

# Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization (IASTM)

**What It Is:** A particular type of Soft Tissue Mobilization (STM) where tools are used to detect and treat fascial restrictions and encourage rapid localization of healing

- Manual therapy technique to treat soft tissue dysfunction
- Small firm tools, along with cocoa butter or other medium, are used to in specific fashion to breakup and mobilize affected area
- Tool helps ensure correct tissues are being treated

**Why It Is Done:** Soft tissue dysfunction is a result of injury or overuse causing alterations in the makeup and arrangement of the damaged structures

- Many conditions are a result of soft tissue dysfunction
  - Medial Epicondylitis, Lateral Epicondylitis
  - Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
  - Plantar Fasciitis
  - Rotator Cuff Tendinitis
  - Patellar Tendinitis
  - Tibialis Posterior Tendinitis... To Name a Few!

**How It Works:** IASTM causes micro-trauma to the area in order to encourage a local healing process

- This re-starts the healing process by introducing the body's own inflammatory mediators and healing factors which bring in necessary nutrients and clear waste products from the area
- Increases blood flow to the area
- Helps the body reabsorb the fibrotic tissue
- Works well with physical therapy interventions to insure as the body heals, it does so with the needed amount of strength and good mechanics

**What to Expect:** It is important to understand what is a normal response to this treatment

- Mild to moderate discomfort is common during treatment depending on the location of the area being treated
  - o Discomfort usually lasts for 1-48 hours following
- Some redness, small dots, and minor bruising can occur and it not a reason for alarm as it is necessary to introduce micro-trauma
- Your therapist will likely want you to continue stretching and exercises they have given you until your next treatment
  - o Not using the body part can promote stiffness which is counter-productive, but overuse can cause excessive strain so you will be given instructions about your activity level
- You will likely need more than one treatment to the same area to see the most benefit
- The more stiff, inflamed, or adhered a tissue is, the longer it may take to see improvement
  - o Many people see improvements in pain, range of motion, and flexibility in just a few treatments