



## Frequently Asked Questions About Massage Therapy

### **What is Massage Therapy?**

Massage Therapy is the manipulation of soft tissues of the body including muscles, connective tissues, tendons, ligaments and joints. Massage therapy is a clinically-oriented healthcare option that helps alleviate the discomfort associated with everyday and occupational stresses, muscular overuse and many chronic pain conditions.

### **Is massage therapy a regulated health profession?**

The practice of massage therapy is regulated under the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and is therefore a regulated health profession.

### **What is a Registered Massage Therapist?**

A Registered Massage Therapist is an individual who is registered with the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) in accordance with the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and the *Massage Therapy Act*. Only members of the CMTO are permitted to use the title Registered Massage Therapist (RMT) or Massage Therapist (MT).

### **How do I know I am using the services of an RMT?**

All RMTs have photo identification cards, issued by the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario, which displays the therapist's registration number. All patients of massage therapy services have the right to view this card in order to be assured they are visiting an RMT.

### **How do I find a Registered Massage Therapist?**

If you are seeking massage therapy treatment in Ontario, visit [www.RMTFind.com](http://www.RMTFind.com). Alternatively, a listing of all Ontario RMTs is available on [www.CMTO.com](http://www.CMTO.com).

### **Who can receive massage therapy?**

Massage therapy is appropriate for individuals of all ages, including infants, children and the elderly. There are some conditions for which massage therapy is inappropriate and a qualified RMT is trained to recognize these cases. Many RMTs treat a wide variety of conditions and disorders, while other RMTs concentrate on certain conditions or groups of people such as athletes, women during pregnancy, infants and children. When booking your first consultation, be sure that the RMT is the right choice for you.

## **What are the benefits of massage therapy?**

Massage therapy can be beneficial to people of all ages and conditions and can be an important part of your health maintenance plan by:

- Reducing or eliminating pain
- Improving joint mobility
- Improving circulation
- Improving lymphatic drainage
- Reducing depression and anxiety
- Reducing muscular tension

## **How can massage therapy help me?**

Massage therapy can be used as a treatment for both acute and chronic conditions. RMTs can work with a wide variety of patients in the treatment of illness, injury rehabilitation and disability.

The following is a list of conditions for which massage therapy can prove beneficial:

- Anxiety and Depression
- Arthritis
- Asthma and Emphysema
- Cancer
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Dislocations
- Edema
- Fibromyalgia
- Headaches
- Inflammatory Conditions
- Insomnia
- Lymphoedema
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscle Tension and Spasm
- Parkinson's Disease
- Plantar Fasciitis
- Post-Surgical Rehabilitation
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Pregnancy and Labour Support
- Sciatica
- Scoliosis
- Sports Injuries
- Strains and Sprains
- Stress and Stress-Related Conditions
- Stroke
- Tendinitis
- Whiplash

## **How often should I have massage therapy treatment?**

Some people believe that one treatment is enough; however, massage therapy is most beneficial for specific conditions when used over a series of treatments and then followed up with maintenance or preventative treatments.

Through mutual discussion, your RMT can help you establish a program which fits your physical needs and lifestyle. Your RMT is most interested in your recovery and in the maintenance of your health. Any recommendation for further treatment is being made by a qualified health professional and is made with your health in mind.

## **Does massage therapy hurt?**

As with many treatments affecting the soft tissue, there are times when massage therapy can cause some light discomfort but it is not harmful. Discomfort usually diminishes and no technique of this nature is used without the therapist first discussing it with the client and obtaining your permission. A comfort scale will be established and the therapist will work to the client's tolerance level. The client can stop or change the treatment at any time and RMTs will modify their techniques to meet their client's needs.

### **What happens on the first visit?**

On the first visit you will complete a confidential health history as part of your assessment. The RMT will assess your individual needs as well as other factors that may be contributing to your injury or condition. The RMT will then develop a treatment plan with you to ensure you receive appropriate treatment. The treatment plan can be changed at any time you wish and will be reassessed at an appropriate time. You have no obligation to undergo any part of the treatment. Your treatment will begin once you have given your informed consent. This involves setting realistic goals for treatment, discussing possible responses to treatment, and being informed of alternate care options.

### **Will my RMT keep my information private?**

As regulated health professionals, RMTs are required to maintain the information you provide, both verbally and in written form, in the strictest of confidence. In addition, RMTs are covered by *Ontario's Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*. As a result, information may only be collected with consent, may only be disclosed with consent or to your immediate health providers (circle of care), and must be secured and maintained. Any concerns about the requirements of this legislation or about whether a RMT breached the requirements of the Act may be addressed to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

### **Do I have to remove all my clothing for massage therapy?**

No. Your comfort is of the utmost importance to all RMTs, whether that is in the context of the clothing you wear or the treatment you receive. RMTs can provide important treatment whether you elect to remove any, some or all of your clothing. All RMTs are trained in proper draping procedures to ensure that your privacy is completely respected at all times during treatment. Your comfort and ability to relax is paramount to effective treatment. RMTs will also describe the treatments to be provided you ensure that you are comfortable with them. Your consent is sought before treatment is provided. If you are uncomfortable, tell your RMT immediately, whether that discomfort involves the treatment, draping or any pain you may experience.

### **Is massage therapy covered under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)?**

Massage therapy treatments are not covered under OHIP. Most extended health benefit plans do cover all or part of massage therapy services when provided by an RMT and most do not require a physician's referral or prescription to do so.

### **Who pays for massage therapy?**

Massage therapy is not publicly funded by the provincial government in Ontario. Individuals, either directly or through an insurance plan, pay for massage therapy services. When paying through an insurance plan, some RMTs may bill directly while others require payment for the patient who then submits the claim to their insurance provider. Some insurance plans may require a physician's referral prior to the start of massage therapy treatments while others allow treatment without referrals. Massage therapy treatments may also be reimbursed by automobile insurance companies, if the patient was in a motor vehicle accident, or in the case of workplace injuries, by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). Most RMTs are required to collect and remit the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) and must advise clients when this is the case.

## **How do I register a complaint against my Registered Massage Therapist?**

The practice of massage therapy is regulated under the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and the *Massage Therapy Act*. These pieces of legislation establish the regulatory body, the College of Registered Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO), and the profession of massage therapy as a self-regulating health profession in Ontario.

The CMTO exists to protect the public interest and to regulate the profession of massage therapy, through the maintenance of high professional standards. The CMTO also ensures ethical, high-quality health care.

Questions regarding the conduct of a RMT must be addressed to the CMTO. The RHPA requires the CMTO to have a formal complaints process. This process gives any member of the public the right to have his/her complaint about a RMT's behavior, conduct or practice investigated by the College's Complaints Committee. Each step of the process is designed to ensure fairness to both the complainant and the member who is the subject of the complaint.

You may file a complaint with the Registrar in writing, recorded on audio tape or on video, submitted on disk or on other permanent medium. The complaint should include the name of the RMT, the time, place, date(s) and details of the event(s). You may file the complaint as follows:

College of Massage Therapists' of Ontario  
1867 Yonge Street, Suite 810  
Toronto, Ontario M4S 1Y5

For more information about the College, you may visit their website at [www.cmtto.com](http://www.cmtto.com).