

Reiki and Massage

By Anna Parkins

In one of my Reiki classes, a massage therapist asked me about using Reiki with massage. Having experienced massages by Reiki practitioners and non-practitioners, I know it is my preference to have someone who is familiar with energy work – whether Reiki or some other form of touch therapy – to give the massage. Being sensitive to the subtle flow of energies can be a gift or it can be something that comes with practice.

To answer the questions of how, what and when, I asked several friends who are massage therapists and have received training in Reiki. (I realize there are now many so-called branches of Reiki, but for this article we will only be concerned with the general definition.)

First, let's compare Reiki and massage. Reiki and massage are different. By definition, massage is a form of tissue manipulation. Traditional Reiki as practiced in the United States does not involve tissue manipulation. The hands are motionless on any place where they are placed. There is no pressure, stroking, rubbing, squeezing, tapping, or other form of manipulation, even though Dr. Usui did mention these in his system. Massage is generally conducted on a nude, draped client; Reiki is usually given to a fully clothed client. Massage practice may use oils and other devices. Reiki uses neither. Massage tries to mobilize tissues through increased blood circulation and the reduction of tense areas. Reiki simply provides the chance for subtle energy to flow quietly through the practitioner to the client.

The most obvious question to begin with was do you use Reiki and massage or keep them entirely separate. (Actually, I knew the answer to this as I had been the honored recipient several times, however, to the reader this might be an important question.) I was curious as to whether the therapist might do Reiki first or massage first or mix it up. It really depends on the situation I found out. For instance, in some areas Reiki is not widely recognized and in some spas, the public is only offered massage treatments or they are offered/advertised as two distinct treatments. Hillary Phillips comments that "most people just want massage and are afraid to try something new." It really is up to the client and what they request. The key I think is to understand how Reiki and massage work together.

In Paula Horan's book "Empowerment Through Reiki," she has one suggestion which is beginning with the client lying face up, doing a few minutes of neck massage, full scalp and deep facial massage, then performing all the Reiki head positions including the entire chakra system, then treating the knees and feet. This is then followed by massaging the front of the body, back of the body, applying Reiki to the entire back, finishing with a balancing technique on the spine. Always giving extra attention where needed, Horan admits that using your intuition as a guide, the possibilities for combining the various techniques are endless.

I might describe Cheryl Kaufmann as an intuitive energy worker. She agrees with following her intuition as to placement of hands or holding a position and allowing the Reiki energy to flow in a similar way that Horan describes. Cheryl states:

"My session may be like this: Asking the intention of the client. By the client setting the intention, they put into motion their own inner healing abilities and I can better know where to support them on an energetic level. This also allows Reiki to flow to aid in their stated intention, whatever level that may be: emotional, mental,

physical, spiritual or etherical. Then I connect with their energy, their body by placing a hand on the area above the heart (heart chakra) and the crown (top of the head). Sometimes, I am guided to connect at the solar plexus and the crown instead of the heart. I begin at the head with some Reiki positions. Then I like to do gentle massage on the temples of the client and smooth out the forehead, which is a nice way to allow the third eye to open so they may be open to whatever is in the highest good for the session. I then begin the massage at the feet and work my way up the body, stopping briefly to balance the energy with Reiki, I speak to Spirit and to the client's body and ask for guidance in where this person may need Reiki as I continue the gentle motions of massage. If I am guided to hold my hands in particular positions, I stop the massage to hold the space for Reiki to flow through and balance the client on whatever level they are needing it. I continue until I am back at the head which is again balanced with Reiki and then they turn over so we may continue on the back of the body. I begin the back of the body by connecting again with the crown and the heart or solar plexus areas. I then gently press along the one side of the spine and follow this all the way down the body to the feet and repeat on the other side of the spine. This helps to eliminate any thought patterns held in the body moving them out through the meridians. I then begin at the feet, moving up the body ending at the back, holding positions if necessary, for Reiki specifically to flow. I seal the aura, smooth out the aura, ask the client to take a deep cleansing breath and end the session."

My next question was how does Reiki work when giving a massage. When Pam Jones begins the session, she "tunes in" to the client usually at the head, sometimes at the feet. Pam told me that "Sometimes she can 'download' information about what this person needs. Usually it is relaxing to the client and they can let go of their stress or bring the stress level way down. This facilitates the muscle relaxation and makes the massage techniques much more pleasant for the client and easier work for me the practitioner. I also see that they are able to breathe much deeper during the session which helps with the circulation and many more things. I have noted that when my clients get on the table even before I am in the room, they are already experiencing the relaxing effects of being in the 'zone' of energy that is ever present in my work/play space. I also diffuse a very relaxing and calming Young Living Essential Oil in the room, Reiki very often facilitates the releasing of the things that can cause discomfort and disease."

Cheryl answered me in a different way. She answered, "In my opinion, Reiki works through the hands and then in the presence of the Massage Therapist to balance the therapist into a clearer space, enabling the therapist to be a more attentive body worker. With that, Reiki is able to flow to the client with grace and beauty. The client is then able to relax into deeper levels and receive greater benefit from their massage. A massage therapist is physically touching all parts of the body, systematically enhancing the lymphatic system and helping the flow of new blood and nutrients to the body. When the massage therapist's hands and arms (and whole being for that matter) are filled with the loving vibration of Reiki, the individual cells of the blood, the tissue, the oxygen, the water molecules, etc. of the client then also begin to vibrate with Reiki energy. This may increase the chance of detoxing after a massage and suggest an increase in water for the next several days. I have found with Reiki and massage, the integration time of the body work is increased. Clients of mine are informed to allow themselves anywhere from 2-4 days for the complete integration time of the massage to take place. This may mean detoxing, or needing more water, or purging of old thoughts, a good cry, a great giggle, however it shows

up for them, to take care of themselves beyond the hour of 90 minutes they spent with me.”

Cheryl Kaufmann has a private practice in Allen, Texas. She has been a Licensed Massage Therapist since 1998; her massage focuses mostly on stress reduction, energy balancing, Swedish, and some therapeutic. Cheryl has been a Reiki practitioner since 1995 and a Reiki Master Teacher since 2005. See [http:// www.brightstarinspirations.com/](http://www.brightstarinspirations.com/) for available workshops or appointment schedule.

Pam Jones is the founder of Essential Health, 117 S. Market St., Suite 215, Benton, Arkansas. She is a Reiki Master and IET Master Instructor and has been practicing Reiki and massage since 1999. Pam can be reached at 501.909.7242.

Hillary Phillips has been a massage therapist for four years and a Reiki practitioner for over a year. She can be reached at Whole Health Massage in Dallas by calling 214-709-6394 or via <http://www.wholehealthdallas.com/>.

Anna Parkins

anna@soundenergyplus.com

<http://www.soundenergyplus.com/>

- **Certified Practitioner of Sound Energy DynamicsSM**
- **Usui Shiki Ryoho Reiki Master Teacher**
- **Graduate of the Intermediate Energy Medicine Class for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Specialists**
- **Coordinates Reiki share groups in the Carrollton, Texas area**

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