



Lending a hand

These days, massages are about more than relaxation.
by Christine Gardner

Therapeutic massage

Therapeutic massage, also known as orthopedic massage, does not refer to a specific method. Rather, it's a way of learning how to diagnose a problem area and setting out to treat it.

For instance, often a therapist will work with antagonistic muscle groups, which means the problem from pain at the back of the shoulder might actually be rooted in another area.

Spargo Salon and Spa, a Pewaukee-based facility that just recently tripled the size of its building, offers the setting of a Roman bathhouse, complete with an atrium.

Lissa Claas, who has worked as a massage therapist for eight years, said people seem to want a more therapeutic type of massage than they did just a few years ago.

"Within these last couple of years it has really taken off," Claas says. "They want health and wellness. They are maintaining themselves, rather than the feel-good pampering kind of thing. People are more aware of themselves now. They're more health-conscious."

Most often, Claas hears her clients point to pains in the neck, shoulder and back. Also, people often complain of headaches. Often, the aches are just a result of sitting at a computer all day, although athletes who tax their bodies and don't stretch enough can experience problems, too.

"It's going to be a little bit deeper, a little bit more focused, a little more specific," Claas says of her work. "We're spending more time getting the circulation going in those areas."

And while people are interested in finding solutions to their pain, sometimes they

want to relax, too. So Spargo offers a combination of Swedish massage and a deeper, more focused massage.

"Sporadically, we're seeing clients come in and it's their only time away," she says. "It's their little sanity hour. It really helps."