



Unwind with a calming Swedish massage at Aquaterra Spa at Surf & Sand Resort.

**UNWIND WITH SWEDISH**

Known for its light pressure, the calming Swedish massage style is a popular choice at spas. “It’s a beginner’s massage for people who are not used to getting a massage on a frequent basis,” says Johanna Riart, spa manager at Aquaterra Spa at Surf & Sand Resort. She adds that this method is best for people who want to get into the “spa mood and Zen mood and just want to relax and want to be taken away.”

Johanna says Swedish massage can lower the heart rate, helping to relieve stress. “It trains the body how to relax,” she says. “... It trains your body to be in that state of mind.”

Effleurage—the long, slow, soothing strokes with light pressure—automatically makes the body more tranquil, she says. Similar to yoga, she explains, “it helps you to breathe better” by encouraging you to inhale and exhale more slowly and deeply. Johanna says it can even relieve headaches by bringing more oxygen into the body, as the pain may be caused by a drop in oxygen levels.

Swedish massage can also boost immunity; improve blood circulation; relax the muscles; keep the joints more fluid; and speed up recovery after an injury, she says. Although the style is “the most traditional massage out there,” Johanna says there are plenty of ways to customize a treatment with deep tissue approach in certain areas of the body or adding hot stones or other elements tailored to the client’s needs.

**ALLEVIATE TENSION WITH DEEP TISSUE**

At Spa Montage Laguna Beach, requests for deep tissue-style massages often come from guests looking for treatment that is a bit more therapeutic, says spa operations manager Cherie Rodriguez. “When they come in and maybe have aches and pains or tension in specific areas, a lot of times they will request a deep tissue massage because they are looking for more of a results-oriented style or approach to those tension areas,” she explains.

“... Physically, the pressure is a little bit more on the firm side and you can really feel the therapist working on the deep layers of the muscles,” Cherie says, adding that massages are often customized using deep tissue and other styles based on what the client needs or wants to achieve, from relieving overall tightness to a specific knot or tension area.

Some guests request deep tissue massage to address a structural imbalance, feeling tension in their lower back that’s actually stemming from their hips or knees, while others might feel tension in their neck and shoulders from sitting at a

computer too much, Cherie says.

The deep tissue approach can even alleviate symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome, she notes. “That has a lot to do with inflammation of the neck and shoulders because the nerves that interlace the arms and hands are coming from and branching out of the spine in the neck and shoulder area. ... So, for example, someone with carpal tunnel syndrome might request a more therapeutic style massage—the deep tissue-style massage—to really open up the neck and shoulder area.”

Although Cherie says guests will feel some relief after the initial massage, those with chronic conditions may be advised to come for more frequent treatments so the therapist can continue to make progress on relieving the symptoms. “And they might also give you recommendations for what you can do at home to support the work that they’re doing,” Cherie says. “... They might talk to you about your water intake or what you’re eating and how that affects your body. Or they might have you do some stretches.”



JOHN RUSSO

Spa Montage Laguna Beach often receives requests for deep tissue-style massages.