

Specialty

Manual Therapy

How can manual therapy help me?

If you are experiencing increased pain and stiffening in any of your joints and muscles, manual therapy and physical therapy are often helpful. Patients seek out this type of therapy for a variety of mobility issues.

For example, you may be finding it difficult to get up from a sitting or lying position, as well as bending over, without back pain and stiffness. You may also find that your neck or shoulders “freeze” and give you pain when you pursue everyday actions such as reaching for items, or driving. In fact, debilitating pain and stiffness in muscles and joints can happen virtually anywhere on your body.

Manual therapy techniques are skilled hand movements and skilled passive movements of joints and soft tissue and are intended to improve tissue extensibility; increase range of motion; induce relaxation; mobilize or manipulate soft tissue and joints; modulate pain; and reduce soft tissue swelling, inflammation, or restriction; facilitating movement and improving function.

During application of the Manual Therapy Technique, there is a continuous cycle of assessment, treatment, re-assessment, and further treatment based on the patient’s response to the physical therapy provided. And a person’s response to manual therapy in many cases provides guidance to both patient and physical therapist about how the condition can be better cared for independently by the patient.

Research coming out of Australia has demonstrated significantly better outcomes for patients who have a “multi-modal approach.” This means when Manual Therapy is used in conjunction with other forms of therapy, such as exercise, proprioception training, etc., it is superior compared to manual therapy used alone or exercise only therapy used alone.

What kinds of manual therapy exist?

Manual therapy is the hands-on component of physical therapy and occupational therapy, but there are several different sub-categories within the practice of manual therapy. Each has its own benefits, depending on what the underlying problem is. Among the most widely used are:

SOFT ISSUE MASSAGE

Soft tissue mobilization, or massage, focuses on muscles, ligaments and tendons. Often if a patient hasn’t had a chance to use a set of muscles due to illness, or has been injured in that area, the tissues can become scarred, and robbed of the precious fluids that promote flexibility. Soft tissue massage focuses on limbering up these damaged areas, while promoting overall wellness.

JOINT MOBILIZATION

A “restricted joint” issue often occurs after an injury, such as falling and twisting your back, or wrenching your shoulder. The injury to the joint leads to muscle spasms and restricted movement. A skilled physical and occupational therapist practices joint mobilization movements, such as a “glide and slide” of opposing

bones, in order to get the joints working properly again.

NEUROMUSCULAR TECHNIQUES

At times, muscles work themselves into abnormal states, in which the muscle's stretch reflex has difficulty relaxing itself. To treat this, the physical therapist and occupational therapist use several techniques to quiet the nervous system to lower the pain response and then allow greater soft tissue relaxation and joint mobilization.

Additional Manual Therapy Techniques include:

- Passive Range of Motion
- Joint manipulation
- Joint mobilization
- Spinal manipulation
- Spinal mobilization
- Massage therapy
- Manual lymphatic drainage
- Muscle energy techniques
- Myofascial release (MFR)
- Physiotherapy
- Manual Traction
- Muscle Energy Technique
- Stain/Counter-Strain
- Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF)
- Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization (IASTM/Graston Technique)
- **Cupping Therapy**
- **Dry Needling**

Where can I get manual therapy for my pain and stiffness?

Our expert **physical therapists** are highly qualified to practice manual therapy. With years of specialized training, we provide gentle, hands-on therapies that address a broad range of muscle and joint conditions and injuries.

Contact us today to schedule an appointment!