

Five Good Reasons To Get A Massage

By Kathy Duncan

Massage Therapy has finally become a mainstream modality that is widely accepted as a wellness practice. I can think of many reasons for everyone and their pets to receive a weekly (or at least bi-weekly) massage, but let me list the top five here.

If you are a little nervous or uncomfortable about receiving your first massage, I hope you will find a therapist that has been in the business for a long time that will make your experience unforgettable.

- 1) Relaxation. We can all use a little more rest. In a professional massage environment, the therapist will probably play relaxing music while moving very slowly. A professional therapist will focus on a comfortable room temperature, appropriate draping, and a gentle non-invasive music. If it is your first massage, the therapist will ask questions about what you think that your body needs, and will discuss their methods, how deep their stroking will be, and your comfort level. The client is always welcome to discuss specific areas of pain, and how the therapist is working.
- 2) Circulation. Once a therapist begins to warm the muscles with long, slow strokes, the blood begins to travel three times faster than normal. While you relax, the blood is manually moved by the therapist's hands and is encouraged through the organs. With the blood comes increased oxygen that serves to nourish the organs.
- 3) Restriction. When life becomes stressful, we tend to hold our breath. If you have ever been stuck in traffic, the more stressed that you become, the tighter that your neck and shoulders become. The tighter the muscles, the more that you hold your breath. As you breathe less, oxygen is lost and the muscles become tighter. As the therapist moves blood through the muscles, the oxygen helps the muscles to warm up and release tension.
- 4) Cleansing. With the manual stroking, blood carries toxins that may have been stuck in tight muscles through the lymph system and out through the excretory systems. After a massage, you are encouraged to drink lots of water to aid in flushing this debris out of your body. Your skin will look and feel wonderful, while your body will feel energized with the release of toxins from the blood.
- 5) Loving, Human Touch. Whether you're a touchy-feely type or not, it is a proven fact that humans need the touch of others. Babies that are orphaned and left without intimate touch have a hard time gaining weight and thriving normally. According to scientists, the benefits of human touch include improved physical and mental health, longevity, and can

even boost career performance. Research shows that massage recipients have better school exam results, better immunity, and better overall health.

To find a qualified Massage Therapist in your area, you can contact your state licensing website, the American Massage Therapy Association, or The National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage. A therapeutic massage generally costs an average of \$1.00 per minute or \$60.00 per hour.

Don't be shy. You'll be amazed at how your body will feel after only one session. You might even become a regular. There is no nicer gift to give to yourself.