

## How to Use a Massage Gun on an Arthritic Joint

When you are experiencing arthritic pain in a joint you should not apply massage directly to that joint. Rather what you should do is apply massage and mobilization to the muscles that cross the joint. Muscles and tissues located above and below the joint should be targeted. Dr. Kelley Starrett, (author of best seller *Becoming the Supple Leopard*), refers to this as treating upstream and downstream. Tissues can include tendons, and fascia.

As an example, we just filmed a video on using a massage gun for knee pain relief. We focused on the massage of muscles and above and below the knee including:

1. *Suprapatellar pouch*: This is the area directly above the knee.



2. *Quadricep*: Hit the entire four muscles and add in some flossing (movement of the muscles and nerves).



3. *Hamstring*: Focus on all three muscles. Can also bend and straighten the knee and add in some flossing.



4. *Calf*: focus on the upper calf but not behind the knee (there are a rich supply of nerves arteries and veins in that area).



5. *Tensor Fascia Lata massage and iliotibial band*: Cannot stretch the IT band but it could help loosen it if somewhat adhered down.



6. *Hip adductors*: Inside of thigh. If tight can cause knee to bend inward-knock kneed.



We would not use a massage gun directly on an arthritic neck. However, it may be beneficial to massage below the neck—the upper trapezius, the levator scapula, and the rhomboids.

*Use the following guidelines to choose the appropriate attachment:*

- a. *Big Round Head Attachment:* Good for larger muscle groups like the glutes, quadriceps, or hamstrings. Allows you to cover more surface area. Moderate in aggressiveness.



- b. *Small Round Head Attachment:* Less aggressive to moderate. Great for tendonitis if used sideways.



(Big & Small Round Head)

- c. *Air-filled (Pneumatic) Attachment*: Probably the least aggressive head. Great for use around bony surfaces and sensitive muscle groups. Good for relaxation.



- d. *Bullet Head Attachment*: Aggressive. We have found to be helpful with treating trigger points or knots.



- e. *Plastic Flat Head*: Moderate. Good on IT band, Pectoralis Major (with ribs underneath), or Plantar Fascia (bottom of foot).



- f. *Steel Flat Head*: (Can be heated up or cooled down prior to use). Moderate to Aggressive.



g. *Knobby Attachments:* Generally, for larger muscles. More aggressive.



h. *Field Goal:* Can be used along both sides of the spine. Also, some have recommended its use on the Achilles tendon.

