

# MEDICAL LIFE

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## Massage is not just for relaxation anymore

Newer and expanded practices have many medically related and aesthetic values

by Mark Jahne

Massage has come a long way from the traditional model of loosening tight muscles and relaxing the mind. What some practitioners of this art offer today can have many related benefits, too.

Two such practitioners are David Priest and Nancy Sinchak, partners in the West Hartford Massage Clinic at 45 South Main Street.

Both are licensed massage therapists with many

years of experience.

They work on a wide variety of issues that can help people achieve their athletic best or recover from injury. They can even make cellulite disappear, in a sense.

"The field of massage is just as vast as the field of medicine. There are all types of therapies," said Mr. Priest, who studied in California before returning to his native East Coast.

He became convinced that massage had greater than acknowledged therapeutic value when he suffered a sports injury to the back of his knee. Traditional medicine, pills, even physical therapy, did not provide sufficient or lasting relief. But a new form of massage resulted in dramatic improvement in just a matter of days.

He was so intrigued that he gave up his prior career as a magazine sales executive to become a massage therapist. The type of massage that healed his sore knee is called neurokinetic massage and he and Ms. Sinchak both practice it on their clients.

He described it as rehabilitative body work.

"It's good for addressing chronic injuries, sports injuries," his partner added. These include whiplash, carpal tunnel syndrome, repetitive strain injuries, TMJ (a jaw disorder), sciatica, tendinitis and even headaches, according to



David Priest and Nancy Sinchak are co-owners of the West Hartford Massage Clinic. They have expanded the traditional role of massage into several medically related applications.

"I've worked with a lot of triathletes" to help them reach their maximum level of achievement, Mr. Priest said. "It's really good for athletic optimization. It's an effective technique for lots of things."

He has practiced neurokinetic massage for 12 years. He worked for three years as the team therapist back when the Hartford Fox Force was part of the World Team Tennis league.

"A lot of times we do a combination of things," Ms. Sinchak said. "We have to customize each session" to meet the needs of the client.

This can include myofascial release and scar tissue work.

Both therapists also practice craniosacral massage, which they described as a form of detection and correction. It involves the cranium, bones in the head and face, neck and spinal column down to the sacrum, which is at the base of the spine.

This can help people with such issues as head injuries, tinnitus and neurological problems. "It frees up your nervous system" said Ms. Sinchak.

They also perform massage that helps drain and improve the operation of the lymphatic system. Unlike the circulatory system in our bodies that moves the blood and is powered by the heart, the lymphatic system does not have a pump, so its fluid

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## Massage/39

can pool, especially in the lower extremities.

"Moving lymph through the lymph system" is how Ms. Sinchak describes it. In addition to the work she and Mr. Priest perform, they teach clients how to do self-massage in this area.

"I've worked on a lot of people who have chronic illnesses" and improving the flow of the lymphatic system can help relieve those conditions, she said. Doing so rids the body of toxins and stagnant lymph fluid.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating advances in massage therapy in a process called Lypossage. This is a body contouring treatment for women that can make you look slimmer and healthier without losing weight.

Sound too good to be true? Mr. Priest contends that Lypossage treatment can achieve physical dimension loss of several inches.

It's all based on targeting cellulite, a natural part of every woman's body.

It has the added advantage, as noted by Ms. Sinchak, of removing toxic fluids that camp out in cellulite tissue.

Mr. Priest said that this treatment lifts tissue and improves muscle tone. It can be used anywhere cellulite is present, including the hips, thighs, lower abdomen, neck and face. This treatment can even improve a woman's posture.

"It helps firm the tissue. It does smooth the dimpled appearance of the cellulite," Ms. Sinchak said. "You have an overall healthier appearance."

Lypossage treatment is a specific blend of massage modalities that derive from physical therapy, including deep lymphatic drainage and deep tissue release. It cleanses the body of stagnant, stalled lymphatic fluid that can create unsightly lumps and bulges.

Deeper Lypossage breaks up adhesions under the skin that contribute to the dimpled, uneven appearance of cellulite. Ms. Sinchak also uses phototherapy to stimulate collagen production. She likened this treatment to cellular regeneration.

"We see a lot of liposuction clients" for Lypossage, both before and after the procedure, she added. It helps firm the body tissue and maintain the results of the liposuction.

"It can also be used for lymph congestion and lymphedema," Mr. Priest said.

Both therapists emphasized that this procedure is all about dimension loss, not weight loss. It can be done manually, with an FDA-approved machine, or with a combination of the two.

Mr. Priest also does reflexology, which involves massaging the feet. This can have benefits throughout the body and is a valuable assessment tool.

"We don't diagnose or prescribe anything here," he said, but they do offer recommendations to improve health.

"We have clients of all ages, teenagers up to people in their 80s," Ms. Sinchak added.

They opened their practice last November. Mr. Priest grew up in Westchester, N.Y., and came to this area 10 years ago. Ms. Sinchak is originally from California and has lived here for 16 years.

Most of their sessions are an hour in duration. Costs vary depending upon what modality the patient chooses. For more information call 860-756-5560 or visit [www.westhartfordmassage.com](http://www.westhartfordmassage.com). **AL**

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