

The Health Benefits of Massage



Of course a massage feels good, but it is also good for you. You might view it as a special treat or as an essential way to manage stress and pain, but it is more than that. It is also a way to pamper yourself, refresh your body, and help you heal. When you include massage as part of your regular health routine, it is an excellent way to create physical, mental, and emotional benefits for your body.

Why is it so important to get a massage? For one thing, you don't have time to be sick, and you probably already know that too much stress can make you feel overwhelmed and old. The next thing that happens after you've been stressed too long is you get sick. In fact, experts think disease is 99 percent related to stress. However, you can reduce your stress through massage. When you take care of yourself regularly with a massage, you are more likely to stay healthy and productive.

Listing the Benefits

The following list will help you understand some of the specifics about massage. It can:

- Improve the health of your skin. In addition, it encourages skin tissue to regenerate, and it can reduce both scar tissue and stretch marks.
- Improve your circulation by encouraging your body to pump oxygen and nutrients into your internal organs and your skin tissue.
- Give your muscles some exercise, even when they are weak from atrophy or tight because of the daily stresses you are experiencing. In turn, the exercise causes your pituitary gland and hypothalamus to release endorphins, which provide you with a general sense of feeling good.
- Stimulate lymph flow through your body. Lymph flow consists primarily

of blood plasma, which is essential to your health.

- Give you relief from anxiety or depression.
- Reduce spasms and cramping. In particular, it can stop pain in your lower back.
- Give you relief from migraine headaches.
- Reduce your dependence on medications.
- Increase your flexibility, giving you a larger range of motion.

In addition:

- Athletes find that it is a great preparation for strenuous workouts, and is effective when it comes to recovering from the workout later. Even if you aren't an athlete, however, it can still help you soften and relax your muscles when you are tired, injured, or when you've overexerted yourself.
- If you have had surgery, it can reduce swelling and internal scar tissue, called adhesions, that can grow between tissues and organs.
- If you are pregnant, it can ease your labor and make it faster. It can also help you recover faster so you can leave the hospital more quickly.

After a massage, you will find that you sleep better, have more energy, and can focus more effectively on work. Your circulation will be better and you won't be as tired. Many people also find that massage gives them a renewed sense of perspective. Things seem more clear.

What Research Shows

Massage also causes some physiological and chemical changes throughout the body. Researchers have found the following:

- People with arthritis hurt less and are not as stiff as they would be without massage.

- Children with asthma have better pulmonary function. In other words, they can breathe better. In particular, peak air flow is increased.
- Patients with severe burns say their pain is less, they itch less, and they are less anxious.
- Patients with high blood pressure can lower their diastolic blood pressure. They can also lower the hormones associated with stress and anxiety.
- Women who suffer from premenstrual syndrome don't retain as much water or cramp as much.
- Babies born before 38 weeks who are massaged can gain weight more easily than babies who don't have massage.

In other words, massage — because it consists of one person touching another person, something we know that people need in order to be healthy — can help doctors treat chronic diseases, injuries, neurological problems, and stress. Many medical people have decided to include massage as a way of helping people at the beginning and end of life, whether those people are in neonatal units or hospice care. They are also finding applications for patients who have come out of surgery or who are struggling with pain management. On-site massage practitioners are becoming part of the medical team in some places.

When to Get a Massage

If you have a question about whether a massage would be suitable for you because of health concerns, such as being sick or suffering from osteoporosis, or late stage pregnancy, please contact us to discuss the matter. Once you are sure there won't be a problem, you can plan a time to incorporate this beneficial practice into your life, secure in the knowledge that even though it feels indulgent, it is one of the smartest health moves you can make.

EO Bodyworks