

Massage 101 News

Spring 2011

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

Invest in Your Health

Massage Offers Excellent Return on Investment

"Invest for the long term" is great financial advice, but it's also great healthcare advice. Never is investing for the long term more important than when you are making day-to-day decisions about your health. There are short-term gains from taking care of your health, to be sure, but the long-term benefits are not to be underestimated.

You already know the value of bodywork. For all the short-term stress and pain relief you get from massage today, there are lasting rewards you'll thank yourself for down the road. Massage therapy as a preventive measure and part of an ongoing care regimen can mean fewer visits to the doctor, as well as fewer

emotionally and spiritually, and maintain harmonious relationships with coworkers, family, and friends.

Research supports the value of massage. Massage provides many benefits, including improved concentration, energy, circulation, and self-esteem, as well as reduced stress, fatigue, and pain. It's helpful with more acute health conditions, also. If you, or a loved one, are already dealing with a health condition, massage is an even more important part of your healthcare planning.

Research shows:
-- Alzheimer's patients exhibit reduced irritability, pacing, and restlessness after

*Take care of
your body. It's
the only place
you have to
live.*

-Jim Rohn



Massage in a health investment, helping to manage stress, support wellness, and boost immunity.

co-pays, prescriptions, and over-the-counter medications. Ultimately, it means a healthier and happier you.

An Excellent Value

As you plan the family budget, ponder how massage therapy impacts your ability to make good decisions, cope with extra responsibilities, stay on an even keel

neck and shoulder massage.

-- Deep-tissue massage is effective in treating arthritis, back pain, fibromyalgia, and osteoarthritis.

-- Fibromyalgia patients receiving massage have fewer sleep problems and less anxiety, depression, fatigue, pain, and stiffness.

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Office Hours and Contact

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-- Massage during labor appears to help block pain, reduce stress and anxiety, and relax muscles. Some medical professionals say massage shortens labor.

-- Massage can reduce sports-related soreness and improve circulation, and is beneficial in reducing symptoms associated with arthritis, asthma, burns, high blood pressure, and premenstrual syndrome.

-- Oncology patients show less anxiety, depression, fatigue, nausea, and pain following massage therapy.

-- Preterm babies receiving massage therapy gain more weight and have shorter hospital stays.

-- Massage therapy is effective in reducing post-surgical pain and can even reduce the time required for post-operative hospital stays.

You may be trimming some extras out of your budget, as many Americans are. When weighing what goes and what stays, consider what an excellent value massage is, especially in relation to things that may be less valuable, but still cost you plenty. The price of massage has remained stable in recent years, while the cost of movies, dining out, and sports events have risen. Which of these activities has the power to improve your health and which has a better return on investment?

Get Creative

There are many ways to keep massage in your life if you use your imagination. While vacations are definitely needed right now by just about everybody, more and more Americans are staying closer to home and taking "staycations." How about planning a healthy, home-based vacation and including massage as part of your relaxation?

When it comes to gift-giving occasions, why not give and ask for massage gift certificates? Massage makes a wonderful replacement for flowers that wilt, sweaters that don't fit, or another box of fattening candy. Some folks buy spa packages or put together their own outings with a massage, a museum excursion, or lunch at a favorite restaurant. Mothers, daughters, aunts, and grandmothers are enjoying spas together and massage is a key part of the package. These events create bonding experiences that launch new traditions and reinforce a healthy lifestyle.

Gift certificates for chair massage at airports are an option for weary travelers, as is chair massage at malls for package-laden shoppers. If you are an employer, consider gifting your staff with on-site chair massage, which has been shown to reduce stress and improve performance. Just think of it as the ultimate pat on the back for staff and one that pays you back.

Maintain Well-Being

You may be tempted to trim your wellness budget when economic times are tough. Yet, a recent national consumer survey showed most massage-minded Americans are still committed to maintaining the health benefits they experience with massage. It only makes sense. The better you feel, the better job you can do of caring for yourself and your loved ones. Massage therapy will also help families under stress create healthier households, and

more focused and relaxed moms and dads. Children are sensitive and often pick up on tension in a household; parents who are taking care of themselves are more likely to provide a sense of calm to their kids. This goes for caregivers of aging parents, too.

Now, more than ever, massage should play a role in reducing your stress and strengthening your health. When people feel their best, they are more able to face the challenges difficult times present. With greater health and peace of mind, you can face difficulties with poise, clarity of purpose, and strengthened emotional reserves.

Truly, massage is more than a luxury--it's a vital part of self-care that has a positive ripple effect on you as you work, play, and care for others. Investing in your health is one investment that's sure to pay off.



The value of bodywork runs deep, for nothing is more valuable than good health.

What Is Reiki?

Understanding Energy Work

A type of energy bodywork, reiki (pronounced ray-key) relies on the ancient belief in the life force energy, referred to as chi, that flows through all things. This life force runs throughout pathways in the body called meridians, nourishing organs and cells and supporting vital functions. When this energy is disrupted by negative thoughts, feelings or actions, illness and disease result. A reiki practitioner's hands hover just above a person's body, sensing the affected areas and infusing them with positive flow. This raises the energetic vibration and breaks up the negativity to heal, clear and restore the natural flow of the life force. The reiki practitioner, trained to access and serve as a channel for the life energy, places his hands on or just above the client's body and uses a passive touch that some clients experience with warmth or tingling. The hands remain in position for 3-5 minutes, alternately covering 10-12 positions over the body.

Thought to be Tibetan Buddhist in origin, the practice of reiki is comprised

of three levels of training. Through this training, the practitioner learns how to access energy flow through the hands to heal. Completion of the third and highest level of training results in the title of reiki master. Reiki is used to accelerate healing, assist the body in cleansing toxins, balance the flow of subtle energy by releasing blockages, and help the client contact the healer within.

According to www.reiki.org, reiki is beginning to gain acceptance as a meaningful and cost-effective way to improve patient care in hospitals and clinics across America. In an interview on the website, Dr. David Guillion, an oncologist at Marin General Hospital in California, says, "I feel we need to do whatever is in our power to help the patient. We provide state of the art medicine in our office, but healing is a multidimensional process. I endorse the idea that there is a potential healing that can take place utilizing energy." For more information, consult your bodywork practitioner.



Reiki balances subtle but vital energy.

Massage for Old Injuries

Ancient Injuries Don't Have to Make You Feel Old

Art Riggs

Injuries such as chronic back pain, trick knees, and sticky shoulders are not necessarily something you just have to live with. Massage techniques might hold the key to unlocking this old pain.

Will Massage Help?

The benefits of massage will depend on the extent of the injury, how long ago it occurred, and on the skill of the therapist. Chronic and old injuries often require deeper and more precise treatments with less emphasis on general relaxation and working on the whole body. Massage works best for soft tissue injuries to muscles and tendons and is most effective in releasing adhesions and lengthening muscles that have shortened due to compensatory reactions to the injury. Tight and fibrous muscles not

only hurt at the muscle or its tendon, but can also interfere with proper joint movement and cause pain far away from the original injury.

Therapists who perform such work often have specialized names for their work--such as orthopedic massage, neuromuscular therapy, myofascial release, medical massage, etc.--but many massage therapists utilize an eclectic approach combining the best of the specialties.

It Works!

A recent Consumer Reports article ran the results of a survey of thousands of its readers and reported that massage was equal to chiropractic care in many areas, including back and neck pain. Massage

also ranked significantly higher than some other forms of treatment, such as physical therapy or drugs.

If that nagging injury persists, consider booking a massage. Be sure to discuss the injury with your practitioner: How did you receive the injury? Have you reinjured it? And what exactly are your symptoms? Often, the body compensates in one area to protect another that has been traumatized, and this can create new problems.

Discuss the issues with your massage therapist. (Sometimes just talking about old injuries can play a significant role in the healing process.) Together, the two of you can work to determine a treatment plan.

*Whatever words
we utter should
be chosen with
care, for people
will hear them
and be
influenced by
them, for good
or ill.*

-Buddha

Spring has arrived!! We are spending more time outside and doing things that we haven't in a while. Being stiff and sore after these activities is common. Massage can help. Being consistent with regular sessions will help you to feel great all year. I hope to see you soon.

Thanks for stopping by,

Barb

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