



Staying in Touch®

Hello—

It's that time of year when everyone is more susceptible to illness. The following excerpts from a recent article in the *Chicago Tribune* serve as a good reminder to take extra care during the winter months.

As winter drags on, so does the season for colds, stomach viruses, strep and the flu. Many illnesses occur most frequently in the winter months.

It's not clear why winter brings so many health woes, says Pritish Tosh, an infectious-disease physician and researcher at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

People have observed seasonal illness spikes for centuries, dating back at least to the ancient Greeks.

Our immune systems may be more vulnerable in the winter, according to some evidence. And certain pathogens thrive best in colder weather, Tosh says.

Cold weather leads to constriction of the airways and suppression of the processes that defend against infection.

Cold temperatures also put stress on the cardiovascular system, affecting blood pressure, constriction of blood vessels, and inflammation.

Massage can help you to stay healthy; see you soon!

Massages: 5 Health Benefits For Body And Mind

By Sadhana Bharanidharan

Sure, a massage can definitely feel good. But can it provide actual health advantages? While many studies have suggested both physical and psychological benefits, it should be kept in mind that much of it is preliminary.

Remember to consult a doctor if you are considering massage therapy to treat any condition. With that being said, here are five benefits that have been found by researchers.

Relieve soreness, pain— The marketing of massages often revolves around the benefit of pain relief, often targeted at those who develop soreness caused by stress and sedentary lifestyles. For example, deep tissue massages can help with pain that affects specific muscles, such as a backache from sitting all day at the office.

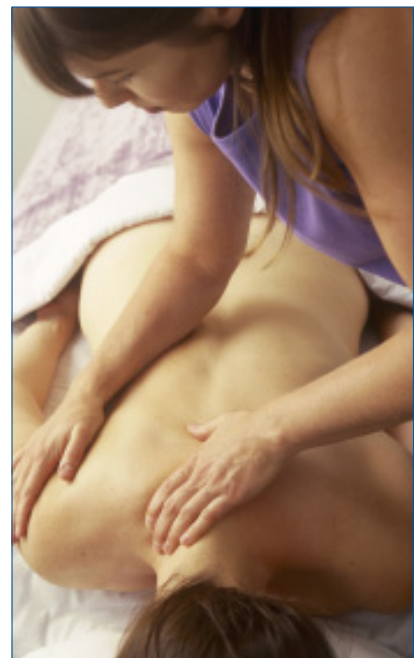
Even those who suffer from chronic forms of pain may see short-term improvements in symptoms, research suggests. Patients diagnosed with fibromyalgia and arthritis may speak to a doctor and consider massage therapy to complement their treatment.

Mental health benefits— Though it has been difficult to conduct controlled studies, a number of findings have suggested that massage therapy can help those with mood disorders. In a study by Emory University, patients reported reduced symptoms of anxiety after opting for a few sessions of Swedish massage therapy.

Similar results have emerged in other studies involving people with depression, though limited. Massage therapists emphasize the importance of a "nurturing touch" which can provide a sense of emotional comfort, comparing it to the positive effects of receiving a consensual hug.

Improved sleep quality— In a study by the University of Miami School of Medicine, participants reported a reduction in sleep disturbances after they booked two 30-minute massage sessions per week.

Of course, a reduction in lower back pain — something all the participants in the study faced — can obviously contribute to a higher quality of sleep. But some researchers have also suggested massage therapy can boost your levels of serotonin, which plays



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5 Health Benefits ...

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an important role in regulating our sleep.

Treating sports injuries— Massages might not only speed up the recovery of existing injuries but could also reduce inflammation and improve the flexibility of our muscles, thus reducing the risk of future sports-related injuries. This can also improve your performance in physical activities, be it running or yoga.

"A sports massage will concentrate on either facilitating healing of a previous activity-caused injury, preventing an injury, or enhancing performance and endurance," said Eva Carey, national massage therapist director for the company Zeel.

Immune system boost— "One of the benefits of massage is that it leads to an increase in the circulation of white blood cells," said Mark Rapaport, a professor ... at Emory University.

Lymphocytes — which are white blood cells that help in fighting off infections — were found to increase in people who received a Swedish massage in a study by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Source: www.medicaldaily.com

Why Does Massage Boost the Immune System?

Studies have shown massage can give your immune system a boost, but why?

People who received a 45-minute massage had an increased number of lymphocytes, which are white blood cells that play a large role in defending the body from disease, researchers from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles said.

The massage brought other physical changes, too. Afterwards, participants had lower levels of cytokines, which are molecules that play a role in inflammation. Chronically high levels of inflammation are known to be associated with conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular disease and depression.

The massages also had an impact on participants' hormone levels. Receiving a massage decreased levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, and vasopressin, a hormone believed to play a role in aggressive behavior, according to the researchers.

So, these internal adjustments help your body to stay healthier and function better; good news indeed!

Source: www.livescience.com

**Know someone who could use a massage?
Friend, family member, or special loved one,
a massage gift certificate is a great way to let
them know how much you care about them.
Call today to order!**

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**Yesterday is not ours to recover,
but tomorrow is ours to win or lose.**

—Lyndon B. Johnson

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