

Five Great Reasons To Get A Massage

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1. Massage feels great!
2. Massage can reduce pain and pain perception.
3. Massage improves performance.
4. Massage reduces stress.
5. Massage improves general health.

If you need to be persuaded to get a massage, it is likely you've never had one!

The first reason to get a massage is **a massage just plain feels great**. There are very real functional health benefits of massage but the pure pleasure of physical touch is so enjoyable it must be mentioned first. Massage therapy powerfully satisfies our basic need for nurturing touch. It can help relax, heal and release emotions without the aid of drugs. Each square centimeter of skin contains numerous nerve endings, which explains why touch is so vitally important to human beings. Massage creates a sense of being nurtured and provides a time away from the pressures of every day life.

Massage can reduce pain and pain perception. Long work days spent standing, lifting or bending may result in tense muscles and spasm leading to back pain, tense shoulders and headaches. Tense muscles can be painful and may tighten tendons and ligaments inducing pain and possibly making us more susceptible to injury. Massage can work the tension of spasm out of muscles

leading to pain relief. Massage reduces hypertension, stopping the pain-spasm-pain cycle. Studies have shown increased levels of endorphins, the body's natural pain killers, during and after massage. Massage is a natural pain relief option and viable alternative to pain medication.

Massage improves performance. Your work performance and general energy will both receive a boost from regular massage therapy. Studies done on office workers and medical students have shown improved performance. Office workers who were given regular massages demonstrated increased production compared to when they were not massaged. Medical students who received massage before exams showed decreased anxiety and lower respiratory rates compared to when not massaged. Reduced stress allows for better focus on the job at hand.

Massage has great benefit in the reduction of stress. One result of massage is an improved sense of well being. Studies done in cancer patients have shown that massage promotes better sleep and therefore can reduce fatigue. Lower anxiety levels, blood pressure reduction, and slower heart rates are all seen after massage and indicate decreased levels of stress. Multiple studies have also demonstrated decreased cortisol levels following massage. Cortisol has been termed "the stress hormone" because it is secreted into the bloodstream during the body's response to stress. High and prolonged levels of cortisol in the bloodstream (like those associated with chronic stress) have been shown to have

negative effects, such as impaired cognitive performance, decreased bone density and higher blood pressure.

Massage can improve your overall health. An experienced massage therapist will customize a course of massage treatments specifically for your needs. When you examine all of the benefits of massage, none can be more important than the positive impact on your overall health. Pain reduction, decreased stress and an improved sense of well being certainly have health benefits such as reduction of hypertension. Studies on cancer patients have shown reductions of depressed mood, anxiety and anger with massage. These are important for the patient to continue to fight their disease. Massage has been shown to elevate dopamine, serotonin and endorphin levels. Dopamine and serotonin levels have a direct impact on whether or not a person feels depressed. Cancer patients and medical students have been shown to have elevated NK (natural killer) cells and lymphocytes. Although not yet proven, this may increase enhancement of immune system competence. In addition, pregnant patients have been proven to have less anxiety, less back pain and better sleep with regular massage.

Massage is increasingly becoming part of a healthy lifestyle. Schedule a massage before your body aches from overwork or before you get a pounding headache and avoid the pain altogether. A Swedish massage is a full body massage with long flowing strokes designed to relieve muscle tension and reduce stress. Deep Tissue massages include specialized techniques

(acupressure, stretching, neuromuscular) for target problem areas such as neck, lower back, hip, sciatic nerve problems and shoulders. Ask a massage therapist which type of massage is best for you. Regular massage, when part of your wellness routine along with good exercise, nutrition, and rest will result in a healthier lifestyle. For all the health benefits and feelings of wellness, try one.