

Hot Stone Massage - An Ancient & Powerful Healing Art!

You may be surprised to know that throughout history many different cultures have incorporated both hot and cold rocks in their healing rituals. This article presents a brief overview at these different cultures and how they use hot and cold rocks in healing, particularly in massage and bodywork. The European cultures used hot rocks to heat their saunas, and applied hot stones to tired and sore muscles to alleviate tension and muscle pain. Native Americans also used hot rocks in their traditional sweat lodge ceremony, large rocks were used to heat the sweat lodge while smaller hot rocks were passed around to place on specific areas of tension. Various cultures also used cold rocks to slow bleeding after labour, women also held the stones during labour believing it would add to their strength and endurance. The Chinese history dating back four thousand years to the Shang Dynasty also shows the use of hot stones to relieve stress, tension and pain. In Oriental Medicine hot stones are used in conjunction with the Meridian channels to promote a better flow of energy around the body. In Ayurvedic medicine in India, the hot stones were used in conjunction with their knowledge of the Marma points. The Japanese used hot stones in Anma, the oldest form of East Asian Massage. The Japanese hot stone massage techniques create similar effects to moxibustion, in that heat penetrates and stimulates the tsubo, or acupoints. The Hawaiians also used lava rocks in their Lomi-Lomi. Rough stones were used to exfoliate after a massage, while smooth lava rocks were either placed on the body in ti-leaves or used to massage. At times two stones were tapped together against the body to allow deep tissue vibrational healing. The lava stone was used as a symbol for healing and protection. Hot rocks have also been used in Ancient Egypt, Africa and South America playing an important part in the healing rituals of these ancient cultures. The healers and bodyworkers used tools to assist the healing process, including crystals, essences, flowers and stones. The hot stone massage evolved as stones from river beds were warmed in the hot sun, in hot coals or hot water, they were then laid directly on the body, on a cloth on the body or used to massage with (depending on the temperature of the stone). This tradition continues today as the knowledge of the ancient stones is rediscovered and used more and more. People are once again realising the benefits of this special and unique healing massage. We can see this by the growing popularity of hot stone massage treatments in spas and clinics around the world. In fact, here in Australia hot stone massage is fast becoming one of the most requested treatments with many health and wellbeing establishments listing it on their menus as their 'signature' treatment. So what is it that makes hot stone massage so popular? Well, a common response from those who have experienced this specialized treatment is how deeply relaxing it is and how it feels like they've had a really deep, thorough massage, without the discomfort often experienced with deep tissue massage. This effect is due to the fact that, 'heat is healing' and when you have a hot stone massage treatment the emanating heat from the stones is gently, yet continually penetrating into your muscle fibres and literally melting away layers of tension. As tension is the root cause of illness, when tension is alleviated, the body quickly returns to it's natural state of wellbeing, promoting a sense of inner peace in the recipient. Keeping this in mind, it should come as no surprise why more and more people are turning to the healing power of hot stones to relieve the stresses of their modern day lifestyles. This growing popularity has lead to an increase in demand for skilled hot stone massage practitioners and presents a fantastic opportunity to existing massage therapists to add an amazing treatment and invaluable asset to their massage and healing repertoire. For the massage connoisseur, the experience of a hot stone massage (when done skilfully and with care) is second to none, and can take you to levels of relaxation, never before experienced. It appears that yet again that the stresses of our modern world have been the catalyst for reconnecting to this truly ancient and powerful healing art - hot stone massage.

About the Author

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