



Massage for Seniors: It's a Good Thing!

There is growing evidence that seniors could significantly benefit from a regular massage session and a new specialty is rapidly growing to provide this service, tailored to the senior's needs and concerns.

The benefits of massage therapy are well-documented; however, seniors are less likely to schedule appointments for a variety of reasons including:

- Modesty
- Cost
- Health Conditions

Benefits of Massage:

- Boosts immune function
- Increased blood and lymph circulation which can help nutrients get to muscle tissue and increase medication absorption rates
- Helpful in reducing pain and reliance on pricey meds for conditions such as arthritis, back pain, circulation problems and high blood pressure
- Widely used to treat chronic pain and osteoarthritis.
- Beginning to develop techniques to improve quality of life for Alzheimer's patients
- Reduces anxiety and depression
- Decreases stress hormone and proteins related to inflammation and allergic reactions.
- Increased flexibility
- Reduced joint pain
- Better sleep
- Provides human touch, increasing overall well-being

Geriatric Massage Techniques and Tips:

- Make sure your therapist is familiar with proper techniques for seniors. Gentle stroking, kneading and application of light pressure on specific points.
- Most seniors require a lighter touch and shorter sessions.
- If a general body massage cannot be done, massage to feet, hands or shoulders can produce beneficial results
- Consult with your physician prior to scheduling an appointment
- Be honest with your massage therapist regarding any conditions you have
- If modesty is an issue, your massage therapist can accommodate what makes you comfortable. You don't have to remove all clothing and you can get assistance on and off the table.

When Massage Therapy Should be Avoided:

- Open or healing wounds or bedsores
- Use of blood thinners – can cause bleeding under the skin
- Thrombophlebitis – Blood clots that can come loose and travel to the lungs during massage
- Broken or healing bones
- Recent surgery – still healing
- Some type of cancer

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