

## Combining Nursing skills and Massage Therapy to promote healing

While massage may have developed a reputation as a self-indulgent treat for people who love pampering, new studies are showing that it has a wide variety of tangible health benefits. As a nurse and a Holistic Therapist, I combine the ancient art of massage and modern knowledge of anatomy to create a therapeutic experience and promote holistic therapies. My job allows me to look at life rather than just the body—asking what is going on in life that needs healing. The idea of caring for the entire person, not just their physical body, is one that dates back to Florence Nightingale, in which her pioneering actions define her as “The Mother of Modern Nursing.”

Our work takes into account both the psychological and the physiological of clients. We are often dealing with chronic pain conditions that are a result of a long term combination of both emotional and physical pain.

Massage as a healing tool has been around for thousands of years in many cultures. Touching is a natural human reaction to pain and stress, and for conveying compassion and support. Think of the last time you bumped your head or had a sore calf. What did you do? Rubbed it, right? The same was true of our earliest ancestors. Healers throughout time and throughout the world have instinctively and independently developed a wide range of therapeutic techniques using touch. Many are still in use today, and with good reason. There is now scientific proof of the benefits of massage - benefits ranging from treating chronic diseases and injuries to alleviating the growing tensions of our modern lifestyles. Therapeutic massage manipulates the soft tissues and muscles to restore natural, pain free functions, treating the entire body, both the psychological and the physiological needs of clients.

Many people wait until they are already in pain or suffering injuries before turning to massage, but why let it get that bad? It is a good idea to take regular massage as a preventive measure so that such injuries do not occur. One of my intentions is to also teach how to perform stretching exercises, reduce stress and when to apply heat or cold compress. Specific self-care exercises become a natural extension of a massage session. Such therapy can be a valuable combination for a better result.

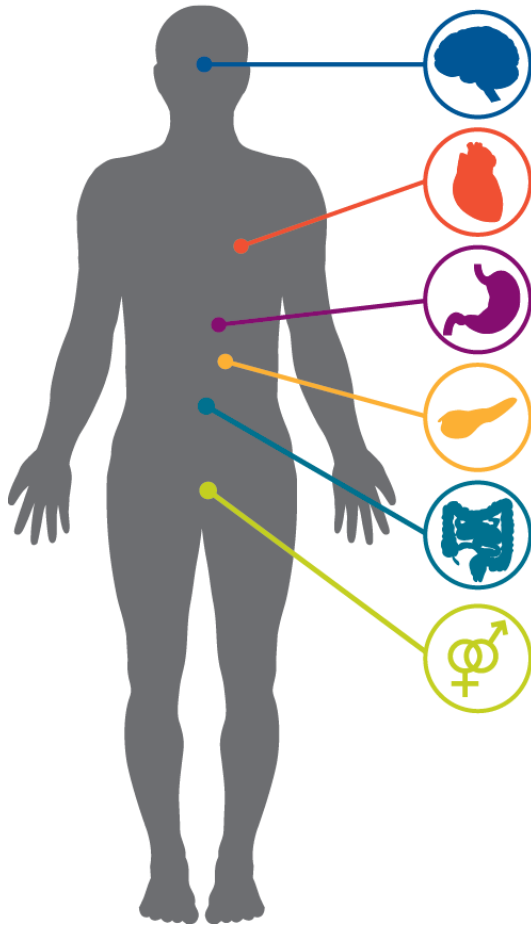
Regular massage maintenance will help enhance your overall sense of wellbeing for optimum physical and mental health.

***\*Remember, “The mind and body are not separate, what affects one, affects the other.”***

### **Please note:**

- Do not use massage therapy to replace conventional care or to postpone seeing a health care provider about a medical problem.
- Talk to your health care physician and explain why you would like massage therapy to be part of your treatment, unless it is contra indicated.
- Discuss your concerns and medical conditions with your massage therapist. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will ensure coordinated safe care.

## Effects of Stress on the Body



**Brain and Nerves:** Headaches, feelings of despair, lack of energy, sadness, nervousness, anger, irritability, trouble concentrating, memory problems, difficulty sleeping, mental health disorders (anxiety, panic attacks, depression, etc.)

**Heart:** Faster heartbeat or palpitations, rise in blood pressure, increased risk of high cholesterol and heart attack

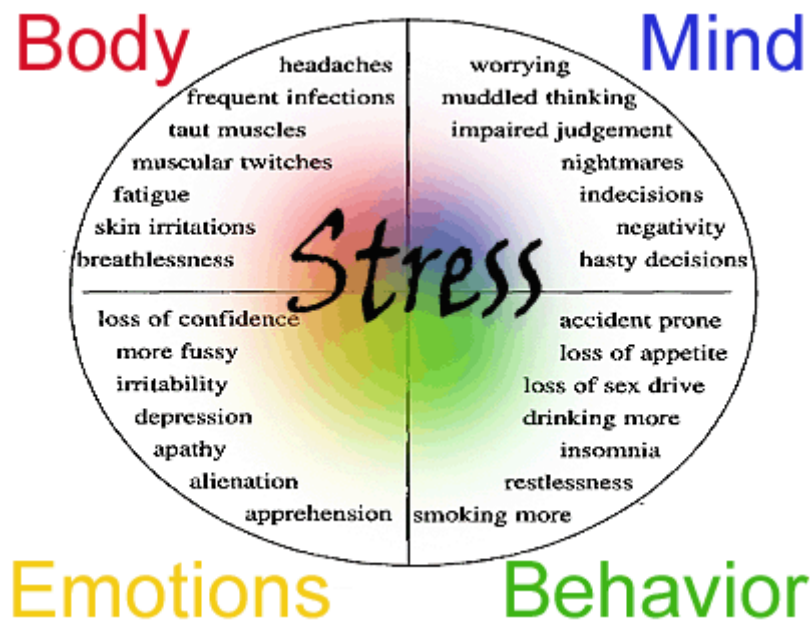
**Stomach:** Nausea, stomach ache, heartburn, weight gain, increased or decreased appetite

**Pancreas:** Increased risk of diabetes

**Intestines:** Diarrhea, constipation and other digestive problems

**Reproductive Organs:** For women-irregular or painful periods, reduced sexual desire. For men-impotence, low sperm production, reduced sexual desire

**Other:** Acne and other skin problems, muscle aches and tension, increased risk for low bone density and weakened immune system (making it harder to fight off or recover from illnesses)



# Benefits of Regular Massage

## Physical Benefits:

- Relaxes the body
- Calms the nervous system
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces heart rate
- Slows respiration
- Loosens tight muscles
- Stretches connective tissue
- Reduces chronic pain
- Improves skin tone
- Increased red blood cell count
- Relieves tired and aching muscles
- Improves muscle tone
- Relieves cramped muscles
- Speeds recovery from injury
- Reduces tension headaches
- Increases tissue metabolism
- Decreases muscle deterioration
- Speeds recovery from illness
- Increases range of motion
- Speeds elimination of metabolic waste
- Increases blood and lymph Circulation
- Stimulates release of endorphins
- Strengthens the immune system
- Reduces swelling
- Improves posture
- Improves skin tone

## Mental Benefits:

- Reduces mental stress
- Promotes quality sleep
- Improves productivity
- Induces mental relaxation
- Improves concentration

## Emotional Benefits:

- Reduces anxiety
- Enhances self-image
- Provides a feeling of well being
- Nurtures and stimulates emotional growth

*Did you know?*

Touch and massage stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain killers

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