

# Joe Linn Massage Newsletter

March 2014

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

## Making the Most of Your Massage

### How to Prolong the Benefits of Bodywork

Barbara Hey

A massage works in wonderful ways, easing stress and pain, calming the nervous system, increasing circulation, loosening tight muscles, stimulating internal organs, and enhancing skin. The multiplicity of physiological responses sends a simple, clear message to the mind: Massage feels good. Of course, you want to hold on to that just-had-a-massage feeling -- total body relaxation, muscles relaxed and at ease, and fluid movement restored -- for as long as possible.

But how long that bliss lasts depends on the state of your body. If you're suffering from chronic pain or recovering from injury, then it may take more sessions and perhaps different

### Massage Frequency

How often you receive massage depends on why you're seeking massage. In dealing with the general tension of everyday commutes, computer work, and time demands, a monthly massage may be enough to sustain you. On the other hand, if you're seeking massage for chronic pain, you may need regular treatments every week or two. Or if you're addressing an acute injury or dealing with high levels of stress, you may need more frequent sessions. Your situation will dictate the optimum time between treatments, and your practitioner will work with you to determine the best course of action.



The more often you receive massage, the more therapeutic it becomes.

modalities before optimal health is restored.

If massage is part of your regular health regimen, then it's more likely the effects will endure. In other words, the effects of massage are cumulative, like any healthy habit. The more often you get a massage, the greater and longer-lasting the benefits.

"You need to consider how you felt before the session and how you felt after, and then look at how long you maintain that," says Pieter Sommen, the chair of the eastern department in the Swedish Institute School of Massage Therapy in New York.

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*"If you want to test your memory, try to recall what you were worrying about one year ago today."*

-E. Joseph Cossman

#### Office Hours and Contact

**Joe Linn Massage**

**Joe Linn**

**415-497-3176**

**By appointment only**

**Hours available Monday - Saturday**

**Call today to schedule your massage.**

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In general, experts say "regular" is preferable, but how regular depends on your situation. While daily massage would be delightful, practical considerations such as cost, time, and physical need likely determine the frequency of treatments. "It's best to maintain a schedule," says Eeris Kallil, CMT, a shiatsu instructor at the Boulder College of Massage Therapy in Colorado. "That way the body becomes conditioned and prepared for session at specific intervals."

## Maintenance

Whether you get a massage weekly, monthly, or just every once in a while, the following habits can maximize and extend the afterglow of treatment.

### WATER

One bit of advice you'll hear over and over again is to drink plenty of water after a massage. Bodywork -- no matter the particular modality -- releases toxins, such as lactic acid and carbonic acid, that need to be flushed from the body. Massage also promotes circulation, increasing blood flow and oxygen and stimulating the lymphatic system, which helps rid the body of pathogens. After-massage hydration supports these functions, helping to eliminate released impurities, sooner rather than later.

### STRETCHING

Another helpful habit is stretching between massages to maintain joint mobility, prevent muscles from tightening up again, and keeping the life energy flowing. This may mean doing yoga or whatever specific or full-body stretches suggested by your practitioner. After a shiatsu session, for example, your practitioner may recommend "makko-ho" stretches, a series of six exercises designed to keep energy circulating. "This series of stretches take anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes a day, but really help keep the chi flowing through the body," says Kallil.

### EXERCISE

Working out can also help maintain the benefits of massage, and this habit should be continually cultivated. However, if you're receiving massage therapy to help speed muscle strain recovery, you may need to ease up on the exercise for a while and give the body time to heal -- particularly if you're

recovering from a strenuous body-pummeling training regimen. "You don't want to over-work your body," says Kallil. That is, if running is taking a toll, try something more gentle and meditative such as swimming, walking, or tai chi.

### BODY AWARENESS

After a massage, respect how your body feels. If your body seems to ask for rest, give in to that demand. This may mean backing off the to-do list, taking it easy, moving slower, and perhaps doing less for a while. And don't allow yourself to get fatigued because it will undermine the effects of massage. Get sufficient sleep to allow the body to absorb the effects and regain vitality.

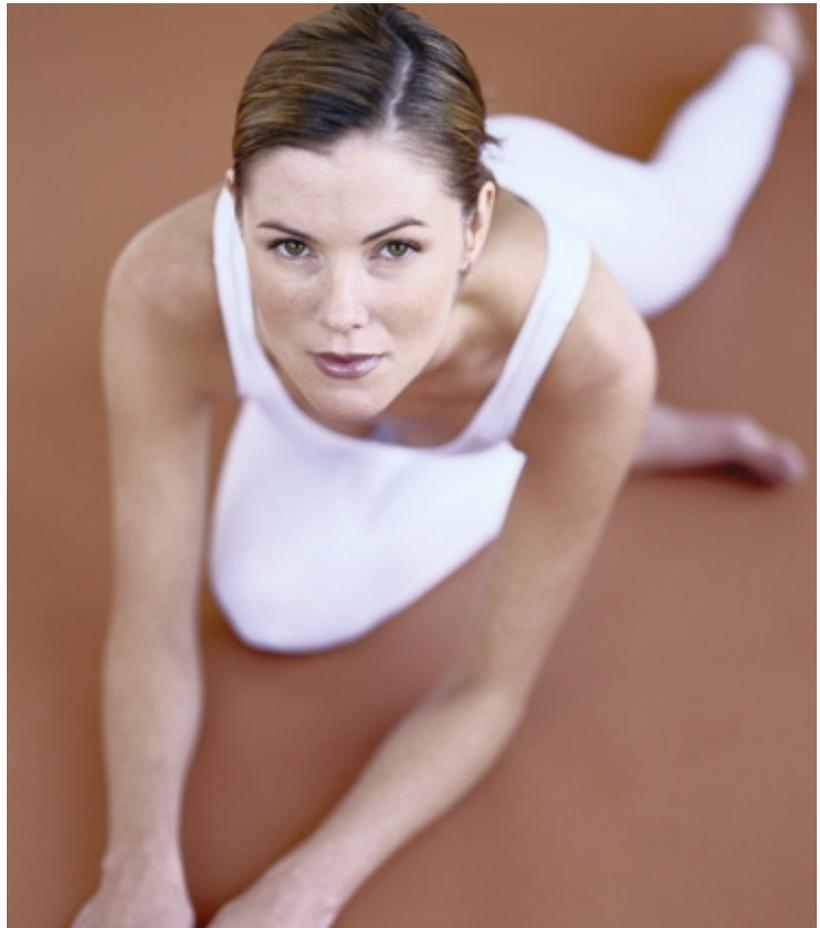
### DIET

Finally, since you've just rid the body of toxins, support the body's renewed state by adhering to a healthy diet rich in

fruits and vegetables, which will continue the detoxification process. Lay off the espresso and all adrenaline-challenges for a time -- which would short-circuit relaxation anyway -- and enjoy the calm.

The benefits of massage are many, including: increasing circulation, allowing the body to pump more oxygen and nutrients throughout the body; stimulating lymph flow and boosting immunity; relaxing overused or tight muscles; increasing joint mobility and range of motion; reducing recovery time after strenuous workouts or surgery; and relieving back pain and migraines, just to name a few.

After receiving a massage, clients feel rejuvenated, relaxed, and refreshed. By opting for a few lifestyle choices, you can extend these benefits and get the most out of your massage.



Stretching between massages helps maintain relaxed muscles, joint mobility, and energy flow.

# What to Expect When Expecting

## How Massage Benefits the Expectant Mother

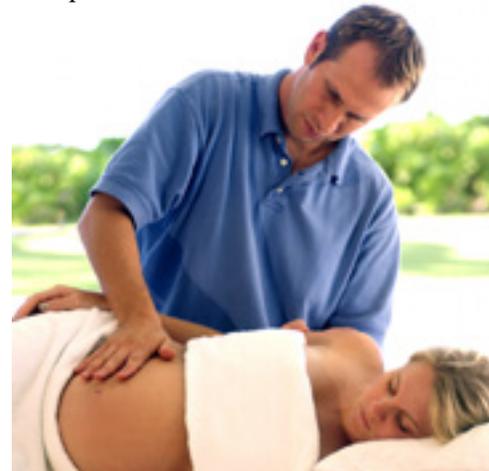
From fatigue to back pain, pregnancy places many demands on a woman's body. Massage is one way the expectant mother can help ease the symptoms and have a more stress-free pregnancy. During the first trimester, a primary goal of massage is to provide relaxation and increase flow of the circulation systems. Stimulating the blood system pumps more energy-giving oxygen and nutrients into your cells and increases blood flow to the placenta. Muscle tension can slow down lymph flow, leaving you fatigued. By stimulating this system, massage can boost your immunity and energy level.

In the second trimester, "the mother starts going through more changes," says Lynne Daize with the National Association of Pregnancy Massage Therapy, "so massage is used to relieve muscle spasms and ease structural changes." The therapist works to loosen joints and soften the connective tissues, thereby relieving backaches and leg cramps.

As pregnancy progresses, special positioning is required during massage. Up to the 24th week of pregnancy it is acceptable, according to Daize, for moms to be on their back with the right hip tilted up, taking pressure off the nerves and arteries. Pressure on the arteries in the back, she notes, will diminish blood flow and oxygen to the fetus. Another position that decreases stress on the back is side-lying, with the belly supported by a small wedge pillow.

During the final trimester, the baby begins to gain weight more rapidly, discomfort increases, and the impending due date can cause added stress and anxiety. At this stage, Daize says, the therapist focuses on trigger points to relieve pain while continuing to elicit relaxation throughout the body. Generally, during the last two weeks before mom's due date, the therapist concentrates her techniques on preparing the mother's body for delivery.

Before initiating massage, consult your obstetrician. While massage is a safe treatment, certain conditions require your physician's approval and careful monitoring by the therapist. Notify your therapist of any changes in your physical health, and consult your obstetrician about continuing the treatments should complications arise.



**Consult your obstetrician before receiving massage.**

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## Secrets of Sleep

*Jed Heneberry*

We've all heard it before: get your eight hours of sleep and watch your life improve. But the reason we've all heard it is because it's true, and research keeps showing the importance of sleep and its variety of health benefits.

The National Sleep Foundation says there is no "magic number" of hours for optimum sleep benefits, but that different age groups, and even different individuals, need different amounts of sleep. General recommendations are 7-8 hours per night for adults, while children often need 10-11 hours. Getting less than what you need has been linked to an increased risk of diabetes, heart problems, psychiatric conditions, and more.

Here's a quick look at some new findings that reveal the secrets of sleep, and also

how to get more of it.

- **Sleep Suppresses Appetite:** Just one night of sleep loss can increase brain activity in the region that contains appetite sensation in response to food images, increasing the long-term possibility of becoming overweight. "Lack of Sleep Makes Your Brain Hungry," *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology Metabolism*.

- **Naps for Your Noggin:** The right side of the brain, which is generally associated with creativity, is active during so-called power naps, while the left brain remains mostly quiet. While it is not clear what exactly is happening during these brief rest periods, researchers suspect the brain is conducting important memory tasks. "'Power Naps' May Boost Right-Brain

Activity," *Health.com*.

- **Cherry on Top:** Drinking tart cherry juice increased melatonin in study participants, improving sleep efficiency, quality, and time. "Effect of Tart Cherry Juice on Melatonin Levels and Enhanced Sleep Quality," *European Journal of Nutrition*.

*Be who you are  
and say what  
you feel, because  
those who mind  
do not matter  
and those who  
matter do not  
mind.*

-Dr. Suess

Wow! It is March already and the first day of spring is just around the corner.

The feature article this month is Making the Most of Your Massage, it is full of great ideas to help you make the positive effects of your massage last longer.

Spring always make me think about new life whether it is the flowers and the trees blooming or the spring lambs and calves frolicking on the farms nearby. In this newsletter I have included a wonderful article What to Expect when Expecting. I always enjoy working with expectant moms. They are always so receptive to body work and it is truly rewarding to help them feel their best!

March also brings with it the often dreaded TIME CHANGE where we spring forward 1 hour. Mostly we just lose an hour of precious sleep so I have included the article Secrets of Sleep.

I am so glad so many of you took advantage of the February special. The special for March is 1.5 hour massage for \$80. I want to encourage those of you who have not tried a longer massage to discover the benefits the extra half hour can provide. Remember to book early and mention this special.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy Spring!

Joe

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