



HELIOS NATURAL THERAPEUTICS

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THE THERAPEUTIC EFFECTS OF MASSAGE

Massage has numerous therapeutic effects upon the various systems of the human body. It can provide relaxation, recovery, stimulation, contraction, sedation, and various other responses depending upon the techniques applied. Some of these effects are listed below.

- ◆ Releases growth hormones that help immune system recover
- ◆ Increases metabolism
- ◆ Hastens healing
- ◆ Relaxes and refreshes muscles
- ◆ Improves detoxifying functions of lymphatic system
- ◆ Prevents and relieves muscle cramps and spasms
- ◆ Improves circulation of blood and lymph thereby improving delivery of oxygen and nutrients to cells and enhancing removal of metabolic wastes
- ◆ Keeps skin healthy by increasing blood flow
- ◆ Effective in pain management
- ◆ Relieves fatigue, reduces tension and anxiety, calms the nervous system and promotes relaxation and renewed energy
- ◆ Encourages nutrition and development of muscular system by stimulating circulation, nerve supply, and cell activity
- ◆ Regular massage causes muscles to become firmer, larger, and more elastic
- ◆ Relaxes tense muscles
- ◆ Blood passes three times more rapidly through muscles being massaged than muscles at rest
- ◆ Muscles are more quickly restored by massage than by rest of the same duration
- ◆ Injuries heal more quickly with less connective tissue buildup and scarring with regular massage
- ◆ Friction massage prevents and reduces the development of adhesions and excessive scarring
- ◆ Increases range of motion in injured or stiff joints
- ◆ Stimulates or sedates nervous function depending on the strokes applied
- ◆ Reduces work of heart due to improved blood flow
- ◆ Blood making process is improved resulting in increases in number of red and white blood cells
- ◆ Improves digestion through activation of the parasympathetic nervous system
- ◆ Facial massage tones skin
- ◆ Relieves headaches and eyestrain
- ◆ Relieves insomnia
- ◆ Mildly high blood pressure is temporarily reduced
- ◆ Mechanical and reflex responses are initiated through massage
- ◆ Massage influences nerve endings of both cerebrospinal and sympathetic nerves which exist in great abundance in skin and muscles. Cerebrospinal nerves are involved in the sensing of locality, temperature, pressure, and weight. Sympathetic nerves are connected to the glands, blood vessels, an thermic mechanism located in the skin
- ◆ Skin pinching excites nervous system and surface circulation
- ◆ Massage may serve to act as a substitute for exercise by increasing blood supply of an otherwise inactive muscle, just as exercise may be considered a sort of massage.

References: *Milady's Theory and Practice of Therapeutic Massage*, Second Edition, by Mark F. Beck, 1994 and *The Art of Massage: Its Physiological Effects and Therapeutic Applications* by J.H. Kellogg, M.D., published 1895 reprinted in *Massage Heritage Times* Vol. 1: Issue 1, January, 2000 and Joan Borysenko, Ph.D., from *Massage Therapy Journal*, Fall 1999 Vol. 38, No. 3