

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON STUDYING THAI MASSAGE

- 1. How is Thai massage different from Western massage?** Thai massage is a form of energy work using acupressure and stretching techniques. No oil is used, the client is clothed and sessions are done on a mat on the floor. The practitioner mainly uses their palms, thumbs, forearms, elbows & knees.
- 2. What are the benefits of Thai massage?** Relaxing for the nervous system, stimulating for the circulatory system, rejuvenating for the musculo-skeletal system, cleansing for the internal organs and rehabilitating for injuries. Thai massage is beneficial to the joints, helping chronic symptoms of hip pain, back, neck or shoulder tension, elbow, wrist and knee problems. Thai massage increases vital energy and aligns the chakras.
- 3. What is Traditional Thai Medicine (TTM)?** In the "Protection and promotion of Thai Traditional Medicine Wisdom Act B.E. 2452" published by the Thai Government's Ministry of Health, it states that, "the medical processes dealing with the examination, diagnosis, therapy, treatment, or prevention of diseases, or promotion and rehabilitation of the health of humans or animals, midwifery, Thai massage, as well as the preparation or production of Thai traditional medicines and the making of devices and instruments for medical purposes. All of these are based on the knowledge that was passed on and developed from generation to generation. (The Role of Thai Traditional Medicine in Health Promotion, by Vichai Chokevivat, MD, MPH and Anchalee Chuthaputti. Ph. D, Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand)
- 4. How is it different from TCM and Ayurveda?** The diagnosis of the different patterns of the elements in relation to the body have unique qualities in all three systems of health. TTM lends the theory that disease develops from the imbalance of the four elements in three degrees: excessive, weakness and deficiency. The elements that appear with the combination of body and emotion as part of nature and the universe are: Earth, Water, Wind and Fire. TTM has four paths to health, they are nutrition, herbs, spirituality and massage. The preservation of TTM is done a disservice by the combination of the TCM and Ayurveda systems, even though there are some aspects which do overlap.
- 3. How is Thai massage different from Shiatsu?** Thai massage is similar to Shiatsu and may even look the same in some movements. The intent is different with respect to the energy channels. Thai massage uses passive supported stretching, it emphasizes breathwork and clearing of the channels with acupressure, whereas shiatsu pointwork and compression techniques are directed more to specific acupressure points along the meridians and stretching is not as prominent.
- 4. How often should someone receive a session?** For relaxation, as often as you like. For chronic pain; once a week. For acute pain; daily until improvement, then once a week.
- 5. When should someone not have a session?** If one is intoxicated, has a fever or a serious injury, if in the first trimester of pregnancy, if advanced osteoporosis is present or certain types of cancer.
- 6. How long is a Thai massage session?** A complete session lasts from 90 minutes to three or four hours, depending on the practitioner and the situation of the client.
- 7. Why so long?** A basic session at 90 minutes would be the minimum for a relaxing full-body massage with a stretching component. In 2 hours the practitioner would be able to target 2 or 3 complaint areas and in 3 or 4 hours, the practitioner may also incorporate techniques of herbal compress or Thai reflexology into the session.
- 8. How does it relate to Hatha Yoga?** Often referred to as Thai Yoga massage or lazy person's Yoga, there is an aspect of Hatha Yoga in the basic supported asanas and breathwork. Safely taking you deeper into stretches, the practitioner then applies acupressure techniques to the channels in various positions. The result is often finding areas of tightness, you simply didn't know existed.
- 9. How does it relate to Buddhism?** There is no "religious" component to this program. Buddhist philosophies are resonated at the core of Thai massage practice, for the Thai's. The spirit of Thai massage is Metta, which is the Theravada Pali word for loving-kindness and compassion. Meditation is important for this work to cultivate awareness and sensitivity to the energy. Chanting is traditional to prepare for the teachings and show gratitude to the revered founder Jivaka Kumar Baccha.
- 10. Should I study in Thailand or here?** We encourage our students to study with many different teachers. Every practitioner should have some experience with the Thai culture during their development and there are many qualified instructors located all over the world. Sacredasia brings aspects of Thai culture to Canada for you to have a traditional experience with clinical Western landmarks and anatomical cross reference.
- 11. What kind of commitment is this program?** This program is a solid month of full time weekday hours, plus a 2 hour clinical exam and any private tutorials that are needed.
- 12. What would prevent someone from learning?** The student must be in good health, any illnesses or recent injuries may prevent one from being comfortable while learning Thai massage. We have had students that range from the elderly, the blind to those physically rehabilitating and we can adapt the teachings for many challenges such as poor knees and wrists.

- 13. Do I need to be a massage therapist to take the course?** You do not require previous training to do Thai Massage. It is completely different to Western massage therapy and those with a background in bodywork find their flow and ergonomics with an advantage. The only pre-requisite for this program is a high-school diploma, cases are considered on an individual basis.
- 14. Is the teacher a certified instructor?** Yes, Kristin Nuttall, RTT is accredited instructor of Thai massage, as approved by The Thai Healing Alliance International (THAI), the highest standard for measuring the qualifications of therapists & instructors.
- 15. Is there a clinical component to the course?** Yes, there is a supervised student practicum of 30 hours during the program. Students will work on the general public with formal intake procedures.
- 15. Do I have to take an exam?** Yes, there is a written exam during class and a practical exam, scheduled individually with each student and the instructor, with certain dates to choose from.
- 17. What kind of certification is given in this program?** Graduates will receive their diploma and a letter of recognition upon completion of the program, plus the written & practical examinations. They must then apply to THAI to receive their RTT (Registered Thai Therapist) title and certification.
- 18. How many levels are there in Thai massage?** In Thailand one week of study is equivalent to one level. Basic Practitioner level is at 170 hours, Advanced Practitioner level is at 500 and Instructor Level requires more than 800 hours. (see specifics at [www.thaihealingalliance.com/ap-info.htm](http://www.thaihealingalliance.com/ap-info.htm))
- 19. Is a basic course enough to practice Thai massage?** If you have a background in bodywork, taking a 30 hour course will get you started, but it will only begin to hint at the depth of the practice as Thai massage is much more than a routine of skills.
- 20. How many students in the class per instructor?** We accept up to 10 students in a class with one instructor and up to 16 with an assistant. Having an intimately sized group is an important factor for our learning environment.
- 21. Do I need to purchase any equipment?** You will need a high-density mat 2-4 inches thick and at least 30" x 75"; bolsters, cushions, a blanket, a sheet and a pillow, plus an eyepillow, a bowl of warm water, tea tree oil and a face cloth for the foot ritual.
- 22. Do I need to bring anything to class?** Yes, please bring a yoga mat, if you have purchased a Thai mat, please bring it with you (if not we will provide one for you), bring a couple of massage table sheets and a pillow. Wear comfortable, loose clothing (no track pants as they tend to make a lot of noise or pants with large pockets or zippers on the legs). Bring your lunch and snacks, tea will be provided.
- 23. What is the schedule of an average day?** We start every day with stretching exercises of Yoga or Thai Ruesri Dut Ton, plus some meditation, chanting and energy field work. We do 1-2 hours of lectures, 1 hour of demonstration and 4-5 hours of exchanging practice. Lastly, we close every day with chanting and there are some reading assignments.
- 24. Can I do private/shared tutoring with the instructor?** Yes, tutoring is available for one or two students at a time to review demonstrations, improve technique, stances and flow or to make up any class time missed.
- 25. Can I get a job after graduating?** You will learn about different employment choices in the industry and decide whether it suits you to become a spa contractor, employee or to have a home-based practice. Our graduates lead successful careers in Thai massage. It is a wonderful tool of transition if you are thinking of changing careers.
- 26. Can I get liability insurance?** Yes, there are several different insurance brokers and associations which cover Thai massage. In Alberta many practitioners choose AMTWP. Another option is Preventative Health Services which is based out of Ontario and is half the cost for a year of insurance. Students must obtain their insurance while in the program to do the practicum component of the course.
- 27. Is Thai massage covered by extended medical?** Not at this time. Efforts are being made by THAI to get Thai massage recognized by medical establishment and so it becomes important to support the trade organization for Thai massage.



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