**Dr Graeme’s comments**

We are in the 21st century now. Medics often don’t have to cut people open to remove gallstones. The put an ultrasound machine on the surface and the high energy waves smash the stones. Likewise we have massage machines that penetrate deeply without painful pressing. Let’s look at how machine vibration massage compares with manual massage.

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**Machine vs manual massage**

**Effectiveness**

**Ability to penetrate**

The two machinery examples below compare the technology used by manual massage with that of vibration massage.

- The sheep’s foot roller uses very heavy pressure but would only penetrate a short distance, crushing and potentially damaging anything below.

- On the other hand the vibrating pad on the geological survey truck cause minimal damage and penetrate through layers of rock to where they are picked up by sensors several kilometres away. This is why deep tissue massage uses very heavy painful pressure, whereas the vibrations from a vibration massager penetrate deeply without heavy pressure.

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**Heavy pressure**

This machine is called a sheep’s foot roller. It uses crushing pressure to compact the ground underneath. It’s effect probably extends to about a meter in depth.

**Vibration**

This machine has a large pad that vibrates the ground. It is used to do geological surveys. The vibrations reflect off the layers of rock below and are picked up by sensors several kilometers away.
Effect of therapy

We do not know of any scientific trials comparing the two. Manual massage is an excellent therapy, with a lot of scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness. On the other hand there is a large amount scientific evidence on the effects of vibration massage. In particular vibration has shown some incredible benefits in speeding and improving the quality of healing.

Further information

The scientifically proven effects of vibration massage

Assisting healing

Repeated therapy

As discussed in our articles on dealing with long standing musculoskeletal issues and the health and wellness benefits of massage, the major benefits come from repeated applications of therapy. For most people having a large number of repeated applications of manual massage is prohibitively expensive and time consuming. On the other hand machine massage using vibration allows self application which means people can have practically unlimited applications.

Further information

Long standing musculoskeletal problems

Massage for health and wellness

Comfort

When vibration massage is used on tight muscles one feels the relaxation of muscles and a warm sensation of increased blood flow. However, it cannot match the sensation of the hands of a professional masseur. On the other hand, the performance of deep tissue massage using vibration is relatively comfortable, whereas with manual massage it can be incredibly painful.

Cost and convenience

Manual massage requires a skilled therapist. Vibration massage is used by many professionals, but with the proper advice can be self applied.

Further help

Contact Dr Graeme
Get a massager

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