

A body in

BALANCE

Massage therapy for injuries, pain and athletics

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Massage therapy has many health benefits, from general relaxation to injury recovery.

While some may think a massage is only something a person would receive at a spa, local massage therapist Rose Smarr said that is only one style.

“In a very broad sense, there’s two basic worlds of massage,” she said.

“Almost everything runs between muscle. Nerves hate to have pinchy pressure.”

Rose Smarr,
licensed massage therapist

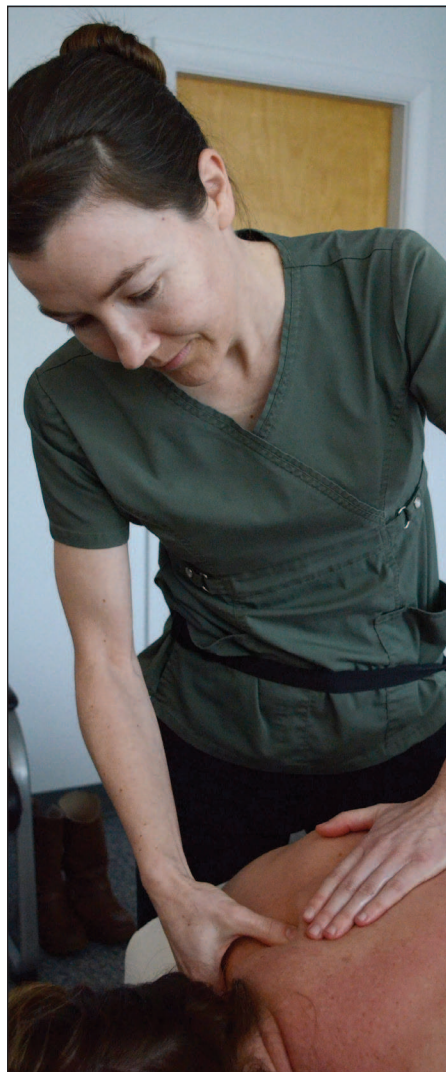
The traditional spa massage typically focuses on the whole body and bodily systems. Smarr said it helps reduce stress, improve sleeping and boost the immune system.

In contrast to the more overall approach, Smarr said she trained in a different technique called specific injury treatment, a type of deep-tissue work.

She said the therapeutic technique treats specific problems by working to balance the tension of muscles in the body, “side to side and front to back,” to ensure blood flow is not inhibited, nerves are not obstructed and joints move correctly.

The technique is used for injury prevention and recovery, athletics and pain management.

“It can be applied to pretty much any injury,” she said.



The Eagle/Sean Hart

Licensed massage therapist Rose Smarr works on a patient at her office in John Day. Massage therapy is beneficial for people with injuries and pain as well as athletes, she said.

Injuries

Smarr commonly treats low back pain and headaches, but the technique improves many other ailments because it affects blood flow and nerves.

“A huge goal is bringing blood flow in,” Smarr said.

When muscles are too tight, she said, it constricts the capillaries — the smallest blood vessels that exchange oxygen, nutrients and waste between blood and tissue.

Loosening the muscles through massage improves the blood flow and helps the area heal, she said.

The process works similarly on nerves, which run from the spine throughout the body.

“Almost everything runs between muscle,” she said. “Nerves hate to have pinchy pressure.”

The technique can also remove pressure from bones, allowing them to slide into place, she said, especially in the back. Removing tension from one side of the body allows muscles to lie more naturally and connected bone systems to align better, she said.

Athletics

Sports injuries can be treated with therapeutic massage, but there are other benefits for athletes as well.

Smarr said athletes use massage as a monitoring system to notify them of potential issues before major problems arise.

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