

## About Shiatsu

Shiatsu is a physical therapy that **supports and strengthens the body's natural ability to heal and balance itself**. It works on the whole person - not just with the physical body, but also with the **psychological, emotional and spiritual** aspects of being.

Shiatsu originated in Japan from traditional Chinese medicine, with influences from more recent Western therapies. Although shiatsu means 'finger pressure' in Japanese, in practice a practitioner uses **touch, comfortable pressure and manipulative techniques** to adjust the body's physical structure and balance its energy flow. These techniques initiate nerve reflexes that benefits the body's internal organs, tissues and their various functions. It is a deeply relaxing experience and regular treatments **can alleviate stress and illness and maintain health and well-being**.



## History of Shiatsu

Massage, along with acupuncture and herbalism, was for centuries an integral part of traditional Chinese medicine. The Japanese developed and refined many of its methods to suit their own physiology, temperament and climate. In particular, they developed the manual healing and diagnostic arts, evolving special techniques of abdominal diagnosis, treatment and massage, which are used in shiatsu today.

In the early part of the 20th century, one such practitioner, Tamai Tempaku, incorporated the newer Western sciences of anatomy and physiology and disciplines such as physiotherapy and chiropractic into several older methods of treatment. Originally he used the term shiatsu ryoho or finger pressure way of healing, then shiatsu ho or finger pressure method. Now known simply as Shiatsu, it was officially recognized as a therapy by the Japanese Government in 1964, so distinguishing it from anma and Western massage.

## Styles of Shiatsu

Today, Shiatsu has a number of different styles, philosophical approaches and theoretical bases and practitioners around the world are still evolving new approaches to treatment. Some concentrate on acupressure (acupuncture) points, while others emphasize more general work on the body or along the pathways of energy to influence the Ki that flows in them. Some styles are such as the **Five Element system** following the organ meridians or **Zen Shiatsu**, which incorporates special exercises, known as makko ho, to stimulate the flow of Ki.



## Preparing for a session



**Wear loose, comfortable clothing**, Shiatsu incorporates stretches and movement. **A session is relaxing and has a calming effect**. Shiatsu uses a variety of manual techniques, including **pressure, kneading, soothing, tapping, and stretching** to access the vital Qi of the body. In the case where the client's energy is low or deficient, the practitioner uses specific techniques to enhance and vitalize the Qi. When the client is over-stressed, wound-up, or anxious, the practitioner employs techniques

to disperse the "excess" energy. In this way, the Qi is regulated. Shiatsu works to **alleviate conditions, restore balance, and promote health**.

## Benefits of Shiatsu

Shiatsu is a non-invasive therapy that may help **reduce stress** and contribute to overall **wellbeing**. Proponents believe that it has both preventative and remedial effects.

Shiatsu can be used in the treatment of a wide range of **internal, musculoskeletal, and emotional conditions**. It is thought to **reduce muscle stiffness, stimulate the skin, aid digestion**, and influence the **nervous system**. Shiatsu is used to treat a wide range of chronic conditions, such as **headaches, PMS, digestive disorders, fatigue, insomnia, fibromyalgia, stress, anxiety, and musculoskeletal pain**, including **low back, neck, and joint pain**.

The effect may be stimulating and invigorating or calming and sedative, depending on the goal of the session.