Introduction to Thai Massage
Thai for the Table

By Jill Burynski, NCTMB, LMBT #4838
LivingSabai
Introduction to Thai Massage

Nuad Bo Rarn, literally translated as “ancient massage”, is a unique and comprehensive style of bodywork. Unlike its western counterpart, Nuad Bo Rarn, or Thai massage is performed on a mat on the floor and the client is fully clothed. Thai massage combines acupressure, yoga and massage to create a truly holistic massage experience.

There are two styles of Thai massage, Southern style or Wat Pho style and Northern style. These two styles of Thai massage come from the two original schools of Thai massage. Southern style originated at Wat Pho in Bangkok and Northern style comes from the Old Medicine Hospital in Chiang Mai. Both schools are still in operation today.

Although both styles of Thai massage have the same basic foundation there are considerable differences between the two massages. Southern style focuses primarily on acupressure and energy lines and employs a much stronger pressure. Northern style is slower and gentler (yet this is still a very strong massage) and focuses more on the yoga like stretching. Northern style Thai massage is what is most commonly practiced in the United States. In this course you are learning Northern style Thai massage.

This massage is unique in its characteristics as it can actually be a form of physical, emotional and mental exercise for both involved. The receiver actually becomes an active participant in the massage and the giver also benefits from the stretches if performed properly. More than that, Thai massage can be a form of meditation for both parties. Historically, Buddhist monks performed Thai massage in the temples as part of their Vippasana meditation to assist them in attaining a clear and peaceful mind.
A Brief History of Thai Massage

Thai massage dates back 2500 years to India at the time of Buddha. The founder of Thai massage was an ayurvedic physician named Dr. Shivago Komarpaj. He was a personal friend and doctor to the Lord Buddha. Dr Komarpaj created this system of healing using the principles of yoga and ayurveda and taught the method to Buddhist monks who performed it in the temples.

Traditionally, Buddhist monks were nomadic and Buddhist temples were the centers for healing in a community. This is why over time Dr Komarpaj’s system of healing spread to Thailand. Additionally, Thai people are descendants from China so the principles of Chinese Medicine combined with Dr Komarpaj’s methods are where Thai massage and Thai traditional gets its roots.

Thai traditional medicine became the main healing practice in Thailand. Families and tribes began practicing on each other and the knowledge was passed down from generation to generation. Ancient texts were created documenting the techniques and point locations and many still exist today.

In the late 1700’s Thailand was all but overrun by the Burmese. The old capital of Ayuthia was destroyed. Many of the ancient texts were lost. In 1832 King Rama III decided it was of utmost importance to preserve this ancient healing art. He had the most important remaining texts inscribed in stone and set into the walls of Wat Pho temple in Bangkok. The king made Wat Pho the first university and school for traditional medicine which is still in operation today.

As modern medicine became popular in the West, the practices began to make their way to the East as well. Traditional medicine was used less and less, especially in the cities. Although this modern medicine was able to do many things that traditional medicine could not, it became clear that there was a downside to the use of so many chemicals. For this reason in 1985 the Thai government launched the Thai massage revival project. By the mid 1990’s Thai massage was back in the forefront and began attracting international attention. Now Thai massage is increasing in popularity at spas and wellness centers across the world.
The Sen Sip

Thai massage has its roots in ayurveda, yoga and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). These ancient systems of healing aim to balance the flow of energy, prana, or qi in the body. If this energy is blocked or imbalanced disease, pain, and emotional disturbance can manifest. Conversely, when energy flows freely in the body health, healing, and a peaceful mind can occur.

This energy flows through a vast network of invisible lines or channels in the body that have many energy centers or points on each line. All Asian traditional health systems agree that there are 72,000 energy lines in total in the body however each tradition differs slightly in their location and number of the main energy lines in the body. This is because as with most things in life there are several paths to reach the same destination.

Thai massage uses the sen line system, or the sen sip. Literally translated, sen sip is the ten energy lines as sen is Thai for energy and sip is Thai for ten. All of the sen lines originate from the naval and all have different exit points. Each sen line is associated with different parts of the body, organ systems, and disease, pain or dysfunction.

Knowledge of these sen lines and their relation to specific conditions in the body and mind allow the practitioner to use Thai massage as therapeutic treatment for their patient. Additionally, one can see that Thai massage treats more than just muscle pain and inflexibility or induces relaxation. Thai massage is a form of holistic medicine.
A Mantra to the Father Doctor Shivago Komarpaj

Before starting a Thai Massage, Thai people Wai Khru. Wai means respect and it is shown by putting the hands into the prayer position and nodding to the person or figure being “waied”. Khru is the Thai word for teacher. To Wai Khru before the massage is to show respect and gratitude for the Teacher Dr. Shivago Komarpaj as well as any other teachers and possibly your parents. The Wai is accompanied by reciting the following mantra. It is not necessary to recite the whole mantra before every massage. The masseur can recite only the first and last line.

It is an important step to Wai Khru at the beginning of the massage. Thai massage is meant to be performed in a meditative state. Taking a moment to close your eyes, center yourself, and connect to your own breath as well as your clients will set the tone for the whole massage.

MANTRA:
OM NAMO SHIVAGO SILASA AHANG KARUNIKO SAPA SATANANG
OSATHA TIPA MANTANG PAPASO SURIYA JANTANG KOMALAPATO
PAKA SESI WANTAMI BANTITO SUMETASO AROKA SUMANA HOMI
(3 TIMES)
PIYO TEWA MANUS SANANG PIYO PROMA NAMUT TAMO PIYO NAKA
SUPAN NANANG PININ SIYANG NAMA MIHANG NAMO PUTTAYA
NAVON NAVIEN NASATIT NASATIEN EHI MAMA NAVIEN NAWAE
NAPAI TANG VIEN NAVIEN MAHAKU EHI MAMA PIYONG MAMA
NAMO PUTTAYA (1 TIME)
NA A NA WA ROKA PAYATI VINAS SANTI (3 TIMES)

Translation:
We invite the spirit of our founder, the Father Doctor Shivago, who comes to us through his saintly life. Please bring us the knowledge of all nature, that this mantra will show us the true medicine of the universe. In the name of this mantra, we respect your help and pray that through our bodies you will bring wholeness and health to the body of our client.
The Goddess of healing dwells in the heavens high, while mankind stays in the world below. In the name of the Founder, may the heavens be reflected in the world below so that this healing medicine may encircle the world.
We pray for the one whom we touch, that he will be happy and that any illness will be released from him.
Palm Press = PP

Palm Press Walk = PPW

Palm Circle = PC

Thumb Press = TP

Thumb Press Walk = TPW

Thumb Walk = TW

Thumb Slide = TS

Finger Circle = FC

Finger Hook = FH

Finger Press = FP

Stretching = ↔

Together = ↑↑
1. PP1 - WARMING UP FEET AND LEGS

PP Together on Foot 1,2,3,2,1 (heel to toe)
PP Walk on Foot 1,2,3,2,1
PP Walk Up the Calf – outer edge of hand only to avoid the tibia bone
P.C the Knee
PP Up the Thigh, fingers facing out, Stop at Groin
Repeat steps in reverse.

ENERGY LINES OF THE LEGS
LOCATION:

INSIDE LINES OF THE LEGS

Calf
LINE 1 - Drop in just under tibia
LINE 2 - Between lines 1 & 3
LINE 3 – Just above Achilles tendon

Thigh
Corner of kneecap to groin
Between lines 1 & 3
Just above large tendon

OUTSIDE LINES OF THE LEGS

Calf
LINE 1 - Drop in just above tibia
LINE 2 - On belly of Peronious
LINE 3 – Just above Achilles tendon

Thigh
Corner of kneecap to groin
Center IT Band
Just above large tendon

~ 6 ~
WORKING THE ENERGY LINES OF THE LEGS

For a Woman:

Start with Inside Left, Stand on the Right Side of the Table and Reach Across.
Warm up area with PPA-
Love Story- PPW towards knee, away from knee, back towards knee, Both hands
PPW to ankle and stretch ankle away from you.

Thumb Walk on Energy Lines
Each Line is a “round trip”

Finish with PPB-
PPW with both hands from ankle to knee, back down to ankle and stretch the ankle away from you.

Repeat these steps now for
Outside Right
Inside Right
Outside Left
10. **HALF LOTUS**

A. BOTH THIGHS
1. PP Together Once, Just Above Knees
2. PPW Up and Back 1,2,3,2,1
3. Repeat Step One

B. BENT THIGH ONLY
1. Butterfly Thigh Up and Back 1,2,3,2,1

11. **OPEN GROIN**

Sit Between Client’s Legs
Straighten Leg to Open Groin 1,2,3,2,1
*Move closer to increase stretch- away to decrease*
DO NOT PULL ON ANKLE!!

12. **LOCK LEG**

Lock Legs By Tucking Your Toes Behind Their Knee and Their Toes Behind Your Knee, Hold Heel
Straighten Other Leg to Press on Hamstring 1,2,3,2,1
Slow Movements. Hard Pressure

13. **FEET WALK**

Unlock Legs, Both Feet Walk on Hamstring
Stop in Middle, Inside Toes a Little Lower
14. HIGH LOW HOOK HIT

1. Tuck Client’s Foot Inside Your Inside Chin
2. Scoot Up, Open Your Knees Wide, Reach Between Knees and Place Finger Pads on Line 1 Outside
3. FH With Both Hands Line 1 Outside 1,2,3,2,1
4. FH WALK Line One 1,2,3,2,1
5. Outside Hand Holds Knee, Inside Hand Knocks on Line One

*You Can Take Outside Foot Out if Needed*

15. CROSS PULL LINE1 (in.-out.)

Inside Hand Press Ankle, Outside Hand Lift Knee
Sit on Client’s Foot with Your Feet Hanging off Table
1. Cross Hands, FHW Line One 1,2,3,2,1
2. FH Together Line 1 (Squeezing) 1,2,3,2,1

16. NUT CRACKER LINE 2 (in.-out.) PULL BACK

Move Heel Close to Sit Bone, Lock Ankle
Interlock Fingers, Heel of Hands on Line 2
Drop Elbows to Squeeze, Then Lean Back 1,2,3,2,1

17. ICE PICKING LINE 3 (in.-out.)

Move Heel Back Out, Interlock Fingers, Palms Facing Client (Icepick Hands)
Thumb Pads Press on Line 3. Drop Elbows to Press 1,2,3,2,1 or Many Points

~ 9 ~
18. MID LINE HAMSTRING

Move Leg Out More
Double Thumb Press or Thumb on Thumb 1,2,3,2,1 or Many Points
Thumb Walk 1,2,3,2,1 or Many Points

19 A. MIDLINE CALF

Finger Tips Touch, Place on MidLine and Lean Back 1,2,3,2,1... PT 3 is Above Achilles
*Flat Fingers, NO Hooking!*

19 B. NUT CRACKER PUSH ON CALF

Interlock Fingers (Nutcracker Hands)
Squeeze Calf and Lean Forward 1,2,3,2,1

20. KNEE TO CHEST

Half Kneeling- Client’s Foot on Your Hip
Outside Hand Hold Knee
Inside Hand Press on Thigh While Lunging 1,2,3,2,1
20% Press 80% Lunge
21. BUTTERFLY HAMSTRING
Move Foot Out a Little
Butterfly on Hamstring 1,2,3,2,1

22. TWIST HIP
Inside Hand Hold Ankle, Outside Hand Press on Thigh
1,2,3,2,1
2 Moves, Knee to Sternum, Foot to Opposite Shoulder

23. LEG LIFT CALF STRETCH
Cup Heel, Forearm on Sole of Foot
Lean Forward to Stretch While Hands on Thigh Points
1,2,3,2,1
*NO PRESSURE ON THIGH!!!*

REPEAT PIC 10-23 ON THE OTHER SIDE
About the Author

Jill Burynski

Jill has been working in the field of holistic health and alternative medicine since 1992. Jill’s career began in bodywork began in 1996 after receiving her level II Reiki certification. By 1998 she was a Nationally Certified Massage Therapist graduating from the Florida School of Massage in Gainesville, FL. In 2001 she received her certification as a Holistic Health Practitioner from Mueller College of Holistic Studies in San Diego, CA.

Jill, a longtime yoga practitioner, wanted to integrate the benefits of yoga with the effectiveness of massage and bodywork. This led her to specialize in Thai “Yoga” Massage. She took her first trip to Thailand to study at the Old Medicine Hospital in Chiang Mai.

After this, Jill went on to become a spa trainer and consultant creating spa treatments, protocols, and business models to spas nationwide. She also completed to yoga teacher trainings in two states. She then discovered she loved teaching and creating classes as much as she loved the practice of massage and yoga.

In 2008, Jill returned to Thailand to continue her studies of Thai Massage and become a Thai Massage Teacher approved by the Thai Ministry of Education. She is now an approved provider of continuing education for the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork and the Florida Department of Health, a massage and bodywork instructor for the State of North Carolina, and a textbook reviewer for the Salvo Massage Therapy Textbooks. Jill founded Living Sabai in Asheville, NC where she teaches continuing education workshops for massage therapists and a variety of healthcare providers. She is also an instructor at the North Carolina School of Advanced Bodywork.