

Massage News – Where it's all about you!

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Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

Back Pain and Massage

How Bodywork Can Help

Karrie Osborn

Whether it's a pulled muscle from yoga class or an afternoon basketball game, or a long-term pain caused by injury, most of us will come to know the beast that is called back pain. In fact, when it comes to low-back pain specifically, researchers say that 70-85 percent of the population will experience it at some point in their lives.

Causes of Pain

Experts say the cause of back pain can be the result of several factors. High on the list is stress. When our body is stressed, we literally begin to pull inward: the shoulders roll forward and move up to the ears, the neck disappears, and the back tightens in the new posture. "It's an

ergonomics, lack of exercise, arthritis, osteoporosis, a sedentary lifestyle, overexertion, pregnancy, kidney stones, fibromyalgia, excess weight, and more can contribute to pain.

Geoffrey Bishop, owner of Stay Tuned Therapeutics in Flagstaff, Arizona, says mechanics is the main cause of back pain that he sees in his practice. "It's mechanics, including repetitive use and ignorance about preventative postures, and neglect by employers and employees to provide rest and recovery." The past also plays a part, he says. "Old injuries and traumatic events, left untreated and unresolved, seem to dictate where stress lands in the back as well."



Studies show that massage therapy helps reduce back pain more than some medications.

armoring effect," says Angie Parris-Raney, a Denver-based massage therapist who specializes in deep-tissue massage and sports therapy. "That protective mode, with the muscles in flex, can even result in visceral problems," she says, where the pain also affects internal organs.

In addition to stress, poor posture, bad

Massage Offers Hope

Those who suffer with back pain know there are no easy answers for chasing the pain away. Physical therapy has proven effective for some sufferers, as has chiropractic and acupuncture, but massage therapy is also making a name

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*We rise by
lifting others.*

-Robert Ingersoll

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for itself when it comes to providing relief. In fact, research has shown that massage can be a great friend to the back-pain sufferer.

"Massage therapists have long treated low-back pain safely and effectively," says Les Sweeney, president of Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals. "They have done so less expensively and less invasively than is possible with other treatments."

In fact, a study by the Group Health Research Institute in Seattle found that massage was more effective at treating low-back pain than medication. Patients who received massage once a week for 10 weeks were more likely to report that their back pain had improved, and improvements were still present six months after the study. Other research from the University of Miami School of Medicine and the Touch Research Institute showed that massage can decrease stress and long-term pain, improve sleep and range of motion, and help lower the incidence of depression and anxiety that often accompanies back pain.

For Parris-Raney's clients, the length of pain relief provided by massage therapy varies depending on the condition they are experiencing. Getting on a regular massage schedule, however, has really helped her clients manage the back pain, she says. When they go past their normally scheduled appointment, "their bodies know it's time to get a massage again." Whether it's just helping clients get through the day, or reminding the stressed-out office worker to breathe, Parris-Raney says massage can play an important part in back pain relief.

Whitney Lowe, owner of Oregon's Orthopedic Massage Education and Research Institute, says the benefits of massage for back pain depend on the primary cause of the pain. "If it is predominantly muscular pain, then massage has a great deal to offer in reducing pain associated with chronic muscle tightness, spasms, myofascial trigger points, or those types of problems. If it's something caused by a joint alignment problem or compression on a nerve, for example, then the role of massage might be somewhat different, such as helping to address the biomechanical dysfunctions,

but not really being able to get pressure off the nerve itself."

Massage Works

When it comes to back pain, there are a lot of options out there. Ultimately, massage, and its myriad benefits, might be a viable answer. For back pain sufferers, Parris-Raney says massage can work wonders. "Massage can help relax the body, relax the psyche, and improve a client's range of motion and circulation to the affected tissues," she says. Not only can massage help directly with the pain, but it can also make life a little easier, too. "Massage lets you tap into the parasympathetic system," she says, "and tap into all the good hormones that help you sleep better and help you handle stressors along the way." All of that helps in building a healthier back and a happier you.

Benefits of Massage

From stress relief to skin rejuvenation, the benefits of massage are extensive. When it comes to managing back pain, however, there are some specific benefits touch therapy can offer:

- Improved circulation. With increased circulation comes faster recovery time for sore, overworked muscle tissues.
- Increased release of endorphins. The prevalence of these natural painkillers is boosted every time you have a massage. This can only help in managing pain.
- Improved movement. Range of motion and flexibility both get a boost with massage.
- Increased relaxation. When you relax, your muscles relax, thereby calming the pain.



Be sure to communicate with your massage therapist if you are experiencing back pain.

Are Your Candles Safe?

How to Choose Toxin-free Flames

Glynnis Osher

There is nothing like the inviting glow of a candle to make us feel relaxed, guide us into a meditative state, or harmonize the ambiance of a room. With all these life-enhancing attributes, it is troubling to think that many candles are toxic and doing more harm than good--but that may be the case.

The Problem

Most candles today are made from paraffin wax, a petroleum by-product that emits toxic fumes and soot into the air. There are up to eleven known carcinogenic compounds in paraffin candles that are considered toxic air agents by the state of California. Burning these candles can cause harm to the heart, lungs, circulatory, and nervous systems, especially a concern for young children, the elderly, and those with asthma or other already established respiratory problems. In addition, the burning of the fragrant oils in scented candles can create significant air pollution, as well.

Another possible hazard: wicks. While U.S. candle makers voluntarily agreed 25 years ago to prohibit lead wicks, some imported candles may still contain lead. Ensure you're burning cotton wicks only.

The Solution

The good news is, you can still enjoy burning candles because there are safe and healthy alternatives. Conscious candle choices include beeswax and the increasingly popular soy wax. Unlike petroleum, soy is a sustainable and renewable resource. Soy wax is a vegetable by-product that is biodegradable and nontoxic. Many candle enthusiasts prefer soy candles because they burn clean and release very little or no soot into the air. Also, because soy wax is water soluble, clean up is easy and containers can be easily washed and reused. Another benefit of soy wax is the cooler burning temperature, making for a much longer burning candle.

For more information visit the website www.themysticmasala.com.



Candles are for relaxation, not toxification.

Skin Care Fresh From the Farm

Noreen Young

People are seeking beauty with a health twist, not just a product in a pretty jar. They want to see and feel the beautiful benefits when they use a product and know that they're putting the freshest of the fresh on their delicate skin.

A fresh approach to skin care is "in," and my mantra is not all beauty needs to come from a jar. Farmers' markets, organic farms, and health food stores are burgeoning in every city, and the freshest local fruit, vegetables, and herbs are waiting for you.

Here are some simple ways to help your skin benefit from the bounty of the summer harvest.

SWEET-AS-HONEY FACE MASK

Honey, a humectant and natural antiseptic, softens skin in its own sweet way.

1 soup spoon of honey

Cleanse your face and then wrap it with a warm, damp towel or facecloth (leave room to breathe!). Lie down and relax for at least 3 minutes. Apply the honey with a spatula on your clean face and leave on at least 10 minutes. Remove the honey mask with a facecloth and warm water. Apply a light moisturizer to your face and neck. Add eye gel or an eye cream.

SWEET SUGAR SCRUB

1/4 cup sunflower oil
4 tablespoons organic brown sugar

Mix the sugar and oil for a skin-softening exfoliating scrub. Massage this mixture on your skin and leave on at least 5 minutes. This treatment scrub can be used on the face, chest, hands, or feet. Remove with a warm facecloth.

CUCUMBER EYE PAD WITH A LAVENDER SUMMER SURPRISE

1/4 fresh cucumber
1 drop of lavender essential oil

Slice the cucumber thinly, place in a small bowl of fresh spring water, and refrigerate for 10 minutes. Add a drop of lavender essential oil and let the bowl rest on the counter a few minutes while the essential oil infuses into the cucumber. Place slices on your eyes to reduce puffiness or to relieve itchy, allergy eyes.

Your mind is a powerful thing. When you fill it with positive thoughts, your life will start to change.

-Anonymous

AUTO AND HEALTH BILLING ACCEPTED

Auto - If you, or someone you know, has been in an auto accident call today to see if you qualify for massage treatments with no out of pocket cost to you.

Health - Do you have massage therapy coverage on your health plan? Let's work together to get you the best massage at the lowest price available.

~ Aromatherapy~

Mood Boosting Geranium Diffuser Blend

3 drops Geranium

5 drops Grapefruit

2 drops Lime

Doterra Oils available. I place monthly orders and would be happy to add anything you would like to my order.

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