



The Implications of Bodywork

Human Touch Has Powerful Results

Cathy Ulrich

Whether in giving or receiving, touch is as essential to human survival as is food. Infants deprived of touch, even when they are getting adequate nutrition, will fail to thrive. Elders isolated by loss of partners and friends become depressed not only because of the absence of social interaction, but also because of the simple loss of physical contact.

We calm our pets by stroking them, we greet each other with a hug or a handshake, and we soothe our children by holding them. No other form of connection is as powerful and universal as touch. Taking a look at how this sensation is connected to the brain provides insight into the significance of bodywork.

because of our skin. Our skin tells us about our environment and ourselves. When we touch something with our fingers, we're not only sensing the object, we're also feeling our own skin, our own boundaries.

In the first few days of an embryo's life, the cells that eventually become a fully formed baby divide into three layers. The brain and skin come from the same layer, and they develop together, not only before birth, but well into the first year of life. When a baby is held, cuddled, and breast-fed, she's getting crucial stimulation to build neural connections between her skin and her brain that will ultimately last her entire lifetime.

Massage is not just a luxury, it's a way to a healthier, happier life.



No matter the age, human touch plays a significant role in mental and physical health.

Skin and the Brain

The adult human lives inside an envelope of about 18 square feet of skin. Every inch houses thousands of nerve endings and various kinds of sensory receptors, all working to tell the brain about its surroundings. The cold of an ice cube, the softness of a cat's fur, a warm breeze, the caress of a loved one--all of these feelings are possible

Study after study has shown that touch is not only important for development, but is crucial to survival. James H.M. Knox of Johns Hopkins Hospital reported in 1915 that babies left in orphanages and given proper nutrition died at a rate of about 90 percent. Other studies of the same era confirmed

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Office Hours and Contact

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New office in Flagler coming soon!

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these findings and showed that those babies who did survive were often mentally handicapped and stunted in their growth. These valuable studies helped institutions understand the importance of touch. When staff was added to provide enough time for each child to be held, handled, and touched, mortality rates dropped dramatically.

Massage for Children

Those early statistical studies showed how vital touch is to developing infants. Researchers are also finding that giving massage to premature infants can improve their growth and overall health. A study conducted by the Touch Research Institute (TRI) at the University of Miami found that when stable premature babies were given five, one-minute massages a day, they gained 47 percent more weight than their counterparts who didn't get massage.

A 2001 study conducted by TRI showed that when mothers gave their infants a 15-minute massage before bedtime, these sleep-challenged kids went to sleep more quickly and were more alert during daytime hours.

Conversely, clinical research and sociological studies link touch deprivation with aggression. A 2002 study reported that adolescents with a history of aggressive behavior showed less aggression and were less anxious after receiving a 20-minute massage twice a week for five weeks.

Massage also reduces the symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder so kids can concentrate better, and it's even been found that the right kind of touch can help kids with autism relate better to teachers and family members.

Massage for Adults

Ongoing research by the Touch Research Institute continues to prove that massage is an important therapy for many conditions. After a massage, levels of the stress hormone cortisol drop in saliva tests, examinations show an improvement in alertness and relaxation, depression scores decrease, and mental focus improves.

The exponential growth of the bodywork field is a testament to the value of safe, therapeutic touch. Of course bodywork

can play an essential role in the healing of specific chronic or acute orthopedic conditions, but it also serves as a powerful aide in improving the quality of life for adults.

Stan, a former client, was going through a nasty divorce. He had friends to support him emotionally, but it seemed that the thing he missed most was the nurturing touch of his partner. He credits weekly massage appointments, along with seeing a counselor, to his emotional recovery. Massage can be a healthy way to get that much-needed human contact.

Massage for Elders

People confined to nursing homes rarely get more than daily hygienic care in terms of touch. Yet elders need touch as much as infants; studies show that when they receive regular massage, the elderly have less depression and anxiety,

experience better physical coordination, and show a decrease of stress hormone in their saliva.

Geriatric massage is a growing field requiring specialized training, and many massage therapists offer it in their practices. Some nursing homes now provide massage to their residents. Elders appear to respond as well to bodywork as, if not better than, their younger counterparts.

Contact for All Ages

Before babies learn about their hands and feet, they need the touch of loved ones and caregivers. We retain that need our entire lives. Remember to savor touch the next time you're lying on a massage table. Your therapist is not only working out tight muscles, she's contacting your entire nervous system, calming you through pathways that were put in place before you were born.



Infant massage has shown great benefits in calming babies and helping pre-term infants thrive.

Massage and Cancer

A Viable Option?

There's no doubt that cancer patients can benefit from massage therapy. In fact, bodywork can serve as a nurturing healthcare option during the stressful, doctor appointment-ridden time of oncology management.

"Cancer treatment places a heavy toxin load on the body, which massage can help eliminate," says Gayle MacDonald, author of *Medicine Hands: Massage Therapy for People with Cancer*. "However, too much too fast may be more than the client's body can comfortably handle. Skilled touch is beneficial at nearly every stage of the cancer experience, during hospitalization, the pre- or post-operative period, in the out-patient clinic, during chemotherapy and radiation, recovery at home, remission or cure, and in the end stage of life."

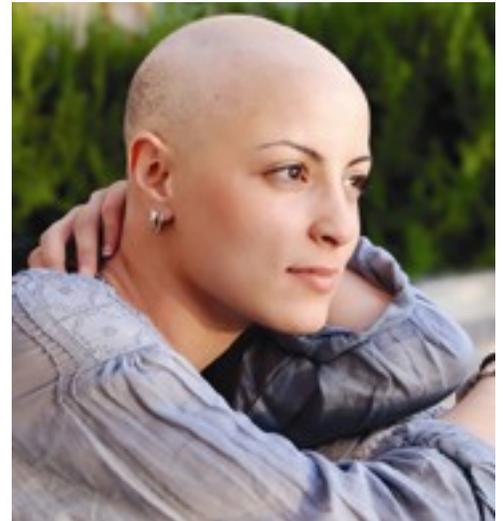
The benefits of massage for these clients include improved blood circulation, equalized blood pressure, and help with fatigue and nausea. The place to start is

by consulting with your physician and your massage therapist. For those who are two to three months out from treatment, bodywork that can be used includes lymph drainage therapies, trigger point therapy, neuromuscular therapy, myotherapy and myofascial release, among others. It's better to wait before receiving deeper work.

While hospitalized, some appropriate techniques include cranialsacral therapy, polarity therapy, reiki and Therapeutic Touch. MacDonald says no matter how severe the treatment's side effects, there's always a way to administer some type of bodywork. According to massage therapist and former oncology nurse Cheryl Chapman, while it's important to receive touch from a qualified practitioner who has worked with cancer patients before, "Touch is always appropriate--there isn't anyone who is untouchable."

If you or someone you love is battling cancer, consider massage as a

therapeutic, nurturing choice to help navigate this difficult journey.



Bodywork offers nurturing relaxation.

Hemp Nutrition

Set Aside Stereotypes For This Wonder Food

Shelley Burns, N.D.

While hemp has often been negatively associated with marijuana, it actually has very little mind-altering tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC) in it--just 0.3 percent in hemp, compared with the 3-15 percent found in marijuana. And in parts of the world, it has been used to make clothing, bedding, and rope thousands of years.

Now more recently, hemp and its good balance of antioxidants, carbohydrates, fats, and proteins is being viewed as a health-promoting, disease-preventing food. Its derivatives include hemp oil, hemp butter, hemp protein powder, and newest of all, hemp milk. Hemp milk is positioned to compete with other non-dairy alternatives like soy, rice, and almond milk.

HEMP'S POWERFUL PROPERTIES PROVIDE A

NUMBER OF BENEFITS:

- Its antioxidant content counteracts environmental toxins.
- Its carbohydrates help increase energy, improve endurance performance during exercise, and keep the mind at peak performance.
- Hemp seeds have more dietary protein than soybeans, meat, fish, chicken, cheese, and milk. Hemp protein has the added benefit of being gluten-free.
- Hemp contains all nine essential amino acids, the building blocks of cells, antibodies, muscle tissue, and enzymes.
- Hemp is loaded with essential fatty acids (EFAs), which are required for maintaining good neurological,

digestive, and skin health.

- Hemp has a low-cholesterol content and a high content in natural phytosterols that also reduce cholesterol levels.
- Hemp is helpful in preventing conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, and asthma.
- Hemp is also good for the planet. As a low-maintenance plant that grows just about anywhere, needs little or no pesticides, and is an ideal crop for organic, sustainable farming.

*Reiki works on
all
levels—mental,
emotional,
spiritual and
physical.*

-Sophie Masi

I am very excited to begin this journey of healing with massage and reiki in our little community. I will have a new office on Main St. in Flagler very soon and I look forward to seeing you there when the doors open for business. Starting Nov. 1st, I will no longer be traveling to my clients, but will be seeing them in my home through the winter months to allow time to finish my office. Visit my website and Facebook or Instagram page for updates. www.harmonihealing.com

HarmoniHealing

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Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals