



Staying in Touch®

Enjoying your summer?

Make the most of the season with a relaxing massage! Even when you can't get out of town, you can still "get away from it all" for an hour or so with some soothing and revitalizing bodywork.

Massage therapy can help in so many ways. Because it encourages your body to "reset" itself to its "normal" condition, massage is aiding your body to reduce stress and to improve health.

One condition that really benefits from regular massage is fibromyalgia, the subject of this month's article. Written by a massage therapist who knows firsthand the challenges of living with fibromyalgia, it explains just how massage can help those who suffer with this painful condition.

According to medlineplus.gov, fibromyalgia is most common in middle-aged women. People with rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune diseases are particularly likely to develop fibromyalgia.

Also, the incidence rises with age so that by age 80, about 8% of adults meet the American College of Rheumatology classification of fibromyalgia.

See you soon for your next appointment! Until then, take care.

When a Client "Hurts All Over," Fibromyalgia Might Be to Blame

by Sara Thomas Simpson, L.M.T.

Do you remember the last time you had the flu? With it came aches, pains, stiffness, headaches, lethargy, disturbed sleep, inability to concentrate and discomfort. These symptoms no doubt went away after a few days, or a week at most.

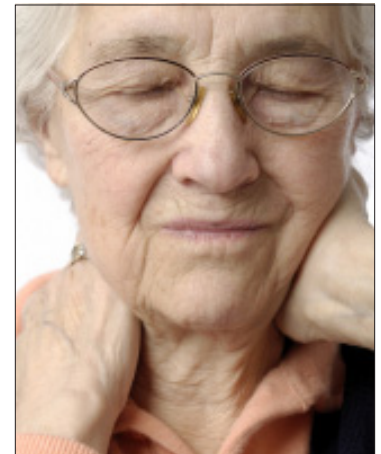
Now imagine having the flu all the time. For the fibromyalgia client, flu-like symptoms, with the exception of fever, can persist for weeks, months or years. Some people live with these symptoms every day and night of their lives.

Because fibromyalgia is a syndrome, or a collection of symptoms and conditions, not everyone who has it possesses the same symptoms.

Although fibromyalgia's characteristics are numerous, it usually includes widespread, chronic musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, sleep disturbances, depression and stiffness.

Massage therapy is particularly beneficial for the fibromyalgia client, as it can reduce heart rate, relax muscles, improve range of motion and increase production of the body's natural painkillers.

One recent study showed massage therapy decreased pain, improved quality of sleep and eased depressive symptoms in fibromyalgia sufferers.



Many symptoms

About 10 million people in the U.S. suffer from fibromyalgia, according to the National Fibromyalgia Association (NFA, www.fmaware.org), and 75 to 90 percent of those with the syndrome are female.

The cause of fibromyalgia is unknown, although brain imaging and neurosurgery have indicated fibromyalgia may be caused by "an interpretative defect in the central nervous system that brings about abnormal pain perception," according to the NFA. ...

Muscle aches and pains are the most predominant symptoms a fibromyalgia sufferer may experience on a daily basis.

Pain levels can change from day to day and from morning to evening.

Changes in weather, level of stress and how much sleep we receive all affect this.

Fibromyalgia sufferers also have difficulty with activities of daily living, and suffer from muscle weakness.

(See **Hurts All Over ...** on back page)

Hurts All Over ...

(continued from front page)

The worst part of fibromyalgia is not knowing what symptoms may present the next day.

Muscle pain and stiffness are not the only symptoms of fibromyalgia.

Overexertion is the fibromyalgia sufferer's enemy, but inactivity can cause just as much pain.

She might suffer from mouth ulcers; restless legs; tingling or numbness in extremities or face; mood swings; panic attacks; lower-than-average body temperature; and sensitivity to odors,

noise, medications, food and cold.

A Difficult Road

In the past, people sometimes suffered for years not knowing what was wrong with them.

Many physicians did not recognize fibromyalgia, instead believing it was all in the patient's mind.

According to the NFA, it can take up to five years for someone with fibromyalgia to receive a diagnosis.

Massage Helps

Massage is effective for fibromyalgia

clients because it can break up muscular restrictions, knots and tightness.

The shoulders, neck, hips and gluteal muscles tend to be most troublesome for clients with fibromyalgia.

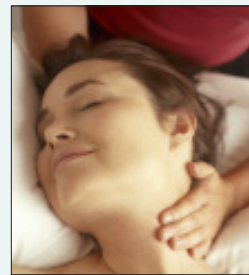
If a client receives massage or other complementary therapies concurrently with Western medical treatment, she usually experiences much better results than with allopathic care alone.

Contraindicated therapies include high-impact exercise, cold water and deep-tissue massage, unless the client has received it in the past with desirable effects. **Source:** www.massagemag.com

Great Reasons to Get a Massage

- Relieve stress
- Reduce anxiety
- Manage low-back pain
- Manage fibromyalgia
- Reduce muscle tension
- Relieve tension headaches
- Better sleep
- Ease symptoms of depression
- Improve cardiovascular health
- Reduce pain of osteoarthritis
- Help chronic neck pain
- Promote relaxation
- Increase range of motion

Surprise someone special with
a massage gift certificate —
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*Deep summer is when laziness
finds respectability.*

—Sam Keen

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