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## Myotherapy

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### Summary

- Myotherapy is a form of physical therapy used to treat or prevent soft tissue pain and restricted joint movement.
  - The philosophy of myotherapy is founded on Western medical principles including anatomy, physiology and biomechanics.
  - You don't need a referral from a doctor to make an appointment with a myotherapist.
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Myotherapy is a form of physical therapy used to treat or prevent soft tissue pain and restricted joint movement caused by muscle or myofascia dysfunction.

Myofascia are the thin, fibrous sheets of tissue that surround and separate muscles. Ligaments and tendons are comprised of bundled myofascia.

The philosophy of myotherapy is founded on Western medical principles including anatomy, physiology and biomechanics. You don't need a referral from a doctor to make an appointment with a myotherapist.

### Symptoms of soft tissue pain

Pain that is caused by muscle tissue or muscle fascia (myofascia) is called myofascial pain. Symptoms can include:

- deep and constant aching
- muscle tightness
- sore spots in the muscle (myofascial trigger points)
- reduced joint mobility
- stiff joints
- numbness
- recurrent tingling, prickling or 'pins and needles' sensation.

### Myotherapy can treat a range of disorders

Myotherapy can be used to treat a wide range of disorders including:

- overuse injury such as tennis elbow or shin splints
- some sports injuries
- tension headache
- pain caused by poor posture
- some types of chronic back pain
- some types of joint pain, such as shoulder impingement syndrome
- muscle sprains.

### What to expect at your first myotherapy appointment

For your first appointment, take any medical test results (such as x-ray films) that relate to your condition. The myotherapist will ask many questions about your symptoms. Tell them about your medical history, including prior illness and surgery. Give them a list of all the medicines you are currently taking. This information is kept in strictest confidence and is used by the therapist to help pinpoint the cause of your symptoms.

The myotherapist will examine and manipulate the affected joints and associated muscles, and test your reflexes. This initial examination is thorough and helps the myotherapist to find out if the symptoms are myofascial. The myotherapist may refer you to other healthcare professionals for further diagnosis or treatment, depending on your medical condition.

### **Myotherapy techniques**

Treatment depends on the assessment. Myotherapy uses a range of techniques including:

- massage, including sports and remedial techniques
- gently moving the patient's affected body part through its range of motion (passive stretching)
- hot or cold therapy
- transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) therapy
- trigger point therapy (acupressure)
- myofascial dry needling.

Each session typically lasts one hour.

### **Self-help suggestions**

The myotherapist will explain your condition in detail. Dietary changes could be recommended. The myotherapist may advise treatments to use at home including:

- exercises and stretches specific to your condition
- self-administered massage
- heat packs
- ice packs
- relaxation techniques including meditation.

### **Ongoing management with myotherapy**

The myotherapist will work with you to identify factors that may be making your condition worse (such as poor posture, scoliosis or overtraining) and help you find ways to avoid or reduce these aggravating factors.

If something cannot be changed (for example, arthritis or age-related changes to spinal discs), the myotherapist will develop a pain management program. This may involve referral to other healthcare professionals.

For acute or persistent joint pain, always see your doctor.

### **Finding a myotherapy practitioner**

Suggestions for finding a practitioner include:

- Visit the **[Australian Massage Directory](#)**.
- Contact **[Massage & Myotherapy Australia](#)** and ask for a list of members in your area.
- Ask your doctor or healthcare professional for a referral.
- Ask your friends for word-of-mouth recommendations.

### **Where to get help**

- Your **[GP \(doctor\)](#)**
- **[Massage & Myotherapy Australia](#)** Tel. **(03) 9602 7300**
- **[The Australian Massage Directory](#)**

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