



Sports Massage

-By: Angee Sieckman

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San Diego's year-round sunshine makes it an ideal city for outdoor sports and recreation. It comes as no surprise that the Rock n' Roll Marathon is celebrating its 14th year next month, with more than 20,000 runners. As thousands of athletes prepare for the big event, it is important to consider the role of "Sports Massage" for pre- and post-event self-care.



In the massage industry, "sports massage" has become a catch-all phrase – one that clients often misinterpret and think of as "deep work." In fact, "sports massage" is intended to be

individualized treatment(s) to reach a specific goal. A May 2003 article in *Massage Today* defined "sports massage" as "the specific application of massage techniques.... utilized to achieve a specific goal when treating an athlete." As a client, it is important to understand your objectives before receiving massage and to ask yourself two questions:

- Is my massage pre or post event?
- What is the purpose of the massage?

The pre- or post-event elements are essential for the therapist to know before customizing a session design. If you are getting bodywork before the event, it is valuable to consider what kind of event you are participating; for example, runners in the Rock n' Roll Marathon have been training to have stamina and to be able to tackle the significant climbs in speed. The intention of pre event massage is to warm the body by increasing blood flow, support joint mobility, and encourage relaxation.

After the event, the focus of the bodywork shifts to recovery, which can include reducing sore and tight muscle, and increasing ROM (range of motion). As the client, it is important to recognize that massage therapists cannot provide first aid, and if injured it is best to receive permission from your physician before receiving massage of any kind (McGillicuddy, 2003).

Regardless of pre- or post-event massage, there are a variety of benefits to receiving a sports massage. Dr. Owen Anderson, an exercise physiologist and editor of *Running Research News*, said, "Massage is good for relaxing, and provides help increasing flexibility of muscles."

Additionally, Keith Grant, head of the Sports and Deep Tissue Massage Department at McKinnon Institute, said, "In my observation, fatigued muscles tend to remain hypertonic and shortened. When we cajole specific muscles to relax and lengthen... we reduce their metabolic activity.... By massaging muscles and adding input to the nervous system, we are facilitating the body in recovering faster from exercise." (Vanderbilt, 2001)



The IPSB Massage Therapy Center (MTC) has several therapists who practice sports massage. Each practitioner has a background in athletics, which allows them to better understand the various athletes they work with. Whether you are participating in the Rock n' Roll Marathon, or take part in any kind of sport, consider the benefits of sports massage, and its role in your self-care and athletic condition.

To schedule a sports massage, contact the MTC at **858-490-1154**, or schedule **on-line** at <http://tinyurl.com/ipsbmtconlinestore>.

The therapists who practice sports massage are: Anna-Karenina, Bart, Blythe, Casie, Daniel, Kayla, Mar, Samuele and Yukari

About the Author: Angee Sieckman, BA, MT, has a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism from Point Loma Nazarene University. She began her journey with IPSB in 2007, and is currently the Manager of IPSB's Massage Therapy Center. She has a small but rewarding private practice.