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Deep Tissue Massage and Myofascial Release By Art Riggs

Art Riggs Publishing

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It is a pleasure to review a good product, so I am happy to bring you the news about Art Riggs' seven-volume (!) production *Deep tissue Massage and Myofascial Release*.

The techniques and principles of Ida Rolf's structural integration Rolfing® have been increasingly available to the advanced massage therapist via both workshop and published media, but never in so complete a form. Although the tapes do not purport to teach structural integration, Riggs has done an enviable job at exposing and explaining many of the techniques.

It is always recommended that first contact with any method be made through a class, and hand-to-hand teaching provides the very best feedback for absorbing the basics. For this reason I would not recommend these programs to the beginner. But to anyone familiar with deep-tissue techniques and myofascial release, these videos—available on both DVD and VHS format—will be a significant contribution to your skill set.

Not that Riggs neglects the basics—the first two programs are given over to them entirely, and form the foundation for the subsequent techniques. This includes the fundamentals of cultivating your touch. Riggs begins with the observation that you can tell within the first two minutes whether you are going to get a good massage.



Therefore, cultivating your touch is without doubt the fundamental task of anyone who wants to pay his or her bills by touching people. This section includes notes unique to structural fascial work: on lubrication (less, and water based); how to palpate different levels of tension or restrictions; and practitioner biomechanics as applied to deeper techniques.

Another section reviews endangerment sites and areas of caution, in order to allow practitioners to reduce their trepidation around areas of physiological vulnerability.

The largest part of these initial two tapes devotes itself to the use of tools—the fingertips, the knuckles, the loose fist and the elbow. This includes several examples of the proper use of each tool and, very usefully, the improper use, as well. This section is followed by an extensive introduction to the different kinds of strokes and client positions used in the rest of the programs.

Having served us well with a thorough introduction, Riggs leads us through a series of techniques and strategies that wind their way up through the body from foot to skull, with many helpful explanations and variations, which ensure that the intent, rather than just the techniques, is conveyed to the viewer.

The final two programs offer help in troubleshooting injuries and include good assessment and treatment options for common problems such as back pain, core stability, rotator-cuff injuries, and ankle-and knee-injury leftovers.

Each section is accompanied by anatomy slides and helpful discussion, which makes this a multi-dimensional approach, rather than a linear procession of techniques.

Riggs is to be congratulated for putting together a pleasing and professional set of programs, which I predict will be strewn on the desk of many a therapist—being used, rather than up on a shelf gathering dust.

—Thomas Myers studied directly with Ida Rolf, Ph.D., and Moshe Feldenkrais, Ph.D., and has practiced integrative bodywork for more than 25 years in a variety of cultural and clinical settings.