

# Blue Heron Healing Arts

Spring 2021

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

## Massage Multiplied

### Benefits of Massage Improve with Frequency

Karrie Osborn

What kind of massage client are you? Do you make an appointment after someone has given you a massage gift certificate? Do you try to get in every now and then for a stress-relieving tune-up? Or do you see your therapist religiously--once a week, every three weeks, once a month?

While getting a massage--regardless of how often--is incredibly beneficial to your body and mind, getting frequent massage treatments is even more powerful as a healthcare ally.

"People who get massage regularly demonstrate a reduction in pain and muscular tension and an improvement in posture," says Anne Williams, author

### Stress Killer

One way in which frequent massage can improve our quality of life is by alleviating stress. Experts say most disease is stress-related, and nothing ages us faster--inside or out--than the effects of stress. As stress-related diseases continue to claim more lives every year, the increasingly deadly role stress plays in modern-day life is painfully clear.

Massage is a great way to take charge and reverse the situation. Mary Beth Braun and Stephanie Simonson, authors of *Introduction to Massage Therapy* (Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2007), explain the benefits of massage

*Be happy for  
this moment.  
This moment is  
your life.*

-Omar Khayyam



Regularly scheduled massage has proven a powerful ally in health and wellness.

of *Spa Bodywork: A Guide for Massage Therapists* (Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2006).

"People regularly make a commitment to fitness. People regularly make a commitment to changing their diet. The difference they'd experience if they regularly made a commitment to massage is mind-blowing," she says.

therapy in the simplest of terms: "Healing input influences healing output." They note that frequent massage can reduce the accumulation of stress and improve overall health. "The benefits of massage are cumulative," they write.

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#### Office Hours and Contact

**Cara Ross, LMP and Associates**  
**Massage Therapy for Optimal Health**  
**206-322-5118**

[seattlemassage.massagetherapy.com](http://seattlemassage.massagetherapy.com)  
[cararossimp@comcast.net](mailto:cararossimp@comcast.net)

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This being the case, it only makes sense that those aches and pains you see your massage therapist for might disappear faster, stay away longer, or even go away altogether with more frequent visits. Stress might never reach those physiologically detrimental levels where the immune system is suppressed or the nervous system is sent into an alarm state if you are able to receive stress-relieving bodywork with some consistency. Not only would your body benefit by regularly unleashing its aches and pains instead of adapting to them, but your mind would have time to wash away the stresses of a life lived in overdrive. Both are critical pieces for living well.

Experts say the body and mind can learn to live more calmly, more efficiently, and more healthfully when frequent massage shows the way. That makes for a healthier whole, allowing us to continue to live life at its fullest, even as we deal with each new stress or challenge.

## Preventive Measures

In so many ways, massage is preventive health care. Yes, it can address injuries, scar tissue, and chronic pain, as well as provide relief for cancer patients and reduce hospitalization for premature babies, among many other valuable benefits (go to [Massagetherapy.com](http://Massagetherapy.com) for more information on the myriad benefits of massage). But when the healthy, and trying-to-be-healthy, among us seek out massage on a regular basis, it helps us live a proactively healthier life.

Since bodywork influences every system in the body, there are enormous possibilities created by increasing the frequency in which you address those systems. It's best to discuss your session goals with your massage therapist and together devise a plan of frequency that meets your needs, while taking into account your therapist's best advice.

## Body Awareness

According to Benny Vaughn, sports massage expert and owner of Athletic Therapy Center in Fort Worth, Texas, one of the benefits of consistent and regular massage therapy is better flexibility. "This happens because regular and structured touch stimulus enhances the nervous system's sensory and spatial processing capacity," he says.

"That is, the person becomes more aware of their body's movement in space and becomes more aware of tightness or pain long before it reaches a critical point of mechanical dysfunction."

Quite simply, frequent massage puts you more in tune with your body. "The consistency of massage therapy over time creates a cumulative stress reduction effect," Vaughn says. "The person becomes acutely aware of stress within their body long before it can create stress-driven damage."

He says the consistency of receiving regular massage therapy has the potential to create a cumulative wellness effect. "Ultimately when one feels good, our whole being follows suit on all other levels--i.e., decision-making is better, processing life events is better, and being happy is easier when you are not in pain or feeling 'heavy' or 'tight.'"

Williams says she's certain people's lives would be changed if they could schedule massage and bodywork more frequently. "I encourage clients to commit to getting massage once a week for a month and then evaluate the results they get," she says. "I guarantee they will become massage enthusiasts for life."

## Massage Can...

- Alleviate low-back pain and increase range of motion.
- Create body self-awareness.
- Improve muscle tone and stimulate their nerve supply.
- Improve elasticity of skin and promote skin rejuvenation.
- Improve sleep and calm the mind.
- Increase endorphin and serotonin production.
- Reduce edema, as well as joint inflammation.
- Release negative holding patterns from previous injuries.



**A consistent massage routine helps you manage stress before it causes illness.**

# A Walking Workout

## Have Fun While Burning More Calories

Imagine the lone hiker, backpack laden with sleeping bag and bedroll, wielding a well-worn walking stick as she climbs the side of a snow-covered mountain. For centuries, trekkers have used walking sticks, partly as a defense against attacking wildlife, partly to aid in balance, and partly as support on long, arduous climbs. But in recent years, many hikers have replaced the single wooden walking stick with hiking poles.

Held in both hands and used to distribute weight more evenly through the four limbs, wilderness hikers have found poles invaluable for safety, efficiency, and comfort on long hikes. What wilderness hikers have known for some time now is that walking poles are a great way to relieve pressure on knees, ankles, and the back. They encourage better posture and provide a total body workout by engaging the upper body.

Now, hiking poles are showing up in urban areas as fitness walkers discover the benefits they provide. Nordic

walking--similar in technique to cross-country skiing--is a great way to get a whole body workout, increase oxygen consumption, and burn more calories than regular walking or even speed walking. This total body workout burns 40 percent more calories and consumes 25 percent more oxygen. Poles can be purchased at most outdoor sporting stores, along with rubber tips for use on paved paths.

### TECHNIQUE

Adjust your poles to approximately 70 percent of your height and loosely secure the straps around your wrists. Hold the poles at an angle behind you so they propel you forward with a slight bend at the elbow. Use an opposite hand-and-heel motion as you walk--right heel strikes as left pole tip contacts the ground. And you're on your way! Don't be shy with your poles. Remember: You're burning 40 percent more calories.

For more information, visit

[www.walking.about.com/od/nordicwalking/index.htm](http://www.walking.about.com/od/nordicwalking/index.htm).



**Add walking poles, and burn more calories.**

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# Boost Your Immune System

## Lymphatic Drainage Therapy Fights Infection

Does your immune system work overtime? If so, you might want to give it a boost by seeing a massage therapist or bodyworker trained in lymphatic drainage therapy. This technique can boost your immunity by increasing the production of antibodies, stimulating circulation, moving congestion out of the body, and reducing swelling, especially after surgery.

The lymphatic system supports our body's immune function and involves several organs, glands, and tissues, hundreds of lymph nodes, and a network of vessels. A clear lymph fluid flows through these vessels and carries the metabolic waste (bacteria, dead cells, fats, fluids, proteins, and viruses) to the lymph nodes, where it is filtered. These nodes often swell when we are sick.

The lymphatic drainage techniques used by massage therapists and bodyworkers gently stimulate lymph nodes, help correct swelling and stagnation in those nodes, reduce local fluid retention, boost the overall immune system, and provide relaxation. As an essential tool in the treatment of lymphedema (excess lymphatic fluid), this therapy is often applied postoperatively and can be especially beneficial for breast cancer patients.

Administering this treatment requires advanced training and is performed with gentle, massage-like strokes. There should be no discomfort involved; in fact, you may feel you are hardly being worked on at all.

### Aftercare

After your lymphatic drainage

treatment, it's possible you could feel some mild, flu-like symptoms, depending on how much strain your body has been under prior to treatment. This strain may be due to environmental pollutants, medication, and diet. Most people leave a session simply feeling relaxed, but if you don't feel at the top of your game, drink plenty of water, limit your salt intake, and stay physically active.

Lymphatic drainage is one way to give your wellness a boost in a busy world that makes many demands on your immune system.

*Try to be a  
rainbow in  
someone's cloud.*

-Maya Angelou

HAPPY SPRING!

I am delighted to jumpstart 2021 with this Spring newsletter dedicated to health and well-being through massage, movement and healthy habits. Did you know that massage can improve your immune function?

Manual lymph drainage is a technique that I can incorporate into your massage session to help your lymphatic system function at it's best. Your lymph system removes toxins and excess fluids from your cells and intercellular spaces and transfers them to your circulatory system, where they are filtered by your liver and kidneys and removed through your lungs, bladder, and sweat glands. That's especially important as we deal with the effects that the COVID-19 epidemic has had on our lives.

I am so excited to return to my massage practice and look forward to connecting with you and providing a healing safe massage. Take a deep breath and smile, we can do this!

Warmly, Cara

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110 Lakeside Ave. , Suite D  
Seattle, WA 98122



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