Is a massage therapy helpful?

Massage therapy is among the most ancient healing modes quoted in medical texts that date back to more than four thousand years. It is the application of various methods to rub against the soft tissues and the muscular structure of the body. It involves the use of movable or fixed pressure, vibration, holding, kneading, compression and friction on the body mainly by the use of hands. However, massage therapists are known to use other body parts like elbows, feet and forearms in addition to hands to massage. Massage is helpful to body systems like circulatory, musculoskeletal, lymphatic and nervous systems. It has been noted that this therapy improves the well being and health of the person involved.

There are a number of reasons why these therapies are popular and helpful. They are done for the following reasons: to relax the entire body, to relieve the body muscles from tiredness and pain, to ease muscles that may be tight, to reduce chronic pain of the body parts, to increase the motion range and flexibility, to put the nervous system at ease, to lower the rate of heartbeat, to bring blood pressure low, to reinforce the immune system, to fasten the process of recovery form illness or injury, to ease body tension and headaches, to enhance the skin tone, to boost concentration, to reduce mental stress, to facilitate peaceful sleep and to relax the mind. These among other benefits have made this practice so popular across the world. A report by the American Massage Therapy Association in the year 2007 revealed that more than a quarter of the American adult population had undergone the practice in the previous year.

There are more than one hundred thousand practicing massage therapists in the U.S today. The training requirements for massage therapists are different in each state but generally, they are supposed to go through a minimum of five hundred training hours. There are a number of massage therapy techniques in use today. These include:

Swedish massage

This is the most commonly used massage technique. It involves the use of long, soft, kneading, rhythmic, light as well as tapping strokes on the uppermost muscle layers. It also incorporates the use of joint movements. This massage technique has four main strokes which include: the petrissage, the effleurage, tapotement and friction.

Shiatsu Massage

Shiatsu is a Japanese word for finger pressure. The therapists using this method use assorted and rhythmic pressure on particular body parts known as the acupressure points. These points are believed to be vital in energy flow within the body. This massage is said to do away with blockages on those points.

Neuromuscular Therapy Massage

This the manipulation of the soft tissue aimed at healing the main chronic pain causes. This massage is medically oriented and focuses on the trigger points, nerve compression, circulation and biomechanical complications.

Other types of massage include: deep tissue massage, sports massage, chair massage, Thai massage, hot stone massage, reflexology and pregnancy massage. Although these types of massage are done differently, the aim is more or less the same, to make one feel healthier.