

# In the Balance

Massage news and tips for your good health

Sojourn Therapeutic Massage

815-741-9741

Winter Issue

**stress relief**

**reduced muscle tension**

**pain relief**

**more restful sleep**

**improved circulation**

**healthier joints**

**improved posture**

**quicker recovery from illness and injury**

**fewer headaches**

**restored humor**

**increased energy**

**improved outlook on life**

## Massage for Men

**Cope with stress, prevent injuries, improve work performance**

Although times have changed, men are often still considered the main provider for their families and may be in high-stress or physically demanding jobs. There also lingers a sentiment that men should be tough enough to deal with these demands without complaint.

However, men are bucking those preconceptions and doing more for themselves to stay healthy and avoid burnout. Many are turning to massage to reduce stress levels and enjoy an enhanced feeling of well-being.

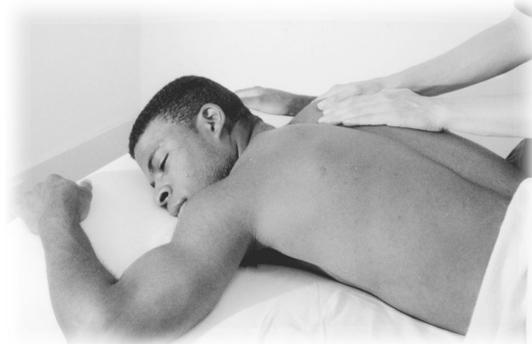
### What can massage do for you

#### Reduce effects of stress

The Touch Research Institute (TRI) of the Miami University School of Medicine has completed dozens of studies on the benefits of touch. One study showed biweekly massage reduced stress hormones and blood pressure in hypertensive adults. The participants also experienced less depression and hostility.

#### Heal or prevent on-the-job and athletic injuries

Repetitive stress injuries are a problem for millions. The most common causes are overzealous participation in sports or jobs that require constant repetitive activity such as lifting or carrying, operating machinery, or keyboarding. These repetitive activities can result in muscle imbalances, for example one shoulder being much stronger and tighter than



*Men are turning to massage to reduce stress and enjoy the feeling of well-being.*



*After a vigorous workout, massage can flush irritating waste products from sore, tired muscles.*

the other — a situation that leaves you vulnerable to injury when these muscle groups are stressed.

If you have an on-the-job or athletic injury, massage can reduce pain and help you heal by reducing swelling, and increasing healing blood flow to the area. It can also relieve contracted muscles to help rebalance chronically overworked muscle groups and improve your range of motion, making it easier to handle the demands of your work or sport.

#### Relax and increase your self-awareness

Chronically tense muscles can dull the awareness of pain and give the sense of being strong enough to “take it.” But constant tension also blocks the flow of energy in the body and can restrict muscle function, which can lead to pain or even injury. Tense muscles can actually be a warning that your body—and perhaps your lifestyle—needs attention.

Massage is a way to relieve tension, prevent pain and tune into the state of your body and mind.

#### Perform better at work

Massage offers a respite from stress and a boost to your circulation, leaving your anxiety relieved, your body relaxed, and your mind refreshed. You can return to work with a clear and balanced mind, allowing you to work better and faster. ☺

# Tips to bust your stress

## Communicate, create, and calm down

Stress is not necessarily a bad thing—it can be a stimulus for positive change and growth. But too much can be detrimental. Learn to recognize the effects of stress in your life. Try one or more of these techniques to deal with stress in a positive way.

- 1. Let your family and friends know when you are under pressure.** Ask for help when life is hectic and you feel anxiety and irritability mounting. Your loved ones can't read your mind and will prefer to lend you a hand instead of being at the receiving end when you need to blow off steam.
- 2. Practice focused relaxation.** Lie down with your knees up and your feet flat on the floor. Focus on your sensations. Notice where you feel discomfort in your body and breathe into those areas. As you breathe, imagine relaxation flooding those areas. With each exhale, let go of discomfort and tension. Practice focused relaxation when you wake up and then again when you get in bed at night.

## Have you suffered a loss?

### Massage can help

Grief is an appropriate reaction to the loss of a loved one, an illness in the family, the loss of a job, and other kinds of bereavement. If you are grieving, you may feel numb, empty, anxious or depressed. People often feel numb for days or weeks until eventually stricken with intense grief.

**Talking about it.** Time will work as an emotional balm, but facing a loss, rather than shutting it out of your mind, will help you the most even when it is painful. Talking about it is an important part of working through it. Opening your heart to friends, family members, ministers, or professional counselors can help immensely.



*Spending time in nature can help you calm down and let go of stress.*

- 3. Get away from your daily routine.** Take a weekend—or even an afternoon—to spend time enjoying the beauty of nature.
- 4. Express your creativity.** Develop a hobby or art that allows you to focus and forget about your troubles. The satisfaction of creating can go a long way toward keeping a larger perspective.
- 5. Get massage and practice relaxation techniques regularly.** Don't expect to experience less stress in your daily life after one massage or 10 minutes of abdominal breathing. For the most benefit, pick your favorite techniques and do them regularly—it may take several weeks before you start to feel results. ~

**Grief in the body.** Research into the mind-body connection has shown that emotions aren't just felt in the brain, but in the body as well. There is a biochemistry of emotion that allows communication between the brain, the immune system, and our emotions, especially intense ones like grief. Massage gets involved in this loop physiologically by increasing circulation, which flushes away stress hormones and increases the flow of endorphins, natural mood-elevators.

**Massage—a safety net.** A massage session is a time you can expect to be responded to in a non-judgmental and caring way. This kind of nurturing experience can allow you to release your feelings or simply to let go and enjoy a much needed sense of calm and well-being. ~

*When words fail, there is still touch.*  
—Dr. David Eisenberg, Chairman,  
Harvard Medical School Center for  
Alternative Medicine

# Menopause

## Massage lends a hand

Menopause, a process spanning a number of years, is different for every woman. Sometime in her 40's, a woman may begin experiencing symptoms like irregular periods, night sweats, headaches, or insomnia. As she ages the symptoms often become stronger and she may also experience achy joints, irritability, and fatigue. Heavy bleeding, bloating, and difficulty concentrating are also commonly reported.

While menopause is natural and normal, these symptoms, especially in combination, can be frustrating and stressful. Women can find relief from their symptoms with natural therapies such as massage, as well as acupuncture, meditation, yoga, exercise, and nutritional therapy.

## How can massage help?

1. **Offers the time and space to relax.** During a massage, you breathe deeply and let go of anxiety, irritability, and stress.
2. **Improves movement in muscles and joints.** Massage increases circulation, which helps to flush excess fluids and bring healing nutrients to your muscles and joints, relieving pain and improving mobility.
3. **Eases headaches and neck tightness.** Muscles in the neck and head can restrict circulation and press on nerves in your head, causing pain and tension. Massage can release these constrictions.



*Massage can help reduce anxiety and irritability and provide a time for reconnecting with your body.*

4. **Improves sleep.** Less anxiety and muscle tension will make it easier to relax when you are ready for bed.
5. **Increases energy and ability to focus.** Improved circulation to the muscles and the brain will result in increased energy and ability to concentrate.
6. **Moisturizes your skin.** High quality oils and lotions are used that are good for your skin. Aromatic essential oils from healing plants are often added that benefit your skin as well as lift your mood.
7. **Promotes a positive body image.** We are in the business to help people enjoy their bodies and because we appreciate the wide variety of body shapes and sizes. Each session should allow you a feeling of reconnecting with and honoring your body. ~

*Sometimes she could not believe that anyone could touch her body like this, with such acceptance, such loving detachment, asking for nothing in return. Moments when she came home to her body in ways she never had before—moments when she felt its aches, varicose veins, and wrinkles so intimately and gently that she groaned with a happiness she could never describe.*  
—Rebecca Wells.  
*The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*

# Speed recovery time

## Are you laid up from injury or surgery?



*Massage can release natural pain relievers to your whole body, including to injured areas that can't be touched.*

If injury or surgery forces you to limit your activities, massage can give you some of the same benefits that you get from your exercise program. Massage improves the flow of the lymphatic fluids, which underlie the health of the immune system. Because it manually flushes irritating toxins caused by injuries, stress, and taking medications, receiving massage makes it easier for oxygen and healing nutrients to flow to tissues in need of repair. Swelling is reduced and can even be prevented.

Massage also releases endorphins, your body's natural pain killers, bringing relief to your entire body, even to immobilized areas that cannot be touched. Last, but not least, the feeling of relaxation and well-being from massage can counteract the general discomforts of too much time on the couch. ~

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**Your newsletter on massage! See inside:**

- Massage for men
- Bust your stress
- When recovering from illness or injury
- Massage and menopause
- When you have suffered a loss

Winter is the time to slow  
down, take stock, and  
renew your energy.



Help someone you care for  
make a commitment to their  
good health with the gift of  
**MASSAGE**

## CNN reports

### Massage gaining popularity with public, employees, medical professionals

CNN reports massage is a growing trend among people seeking alternative forms of health care or simply wanting to feel better.

According to surveys completed by the American Massage Therapy Association, every year more Americans are reporting that they received massage. The increasing interest—and proven benefits—have spurred managed care health plans around the country, including Prudential, Oxford Health Plans, and Kaiser Permanente to add to their coverage massage therapy prescribed by a doctor.

A growing number of employers have also taken note of the benefits of massage. The U.S. Department of Justice, Boeing, Reebok, and dozens of other companies and agencies offer regular seated massage to their employees. Those companies include hospitals and medical centers whose administrators are increasingly making massage available to patients as well. “It’s all about the power of touch, which the medical profession is starting to learn has amazing healing properties,” said Dr. Brad Stuart, the medical director for California-based Sutter Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice, a non-profit group working with terminally ill patients. ~