



# Staying in Touch®

## Holiday Greetings!

It's time to put the wraps on another year and to plot a course for the coming months. The final week of the year is a great time to begin making your New Year plans, while enjoying your holiday celebrations.

What better time to reflect on your current circumstances and to set your sights on what you'd like to accomplish over the next year?

Everything we do is affected by how we feel—physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. You can feed your heart and soul with positive, inspiring news and stories that help you focus on your goals for improvement.

Staying healthy depends on good physical care, proper diet and rest. And what better way to support all of your life goals than regular massage?

This month's article covers some of the key reasons regular massage is such an effective way to keep you feeling your best.

Still trying to decide what to give some of the folks on your shopping list? Massage gift certificates are a wonderful solution—and just a phone call away.

Enjoy the rest of your holidays, visiting with friends, family, and loved ones. See you soon!

## The Benefits of Regular Massage *by Eric Stephenson, LMT*

Take a deep breath and daydream yourself to a massage room, where there is true tranquility, stress evaporates and you have a full hour to unwind and relax.

When you see that nearly 60 to 90 percent of all doctor visits are stress-related, it should strike a chord. In fact, nearly five of six leading causes of death are linked to stress.

Massage therapy, along with other integrated health approaches like yoga and meditation, are excellent strategies to effectively manage stress. Below are listed some of the benefits of regular massage and how massage can help you alleviate the stress in your life.

**Relaxation**—As humans, we have two main states of being: fight-or-flight and rest-and-digest.

Many people sit in fight-or-flight mode for most of the day, and it can actually be weeks on end between work, grocery visits, alarm clocks, rushing through traffic and getting the kids.

When humans are constantly in a fight-or-flight mode, over time, it can negatively impact their immune system, resulting in fatigue and burn out.

Massage brings you out of the fight-or-flight mode and into the rest-and-digest mode for an hour or 90 minutes, twice a month, once a month or however often you get a massage.

During a massage, you get to sit and be still; that, in and of itself, is relaxing.

Just imagine lying down and doing some gentle stretching for an hour. It calms your heart rate and brings everything down a few notches, taking you to the present moment.

The relaxation response is a real thing and it's induced by resting and relaxing.

**Stress Relief**—People are always looking for ways to alleviate stress and, at the same time, stress relief is so vast in what it encompasses.

At the end of the day, stress level is determined by how one relaxes and is able to get into the rest-and-digest state of being, which in turn dictates the health of the immune system.

Prolonged exposure to cortisol and adrenaline from the fight-or-flight nervous system is extremely detrimental. The body's stress-response system is usually self-limiting. Once a perceived stressor has passed, hormone levels should return to normal.

As adrenaline and cortisol levels drop, your body's systems return to baseline levels, resuming their regular activities.

But, when life stressors are always front of mind and you constantly feel under attack,



See **Massage Benefits ...** (continued on back)

## Massage Benefits ...

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that fight-or-flight reaction stays turned on, keeping the physiology of your body out of balance.

This long-term activation of the stress-response system—and the subsequent overexposure to cortisol and other stress hormones—eventually will disrupt almost all your body's processes.

This puts you at increased risk of numerous health problems, including: anxiety, depression, heart disease, headaches and weight gain.

Sadly, in our world, many of us have been in the fight-or-flight state for a long time, without any reprieve.

Without making a personal commitment to your wellness, it's difficult to eliminate stress. More and more people are becoming aware they need a strategy for managing stress and can't just leave it to chance.

**Proven Clinical Benefits—** So how does one get a reprieve from this stress response? One enjoyable way to accomplish this outcome is through the benefits of regular massage.

Massage has proven clinical outcomes. For example, we know massage is

proven to decrease pain and stress levels, resulting in an overarching sense of well-being. The problem is, sometimes as practitioners, we start to talk about internal (mechanistic) outcomes, which are a little more difficult to prove through research.

Internal outcomes could be “massage increases circulation” or “massage decreases cortisol in the blood,” and we just don't have a lot of hard, scientific proof to make those claims. What we do know is there is research to support a lot of massage's clinical outcomes, which are very important.

As a massage client, it's likely you won't ever come in and say, “I want to decrease the cortisol level in my blood”

or “I want to increase endorphins.”

Instead, what you are more likely to say is, “I want to play nine rounds of golf” or “I want to be able to pick up my grandchildren.”

These larger clinical outcomes of stress relief, pain relief, improved sleep patterns and general well-being are what most of us are looking for.

Massage, at least once a month, is a feel-good, relaxing way to manage pain and stress, and promote improved well-being. Unlike some other medicinal approaches, the side effects of massage are positive and prompt stress relief and relaxation.

Source: [www.massagemag.com](http://www.massagemag.com)

**Doing some last-minute holiday shopping?**

**How about a massage gift certificate?**

**Nothing offers a greater reward than  
the gift of health and well-being.**

**Holiday shopping made easy — Call today!**

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**What you do today**

**Can improve all your tomorrows.**

**—Ralph Marston**

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*The content of this newsletter is not intended to replace professional medical advice. If you're ill, please consult a physician.*

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