently instruments may be made out of wood, ceramics, plastics, stone and stainless steel. The use of IASTM is rapidly growing with multiple clinical groups devising their own version of IASTM, with varying types of strokes being taught and additional instruments have been developed to produce the desired soft tissue effect.

The Graston ®Technique is one popular example of IASTM, having it’s own set of tools and shapes of tools that they feel allow the best application of this soft tissue treatment.

Here at BodyFiT Physical Therapy, our **physical therapist in Avon** is trained in the Rock Tape IASTM technique.

## What is Rock Tape IASTM?

Various versions of IASTM have been developed which are similar to the Graston technique. Rock tape has developed an IASTM application which is also performed with ergonomically designed instruments that help detect and treat the fascial restrictions, encourage rapid localization of blood flow and effectively treat areas exhibiting soft tissue fibrosis or “graininess”, chronic inflammation, or degeneration. Clinicians also theorize that the application of IASTM creates a neurostimulation to the skin, fascia and muscle. Per Rock Tape, the use of IASTM can up regulate or down regulate the nervous system, therefore facilitating improvements in range of motion, strength and pain perception following treatment. A benefit of IASTM, is the ergonomic design of the instruments providing the physical therapist with the ability to locate restrictions and apply the appropriate amount of pressure. At a cellular level studies have indicated increased fibroblast proliferation, reduction in scar tissue, an increased vascular response, and the remodeling of unorganized collagen fiber matrix following IASTM application. There is also a benefit to the physical therapist in that IASTM provide clinicians with a mechanical advantage, thus preventing over-use to the therapist’s hands.

## Indications:

- Limited motion of a region
- Pain with motion
- Motor control or imbalance issues
- Motor weakness

### Conditions for which IASTM is usually used:

- Medial Epicondylitis, Lateral Epicondylitis
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Neck Pain
- Plantar Fasciitis
- Rotator Cuff Tendinitis
- Patellar Tendinitis
- Tibialis Posterior Tendinitis
- Heel Pain /Achilles Tendinitis
- DeQuervain's Syndrome
- Post-Surgical and Traumatic Scars
- Myofascial Pain and Restrictions
- Musculoskeletal Imbalances
- Chronic Joint Swelling Associated with Sprains/Strains
- Ligament Sprains
- Muscle Strains
- Non-Acute Bursitis
- RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy)
- Back Pain
- Trigger Finger
- Hip Pain (Replacements)
- IT Band Syndrome
- Shin Splints
- Chronic Ankle Sprains
- Acute Ankle Sprains (Advanced Technique)
- Scars (Surgical, Traumatic)

### Contraindications

- Compromised tissue integrity (open wound, infection, tumor)
- Active implants (pacemaker, internal defibrillator, picc/pump lines)
- DVT
- Cervical carotid sinus

For more information, **Contact us** today.