

# Relieve tension? Self-massage is what you knead

Massage, once revered only by those in athletic circles, has emerged as a mainstream health and fitness routine for people of all ages and activity levels.

Casual strollers, hobbyists and weekend athletes alike can benefit from massage, without paying anywhere from \$20 to \$60 for an hour's worth of a massage therapist's services, by learning the basic techniques of massage and self-applying them.

Self-massage, "emerging as one of the hot new self-help therapies of the decade, can help alleviate fatigue, muscle soreness, joint stiffness, tension, lower back pain and pain from arthritis."

"Massage flushes waste material from muscles and stimulates blood flow. By doing so, it forces fluids back through the joints to increase joint mobility, to nourish muscles and to overcome fatigue," says Ed Moore, certified massage therapist.

As the therapist for the Schwinn/Icy Hot professional cycling team, Moore worked with the makers of Icy Hot pain-relieving rub to create the "Icy Hot Self-Massage Program" to introduce non-athletes to the benefits of massage.

MASSAGE HAS THREE basic effects on the body. They are circulatory, conditioning and tension reducing. Almost all massage movements yield more than one of the effects; all massage has circulatory effects, for instance.

Depending on what area of your body you are treating, you might want to experiment with a combination of these techniques.

A lubricant is essential during self-massage to reduce friction between the hands and the skin. A dual-action

pain-relieving rub like Icy Hot is ideal if you have sore muscles or joints, because it increases skin warmth, thus enhancing the benefits of massage, and helps to relieve pain at the same time.

The basic techniques of massage are: Stroking, kneading, friction and shaking. With the exception of friction, a lubricant should be applied prior to beginning massage therapy.

**FOLLOWING ARE THE** basic movements and their benefits.

● Stroking begins and ends the massage. It is a long sliding action of the hands along the length of the muscle. Stroking should begin at the point farthest from the heart and always move towards the heart. Stroking stimulates overall circulation, which leads to increased joint mobility.

Kneading uses the fingers, thumb, knuckles or hands to press into muscles. The procedure is very similar to kneading dough.

For instance, use both hands to clasp the calf muscle. Alternate pressure from one hand to the length of the muscle toward the heart. Kneading is generally recommended for thighs, calves and top of the shoulders.

● Friction is a localized, circular or cross-fiber movement done around joints and tendons or across muscles. Friction is applied with fingertips, thumbs or fleshy base of thumbs.

Moderate pressure is applied perpendicular to the length of the muscle or in a circular fashion. After friction strokes are completed, a topical rub like Icy Hot, which combines the pain-relieving ingredients menthol (cooling) and methyl salicylate (warming), should be applied to help ease joint pain and maximize massage benefits.

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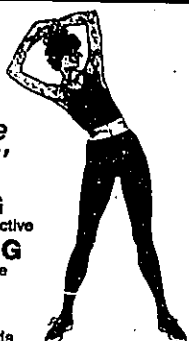
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- **ST. MARY HOSPITAL PAVILION**, a new medical center including a special critical care unit, separate 24-hour walk-in and trauma emergency rooms, and advanced radiology services,
- **MARIAN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUILDING**, a new four-story professional office building.

The farmlands are gone. In their place stands a high-tech medical facility. But, the spirit which inspired the founding of St. Mary Hospital has not been lost in the midst of this growth and change.



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