



Ahhh, But Therein Lies the Rub

Our writer – a broken woman – endures (OK, enjoys) some tendon-stretching, bone-aligning, muscle-releasing techniques

By Signe Langford

THIS IS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF REVIEWS on three deep tissue, massage treatments. Sometimes the reasons one is assigned a particular story have less to do with pithy prose, witty repartee or smarts, but rather more to do with the inescapable reality of one's creeping decrepitude.

At 47 things can get a little bit creaky here and there – yoga or no yoga – time marches on. And, I'm a tad on the, shall we say, driven side? Type A? I work a lot. OK, I'm a workaholic, I admit it, which means unending, untold hours just sitting. So, who better than I to send off for a pummelling – pen and paper in hand, of course? Heaven knows I can't even have a massage without working at the same time. See? Type A.

THAI MASSAGE

Some call it 'passive yoga'. I'm down with that. Down on a firm mat that covers almost the entire floor of this sunny and heavenly-scented room – lemongrass, lime and camphor infuses the warm air.

Like its kissing cousin, yoga, Thai massage is an ancient bodywork, practised for 2,500 years. And though some may think of it as 'passive', perhaps a better word would be trusting. In Thai massage, the client must relax – surrender the ego – and give themselves over to the practitioner.

Today I'm putting my trust in co-owner, teacher and master practitioner, Deanna Villa, and within a matter of minutes, I believe these hands could catch me if I were falling from a high-rise. She is strong, sure and intuitive.

In Thai massage – with its roots in Buddhism – the practitioner applies compression with hands, elbow or feet while exerting gentle stretches, blending acupressure, yoga and meditation. At the core of this lie the Four Divine States of Mind: loving kindness, compassion, joy and balance.

This is the sort of therapy that truly affects both body and mind. Again, there's that box of Kleenex. Yes, there have been meltdowns on this warm, comforting mat, as Deanna unblocks stored energy or memories. But mostly there has been healing. Clients range from stressed out moms to injured gold medallists. They all need something very different and they all receive precisely what they need.

Now this may sound hyperbolic, but it's true: I left feeling re-born and almost grief-stricken that I couldn't come back the next day and the day after that for more. Yes, this is addictive. You have been warned. **JE**

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