

# FMA

# Informative

Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

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## Massage Therapy

*Unbeknownst to many martial artists today, massage therapy and martial arts are two disciplines which can coexist and complement each other.*



*Alison Fand*

**Massage Therapy and the Martial Artists**  
**Physical Benefits**  
**Self-Care**



[www.allysearhtreasures.com](http://www.allysearhtreasures.com)

The FMA Informative was fortunate in being able to correspond with Alison through her husband Ron Kosakowski of Traditional Filipino Weapons (TraditionalFilipinoWeapons.com). There are many types of healing as the FMA Informative has put forth in the past like Hilot. However massage is a type of healing that works the system of the body, coupled with the correct lotions and hot and cold packs a definite benefit can be the out come for any practitioner.

Alison Fand has been a licensed massage therapist for many years and has been training and learning various massage methods since 2001. She performs a variety of massage modalities including Rain Drop Therapy, Swedish Massage, Deep Tissue Massage, Sports Massage, Pre-natal Massage, Shiatsu, Acupressure, Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy, Hot Stone Massage and Traditional Thailand Massage. She has also studied Aromatherapy, which is used in many of her products, along with many other healing therapies. Her products are found on a website she Founded, [AllysEarthTreasures.com](http://AllysEarthTreasures.com).

Alison is a member of the American Massage Therapy Association as well as The National Certification Board For Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork.

In addition, Alison has been working with people with developmental disabilities, primarily people with autism, for over 20 years. She has incorporated massage into her work with them since her massage licensing. Alison has received specific massage certification to work with them as well. Also, she carries Medical Administration Certification within the Connecticut State Department of Development Services. Alison maintains annual and biannual inservice trainings required by the state department such as Abuse and Neglect, Infection Control, Osha standards, Habilitative Planning as well as Physical and Psychological Management Techniques.

Furthermore, Alison has been a certified CPR and First Aid Instructor for over ten years as a volunteer for the American Red Cross.

Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts, other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts, the culture of the Philippines and other related subjects.

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Unbeknownst to many martial artists today, massage therapy and martial arts are two disciplines which can coexist and complement each other. Personally, the decision to embark on both disciplines initially seemed contradictory. As a long-time massage therapist and a facilitator of healing, I was not sure if I wanted to enter the practice of martial arts, which I perceived to be only in the realm of violence and harm. I was, nevertheless, attracted to the idea of being able to defend myself. I could not pretend to live in a perfect world however much I would like to think the best of people. Therefore, almost three years ago, I started my education in the specialty of Kuntao Dumpag, a Filipino martial art, at the Practical Self Defense Training Center in Waterbury, Connecticut. Since then, I've come to realize there really is a strong connection between the two disciplines. Martial arts and massage education both, at their best, have a holistic approach, a mind, body and spirit connection. In this issue, I will explore the similarities between these massage therapy areas of healing and martial arts, examining their benefits while defining some massage modalities and other aspects of natural healing.

The connection between massage and martial arts has a long history. Recently, I attended a massage course on Ashitsu Oriental Bar Therapy. In the opening lecture, it was stated this therapy was partly based on Chavutti Thirummal, an ancient art of Keralite massage. This barefoot massage was traditionally done by martial artists on other martial artists thousands of years

ago. Indian philosophy suggests that one cannot truly give a good massage without being proficient in the martial arts. It is easily understood the martial artists likely needed relief from aches and pains as well as injuries incurred during training and battles. It may be harder, however, to understand why it was the martial artists who gave the best massages.

To understand the viewpoint behind this philosophy, we have to consider ourselves as more than just solely physical beings. We have emotion, spirits/energy and minds, too. When we, as healers or martial artists, are dealing with people, we must look at them holistically. We should remain conscious of their physical, emotional, spiritual/energetic and mental aspects at all times. Developing our intuition and perception is important. We need to look for not only obvious cues but also subtle indicators to truly see what is going on with the other person as a whole. It's best to take in their body language, size, posture, gait, energy, intentions, etc...to be able to effectively work with him/her as either an opponent in the martial arts arena or as a massage client.

We need to look at ourselves holistically as well. When doing martial arts or massage therapy not only do we need to focus on our knowledge of anatomy and physical techniques but also we need to pay attention on calming our mind, remaining centered, grounded and present. When challenged by people during the practice of martial arts and occasionally during a massage, we will be faced with negative energy. This is readily apparent in the practice of martial arts but

there are times during a massage as well when a client may become emotional during a session and have an emotional release. The therapist must use their abilities to remain compassionate and at the same time not allow the transfer of negative energy into them. A martial artist must also remain calm and work with the energy coming at him/her from his/her opponent.

In addition, there is an aspect of what I like to call the yin and yang of martial arts. That is, we have the ability of harming which comes with the ability of healing and vice versa. There are vital points on the body when stimulated can induce healing. When the same points are hit or cut, however, with more force it can be completely disruptive or damaging. For example, Kalari fighters back in 1500 BC used an opponents' marma (vital points) points to inflict pain and injury. They were then healed with the same marma points if they were wounded in battle. Of course, it is our focus, power, and intention that changes. A practitioner of both massage and martial art disciplines will have the intuition and knowledge to know what is appropriate to do at any given time. I believe it comes down to having good character and good values as well as thorough training. Ideally, we will use our martial arts to protect ourselves and the ones we love and our healing abilities to show kindness and compassion to others.

It does feel good to help others feel better. Fortunately for us, there are many ways to facilitate healing. For me, I love the various types of massage therapy. So much so, I became

a massage therapist. Massage dates back in time and is found in many cultures all over the world. I believe it is our instinct to touch one another and give our warm energy. Massage, however, is so much more than just pampering that feels good. Massage can have profound effects on physical, mental and emotional states.

### Massage Physical Benefits



Physically relaxes the body, calms the nervous system, lowers blood pressure, reduces heart rate, slows respiration, loosens tight muscles, stretches connective tissue, reduces chronic pain, improves skin tone, increases blood and lymph circulation, speeds the removal of metabolic waste, increases red blood cell counts, relieves tired and aching muscles, stimulates the release of endorphins, improves muscle tone, relieves cramps and muscle spasms, increases flexibility and range of motion, promotes deeper more effective breathing, speeds recovery from injuries and illness strengthens the immune system, reduces swelling, reduces scarring, improves posture, reduces tension headaches, increases tissue metabolism and decreases muscular deterioration.

**Mental Benefits:** *reduces mental stress, promotes better sleep, calms bad temper and improves concentration.*

**Emotional Benefits:** *reduces anxiety, enhances self-image, provides a feeling of wellbeing and promotes greater creative expression.*

It is impossible to talk about massage and not mention stress. Stress is a killer. When someone does not cope well with the stress in their lives, their immune systems can be compromised, leaving them vulnerable to illness and disease. Some people even believe cancer and heart attacks could be caused when our resistance is low. Massage is a great way to reduce stress. After 11 years, it still is the number 1 complaint I receive from clients.

As mentioned earlier, there are many types of massages called modalities. Below are brief descriptions of some of the most popular ones.

### Swedish

The very most popular massage is called Swedish, a style also referred to as "classic massage" outside English, Quebecer or Dutch speaking countries. Swedish massage



is defined by the strokes that are used. The basic strokes are effleurage (sliding or gliding), petrissage (kneading), tapotement (rhythmic tapping), friction (cross fiber), compression, and vibration/shaking. Swedish massage can be helpful in reducing pain and joint stiffness as well as for individuals with poor circulation.

### Deep Tissue

Although the therapist is using the same strokes with deep tissue massage as in Swedish massage, the movement is slower and pressure is deeper and concentrated on areas of tension and pain. We have deep muscles and therefore can have deep knots/adhesions. To get in deeper, the therapist will use their forearms, knuckles, and elbows more. Sometimes, even hard objects are used to penetrate the muscles. Deep tissue massage is not for everyone. I believe in working within a person's pressure preference. If a therapist works too deep a person's natural response is to tense up. Release can only take place if a person is in a relaxed state.

### Sports Massage

A more rigorous style, sports massage has evolved to focus on alleviating stresses on the body resulting from the diverse demands on different muscles of athletes and the more casual player.



### Ashiatsu

This barefoot massage method, Ashiatsu uses deep compression effleurage strokes that glide over the body. The therapist utilizes bars placed over the massage table to assist in maintaining balance as proper body

Sports massage addresses the specific concerns according to the sport of the athlete and can even prove beneficial to performance if given beforehand. A more targeted body work, sports massage can help to heal strained muscles and allow healthy ones to reach peak performance and maintain it while minimizing the risk of injury.

### Shiatsu

A Japanese form of bodywork, shiatsu means “finger pressure” and is sometimes described as a finger pressure massage. Like acupuncture, shiatsu is based on the holistic system of traditional Chinese medicine, where illness is thought to result from imbalances in the natural flow of energy, or qi (spelled Chi in Chinese) through the body. Shiatsu therapists use finger and palm pressure on energetic pathways, called meridians, to improve the flow of qi. A scientific explanation is that shiatsu calms an overactive sympathetic nervous system, which improves circulation, relieves stiff muscles, and alleviates stress. Unlike other forms of massage, with shiatsu no massage oil is applied, so you remain fully clothed in comfortable attire throughout.

mechanics of the practitioners is essential. The movements in this massage are slow and deep, with a great deal of focus on elongating the muscles of the spine. The biggest benefit of this technique is that after a few treatments it will help improve the client’s posture and movement while relieving pain, improving bodily functions, and creating a state of well-being.

### Reflexology

A form of bodywork that focuses primarily on the feet, hand and ears, reflexology is also known as zone therapy. Untraceable to a sole culture, reflexology has a 5,000 year history, documented in Ancient Egypt, China and India and mentioned in the works of Hippocrates. The underlying theory behind reflexology is that there are “reflex” points on the feet, hands and ears that correspond to specific organs, glands, and other parts of the body. Practitioners believe that applying pressure to these reflex areas can promote health in the

corresponding area through energetic pathways. A scientific explanation is that the pressure may send signals that balance the nervous system or release chemicals such as endorphins that reduce pain and stress.

### Raindrop Therapy

Raindrop therapy mixes the use of essential oils with a variety of massage techniques including back massage, vita flex massage and heat application. It is called raindrop therapy because the oils are dropped like rain along the spine and also massaged into the feet during the same session. This treatment is designed to bring the body back into structural alignment. Often many types of spinal problems and misalignments are caused by toxins that lie dormant within the spine. The use of essential oils helps to remove these toxins within the spine helping its structure return to normal.

### Craniosacral Therapy

This is a gentle, hands-on method of evaluating and enhancing the functioning of a physiological body system called the craniosacral system. This system is comprised of the membranes and cerebrospinal



fluid that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. Often called, CST, craniosacral system therapists use a soft touch known as nickel weight as the pressure used is generally no greater than 5 grams, or about the weight of a nickel. The goal is to release restrictions in the craniosacral system, which can improve the functioning of the central nervous system.

### Lymphatic Drainage

A therapeutic method that uses massage-like manipulations, lymphatic drainage is considered very relaxing. Rhythmic hand motions are used to promote overall body health through the stimulation of lymph movement. Our lymphatic system maintains the body’s fluid balance and removes bacteria and toxins. Lymphatic drainage evolved as a therapy to assist the body by spurring this natural process. Combined with other techniques, this massage can help to reduce

swelling in the limbs.

All these types of massage and many more, make being a massage therapist a never-ending quest. There are so many areas to try out and improve upon. My recommendation to you is to try them out to see which ones you are the most receptive to. It is important to make sure you use a licensed therapist as he/she will have the knowledge and experience to work with you safely. In addition, you can inquire if the therapist holds a certification for the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage. This certification will tell you if he or she has continued their education and required ethics training. You may see it listed on their business card as NCTMB certified. Then you can relax and know you are in good hands..

### Self-Care

Being a massage therapist, I like to give recommendations to clients for self-care at home. I often mention drinking water to flush toxins released from the muscles during the massage, using hot or cold packs, taking baths, stretching, and practicing yoga. A few years ago, I created a website, *AllysEarthTreasures.com*, featuring natural healing products I have crafted to be able to offer some self-care items for people to use at home. I believe in using all natural ingredients in ALL my products. You have to be so careful with what you put on your body. Rule of thumb is to not put anything on your skin that you wouldn’t eat. The skin, our largest organ for absorption, takes in all forms of chemicals, both natural and unnatural, three times faster than water, carrying toxins to our brains where the nervous, immune, endocrine, and musculo-skeletal

### Hot Therapy and Cold Therapy



How it works: the heat from the pack opens the pores of the skin allowing the healing herbs to go through the pores, going around the muscle, tissue and nerve ends, creating a barrier to stop the pain and relax the muscles and the body. Most important, creating a healing effect. You will feel the pain and stress disappear as you place the pack on the body.

#### Basic Herb Pack

A great alternative to electric heating pads, ice and gel packs. This herbal pack will stay hot or cold for 30 minutes.

**Ingredients:** *Flax seed, hulled barley, lavender, chamomile, eucalyptus, spearmint, peppermint, cinnamon, Valerian root, yellow dock root, lemon grass, rosemary.*

#### 3 Panel Shoulder Herb Pack

3 panel Shoulder Pack designed to distribute heat evenly around the neck and shoulders.

**Ingredients:** *Flax seed, hulled barley, lavender, chamomile, eucalyptus, spearmint, peppermint, cinnamon, Valerian root, yellow dock root, lemon grass, rose-*

*mary*

#### Lavender Eye Pack

Lavender Eye Pack: Aids with alleviating stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, headaches and migraines. Freeze it to reduce puffiness around the eyes and to help with migraines. Great for relaxation during mediation.

**Ingredients:** *Flax seed, lavender.*

systems are affected. Also, just because something is being sold doesn't mean it has been tested for your safety. Here are some statistics put together with the help of many herbalists and sources on the internet to explain the reason why I am against using anything besides all natural products on the skin:

- *The word NATURAL can be used by manufacturers if only ten percent of a substance is natural (including foods).*

- *NONTOXIC can mean up to half of the animals tested in a lab died within two weeks during the evaluation of products.*

- *Unregulated since 1936, most of the 2500+ chemicals used in the cosmetics industry and consumed in our daily personal care products have not been tested for long-term toxic effects.*

Fortunately, there are great natural substances for our skin that are available. For example, one that I like to use as a base for massage oils as well for moisturizing skin is jojoba oil. Jojoba oil is pure and can be used on the most sensitive of skin types. It is known to closely mimic our own body's oil, so it is able to deeply penetrate into our skin's layers. This cold pressed high grade oil (liquid wax) leaves skin feeling smooth.

Not only do I like to use all natural ingredients but also like to incorporate aromatherapy into my products as well. Aromatherapy uses volatile plant materials, known as essential oils, and other aromatic compounds for the purpose of enhancing psychological, spiritual and physical well-being. There are a number of essential oils

and aromatic herbs each with their own healing properties. Benefits include calming the mind, enhancing mental clarity, relieving anxiety, promoting sleep, healing skin ulcers, and combating jet lag as well as relieving backaches, headaches, sprains, strains, swollen joints, colds, coughs and chest infections. Essential oils also can help protect us from foreign particles. Some oils have anti-oxidant, antibacterial, antifungal, anti-parasitic, and antiviral effects. Others can remove odors and toxins from the air. The full list of benefits is extremely extensive and many books have been put together to give people options of essential oils to use for a variety of ailments.

There are three methods of application with essential oils, which are inhalation, topical and consuming. My items use essential oils and herbs for both inhalation and topical. The scents are meant to be breathed in for inhalation application and put on the body, to be absorbed by the skin, for topical application. Examples of this combination are with my scented jojoba massage oils, scented Dead Sea bath salts, and herb packs.

In my aroma therapeutic hot and cold packs I use high quality herbs in place of essential oils. The delivery systems for the herbs in these packs are somewhat different since these packs are heated either in the oven or microwave. The heat from the pack opens the pores of the skin allowing the healing herbs to go into the pores, going around the muscle, tissue and nerve ends. This creates a barrier to stop pain as well as relax the



#### Lavender Massage Oil

Lavender Massage Oil consists of lavender essential oil blended with jojoba oil. The lavender oil is calming and relaxing and combats insomnia, depression, stress, jet lag, backaches, headaches, leg cramps, sprains, strains, swollen joints, colds and coughs, chest infections, irritable bowel syndrome, and hangovers.

Jojoba oil is pure and can be used on the most sensitive of skin types. It is known to closely mimic our own body's oil, so it is able to deeply penetrate into our skin's layers. This cold pressed high grade oil (liquid wax) leaves skin feeling satin smooth.

#### Arnica Massage Oil

Arnica is a daisy like mountain flower that has been used since the 1500s for medicinal purposes. It is known to help with healing strains, sprains, bruises, soreness, swelling, muscle spasms, arthritis set off by seasonal change, and general muscle and joint pain. Ally's Earth Treasures infuses arnica flowers into jojoba oil to create a soothing massage oil, which can be used not only for spot treatments but also full body massages.

Precaution: Some people may be sensitive to the compound helenalin found in arnica. Discontinue use if a rash occurs. Also, never apply arnica oil to broken skin or open sores.

muscles and the body.

In addition to the packs having a therapeutic effect with the herbs, the use of heat can also be very therapeutic. Applying heat to an area effectively opens up the blood vessels allowing blood to flow freely to the affected area, delivering an increased supply of oxygen and nutrients. It also removes waste from sore, fatigued and injured muscles.

Furthermore, the herb packs can be put in the freezer for cold therapy, also, known as Cryotherapy. As with First Aid, ice should be applied for the first three days following any type of acute injury. Ice works to reduce the circulation of blood and swelling. Ice is commonly used to numb an area of pain, creating an analgesic effect

For some issues it may be difficult to decide when to use hot or cold. Here is my flyer with a more detailed list of when to use each:

## 100% Aromatherapeutic Herb Pack



### HOT (Microwave it!) and COLD Therapy (Freeze it!) Healing and Relaxing

Hot Uses: Arthritis, TMJ, Migraines, Headaches, Earaches, Backaches, Neck Pain, Muscle Pain, Menstrual Cramps, Bursitis, Tendinitis, Sinusitis, Flu, Stress, Colic, Insomnia, Etc.

Cold Uses: Bruises, Hives, Black Eye, Insect Stings, Bursitis, Nose Bleeds, Cold Sores, Fever, Foot Aches, Shin Splints, Sunburn, Tooth Ache, Burns, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Heatstroke, Headaches, Etc



Overall, I think we are all looking to have a quality life lasting long years. We all want to look good, feel good, be safe and connected to others. Life is challenging, however, and we often have battles to fight. Whether it be a battle against enemies/opponents or a battle against disease and illnesses, we are fortunate to have martial art practitioners, healers and/ or people who are both to come to our aid. We can only do so much for ourselves. Sometimes, we need that other person to 'get our backs' or reach that hard to reach spot.



**Swedish Massage**

- 30 minute session
- 1 hour session
- 90 minute session

**Deep Tissue Massage**

- 30 minute session
- 1 hour session
- 90 minute session

**Sports Massage**

- 30 minute session
- 1 hour session
- 90 minute session

**Ashiatsu**

- 1 hour session

**Pre-Natal Massage**

- 30 minute session
- 1 hour session

**Thai Massage**

- 90 minute session

**Hot Stone Massage**

- 1 hour session
- 90 minute session

**Raindrop Therapy**

- 60 minute session

**Acupressure**

- 30 minute session
- 1 hour session

Call Alison and plan a time during the day that fits your schedule.

**Call To Schedule:**

Alison Fand,  
Owner, Massage Therapist.  
(203) 824-8293

Sessions are offered also at PSDTC at 847 Hamilton Ave. Waterbury, CT 06706



[www.allysearthtreasures.com](http://www.allysearthtreasures.com)



### ***School Submission***

The schools listed teach Filipino martial arts, either as the main curriculum or an added curriculum.

If you have a school that teaches Filipino martial arts, or you are an instructor that teaches, but does not have a school, list the school or style so individuals who wish to experience, learn and gain knowledge have the opportunity.

Be Professional; keep your contact information current. - **Click Here**



### ***Event Submission***

Submit your event whether - Seminar, Workshop, Training Camp, tournament, or Gathering - **Click Here**



### ***Advertisement Submission***

Advertising in the FMA Informative Website is FREE.

An Ad in the FMA Informative can create Business. Your Advertisement for Filipino martial arts forums, blogs etc, can be included in the FMA Informative. Advertisement is for the Filipino Martial Arts and the Philippines.

**Click Here** and fill in the information. Additional information and .gif, .jpg, .bmp, or .tiff.

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### ***Article Submission***

Finished manuscripts should be accompanied by color or black and white photographs. Though we take care of materials, we can not be responsible for manuscripts/photographs and accept no liability for same. Every photograph or graphic must be accompanied by a caption Carefully key photos to caption information with a letter or number.

We reserve the right to use any photo(s) as cover material or additional compensation. We also reserve the right to edit material and to crop photographs.

We reserve the right to use articles or parts of articles that are given and approved from time to time as needed to promote the Filipino martial arts and the Culture of the Philippines.

Physical manuscripts should be typed in black, double spaced, and set to 1-1/2 margins (right and left).

Emailed manuscripts should be typed in Ariel or Times Roman, on programs such as Notepad, Wordpad, Microsoft Word, Word Perfect and can be sent as an attachment. Photo(s) can be sent as a .jpg, .gif, .bmp, or .tiff to **Article@fmainformative.info**

We welcome your article, ideas and suggestions, and look forward to working with you in the future.