

DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE

JANE JOHNSON

A step-by-step
guide of over
80 techniques

HANDS-ON GUIDES
FOR THERAPISTS

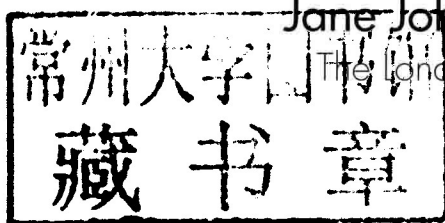


Deep Tissue Massage

Hands-On Guides for Therapists

Jane Johnson, MCSP, MSc

The London Massage Company



Human Kinetics

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Johnson, Jane, 1965-

Deep tissue massage / Jane Johnson.

p. ; cm. -- (Hands-on guides for therapists)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7360-8470-3 (soft cover)

ISBN-10: 0-7360-8470-3 (soft cover)

1. Massage therapy. I. Title. II. Series: Hands-on guides for therapists.

[DNLM: 1. Massage--methods. WB 537 J67d 2011]

RM721.J644 2011

615.8'2--dc22

2010006740

ISBN-10: 0-7360-8470-3 (print)

ISBN-13: 978-0-7360-8470-3 (print)

Copyright © 2011 by Jane Johnson

This book is copyrighted under the Berne Convention. All rights are reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher.

Notice: Permission to reproduce the following material is granted to instructors and agencies who have purchased *Deep Tissue Massage*: pp. 176-177. The reproduction of other parts of this book is expressly forbidden by the above copyright notice. Persons or agencies who have not purchased *Deep Tissue Massage* may not reproduce any material.

Acquisitions Editor: John Dickinson, PhD; **Developmental Editor:** Amanda S. Ewing; **Assistant Editor:** Casey A. Gentis; **Copyeditor:** John Wentworth; **Permission Manager:** Dalene Reeder; **Graphic Designer:** Nancy Rasmus; **Graphic Artist:** Angela K. Snyder; **Cover Designer:** Keith Blomberg; **Photographer (cover):** Neil Bernstein; **Photographer (interior):** Neil Bernstein; **Visual Production Assistant:** Joyce Brumfield; **Photo Production Manager:** Jason Allen; **Art Manager:** Kelly Hendren; **Associate Art Manager:** Alan L. Wilborn; **Illustrators:** Jason M. McAlexander, MFA, and Alan L. Wilborn; **Printer:** Creative Printing USA

Special thanks to Douglas Nelson, LMT, for his expertise as the massage therapist in the photographs.

Printed in China

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Human Kinetics

Web site: www.HumanKinetics.com

United States: Human Kinetics

P.O. Box 5076

Champaign, IL 61825-5076

800-747-4457

e-mail: humank@hkusa.com

Canada: Human Kinetics

475 Devonshire Road Unit 100

Windsor, ON N8Y 2L5

800-465-7301 (in Canada only)

e-mail: info@hkcanada.com

Australia: Human Kinetics

57A Price Avenue

Lower Mitcham, South Australia 5062

08 8372 0999

e-mail: info@hkaustralia.com

Europe: Human Kinetics

107 Bradford Road

Stanningley

Leeds LS28 6AT, United Kingdom

+44 (0) 113 255 5665

e-mail: hk@hkeurope.com

New Zealand: Human Kinetics

P.O. Box 80

Torrens Park, South Australia 5062

0800 222 062

e-mail: info@hknewzealand.com

Series Preface

Massage may be one of the oldest therapies still used today. At present more therapists than ever before are practicing an ever-expanding range of massage techniques. Many of these techniques are taught through massage schools and within degree courses. Our need now is to provide the best clinical and educational resources that will enable massage therapists to learn the required techniques for delivering massage therapy to clients. Human Kinetics has developed the Hands-On Guides for Therapists series with this in mind.

The Hands-On Guides for Therapists series provides specific tools of assessment and treatment that fall well within the realm of massage therapists but may also be useful for other bodyworkers, such as osteopaths and fitness instructors. Each book in the series is a step-by-step guide to delivering the techniques to clients. Each book features a full-colour interior packed with photos illustrating every technique. Tips provide handy advice to help you adjust your technique, and the Client Talk boxes contain examples of how the techniques can be used with clients who have particular problems. Throughout each book are questions that enable you to test your knowledge and skill, which will be particularly helpful if you are attempting to pass a qualification exam. We've even provided the answers too!

You might be using a book from the Hands-On Guides for Therapists series to obtain the required skills to help you pass a course or to brush up on skills you learned in the past. You might be a course tutor looking for ways to make massage therapy come alive with your students. This series provides easy-to-follow steps that will make the transition from theory to practice seem effortless. The Hands-On Guides for Therapists series is an essential resource for all those who are serious about massage therapy.

Many clients enjoy the sensation of deep tissue massage, and when asked for their preferences beforehand, these clients request 'firm' or 'deep' pressure. Yet some therapists shy away from incorporating this form of massage into their treatments, believing it to require the application of force greater than that of which they can deliver. Therapists also may be anxious about how to apply pressure safely. This book was written for those of you searching for ways to increase the depth of pressure you use in a manner that is both safe and effective for yourself and your clients. Here you will find simple explanations of how to use compressive and stretching techniques while applying them in ways that facilitate additional leverage to tissues. By following the guidelines provided, along with a little practice, this book will help you to deliver massage in such a way that your clients perceive a comfortable and considerable increase in the pressure they receive from your treatments.

You will also find the book useful if you are an experienced therapist looking for techniques to avoid overuse of your hands. Ideas are presented for the use of forearms, fists and elbows. Or perhaps you are already skilled in the use of deep tissue massage and are looking to add variety to your existing treatments. If you are a teacher of massage, you may find ideas and alternatives to stimulate debate within the classroom. Whatever your aims, in this book you will find plentiful photographs, tips and tricks to inform and inspire.

To get you started, Part I introduces this form of massage, its effects and benefits. This part also covers important safety issues and provides clear guidelines for the correct use of your own body and for the use of massage tools. Part II describes two main methods for applying deep tissue massage—compressive techniques (chapter 3) and stretching techniques (chapter 4).

In part III, the chapters are organized by body part. Chapter 5 contains deep tissue massage techniques for the muscles of the trunk while chapter 6 covers the lower limbs. Last in this part, chapter 7 covers the upper limbs. In each of these chapters you will find techniques for the application of deep tissue massage provided for prone, supine and three-quarter lying positions.

Finally, part IV concentrates on deep tissue massage routines. Use this part of the book to help you practice using the techniques in one particular position before moving on to the next position.

Whether you are a newly qualified therapist or a therapist with many years of experience, I encourage you to experiment with this material by giving and receiving the techniques described here. Discover those techniques and treatment positions that

appeal to you and discard those which you find less helpful. With practice, you will find many of these techniques easy to apply and will quickly be able to include them as part of your routine. As always, it is my intention to help disseminate information regarding the practice of massage. Please share these techniques with other therapists and as always, feel free to get in touch with me with your comments and suggestions regarding the material presented.

Acknowledgments

I would like to start by thanking massage therapist Douglas Nelson, LMT, who has once again managed to reproduce treatment positions and hand holds based on my original photographs; this time for deep tissue massage techniques. Thank you also to Abraham Jones and Rebecca Ray for modelling for us.

I commend developmental editor Amanda Ewing for making so few changes to my manuscript, John Wentworth for his copyediting, and Nancy Rasmus for the uncomplicated design of this series, *Hands-On Guides for Therapists*.

I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable input I derived from all of the therapists who have, over the years, attended my workshops on deep tissue massage. I hope this book goes some way in answering your questions.

Finally, I would like to thank John Dickinson, acquisitions editor at Human Kinetics, for offering me the opportunity to write this book in the first place.



*You'll find
other outstanding
massage resources at*

www.HumanKinetics.com

United States 1-800-747-4457
Australia..... 08 8372 0999
Canada..... 1-800-465-7301
Europe..... +44 (0) 113 255 5665
New Zealand..... 0800 222 062



HUMAN KINETICS

The Information Leader in Physical Activity & Health
P.O. Box 5076 • Champaign, IL 61825-5076 USA

Series Preface vii ■ Preface ix ■ Acknowledgments xi

PART I Getting Started With Deep Tissue Massage Techniques

1 Introduction to Deep Tissue Massage 3

What Are the Methods of Application? 3 ■ How Do You Increase the Depth of Your Massage? 7 ■ How Is Deep Tissue Massage Different From Sports Massage? 8 ■ What Are the Effects of Deep Tissue Massage? 8 ■ Benefits of Deep Tissue Massage 10 ■ Where and When Should Deep Tissue Massage Be Done? 12 ■ Closing Remarks 13 ■ Quick Questions 13

2 Preparing for Deep Tissue Massage 15

What Type of Massage Therapist Are You? 15 ■ Establishing Your Intention 17 ■ Using Your Body 20 ■ Choosing Where to Use Forearms, Elbows, Fists and Squeezing 22 ■ Using Your Equipment 23 ■ Understanding Cautions and Safety Issues 24 ■ Commonly Asked Questions and Concerns 30 ■ Top Tips for Treating Clients 32 ■ Tips for Working Safely With Deep Tissue Massage 33 ■ Closing Remarks 33 ■ Quick Questions 34

PART II Deep Tissue Massage Techniques

3 Compressive Techniques 37

Introduction to Compressive Techniques 37 ■ Forearms 38 ■ Fists 43 ■ Elbows 46 ■ Squeezing 50 ■ Tools 52 ■ Closing Remarks 56 ■ Quick Questions 56

4 Stretching Techniques 57

Introduction to Stretching Techniques 57 ■ Without Oil (Dry Stretching) 58 ■ Dry Stretch 58 ■ Traction 62 ■ Dry Stretching for the Piriformis Muscle 65 ■ 'With Oil' Stretching 67 ■ Stretching With Oil Plus a Passive Joint Movement 69 ■ Stretching With Oil Plus an Active Joint Movement 71 ■ Closing Remarks 74 ■ Quick Questions 74

PART III Applying Deep Tissue Massage

- 5 Deep Tissue Massage for the Trunk** 77
 Three-Quarter Lying 78 ■ Supine 84 ■ Prone 93 ■ Seated 101 ■
 Quick Questions 105
- 6 Deep Tissue Massage for the Lower Limbs** 107
 Three-Quarter Lying 109 ■ Supine 121 ■ Prone 136 ■
 Quick Questions 148
- 7 Deep Tissue Massage for the Upper Limbs** 149
 Three-Quarter Lying 150 ■ Supine 154 ■ Prone 161 ■
 Quick Questions 167

PART IV Deep Tissue Massage Routines and Programmes

- 8 Creating Deep Tissue Massage Routines** 171
 Initial Questions 171 ■ Tests 173 ■ Notes Concerning
 Timing 174 ■ Practice Routines 175 ■ Case Studies 193 ■ Closing
 Remarks 195

Answers to Quick Questions 197 ■ Photo Index 201 ■ About the Author 203

Getting Started With Deep Tissue Massage Techniques

Congratulations on wanting to learn more about deep tissue massage. In chapter 1 you will be introduced to the main methods for achieving deep tissue massage and the effects that these compressive and stretching techniques have on the body. You will also discover the benefits of this kind of treatment for both you and your clients, and how this type of massage differs from sports massage. Also included is advice on where and when deep tissue massage should be performed and some general tips on how to increase the depth of your massage (an area that we revisit in more detail in part II, where you will really get to grips with the different methods of application).

Chapter 2 covers everything you need to help you prepare to give a deep tissue massage. We help you identify your treatment goals and explore the concept of working with intent. The section on safety guidelines helps to ensure that you work safely and effectively with these deep tissue techniques. The chapter's troubleshooting tips and answers to frequently asked questions address many common queries and concerns. In these two chapters of part I and throughout the book you will find quick questions at the end of each chapter. Use these questions to test yourself and to reinforce what you have read. Answers to the quick questions appear at the end of the book.

Introduction to Deep Tissue Massage

In this first chapter we will set the scene for deep tissue massage by exploring the concepts involved in its application. The two main methods of application are to compress tissues and to stretch tissues. Understanding the effects of these techniques (individually and combined) will help you make informed judgements about which of your clients might benefit most from deep tissue massage. This chapter also helps prepare you for chapters 3 and 4, in which the application of these techniques is covered in detail.

Also presented in this chapter are answers to commonly asked questions: How do you increase the depth of your massage? How is deep tissue massage different from sports massage? What are the effects and benefits of deep tissue massage? Last but not least, we'll examine where and when deep tissue massage can be performed.

What Are the Methods of Application?

Manual massage consists of five well-known techniques: effleurage, petrissage, tapotement, frictions and vibrations, each of which can be performed in a variety of ways. These are the strokes that form the basis of Swedish massage, and their effects vary according to factors such as the strength and speed with which they are delivered and the physical and emotional states of both the recipient and the therapist providing them. In this book you are going to learn how compressive and stretching techniques can be used to help you work more deeply into tissues—the skin, muscles and their supportive fascia—if this is your intention. There are many variants on how these techniques can be applied, which together form the basis of deep tissue massage.

Compressive Techniques

You are already using compressive techniques: broadly and lightly when you effleurage, more firmly and with a wringing motion when you petrissage, and during 'holding'

techniques whenever you hold a muscle or lift it away from underlying structures. You might even be using your fingers or thumbs to apply deep localized digital pressure to specific spots on a muscle, such as when treating trigger spots. Here you are going to learn how to apply deep pressure while safeguarding your hands, fingers and thumbs, and in doing so you will explore the best ways to use your forearms, fists and elbows. Squeezing techniques are also discussed, as is advice on the use of massage tools, which is valuable for compressing specific spots on a muscle. You will learn how to apply each of these compressive techniques statically, and then how they can be combined with stretching techniques to provide really deep tissue massage.

Tapotement is a form of compression but will not be discussed here. The short, sudden strike of these percussive techniques (e.g., hacking, clapping and beating) compress tissues suddenly and rapidly and are stimulatory in nature, aimed at inducing vasodilation, vibrating tissues and triggering cutaneous reflexes. The compressive techniques described in this book are slow, sustained and aimed at facilitating deep relaxation and a reduction, rather than an increase, in the tone of muscles. Everything you need to know about the application of compressive techniques you will find in chapter 3.

To start, see figure 1.1 a-e; these illustrations show the effect of different types of compression. The layered-looking boxes represent a cross section of skin, muscle and bone. Fascia is not shown but is found beneath the skin and wraps around and invaginates muscles, as you know.

You may have heard the riddle: ‘Which makes the deeper impression into a carpet—an elephant’s footprint or a lady’s stiletto-heeled shoe?’ Many people quickly answer the footprint of the elephant because the elephant is so heavy. However, when applied to the same kind of surface and using the same weight, penetration is deeper when applied to a smaller surface area. So the lady’s heel may well leave the deeper impression on the carpet, although she is obviously much lighter than an elephant. Her heel directs weight to a small, localized area, whereas the broad flat pad of the elephant’s foot disperses weight over a larger surface area, thus making a less deep impression in the carpet. Understanding this helps us when working with the compressive techniques needed for deep tissue massage.

Notice that the depth of compression achieved using a massage tool (1.1e) is equal to the depth of compression when using your elbow (1.1d), although the tool covers a smaller surface area. The reason is that you are usually at a slight mechanical disadvantage when using a massage tool and thus not able to deliver as much weight. This is also the case when using your fist. The fist covers a smaller surface area (1.1c), so you would expect to be able to press more deeply into tissues than when using your forearm (1.1b). However, when using your fist or a massage tool, you often work with your arms held straight, directing pressure through your elbows and wrists, which need to be kept in a neutral position. Maintaining this position with your arms requires more effort than when using your forearms (in which case you simply lean on the client, transferring your body weight to him or her).

Notice too just how deeply you can compress tissues when using your elbow or a massage tool. You could press the tissues right up to and onto the underlying bone, but this is neither safe nor desirable. Remember this when working on thinner muscles and those that lie close to the bone.

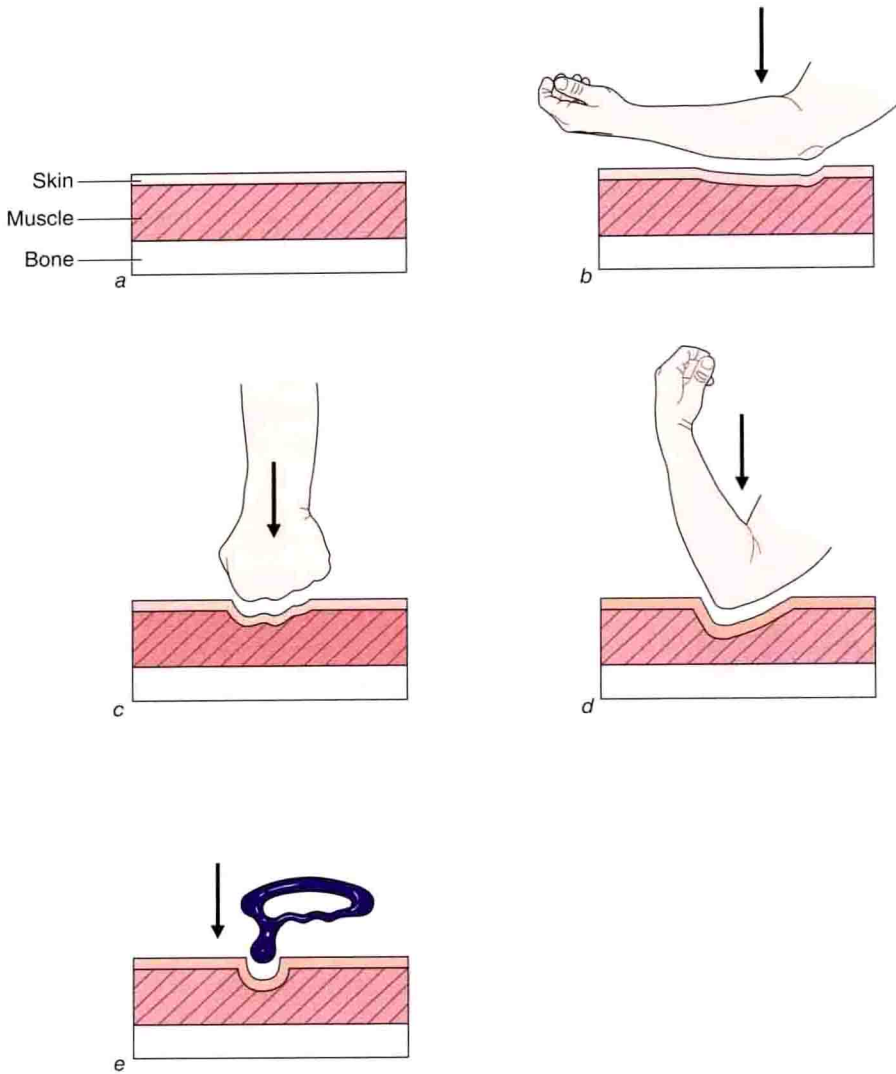


Figure 1.1 Types of compression: (a) noncompressed tissues, (b) tissues compressed using the forearm, (c) tissues compressed using the fist, (d) tissues compressed using the elbow and (e) tissues compressed using a massage tool.

Understand that the illustrations in figure 1.1 are designed to help you differentiate the effects of different forms of compression. How much you actually compress tissues will depend on your strength and leverage, as well as on which sort of tissues you are compressing and the state of those tissues. Muscles depress more readily than tendons; muscles with a high state of tone are harder to compress than those with a lower state of tone. Clients with muscle tension are more likely to sense your pressure as being ‘deep’ compared to when the same pressure is applied to clients whose muscles are relaxed. So, although you will learn how to compress tissue very deeply, you will not always want to do so.

Stretching Techniques

Whenever you massage, you stretch tissues. Unless you are using very large amounts of oil and a feather-like touch, even light effleurage stretches the skin slightly. In this book you're going to learn how the stretching of skin, fascia and muscles can be specifically incorporated into your massage treatment. Unlike the kind of stretching you might perform after exercise, or a passive stretch you might incorporate at the end of a treatment for your client, the kinds of stretching described here are specific to the application of deep tissue massage. You will learn a variety of stretching techniques both with and without the use of oil, plus how to enhance these with tractioning of a limb. Moving the joint associated with the muscles on which you are working can also be used to increase stretch in tissues, and this technique is also presented. Together, these stretching techniques are intended for use as part of a massage treatment, and you will find many tips and tricks on how to apply them safely and effectively in chapter 4. You will also learn where they are best used on the body.

Figure 1.2 presents more diagrams that might help you visualize the effects of stretch on skin and muscles (figures 1.2a and b). As you can see in figure 1.2a, with lots of oil and little compression you glide across the skin, and there is very little stretch. The effect here would not be considered deep tissue massage. However, with no (or less) oil (figure 1.2b), you may grip the skin and stretch it, and this shearing force might stretch the underlying fascia and muscle too slightly.



Figure 1.2 Stretch on skin and muscle: (a) effect of stretch when lots of oil is used, and (b) effect of stretch when little or no oil is used.

Combining Compression and Stretch Techniques

Finally, notice what happens when you combine the forces of compression and stretch (figure 1.3). When compression and stretch are used together, the therapist usually angles the direction of pressure so that it is no longer perpendicular to the tissues but instead acts on them obliquely. The result is that while the tissues are physically compressed less deeply, clients often report *feeling* a deep compression. This might be because the stretch receptors in the client's muscles and tendons are activated, signaling stretching sensations to the brain.

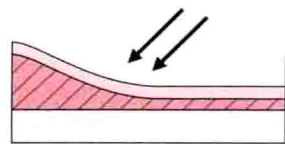


Figure 1.3 Effect of compression and stretch.

Modifications and combinations of the forces of compression and stretch provide you with a wide variety of treatment options. For example, using oil and a broad surface area (such as the forearm) provides lighter compression and little stretch; using less oil and a smaller surface area (such as the elbow) provides deep compression and greater stretch.

How Do You Increase the Depth of Your Massage?

Whether you are a newly qualified massage therapist or have been working as a therapist for many years, you have likely come across clients who enjoy the sensation of deep tissue massage. Mechanically, there are five things you can do to increase the depth of your massage. Let's look briefly at each of the five.

1. Apply more pressure. Many therapists discount this possibility, believing they are not physically capable of applying more pressure, perhaps because they are tiny compared to their client, or because their client is particularly muscular. Lacking confidence, therapists sometimes avoid treating clients who request deep tissue massage, doubting their ability to compress tissues any more than they are already doing. As you will learn in chapter 2, there are ways to use your body and equipment to dramatically increase pressure irrespective of your body weight.

CLIENT TALK

Many years ago I was asked to provide a workshop on deep tissue massage to a group of Japanese aromatherapists. The group was comprised of female therapists, most of them slight of frame. The therapists were initially dubious that they would be able to use deep tissue techniques, but after lowering all the treatment couches and practicing on each other, they discovered that with proper leverage and by using the right technique they could apply deep tissue massage quite effectively.

2. Keep the pressure the same, but reduce the surface area to which you are applying it. In chapter 3, you will explore what happens when you reduce the surface area for compression, comparing the different effects of using your forearm, fist, elbow or a massage tool.
3. Apply more pressure *and* reduce the surface area to which you are applying pressure.
4. Have the client contract the muscle that works opposite to the one you are treating (i.e., the antagonist muscle). Contraction of the antagonist results in a decrease in tone in the agonist (the muscle you are working), thus facilitating deeper pressure. Some of the techniques we will describe in this book make use of this characteristic of muscle function.
5. Give the impression of deep pressure without physically pressing into tissue more deeply. Here we come to one of the tricks of the trade of deep tissue massage. The sensation of deep pressure occurs when you add a stretching component to your massage. Everything you need to know about this is covered in chapter 4, in which you will explore how to stretch tissues with and without oil, combining them with compression for maximum effect.