



## **MASSAGE – WHICH ONE IS FOR YOU?**

Today there are so many new and interesting forms of massage therapy it can be confusing and in many ways frustrating when seeking treatment. I believe a good therapist will tailor techniques to best suit the individual's physiology and treatment goals.

Below are some of the treatment modalities that we use most readily at Pure Sports Medicine. We believe these to gain the most therapeutic value for our clients.

### **SWEDISH MASSAGE**

Swedish massage is a generic term which applies to a wide range of techniques used to manipulate the soft tissue of the body. Generally these are non-specific and broad techniques which bring about general relaxation of the physical and motional state. They are used effectively for warming up and down an area to be treated.

Swedish massage can also be beneficial for improving bodily functions, such as blood & lymph flow, reduce pain symptoms by stimulating the release of endorphins and helping in the prevention of muscular tightness.

### **DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE**

Deep Tissue Massage involves many different forms of therapeutic techniques which are designed for more focused treatment work. Some of these include:

- Soft Tissue Release
- Muscle Energy Technique
- Myofascial Release
- Active Release Technique

These techniques are applied to gain access to deeper layers of soft tissue within the body, to promote the greatest amount of therapeutic change, i.e. muscle fibre release. They are used to treat specific areas of tension and muscular lesions.

### **SOFT TISSUE RELEASE, MUSCLE ENERGY & ACTIVE RELEASE TECHNIQUE**

Soft Tissue Release (STR), Active Release Technique (ART) & Muscle Energy Technique (MET) are popular forms of therapy among athletes as they are a quick and effective way of achieving strength and flexibility after muscular injuries. The technique can be modified to suit areas of the body which are more resistant to other forms of treatment and other massage techniques as involves active participation from you, physically moving the joint whilst it is being treated.

STR, ART & MET is used on specific muscles or muscle groups to help identification of the specific problem. The techniques separate the muscle fibres to release adhesions between fascial planes, which promote better joint biomechanics.

When performing STR/ART/MET the tissue is directly engaged and a force is applied either parallel or perpendicular to the muscle fibre, whilst the muscle is in a shortened position. Next you will be asked to move the affected joint to contract the antagonist (opposing) muscle. It was developed to gain range with your movement creating an effect called reciprocal inhibition. Reciprocal inhibition is a neural response which prevents opposing muscles from contracting simultaneously. Thereby, decreasing the ability of the muscle to remain contracted.

They are particularly useful in the more powerful prime mover muscles such as your Hamstrings, Quadriceps and Pectorals. As their muscular bulk is greater this technique will allow the clinician to gain access to the deep fibres to release them.

### **TRIGGER POINT THERAPY**

In muscle tissue the site of the pain may not always be the location of the problem. There are documented areas in our muscles which can create a pain pattern in a completely different region to the cause of the problem; this is called a trigger point.



Trigger points are irritable areas in muscle tissue which are related to palpable nodules or taut bands of muscle fibres. These nodules or small areas of contracted muscle tissue have trigger points located in them which can cause localised pain or produce identifiable pain pattern referrals and also can decrease neural activity and function of the muscle or organ.

For example, a common trigger point for headaches experienced in the temple can be from the Upper trapezius muscle toward the shoulder, where the X is located in the diagram.

Once the trigger point is released the pain referral should also dissipate reducing the frequency of the symptoms of the headaches. Used with a combination of strengthening and stretching of the effective areas Trigger Point Therapy is a hugely effective tool for reducing muscular pain.