

Chinese Massage Pummels Problems

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Across China there are thousands of foot massage clinics for weary travellers, locals looking for relief from the streets and stress of big cities and those seeking the latest in health care maintenance.

The clinics range from up market establishments with well trained practitioners to fly by night corner shops. Once you have checked the bona fides of the clinic, preferably by being referred by a friend or local, you are greeted by uniformed practitioners and led to a small room with several large reclining chairs. This is so you can go as a group and enjoy the experience together. There is soothing background music and usually some large TVs for those who need to keep up with the latest news. You can choose the type of ambience you like.

The first step is to have your feet soaked and bathed in warm water with soothing herbs. This can be relaxing, or very ticklish, depending on your sensitivities. After having your feet dried, fragrant oils are applied and a general relaxing sequence of pressing and stretching begins. Now you can sink back into the big recliners or sip herbal tea and chat to your neighbour.

But this first phase of relaxation only prepares the way for what follows. Gradually the practitioner increases the pressure and begins to search out every sore point on your foot that you have accumulated from a lifetime of use. They follow a routine, designed by Doctors of Chinese massage. Each muscle, sinew and joint is worked on using a myriad of techniques. At times the pain is nearly unbearable, but the attentive practitioners are alert to your tolerance level, and work ever deeper into feet that may never have had maintenance work before. These practitioners are not professionals, but have undertaken short intensive training.

Part of the massage involves the practitioner using their knuckles to press areas on the feet that correspond to different parts of the body. This is similar to reflexology in the West, but the Chinese have their own maps of the areas of body correspondences on the feet and a bigger array of techniques.

Severe pain can reflect problems with a particular organ or body part, and by working on these painful points on the feet, some relief or healing can be initiated. This sort of treatment originates from the professional Chinese massage departments found in all hospitals in China and the specialist Chinese Massage research institutes set up by the Government of China in recent years.

After the painful points have been found and the pain eased, a calm begins to descend on you and a sense of relief and deep relaxation is experienced. Many people fall asleep as the practitioner wipes away the oils with steaming towels and you are left in a state of semi-tranquility until it is time to tread the footpaths once more.

Walking out of the clinic, your feet will feel light and somewhat new again. The experience becomes addictive and before long you will be longing for that feeling of renewal again.

In Perth, there are no specialty Chinese foot massage centres yet, but you can get a professional Chinese Massage. This involves work directly on the affected areas of the body. Brisk rolling, pushing and pulling techniques are applied to get stiff and sore muscles to relax. A session can last 20-40 minutes. Generally clothes are left on for Chinese massage, as oils need not be used. Liniments are occasionally rubbed into sore or inflamed areas and then brisk massage strokes applied with fingers, knuckles, elbows and palms. The effect is immediate and relief can be obtained where all else has failed.

Chinese Massage treats a wide range of musculoskeletal injuries and pain. It can also be used as an adjunct to Acupuncture and Chinese Herbs for chronic health problems like digestive disorders and stress related conditions.

In China there are also specialty departments of paediatric massage for babies. Colic is a common problem treated easily with Chinese massage.

For a professional Chinese massage you need to seek out a qualified practitioner. And if you happen to be in Shanghai, then a foot massage may be the pick me up you need after long hours of sightseeing.

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