



Staying In Touch



Dec 2009

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Fibromyalgia Demystified—Bodywork as a Key Therapy

Jane had just been diagnosed with fibromyalgia. She was happy to have a name for the mysterious, traveling pain she had felt for some time, but she was still worried about how to deal with it. She'd done research on the Internet, but the information left her more confused. "There are so many causes and ways to treat it," she said. "I don't know what to do." A friend of Jane's recommended massage as part of her treatment plan. "She said it helped her," Jane said, "so I'm willing to try."

For fibromyalgia sufferers, muscle pain, tightness, and general body discomfort can all too often become a way of life. But what is fibromyalgia, and what can be done to help?

What is Fibromyalgia? Fibromyalgia, which literally means "connective tissue muscle pain," causes severe tenderness in multiple points throughout the body as well as persistent fatigue, morning stiffness, and non-refreshing sleep. Fibromyalgia is found in about 2 percent of the adult population, and women are five to seven times more likely to have it than men.

Theories about the cause of fibromyalgia include thyroid imbalance, sleep disorders, genetic predisposition, allergies, trauma--especially whip-lash injuries--and possibly even viruses. Many who have fibromyalgia syndrome have other conditions as well, including depression, irritable bowel syndrome, chemical sensitivities, intolerance to exercise, restless legs syndrome, extreme sensitivity to cold, and seasonal affective disorder.

Factors At Play Jay Goldstein, MD, a leading researcher and clinician, identified three common factors in people who are susceptible to fibromyalgia. It's helpful to consider these factors when planning a treatment approach:

1. Biochemical factors, such as hormonal disturbances, allergies, frequent colds and viruses, and nutritional deficiencies.
2. Biomechanical factors, such as congenital

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deformities (one leg longer than the other or scoliosis - curvature of the spine) or functional conditions (poor posture, overuse syndromes, or poor breathing patterns).
3. Psychosocial factors, like depression, anxiety, or difficulty coping with stress.

Bodywork Can Help Fibromyalgia is best treated using a multidisciplinary approach, and bodywork can be a key part of healing, recovery, and management. Depending on your specific needs, any or all of the following methods may be helpful.

Swedish Massage Because stress is such a strong component of fibromyalgia, regular massages for relaxation and stress reduction can be beneficial to your program. Swedish massage is the foundation of training for most massage therapists. Its primary goals are to gently relieve muscle tension, improve circulation, and restore the balance between mind and body.

Rolfing/Deep Tissue Massage This whole-body approach is designed to restore postural alignment and ease. Rolfing--and other related forms of bodywork under the umbrella of structural integration--helps to free soft tissue tightness and remove the structural imbalances that create stresses and strains on the body, restoring biomechanical function. Whiplash and other types of neck injuries are commonly seen in fibromyalgia cases. Rolfing aligns the body so the head and neck can rest more easily.

Lymphatic Massage The lymph system is the body's primary way of eliminating waste at the cellular level. When the lymph system is backed up, tissues can get bogged down and become irritated, inflamed, and swollen. Biochemical disturbances are a key factor in fibromyalgia, so restoring the mechanical function of the lymph system can be important. Lymphatic massage is a specific form of therapy designed to improve circulation, remove waste, and reduce swelling in the tissues. It's often a good way to start a bodywork session.

Neuromuscular Therapy Trigger points--pivotal body points that hold and release pressure--become small areas of extreme tenderness and tightness for fibromyalgia patients. Neuromuscular therapy is a specific form of bodywork designed to free these trigger points along with the fiber in the surrounding tissues. Neuromuscular therapy encompasses many different techniques, but the system is designed to relieve the tightness in the deep soft tissues and to eliminate trigger points.

Considerations Sensitivity to touch varies greatly for fibromyalgia patients. Some people prefer very deep work, while others are sensitive to the lightest pressure. It's important that you establish good communications with your massage therapist so you can explain what feels comfortable to you and what doesn't.

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When you're in an acute flare-up, limit your bodywork to more gentle techniques. When you're feeling better, deeper work intended to eliminate trigger points or work on posture may be more appropriate. Partner with your therapist to find the best approach.

You may be sore after a session. A moderate level of soreness can be expected, but should only last about forty-eight hours as your body adapts to the changes. If it lasts longer or is more severe, bodywork may be too aggressive or the session may be too long. Start out slowly, learn what works best for you, and let your therapist increase the time or intensity as you progress.

Fibromyalgia is a soft tissue condition, and bodyworkers are experts at working with soft tissues. By including massage in your care, you can expect to manage and improve your fibromyalgia.

HOLIDAY Available Massage Appt Hours:

Nov 27 - Dec 24, 2009



Hours must be adjusted during this holiday season as I must split my time between doing massages at the office & selling gift certificates at the mall kiosk.
I apologize for any inconvenience this causes anyone.

Monday - Friday 9 am - 3 pm
CLOSED Sat & Sun



Regular Massage Appointment Hours:

These hours will resume Jan 2010

Tuesday	11 am - 6 pm
Wednesday	9 am - 3 pm
Thursday	3 pm - 9 pm
Friday	9 am - 3 pm
Saturday	11 am - 4 pm

**(open at least one Sat per month. . .
many times more)**

CLOSED Sun & Mon

The Implications of Bodywork - Human Touch Has Powerful Results

By Cathy Ulrich

Whether in giving or receiving, touch is as essential to human survival as is food. Infants deprived of touch, even when they are getting adequate nutrition, will fail to thrive. Elders isolated by loss of partners and friends become depressed not only because of the absence of social interaction, but also because of the simple loss of physical contact.

We calm our pets by stroking them, we greet each other with a hug or a handshake, and we soothe our children by holding them. No other form of connection is as powerful and universal as touch. Taking a look at how this sensation is connected to the brain provides insight into the significance of bodywork.

Skin and the Brain The adult human lives inside an envelope of about 18 square feet of skin. Every inch houses thousands of nerve endings and various kinds of sensory receptors, all working to tell the brain about its surroundings. The cold of an ice cube, the softness of a cat's fur, a warm breeze, the caress of a loved one--all of these feelings are possible because of our skin. Our skin tells us about our environment and ourselves. When we touch something with our fingers, we're not only sensing the object, we're also feeling our own skin, our own boundaries.

In the first few days of an embryo's life, the cells that eventually become a fully formed baby divide into three layers. The brain and skin come from the same layer, and they develop together, not only before birth, but well into the first year of life. When a baby is held, cuddled, and breast-fed, she's getting crucial stimulation to build neural connections between her skin and her brain that will ultimately last her entire lifetime.

Study after study has shown that touch is not only important for development, but is crucial to survival. James H.M. Knox of Johns Hopkins Hospital reported in 1915 that babies left in orphanages and given proper nutrition died at a rate of about 90 percent. Other studies of the same era confirmed these findings and showed that those babies who did survive were often mentally handicapped and stunted in their growth. These valuable studies helped institutions understand the importance of touch. When staff was added to provide enough time for each child to be held, handled, and touched, mortality rates dropped dramatically.

Massage for Children Those early statistical studies showed how vital touch is to developing infants. Researchers are also finding that giving massage to premature infants can improve their growth and overall health. A study conducted by the Touch Research Institute (TRI) at the University of Miami found that when stable premature babies were given five, one-minute massages a day, they gained 47 percent more weight than their counterparts who didn't get massage.

A 2001 study conducted by TRI showed that when mothers gave their infants a 15-minute massage before bedtime, these sleep-challenged kids went to sleep more quickly and were more alert during daytime hours. . . . Continued on pg 5

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Conversely, clinical research and sociological studies link touch deprivation with aggression. A 2002 study reported that adolescents with a history of aggressive behavior showed less aggression and were less anxious after receiving a 20-minute massage twice a week for five weeks.

Massage also reduces the symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder so kids can concentrate better, and it's even been found that the right kind of touch can help kids with autism relate better to teachers and family members.

Massage for Adults Ongoing research by the Touch Research Institute continues to prove that massage is an important therapy for many conditions. After a massage, levels of the stress hormone cortisol drop in saliva tests, examinations show an improvement in alertness and relaxation, depression scores decrease, and mental focus improves.

The exponential growth of the bodywork field is a testament to the value of safe, therapeutic touch. Of course bodywork can play an essential role in the healing of specific chronic or acute orthopedic conditions, but it also serves as a powerful aide in improving the quality of life for adults.

Stan, a former client, was going through a nasty divorce. He had friends to support him emotionally, but it seemed that the thing he missed most was the nurturing touch of his partner. He credits weekly massage appointments, along with seeing a counselor, to his emotional recovery. Massage can be a healthy way to get that much-needed human contact.

Massage for Elders People confined to nursing homes rarely get more than daily hygienic care in terms of touch. Yet elders need touch as much as infants. Studies show that when they receive regular massage, the elderly have less depression and anxiety, experience better physical coordination, and show a decrease of stress hormone in their saliva.

Geriatric massage is a growing field requiring specialized training, and many massage therapists offer it in their practices. Some nursing homes now provide massage to their residents. Elders appear to respond as well to bodywork as, if not better than, their younger counterparts.

Contact for All Ages Before babies learn about their hands and feet, they need the touch of loved ones and caregivers. We retain that need our entire lives. Remember to savor touch the next time you're lying on a massage table. Your therapist is not only working out tight muscles, she's contacting your entire nervous system, calming you through pathways that were put in place before you were born.

Body N Soul Massage

www.bodydayspa.net

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3 blocks East of Honey Creek Mall
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NEW this year: Purchase your gift certificates at my kiosk in the Honey Creek Mall in Center Court by Santa. I will be selling the gift certificates at my mall kiosk during the following hours to purchase your holiday gift certificate:

Through Dec 17, 2009: Friday 3:30 - 8 pm; Saturday 11 am - 8 pm;
Sunday Noon - 6 pm

From December 18 - Dec 22, 2009: Mon-Fri 3:30 pm - 8 pm;
Saturday 10 am - 8 pm; Sunday Noon - 8 pm

Extended hours: Dec 23 10 am - 9 pm; Dec 24 10 am - 6 pm



* You may also purchase gift certificates by phone, instantly online @ www.bodydayspa.net, or in the office during your massage appointment. However, **NO** holiday gift certificates will be available for sale at Health Quest this holiday season (they will be available @ HealthQuest again Jan 2010).