



# Staying in Touch®

## Here comes Autumn . . .

With the busy holiday season on its way, it's common for stress levels to be on the rise. This month's issue takes a look at how to reduce stress and improve your mood.

As reported in an article on the Irish site [www.independent.ie](http://www.independent.ie):

"A Mayo Clinic report claimed that a 60-minute massage could lower cortisol, the hormone that causes stress, by up to 30 percent after just one session, while creating an almost equal increase in the production of serotonin, the hormone that improves our mood.

"A study published in the *Journal of Depression and Anxiety* found participants who received regular massage therapy for 12 weeks had a 50 percent reduction in anxiety symptoms lasting up to six months.

"Further studies point to improvements in both the immune system and the quality of sleep that comes from frequent physical contact with others."

Read on to learn other ways to increase serotonin levels, reduce stress-causing cortisol and get a better night's rest.

Have a great month; see you soon for your next massage!

## 7 Ways to Increase Your Serotonin Levels Naturally *By: Brian Syuki*

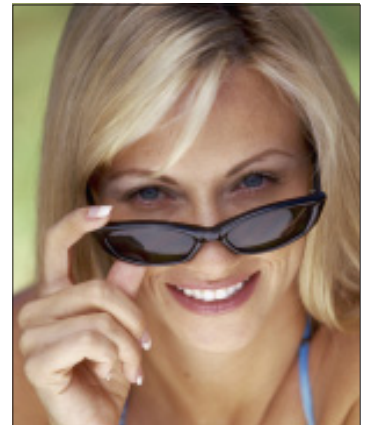
*Serotonin is a neurotransmitter produced in the gut and brain. It is popularly known as the "feel-good chemical". Low levels of serotonin can lead to anxiety, depression, and low energy. High levels can boost your mood and ease depression.*

**How to increase serotonin naturally—** Taking serotonin supplements is the easiest way to increase serotonin levels, but sometimes supplements have negative side effects such as dizziness and insomnia. Luckily, you can boost your serotonin levels naturally. Below are some of the diet and lifestyle changes that boost serotonin levels.

**1. Eat serotonin-boosting foods—** Research shows that a diet that lacks tryptophan leads to low serotonin levels. Therefore, you need to increase your intake of tryptophan-rich foods. These foods include tofu, pineapples, nuts and seeds. ...

**2. Get a massage—** A massage can make you feel better by loosening your muscles and releasing tension in your body. But that's not all. **Research shows that massage therapy can ease depression and anxiety by reducing cortisol levels by 31 percent and boosting serotonin levels by 28 percent.**

(See **Increase Your Serotonin ...** on back page)



## Massage for Improved Mood + Sleep

*Whether it's the changing of the seasons or more long-term, chronic feelings of anxiety and depression, recent research is showing that massage therapy can help improve mood and reset circadian rhythms, which can lead to better sleep and more energy.*

**Improved Mood— The Research:** A randomized study of 34 women with stage 1 or 2 breast cancer examined how massage therapy impacted depression and anxiety levels. The massage therapy group received a 30-minute massage three times per week for five weeks. ... The control group received no intervention. Study participants were assessed on the first and last day of the study, and assessment included both immediate effects—measures of anxiety, depressed mood and vigor—as well as longer term effects on depression, anxiety and hostility, functioning, body image and coping styles.

**The Results.** The immediate massage therapy effects included reduced anxiety, depressed mood and anger. Longer term effects included reduced depression and hostility, as well as increased serotonin values, NK cell numbers and lymphocytes. Serotonin, a neurotransmitter with functions in various parts of the body, works to regulate mood, appetite, sleep, memory and learning.

**Better Sleep—** In another study examining the effect of massage therapy on the adjustment of circadian rhythms in full-term infants, researchers measured the rest-activity cycles of infants before and after 14 days of massage therapy, starting at 10 days old and again at six and eight weeks of age.

(See **Improved Mood & Sleep ...** on back page)

## Increase Your Serotonin ...

(Continued from front page ...)

**3. Exercise regularly**— Skipping workouts because you feel low is like starving yourself because you are hungry. Push yourself to work out when in a low mood, because exercise boosts serotonin and improves mood.

In fact, researchers in the UK found that consistent exercise has the effects of antidepressants, which usually contain serotonin. Additionally, exercise increases tryptophan levels in the brain for hours after the workout, according to research.

**4. Get some sunlight**— Research

shows that people have higher serotonin levels on sunny days than on cloudy days. Therefore, take advantage of the hot season and get out more. Going for a 20-minute walk every morning after sunrise can keep you in a great mood all day.

**5. Keep your gut healthy**— We mainly think of serotonin as a brain neurotransmitter, but most of it is produced in the gut. Research shows that the gut produces 90 percent of the serotonin in the body.

Cutting back on sugar and processed foods is one of the best ways to improve gut health. You may also want to adopt these habits that heal your gut.

**6. Cut back on alcohol**— It is never a good idea to turn to alcohol when you are low and depressed. Alcohol lowers serotonin levels and worsens depression, according to research. Instead of drinking alcohol to numb your pain, do short workouts, which will actually improve your mood.

**7. Be optimistic**— Being pessimistic is not a good thing. It can even shorten your lifespan. Optimism, on the other hand, can raise your serotonin levels, according to research. If you are not a naturally optimistic person, try to remember happy events from your past.

Source: [www.care2.com](http://www.care2.com)

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## Improved Mood & Sleep ...

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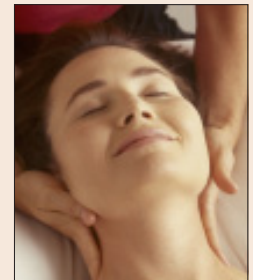
Rest-activity cycles were assessed through urine samples, which helped determine the level of melatonin in the blood, and melatonin is what helps control sleep and wake cycles.

At 12 weeks, these excretions were significantly higher in the infants receiving massage therapy than those in the control group, suggesting that massage therapy can enhance coordination of the developing circadian system with environmental cues.

Source: [www.amtamassage.org](http://www.amtamassage.org)

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a massage gift certificate!**

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**Blessed is the person who is too busy to worry in  
the daytime and too sleepy to worry at night.**

**—Unknown**

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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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