



# Thai Together

*A lovely description of Thai Massage is “the physical application of loving kindness”.* Buddhist monks traditionally performed Thai Massage in temples as a means of invigorating the mind, body and spirit. This unique ancient healing tradition originated in India and dates back to 2,500 years ago.



*Traditional Thai Massage is often referred to as Thai Massage, Thai Bodywork, Thai Yoga Massage or applied yoga for lazy people.*

*A Thai Massage session has more ingredients than a yoga workout.*

*It has a blend and fusion of exquisite Asian techniques including thumb pressure, similar to Chinese acupressure which works along energy lines rather like meridians or nadis. Thumb-pressing along these sen lines, as they are known in Thailand, aims to release blockages, creating a free flow of energy and prana throughout the body.*

Another important part of Thai Massage is the Buddhist and spiritual influence. Students are encouraged to recite a short prayer silently in pali (the Buddhist language) before commencing the massage to focus and quieten their mind. Thai massage reflects the Four divine states of mind of Buddhist teaching. These are loving kind-

ness, compassion, vicarious joy and equanimity. A Thai Massage given with metta (meaning loving kindness) is essential rather than given in a mechanical or forceful way. A lovely description of Thai Massage is "the physical application of loving kindness". Buddhist monks traditionally performed Thai Massage in temples as a means of invigorating the mind, body and spirit. This unique ancient healing tradition originated in India and dates back to 2,500 years ago.

**YOGA**

Many yoga postures may be included in a Thai Massage treatment. Forward bends, backward bends, cobra, spinal twists, locust positions shoulder stand and the plough. The dynamics of Thai Massage are very similar to ashtanga yoga

and matched to the client's physical ability and needs. A practitioner will learn to feel how far to take a client into a stretch. This is indeed an art, working slowly with mindfulness, watching facial reactions will help the practitioner to feel the point of resistance and maximum stretch for the limbs. Watching the movement and transition from one posture to another is important for the student to learn the art. With practice it will flow creating a lovely dynamic rhythmic sequence with the minimum amount of effort.

**BENEFITS**

Thai Massage has many benefits and is suitable for people of all ages irrespective of their level of flexibility. Sportspeople, yoga and Pilates practitioners, Tai Chi teachers, physiotherapists, health practitioners and those with no previous experience all love the benefits of giving and receiving Thai Massage. With the meditative qualities it works very deep on an emotional level and with the yoga stretches it also has a profound effect on a physical level.

It is very good for back pain, sciatica, shoulder and neck pain. There is an emphasis on stretching the legs into various yoga positions to alleviate the lower back. Stretching and loosening the hamstrings and opening the hips greatly enhances the flexibility of the back. There are many upper-body stretches to open the chest and improve the flexibility of the shoulders and neck. The numerous slow stretching movements free the tension held within the body. They increase flexibility, relax and elongate tense

– the vinyasa linking and flowing from one asana to another. The use of body weight, correct body mechanics and rhythm is essential for performing a good Thai Massage. It is like a yoga dance and a meditative experience for both the client and practitioner; the practitioner also benefiting from their muscles being stretched and strengthened.

With the close relationship of yoga, more yoga teachers are enjoying learning the art of Thai Massage and experiencing the benefits for themselves. Clients are able to go deeper into a posture when assisted by a Thai Massage practitioner; enhancing their flexibility and encouraging deep relaxation in each pose. Ashtanga yoga can greatly improve the flow and rhythm of a Thai Massage practitioner. Iyengar yoga can also help to feel the degree of stretching necessary, so that a practitioner can feel how far to take a client into a posture and ensure the stretching is within the client's limits and comfort boundaries. The pressure and stretching is measured

muscles, mobilise and open joints, thus energising and nourishing the client by allowing the prana to flow more freely around the whole body. Thai massage relieves aches, pain and stiffness, stimulates and improves the range and freedom of movement and co-ordination. The stretching movements affect the entire body by releasing both deep and superficial tension and re-educating the client into a better alignment and improved posture. The result is an opening of the body, which leaves one feeling both relaxed and energised at the same time.

Thai Massage soothes the nervous system, and has a positive and calming effect on the mind inducing deep relaxation with the meditative qualities. The circulation of blood and lymph is improved. Internal organs and the immune system are stimulated. It aims to balance all the systems of the body. This transformative therapy produces a powerful feeling of wellbeing, restoring inner balance and equilibrium.

**Christine Townley  
ITEC, MIFR, IEB, ITM**

Christine is the founder and director of the Sussex Thai Massage School in Brighton which was one of the first Schools in the UK to offer accredited professional courses to Practitioner level and Introductory Courses. The school was established in 1998 and is in its 10th year. Christine has been practicing Thai Massage for over 15 years and has been practicing Yoga since her late teens. She is a UK qualified teacher having completed 7307 Stage II. Also qualified in Holistic Massage, Anatomy and Physiology and Reflexology with the International Federation of Reflexologists. Courses are accredited with Embody (CThA) [www.ebodyforyou.com](http://www.ebodyforyou.com) and approved by the Institute of Thai Massage. Christine is also training therapists at Premiership Football Clubs and offers In House training at Clubs or in Spain for small groups. Also offers In-House training at Spas, Yoga and Health Centres or in Spain for small groups.

## THAI MASSAGE SESSION

It is a very thorough treatment of the whole body lasting for 1½ or 2 hours, the latter being more thorough and able to address more specific problems. There are a range of techniques suitable and appropriate for each client, and practitioners choose techniques to suit their client's varying needs and abilities. Students learning Thai Massage learn over 3 hours of techniques and will tailor Thai Massage treatments for their clients depending on size, flexibility and needs. It is a very intuitive massage.

The massage is carried out clothed on a futon mattress. The client will lie on their back (supine) position and, before commencing, the practitioner recites a short prayer in the Buddhist language silently to focus the mind and energy. The mantra thanks Jivaka Khuma Bhacca, the founder of Thai Massage and friend of the Buddha, and wishes the client good health. Relaxation techniques of palm walking are then applied to the feet and legs, allowing both practitioner and client to become acquainted with each other's energies and to establish a rhythm which creates a key foundation to the massage. This rhythm is very important for soothing the client's nervous system. Various thumb presses similar to reflexology are used on the feet to ground and balance the client's energy before commencing to work on the energy lines of the legs. Palming techniques are then followed by slow moving thumb pressure to release blocked energy along the sen lines.

A series of slow powerful stretching movements are performed on one leg to stretch the hamstrings, to create mobility in the hips, elongate the muscles and improve circulation throughout the body. This is repeated on the other leg. The practitioner then uses more stretches on both legs together. Palm pressure, gentle rhythmic rocking and soothing massage techniques are used for relaxation between the dynamic yogic postures throughout the massage. A relaxing abdominal massage is then carried out massaging the stomach and internal organs. The practitioner then works the energy lines of the arms, moving on to the chest, with maybe some shoulder stretches in this position.

A soothing face massage may be performed in supine or at the end in the sitting position. The client will then turn onto one side and the practitioner may further open the shoulder and pelvic area with some more stretching movements. This is repeated on the other side. Techniques will then be performed with the client lying prone on the stomach, various leg stretches and palming and thumbing the energy lines of the back. The client is then placed into sitting position which focuses mainly on the spine, shoulders and posture. Each movement is carried out in a continuous movement and flow.



### Butterfly

Also known as the Frog Jump in Thai Massage. Good stretch for hips, back, hamstrings, gluteus maximus and abductor muscles.



### Ride Horse

Stretches the hamstrings and gluteus maximus muscles. Eases the lower back and sciatica.



### Bridge

Also known as Kidney Stretch in Thai Massage as the knees are stimulating the kidneys reflexes on the feet whilst creating flexibility to the spine and back muscles.



Shoulder Stand to Plough

Shoulder Stand stretches hamstrings, lower back and improves flexibility of spine improving energy flow in sen lines. Balances the thyroid gland and good for varicose veins. Plough is beneficial for neck, shoulders and thoracic area.



### Cobra

Classic yoga pose backward bend. Muscles of the back and abdomen are toned, stretched and strengthened. Increases flexibility in the spine, improving energy flow in the sen lines and opens the vertebrae, especially thoracic area. Opens the chest area and improves shoulder mobility.



### Locust

Good for hip mobility, sciatica. Stretches quadriceps and abdominal muscles. Strengthens muscles of the back.



Head to Knees

A classic forward bend counter-pose to backward bends. Stretches back and hamstrings and improves flexibility of spine and energy flow in sen lines.



### Cross Leg to Sitting

An excellent way to bring the client into sitting posture and counter-pose to the cobra and backward bends. Relaxes the back and spine.



### Forward Bend

Another classic yoga asana, again counter-pose to backward bends. For a variation the client's legs can be outstretched. Releases blockages along sen lines and eases back. Good for the nervous system.



### Spinal Twist

Excellent for improving flexibility of the spine and eases lower back tension.

## Thai Massage Course on DVD

This double DVD is invaluable for the qualified practitioner and for those learning Thai Yoga Massage. The DVD demonstrates a comprehensive step-by-step complete Traditional Thai Massage. It has easy-to-follow voiceover instructions and is beautifully presented and professionally filmed. You will see smooth, carefully-controlled flowing, dynamic movements using bodyweight with balance. Content: Introduction, Benefits, History including Temples and Buddhas of Thailand, Contra-indications, Techniques. The Session – Feet, Sen Energy Lines, Single Legs, Double Legs, Abdomen & Chest, Arms & Hands, Shoulders, Neck & Face, Side Position, Back Position, Sitting Position Running Time: 3 hours 45 minutes To order [www.thaimassageuk.com](http://www.thaimassageuk.com)

## Courses 2009 in Brighton

The next courses in Brighton are as follows:  
Practitioner Course  
24,25,26 April  
5,6,7 June  
3,4,5 July  
Courses are open to everyone whether a complete beginner, qualified practitioner or yoga teacher. Class sizes are small at Sussex Thai Massage School to enable students to receive individual attention from the tutor. The content is mainly practical with traditional techniques and students will be giving and receiving Thai Massage. Christine teaches in a passionate and sympathetic style with a sensitive approach to students learning. Emphasis is placed on the student's body movements, rhythmic flow, effective use of bodyweight, safe practice and client's reactions and comfort. For further information and syllabus please contact Christine: [christine@thaimassageuk.com](mailto:christine@thaimassageuk.com) or call 01273 562202 or visit their website [www.thaimassageuk.com](http://www.thaimassageuk.com)

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