

# Still Point In-Touch

Winter 2011

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

## Massage as the Body's Workout

### Can Bodywork Sometimes Make You Sore?

Shirley Vanderbilt

You've just had a wonderful massage, and you go home feeling both relaxed and rejuvenated. But later that night you feel like you're coming down with something. Or perhaps the next morning, you wake up with twinges of muscle soreness, maybe some fatigue, and you just don't feel yourself. What happened? Chances are it's the massage, and it's perfectly OK.

Keith Grant, head of the Sports and Deep Tissue Massage Department at McKinnon Institute in Oakland, Calif., says, "It's very much like doing a workout. If the muscles aren't used to it, they often respond with some soreness." Grant notes this should last for no more than a day or two. If it lasts longer, the

therapist can find all the kinks that have built up from daily stress and too little or too much exercise. The whole point of a therapeutic massage is to release that tension, work out the kinks, and help your body relax so it can function at an optimal level. All of this work stretches muscles, pushes blood into them, and gets things working again.

#### A Closer Look

There are several theories, in addition to muscle function, as to why people sometimes experience after-effects from massage.

Massage can stimulate the lymph system, which is comprised of several organs



A good massage can sometimes leave you feeling like you had a good workout.

massage may have been too intense, and the therapist should adjust for this in the next session. However, just as with exercise, when your body adjusts to having this type of workout, your physical response will also be less intense.

A professional massage is more than an ordinary backrub. Your massage

(thymus, tonsils, spleen, adenoids), hundreds of lymph nodes, and a multitude of vessels that run throughout the body. These lymphatic vessels carry a clear fluid, known as lymph, that circulates around the body's tissues, absorbing fluid, waste products, dead cells, bacteria, viruses, fats, and proteins

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*Forget not that  
the earth  
delights to feel  
your bare feet  
and the winds  
long to play  
with your hair.*

-Kahlil Gibran

#### Office Hours and Contact

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from the tissue as it goes, while also giving passage to immune cells as they're needed. Massage can sometimes stimulate the lymph system, helping to eliminate toxins from the body. And if the body contains a high level of environmental or dietary toxins, you could feel some mild, flu-like symptoms. While most people come out of a typical massage feeling nothing but relaxed, some people do report feeling a bit nauseous. If this is the case, make sure to drink plenty of water and perhaps take a slow walk. Movement creates a greater lymphatic response and will hurry the process along.

Grant points to another theory being closely examined by experts. Neurological sensitivity, or "sensitization," looks at the "whole response of what's going on in a person." As Grant explains, massage provides a significant amount of input to the central nervous system and the body responds to that increased information. Pain and other occasional after-effects may be the result of a system that has received more information than it can handle at that particular time. And because the amount of sensory input we receive during any day or week is always fluctuating, sometimes we may be overloaded and other times not. It depends on the total stress (emotional, spiritual and physical) being experienced by the body at that moment.

## Minimizing Overload

So what can you do to minimize the sometimes uncomfortable side effects? It's important to communicate with your massage therapist regarding your expectations, as well as your current state of health. Your therapist can then tailor the massage to your personal needs and desires, and make adjustments in intensity or technique as the session proceeds. "I'd look at what's being done," says Grant. In some cases, a shorter or more soothing session may be more appropriate. In others, the therapist may need to change the kind of technique used. Much of this can be judged by how the person is feeling and responding during the massage.

In addition to communicating clearly with your practitioner throughout the session, following a few simple steps will help ease tenderness and maximize

benefits:

- UNDERSTAND THAT EVERY BODY REACTS DIFFERENTLY.

Your body is an organism made up of complex systems that react to a constantly changing influx of external factors.

- MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH PRACTICES.

This means keeping your mind free of negative clutter.

- DRINK PLENTY OF WATER IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING YOUR TREATMENT.

Continue to do so for the next day or two. This will rehydrate your tissues and ease the effects.

- TAKE IT EASY AFTER YOUR MASSAGE.

Go home, relax and just allow your body to find its balance naturally.

Getting a massage can do you a world of good. And getting massage frequently can do even more. This is the beauty of bodywork. Taking part in this form of regularly scheduled self-care can play a

huge part in how healthy you'll be and how youthful you'll remain. Budgeting time and money for bodywork at consistent intervals is an investment in your health. And remember: just because massage feels like a pampering treat doesn't mean it is any less therapeutic. Consider massage appointments a necessary piece of your health plan, and work with your practitioner to establish a treatment schedule that best meets your needs.

Like exercise, making bodywork a habitual practice is good for your health. And if you wake up the next morning a little sore, it's probably because you had a really good massage.



Bodywork can stimulate the lymph system, which can help detox the body.

# Soothe Your Skin's Winter Ailments

*Kayla Fioravanti*

The drying effects of winter are upon us. Here are some at-home ideas to help soothe your skin through this challenging season.

## Cleanse

Put away your foaming gels and soaps and stock up on creamy products. Cleansing creams, lotions, and milks are great winter choices, because they don't contain the harsh, oil-stripping detergents found in most cleansing gels.

## Tone

Shelve your astringents and switch to a toner. In the cold months, your skin needs to be soothed and balanced, not dried out further.

## Moisturize

Choose heavier creams than you would in summer months. You can even use your heavy eye cream on your lips and face. If your skin itches, the dry air is causing the moisture in the top layer of your skin to evaporate quickly. Slather those areas with extra moisture until you feel relief, and never be afraid of using

pure oils on your skin--a bottle of jojoba or olive oil is great to have on hand.

## Exfoliate

Exfoliate twice a week to remove dead skin cells and help your skin absorb the extra moisture you are using. Because central heating systems reduce the amount of sebum our skin secretes, contributing to dryness, exfoliation will free this natural regulating agent. Use a cream-based exfoliant with jojoba beads, so your body can soak up the rich oils.

## Hydrate

For a simple in-home hydrotherapy treatment, start your day with a steamy shower. Just as you are finishing, switch the water to cold for about 15 seconds and then back to warm for 15 seconds. Repeat the process for two minutes.

## Shower and Bathe with Oils

Did you know you can apply body oil, lotion, or cream during your shower or bath? The heat and steam help your skin to thoroughly absorb the moisture.

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# Coenzyme Q10

## The Wrinkle Cure

Air pollutants, toxins, cigarette smoke, cell metabolism, exposure to the sun, and other environmental factors initiate free radicals, which can cause dangerous reactions that destroy cells and damage DNA, proteins, and fats. Free radicals also interfere with collagen production and integrity, resulting in loss of elasticity and, ultimately, aging skin. Although this is a natural and unavoidable by-product of metabolism, an overabundance of free radical damage can cause premature aging and wrinkles. Fortunately, there's a nutritional way to fight the elements.

Coenzyme Q10, also called CoQ10 and ubiquinone, is a fat soluble, vitamin-like nutrient present in virtually all cells and considered the

spark plug of the body, helping to produce and regulate energy as well as fighting free radicals as an antioxidant.

CoQ10 levels are highest during the first 20 years of life and decline with time, so much so that at age 80, CoQ10 levels may be lower than at birth. Yet the body's demand for CoQ10 increases with age. Furthermore, statin (cholesterol-lowering) medications can further deplete the body of CoQ10.

The recommended daily CoQ10 dose is 30 mg, in combination with alpha lipoic acid and vitamins A, C, E, and selenium. Foods highest in CoQ10 include sardines, beef, peanuts, spinach, and albacore tuna. However, it would take a pound of sardines, two

pounds of beef, or two-and-a-half pounds of peanuts to provide 30 mg, and cooking foods at high temperatures degrades the enzyme. Consequently, CoQ10 supplementation is likely necessary to achieve therapeutic effects.

CoQ10 can also benefit topically, as it's a small molecule that can easily penetrate the skin. When CoQ10 is combined with vitamins C and E in creams or lotions, the synergistic effect can neutralize free radicals, thus reducing wrinkles.

Supplementing with CoQ10 is not only a good antiaging strategy for the skin, it can also enhance energy, cognition, heart health, stroke prevention, and immune support.

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

-Buddha

Mention this newsletter and receive \$5 off your session!

(Offer ends March 31, 2011, not to be combined with other offers)

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