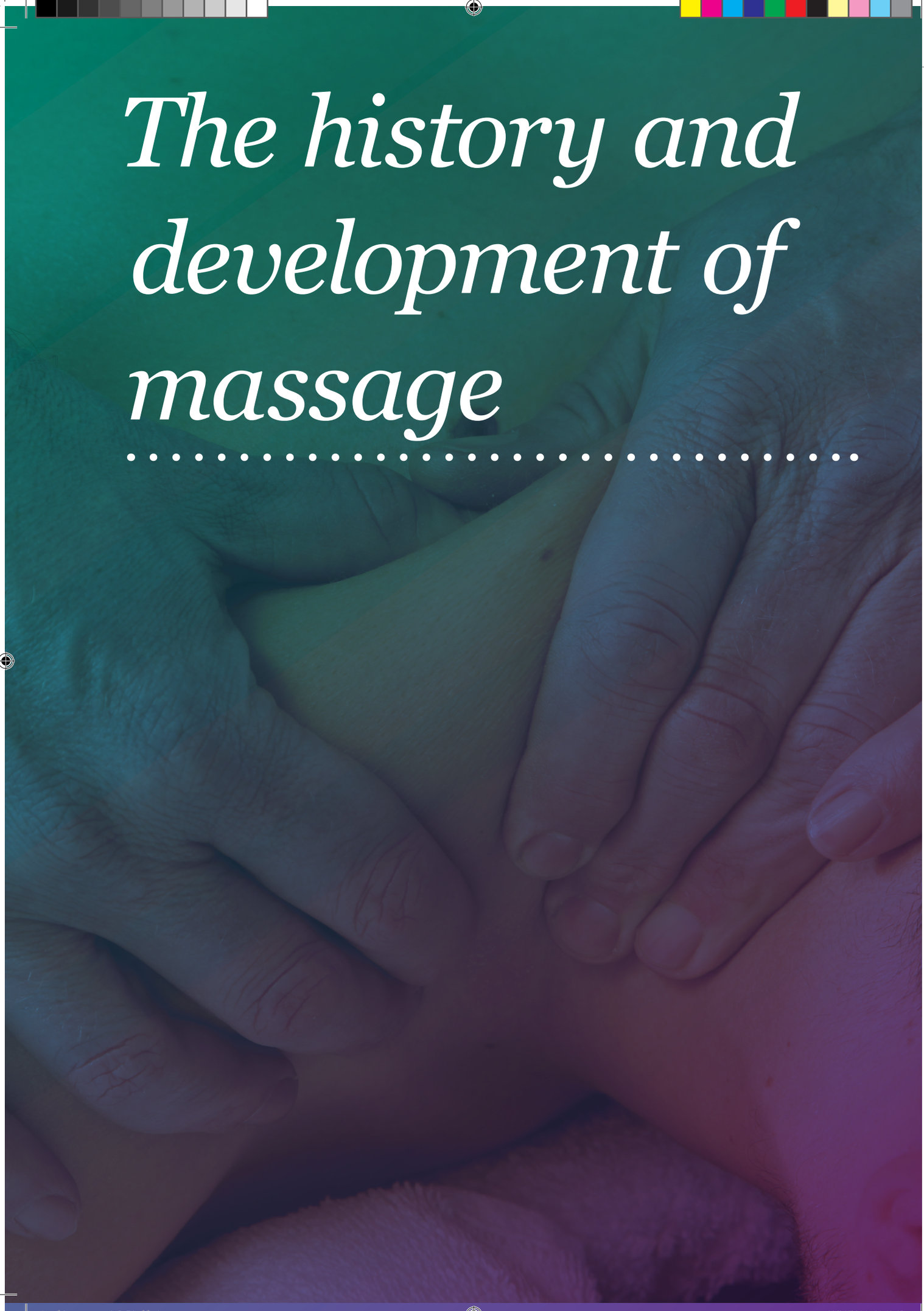
The history and development of massage



History and origins of massage

Massage is one of the oldest forms of physical therapy to be recorded in Eastern cultures as a method of healing. Its origins can be traced back to medical text books from Ancient China, from as early as 1800BC, which document how specific techniques were performed for therapeutic purposes.

In other Ancient cultures there is evidence of the use of other physical therapies as treatments for healing. The tomb of Ankmahor, physician to the Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt, evidences hieroglyphics that offer pictorial images of massage techniques being practised.

> *The word massage itself may originate from the Arabic root "mass'h" which means to touch, knead or squeeze.*

Stroking or rubbing a body area that is feeling painful or uncomfortable is a natural instinct. Many people will place a soothing hand on, or rub their tummy when it aches. Likewise, when young children fall and hurt themselves, a natural instinct of parents or carers will be to advise them to 'rub it better' - this is the most simplistic principle of massage; the use of touch to soothe and heal.

In Western cultures, the Ancient Greeks validated the use of massage as a technique that could assist healing within the field of medicine. Hippocrates (460 to 380 B.C.) wrote in his memoirs "The physician must be experienced in many things but assuredly also in rubbing (anatripsis)". Translations of his memoirs reveals his reference to rubbing as helping to tone muscle, assist with lymphatic drainage and increase hypertrophy.

The tradition of massage is also evidenced in Ancient Rome in the teachings of Galen (130-201 AD). Galen served as a physician to the gladiators and chariot racers of the Circus Maximus. He used massage for treating diseases and physical injuries and was considered one of the greatest medical historians of the time.

In Europe, massage was considered distasteful and sinful. The Europeans rejected the use of massage until the Stockholm born Pehr Henrick Ling (1776-1839) introduced Swedish massage as a manual therapy used in the treatment of athletes and sports people around the turn of the 19th Century. Ling gained professional recognition for the method. After his death, his pupils continued to develop his legacy through research and teaching of the physiological and psychological benefits of massage.

The techniques that Ling introduced in 1813 are considered the foundations of all massage techniques, these include:

- *Effleurage* - Gliding or stroking
- *Friction* - Rubbing or pressing
- *Petrissage* - Squeezing or kneading
- *Tapotement* - Striking, beating or percussion
- *Vibration* - Oscillations on the skin

The development of sports massage and other healing modalities

From these early origins, the research and development of massage as a method to assist healing has continued and the credibility of massage as a form of treatment to assist healing has continued to grow and expand. Whilst massage was traditionally a therapy practised within the medical paradigm, it has since gained a reputation as a therapy and profession in its own right.

Sports massage has been an accepted practice in America, Australia and Canada for many years. In the UK it has gained greater popularity and recognition since the 1990s. Sports massage therapists are now in attendance at many national and international sporting and athletic events, including the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

As the popularity of the method increases a range of other alternative therapies, some with equally ancient origins, is also emerging. These include: reflexology, aromatherapy, hot stone massage, Thai massage, Reiki healing, Shiatsu, Feldenkrais, Body work, energy medicine, chakra healing, crystal healing, acupuncture, kinesiology, herbalism, Alexander technique, remedial massage, somatics, hypnotherapy, Indian head massage and sports massage.

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There are currently a number of professional organisations which have been established to provide support and regulation of the various alternative therapies and training courses.

These organisations include:

- **Sports Massage Association**: www.thesma.org
- **Institute of Sport and Remedial Massage**: www.theisrm.com/terms.php
- **Complementary and Natural Healthcare**: www.cnhc.org.uk
- **Federation of Holistic Therapists**: www.fht.org.uk
- **The council for soft tissue therapies**: www.gcmt.org.uk

As research into the benefits of massage and other alternative therapies continues to expand, the profession can look forward to continued growth.

How sports massage can complement other therapies and treatments

Massage and sports massage can be used alongside a number of other therapies and treatments as a complementary therapy. When included as part of a client's treatment and recovery plan it can assist and support the healing process.

Massage and sports massage can be used alongside:

Medical therapies	Including physiotherapy, osteopathy, occupational therapy and chiropractic treatments to assist healing of soft tissue structures and chronic and acute injuries.
Physical therapies	For example yoga therapy, Pilates, exercise therapy, personal training, strength training and conditioning to assist relaxation, recovery and healing.
Talking and psychological therapies	Including counselling, drama therapy and dance movement therapy to promote relaxation and connection with the physical body and reduce tension in the body created by general anxiety-related conditions.
Other alternative therapies	For example Somatics, Reiki, energy medicine, aromatherapy, crystal healing, hypnotherapy, Pilates, herbalism, yoga therapy, reflexology, to aid with holistic healing.

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