Swedish Massage

The most common type of massage is Swedish massage therapy. It involves soft, long, kneading strokes, as well as light, rhythmic, tapping strokes, on topmost layers of muscles. This is also combined with movement of the joints. By relieving muscle tension, Swedish therapy can be both relaxing and energizing. And it may even help after an injury.

The four common strokes of Swedish massage are:

* **Effleurage:** a smooth, gliding[stroke](http://www.webmd.com/stroke/default.htm) used to relax soft tissue
* **Petrissage:** the squeezing, rolling, or kneading that follows effleurage
* **Friction:** deep, circular movements that cause layers of tissue to rub against each other, helping to increase [blood](http://www.webmd.com/heart/anatomy-picture-of-blood) flow and break down scar tissue
* **Tapotement:** a short, alternating tap done with cupped hands, fingers, or the edge of the hand