

Massage in Sports

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Massage is an ancient art and modern clinical research has provided increasing scientific evidence for its therapeutic use. The word "Massage" comes from "mass" the Arabic term denoting "to press". Massage is the term used to express certain scientific manipulations, which are performed by the hands of the operator upon the body of the athlete. It is a means used for creating energy which has been exhausted, from whatsoever cause and is a natural method of restoring the part either locally or generally injured, to its normal conditions.

Prosser in 1941 gave another definition that the massage is "the scientific manipulation of the soft tissues of the body as a part from mere rubbing". Technically it can be described as the therapeutic manipulation of the soft tissue.

Per Henry Ling (1776-1839) of Sweden founded an institute in Stockholm in 1813 and promoted the therapeutic use of techniques termed "Swedish Massage and Gymnastics".

Massage has been used in sports from time immemorial. Athletes have restored to massage since the days of the first OLYMPIC GAMES and ancient athletes develop a special tool.

Massage Manipulations

The massage manipulations used in sports massage are:-

- *Effleurage/Stroking Manipulation
- *Petri sage Manipulation
- *Friction Manipulation
- *Percussive Manipulation

Effleurage/Stroking Manipulation:-

Effleurage means to stroke. It is a unidirectional manipulation in which the hands possess from distal to proximal with a depth compatible with the state of the tissues and desired effect which aims at:

- *Assist Venous and Lymphatic Drainage
- *Assist Fluid Interchange
- *Assist in relaxation of the athlete through sedative effect
- *Help to decrease muscle tone or to increase muscle tone
- *Help with passive stretch of the muscle fiber

Petri sage Manipulation

Petri sage manipulation is those in which the soft tissues (mainly muscles) are compressed either against underlying bone or against themselves which aims at:

- *Assist Venous and Lymphatic Drainage
- *Assist Fluid Interchange
- *Increased mobility of underlying tissues
- *Has an effect on soma to -visceral reflexes

Friction Manipulation

Frictions are small range, deep manipulations performed on specific anatomical structure with the tips of the fingers or thumb. No other part of the hand must rest on the part where massage is given. It aims at

- *To stimulate local circulation
- *Mobilize underlying tissues

Percussive Manipulation :- The percussive manipulations are those in which the treated part is struck soft blows with the hands. They are performed either to assist evacuation from hollow organs or to stimulate either skin or muscle reflexes. It aims at:

- *Stimulate local circulation
- *Stimulate muscle tone and tendon reflexes
- *Stimulate nerve endings
- *Assist in peristalsis via vibrations
- *Help evacuation of hollow organs

Classification of Sports Massage

Sports Massage can be classified as follows:-

- *Specific Sports Massage
- *Non Specific Sports Massage

Specific Sports Massage:-

Specific Sports Massage is given for a particular reason and can be used in six different situations.

- *Massage in conditioning
- *Massage as a treatment
- *Pre-competition massage
- *Inter -competition massage
- *Post-competition massage

Massage in conditioning:-

In this the body is prepared for the safe and intense development to achieve peak condition at the time of major competition. The main objectives are:

- *To promote recovery from the hard training
- *To aid cool-down
- *To prevent delayed onset muscle soreness
- *Psychological effect

Massage as a treatment:-

Massage as a treatment for sports injuries can be used after 48 hrs. if all bleeding and tissue swelling has ceased of hematoma, after 4 days or depend upon athlete tolerance. The main objectives are:

- *To stimulate circulation
- *To promote recovery from injury
- *To breakdown adhesions
- *To promote flexibility
- *To improve the range of movement

Pre competition massage:-

Massage prior to competition is too many sports person is a part of ritual carried out before their sporting endeavor. This massage cannot be used instead of the participants own physical warm up but definitely can be used to enhance the sports performance. The objectives are

- *To prepare muscles for exertion
- *To aid warm up
- *Psychological effect

Inter competition massage:-

when there is a prolonged competition<it is necessary to provide inter competition massage. The massage is extremely useful to complement a shortened warm up and cool down but again cannot replace this essential activity. The only time massage can replace cool down is if the participant is exhausted to perform an active cool down or if injury precludes activity. This massage can never replace active warm up. It helps

- *To promote recovery
- *To refresh the competitor
- *To work out niggles
- *To prevent muscle cramps and spasms

Post competition massage:-

In this, the massage is used to replace active cool down with passive movements, example after a marathon, long distance event or when the competitor has sustained an injury that precludes active cool down, It aims at

- *To carry away waste products
- *To allow body functions to return to normal
- *To prevent post exercise pain
- *To work out niggles and psychological effect

Post travel massage:-

It is very common for all types of sports people to travel varying distance to participate in competition all over the world. Whenever possible sufficient time should be allowed to athlete for permit adequate acclimatization both to time change and climatic conditions. The length of time spent for travelling and the frequency of the travel can adversely affect the performance.

Travel problems highlighted in sports are

- *a general feeling of stiffness
- *a feeling of latitude
- *aches specially in lower back, neck and shoulder
- *swelling of lower legs and feet

The solutions are:- light exercise, shower, Jacuzzi, massage

The objectives are:-

- *To increase venous and lymphatic flow, thus removing swelling and stiffness
- *To remove aches and increase flexibility by gently and deeply stretching the soft tissues
- *To remove any residual stiffness without tiring the athlete with exercise
- *To restore the normal balance of the body
- *To create a feeling of wellbeing

Non Specific Sports Massage:-

There are times in the competitor's year when there is no competition or conditioning takes place. At this times the athlete will still maintaining his/her body in the state of preparedness for the activities of the future. Massage can play a very important and helpful role at such times and is referred as non-specific massage. This term also applies to massage given when the athlete has arrived at the competition site ahead of the event by at least two days, or finished competition and still present at the competition site.

Non specific sports massage can be divided in to two applications:-

- *General body massage
- *Specific body massage

General body massage:-

Sports people spend a larger part of their lives in conditioning and preparing their bodies for rigorous of their particular sports performance. Many of them firmly believe that regular full body massage

will aid them in their pursuit of excellence. It mainly aims:

- *To enhance a great feeling of well being
- *To promote relaxation
- *To stimulate
- *To monitor condition of the musculature and soft tissues
- *To highlight and deal with any area that could develop into problems

Specific areas of massage:-

Dependent on the muscle groups most used in a particular event, the competitor may request an area of body to receive massage rather than a full body message, e. g. a thrower's back or shoulders.

Conclusion

Sports massage may be sports specific and those who involved in giving massage must know and understand the principles of the sports. Most importantly, the rules and call-up times of the sports must be understood.

Thus sports massage is a relaxation technique, the manipulation of skin, muscles, ligaments, and connective tissues for the purpose of realizing muscle tension and increasing physical comfort of musculature and surrounding joints.

References:-

"Massage for Therapists"-3 rd edition by Margaret Hollis (Edited by Elizabeth Jones)-P152-162, Williams, J. Massage and Sports. Bayer, Switzerland.