

# Tuina-Massage: TCM Therapy

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**T**raditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) differs from western medicine in a number of ways. How a diagnosis is made as well as curative methods, are very specific to TCM.

Most people are familiar with acupuncture, which has become very popular in the west. Herbal medicine is also becoming more popular. Tuina-massage is the name for the massage therapy used in TCM. It is not very well known, but its history is as old as Chinese medicine itself. First records of Tuina-massage have been found from the Shang Dynasty (1700 B.C.), where oracle bones show that Tuina-massage was used to treat children's diseases and digestive problems in adults.

Tuina-massage uses the TCM theory of channels and collaterals (sometimes known as meridians or pathways) through which Qi flows. These channels are the basic therapeutic focus of Tuina-massage. Through the application of massage and manipulation techniques, Tuina-massage helps to establish a more harmonious flow of Qi through channels.

Tuina-massage brings changes in the body through stimulation induced by manipulation and movement of various parts of the body without using drugs or medical apparatus. By strengthening phagocytes which destroy bacteria, it has been demonstrated that nutrients in the body can be adjusted, and harmful agents eliminated with Tuina-massage. Tuina-massage methods include a range of various techniques, such as soft tissue massage (muscles and tendons), acupressure to directly influence the flow of Qi, and manipulation techniques to realign the muscular-skeletal system (bone setting). These techniques can be divided into two categories: reinforcing manipulations and reducing manipulations. Massage, using a light and slow touch covering a short distance along the meridians, is known as reinforcing manipulation. Massage, with a

heavy and quick touch covering a long distance, is called reducing manipulation.

It was believed that Bodhi-dharma, from ancient India, contributed greatly to the development of Tuina-massage. Bodhi-dharma came to China to study massage in 507 A.D. He served as a monk in the Shaolin Monastery with a veteran monk as his teacher. He meditated for nine years and learned the manipulation techniques of pressing, rubbing, pushing, and pulling. Based on this knowledge, he developed ten techniques and invented the flicking manipulation. Today, commonly used techniques involve pushing, stroking, grasping, pressing, pinching, rubbing, rolling, shaking, rotating, percussing, and pulling.

A tuina-massage treatment focuses on specific problems rather than being a generalized treatment and it can be used to treat a variety of medical conditions. The doctor will focus on specific pain sites, acupressure points, energy meridians, muscles and joints.

During a treatment, you may feel comfortable or you might experience varying degrees of discomfort when your therapist uses different manipulations on particular parts of your body. In order to get the best effect, your therapist will stimulate the aching areas and use special manipulations if necessary. If you tell your therapist you are experiencing discomfort, he/she will decrease the movements. Tuina-massage differs substantially from western physiotherapy and relaxing massage. Even though similar manipulations are used in other types of massage, Tuina-massage is a therapeutic TCM intervention. Tuina-massage should not be used if you have fractures or open wounds, internal bleeding or other serious medical conditions. Be sure to tell your doctor about any medical conditions before beginning a treatment.✍

*Article provided by Body & Soul Medical Clinics*