

Body N Soul Massage

Staying In Touch

August
2009

Prevent the Afternoon Slump
Some Tips for P.M. Energy

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If you're like most people, you've experienced the afternoon slump. You know the feeling -- it's only 2 p.m., yet you feel drained. Fortunately, you can employ methods to reduce the slump's frequency and shorten its duration.

Drink water. Your body uses water even if you're not exercising. If you wait until you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated. Keep a water bottle handy all day.

Avoid sugar and simple carbohydrates. While a mid-afternoon candy bar may give you a quick rush, it actually worsens the slump. Instead, choose protein-rich foods and complex carbs.

Eat small meals. Have six small meals over the course of the day instead of three large ones. Big meals cause the digestive process to divert blood from your brain to use in the digestive track.

Evaluate your lighting. Most offices are lit with cool, white fluorescent tubes, which have a terrible effect on how people feel and function at work. A better

option is full-spectrum, fluorescent tubes.

Take time for walks. Walking gets your blood circulating, helps you breathe better, and stimulates your brain due to the increased blood flow. Take a 5- or 10-minute walk during the day.

Meditate. Meditation is great for rejuvenating your body. By meditating for 15 to 20 minutes twice a day, you're keeping your body continually energized and rested.

Take time to breathe and stretch. Deep breathing exercises give you an energy boost. Also, stand up and stretch to increase blood flow and stimulate the lymphatic system.

Handle negativity. Negative people and images can have a draining effect on your energy. Make a conscious effort to stay positive.

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Steer Clear of the Gym Take it Easy After Your Massage

When booking a massage, consider your schedule, and try to avoid any strenuous physical exertion for at least 24 hours following your bodywork session. Exercising after a session can both increase muscle soreness and compromise the value of the soft-tissue work you've just received. "Strenuous exercise" includes activities such as running, weight lifting, high intensity aerobics, or power yoga classes.

Light exercise such as moderate walking, gentle stretching, or swimming laps at an easy pace is okay for healthy individuals. One widely accepted view in favor of this twenty-four-hour recovery period is that sustained pressure on connective tissue makes it more gel-like. The technical term for this change is thixotropic effect. This state of increased softness lasts about twenty-four hours, so high-intensity exercise may pull or move the tissue back to old patterns or even induce new strain patterns.

Experts usually suggest taking it easy that evening and the following day. To further reduce any bodywork-related soreness, drink at least two liters of water in the next twenty-four hours to hydrate and flush your system. Take a hot Epsom salt bath and drink gently calming teas such as chamomile or passionflower to facilitate sleep and reduce stress that is so commonly seen as a contributing factor in chronic muscle tension and soreness. If you're dealing with an injury, the guidelines should be adjusted, but these basic suggestions seem to work well for most people.

It does appear that healthy people who exercise vigorously five to six days a week sometimes find even these modest recommendations quite challenging. If you're one of these people, consider working out before your session and then take it easy afterward.

To get the most out of your massage, hold off on the workout. When you do hit the gym again, you'll likely discover your body is more fit than ever, thanks to the healing power of bodywork.

STRETCHES FOR THE NECK AND SHOULDERS

These feel great anytime, but are especially helpful if you work at a computer.

Note: If you feel any of these movements are difficult because of tension, let your massage therapist know you would like to work on releasing that area at your next session. If you have pain with any of these stretches, discontinue until you discuss it with your physician.

1. Sit straight with your shoulders relaxed. Inhale and squeeze your shoulders up toward your ears. Hold tightly for several seconds and relax as you exhale. Repeat several times.



2. Still sitting straight, exhale and let your neck drop forward. Relax for about 2 seconds, then lift your head to the center. Then let your head drop to one side, relax, and return to center. Repeat to the other side.

Do the whole sequence 5 to 10 times, the more often the better.

3. Stretch your spine. Sit straight in your chair. With your hands clasped behind your head, exhale and turn slowly to the right. Look behind you, twisting as far as is comfortable. Don't strain. Hold for several seconds, and inhale as you return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. Repeat 10-20 times, up to 3 times a day.

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Body N Soul Massage

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