

The Power of Touch

A Natural Touch – Massage Therapy
Jodi Saum-Stockner, LMT

<http://www.antmt.com>

Welcome to this month's article! For those who are interested in learning more about the many ways massage can help improve overall health and body function, there is plenty of information available on the Internet. As an example, the article below comes from the American Massage Therapy Association's web site: <http://www.amtamassage.org/news/>.

Another informative site is <http://www.miami.edu/touch-research/>. The Touch Research Institute has conducted over 100 studies on the positive effects of massage therapy on many functions and medical conditions in many different age groups.

The Touch Research Institute was formally established in 1992 by Director Tiffany Field, Ph.D. at the University of Miami School of Medicine. The TRI was the first centre in the world devoted solely to the study of touch and its application in science and medicine.

The TRI distinguished team of researchers, representing Duke, Harvard, Maryland, and other universities, strive to better define touch as it promotes health and contributes to the treatment of disease. Research efforts that began in 1982 and continue today have shown that touch therapy has numerous beneficial effects on health and well-being.

Of course, if you have other questions on how massage can help you, just ask at your next appointment. Enjoy this holiday season. See you soon!

The Power of Touch for Pain Relief: Basic Facts

Massage is well known for reducing stress and promoting relaxation. And, a growing body of research also shows that massage therapy is effective for relieving and managing chronic and acute pain, a significant national health problem. According to the National Institute for Health, more than one-third of all Americans will suffer from chronic pain at some point in their lives, and approximately 14 percent of all employees take time off from work due to pain. Increasingly, massage therapists are being incorporated into pain management programs of hospitals and health care organizations. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations has suggested massage therapy as one means to manage pain without use of pharmaceuticals.

According to a recent American Hospital Association survey about their use of CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) therapies, among the 1,007 hospitals responding, nearly 82 percent of the hospitals offering CAM therapies included massage therapy among their health care offerings — with more than 70 percent utilizing massage therapy for pain management and relief. In a recent consumer survey commissioned by AMTA, 91 percent of respondents agreed that massage can be effective in reducing pain, and nearly half of those polled (47 percent) have had a massage specifically for the purpose of relieving pain.

Consider recent clinical research on the efficacy of massage for pain relief:

- Massage therapy is more effective for chronic back pain than other complementary therapies.
- Massage therapy promotes relaxation and alleviates the perception of pain and anxiety in cancer patients.
- Massage therapy reduces post-traumatic headaches better than cold pack treatments.
- A pilot study conducted at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles found that massage, as part of hospital-based surgery treatment, reduces pain and muscle spasms in patients who have undergone heart bypass surgery.
- Massage stimulates the brain to produce endorphins.

How does massage relieve pain?

- A simple and direct strategy: working from the external, outer mechanisms of pain to the primary, root cause.
- Focuses on the entire body system and its relationship to soft tissue – not solely on the site of pain.

Benefits of massage for pain relief

- Helps patients become more aware of their bodies and the sources of pain.
- Better familiarizes patients with the pain they experience.
- Has an impact on the patient by virtue of human touch.
- Improves confidence by encouraging patients to effectively cope with their pain.

“We’re drowning in information and starving for knowledge.”

— Rutherford D. Rogers

The content of this article is not designed to replace professional medical advice. If you’re ill, consult a physician.

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