

Research confirms that some forms of massage help against low-back pain

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Most people have experienced back pain - and many hope that massage will relieve it. But not all forms of massage have been scientifically proven to help against low back pain.

That is what the German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in [Health Care](#) (IQWiG) pointed out in information published on informedhealthonline.org today.

Back pain often affects the lower back and can be a big physical and psychological burden. "The cause of back pain is not always immediately clear," explains Professor Peter Sawicki, the Institute's Director. "But low back pain usually gets better on its own within a few weeks." Back pain is only rarely caused by a more serious health problem.

Classic massage, Thai massage and acupressure could help against low back pain

If low back pain does not get better on its own, [massage therapy](#) could be a worthwhile option. "Research suggests that classic massage, Thai massage and acupressure can relieve [low back pain](#) that has lasted longer than several weeks," says the Institute's Director. In classic (Swedish) massage the affected area of skin and muscles are massaged, in Thai massage the limbs are pulled and stretched, and acupressure involves applying pressure to certain points on the body. "But relying on massage alone does not appear to be the best approach when it comes to back

pain", adds Sawicki. Research indicates that people could benefit more if they combine massages with exercises and stretching. In some trials this combination of approaches led to better pain relief and mobility compared to massage alone.

"Not all forms of massage have been scientifically proven to help against chronic back [pain](#) though," concludes Sawicki. "So it is worth finding out about the different techniques before deciding to have a certain type of massage."

An overview of the most common forms of [massage](#) is now available on informedhealthonline.org.

Provided by Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care

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