

# detours & travel

**OTHERWORLDLY ROAD TRIP**  
 The land and seascape of Canada's Gaspé Peninsula is a sight to see >> D7

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## TARGETED TREATMENT

*Honolulu physical therapist Craig Nagata uses myotherapy, a form of soft-tissue manipulation, to ease patients' aches*

PHOTOS BY CINDY ELLEN RUSSELL / CRUSSELL@STARADVERTISER.COM

**By Steven Mark**  
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In the 1984 film "The Karate Kid," martial arts sensei Mr. Miyagi heals his wounded disciple Daniel by rubbing his hands together vigorously and massaging Daniel's battered leg.

Fanciful as that scene might be, it's not as far-fetched as it seems. In Japanese texts and artwork dating back hundreds of years, deep tissue massage was often used to speed up injured martial arts fighters' recovery,



COURTESY YOICHIRO TSUJII

according to Yoichiro Tsujii, a renowned physical therapist from Japan.

Back in the 1970s, Tsujii studied various forms of pain treatment therapy then in use and found many of the techniques were "already developed in Japan, especially among the martial arts practitioners in (the) Edo era (1603-1867) or long before," he said in an email. Tsujii trained extensively in Japan, the U.S. and Canada before completing his Ph.D. in neuroscience at Nagoya University in 1996, serving on its faculty during and after his studies.

The principles behind those therapies formed the basis for a treatment Tsujii developed and has been promulgating for about the last 40 years. Called myotherapy, it is a deep, soft-tissue massage that targets muscular pain by loosening scarred muscle tissue with the aid of a vibrating metal instrument, thereby stimulating blood flow to nerves in afflicted areas.

Hawaii's only practitioner of myotherapy is Craig Nagata of Orthopedic Rehabilitation Specialists, a licensed physical

therapist who studied with Tsujii in the early 1990s.

"There's lots of other soft-tissue treatments out there," said Nagata, who co-wrote a paper on the subject with Tsujii for the Journal of Manual & Manipulative Therapy. "We've had a lot of success with this treatment. People with chronic headaches, lower back pain, plantar fasciitis, any kind of 'itis' of the muscle, myotherapy treatment has been pretty effective at reducing pain, promoting healing and getting people back."

Nagata said his interest in myotherapy stemmed from the early years of his practice when he noticed that his conventional training, which focused on conditions such as bulging discs and aching joints, was not giving patients long-term recovery. He started his own therapy procedures based on working with soft tissue, or muscle, and had good results with patients. He wound up taking some courses with Tsujii that confirmed his beliefs, and "then he taught me a better way of doing what I was doing."

Please see **MUSCLES, D6**

**Physical therapist Craig Nagata uses myotherapy to treat patient Antoinette Nip's neck pain. Nagata utilizes an instrument called a MyoVib, consisting of a short metal rod attached to a vibrating device, which allows him to knead specific muscles and muscle groups, triggering a healing response.**

**MYOTHERAPY**

*The treatment is offered at Orthopedic Rehabilitation Specialists. It is covered by most health insurance plans; a physician's referral is required.*

>> **Where:**  
 1600 Kapiolani Blvd. (Pan Am Building), Suite 600  
 >> **Info:** 808-979-0700

**Yoichiro Tsujii of Japan, who holds a doctorate in neuroscience, developed myotherapy, basing his work on years of experience as a physical therapist and study of medical and healing techniques dating back hundreds of years.**