

## Tuina, the ancient healing bodywork of China.

The great forerunner of all the Oriental healing systems, and the oldest recorded system of bodywork in the world, is the ancient healing massage of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Tuina combines soft tissue manipulation and structural alignment with traditional Chinese medical theory and is used to treat a wide variety of musculoskeletal, respiratory, digestive, and reproductive disorders.

Studies show that as far back as 2700 B.C.E., the Chinese people in the Yellow River valley began to organize massage techniques into a medical discipline. Bone fragments that were used as oracular tools during the Shang Dynasty show a complete system of pediatric massage and how the female healers of the era treated disease with massage. It would appear from these records that even during this early period in history, massage had reached a high level.

During the Tang Dynasty, a doctoral degree was created for massage at the Imperial Medical College. Doctors taught students at the college "to master the physical and breathing exercises to treat diseases and rectify injuries." Today, there are medical schools and hospitals devoted exclusively to the practice of Tuina massage as well as departments for its study established in every school and hospital of traditional medicine. For 1600 years, Tuina doctors have been held in the same high regard as doctors of acupuncture or herbal medicine.



Tuina was largely unknown in the West until 1976 when Taoist Master Share K. Lew began teaching it in Los Angeles. At that time, there was no one else teaching it in the United States and most certainly no one else practicing it outside of the Chinese community. Master Lew grew up in the Yellow Dragon Temple in Canton province where he received instruction in Kung Fu, Qi Gong internal energy exercises, Tuina, healing with the hands, herbal medicine, ritual magic, and exorcism. These subjects were normally taught to all monks as part of an integral whole. Today, due to cultural differences, they are taught independently of each other.

The main principles of treatment in this system are to regulate the Qi, Blood and Viscera, and to facilitate the proper functioning of the musculoskeletal system. To do this, a wide variety of techniques are

used to manipulate the soft tissue of the body, acupressure is used to affect the flow of energy, and "bone setting" techniques are used to realign the structure of the body. This makes for a very large system of hands-on healing.

In the West, physical medicine is divided into separate and distinct disciplines. Chiropractic, physical therapy, and massage are all separate fields of study. In fact, in our system we differentiate between chiropractic and osteopathy, physical therapy and occupational therapy are considered separate modalities and many see massage and therapeutic bodywork as different types of work. In China, all of these are considered physical medicine and fall under the large umbrella of Tuina.





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There are different specialties within Tuina just like there are different specialties within Western medicine. Each medical school teaches its own unique style along with dozens of auxiliary techniques. Some of the main specialties include the Rolling style (large muscle groups and joint dysfunction), One Finger Push (acupressure and internal organ disharmony), Nei Gong (internal energy generation and off the body healing), all of which are taught at the International Professional School of Bodywork (IPSB). Bone setting (orthopedics), sports massage, and pediatrics are also specialties in China. All of these schools have roughly three things in common: they all have long histories, they all have a theoretical base in Traditional Chinese Medicine, and they all have a substantial amount of documented clinical experience.

Whether your interest lies in the East or the West, Tuina can be easily integrated into any form of bodywork and can make any massage even more effective.

Tuina and other bodywork modalities available at the IPSB Massage Therapy Center, call (858) 490-1154 or visit [www.ipsbmassagetherapy.com](http://www.ipsbmassagetherapy.com). To learn more about the IPSP College and its certificate and degree

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