



Health Awareness

Massage Therapy: A Hands-On Approach To Pain Relief

(NAPSA)—Once viewed mainly as a way to relax and relieve stress, massage therapy is being recognized for its effectiveness in helping to relieve pain and other medical conditions. In fact, a recent survey by the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) found that while 26 percent of respondents get massages to relax or reduce stress, 40 percent have had a massage for pain relief.

“The medical community is increasingly recognizing the benefits of massage,” says Mary Beth Braun, president of the AMTA. “As this trend grows, massage will become an even more common component of people’s regular health and wellness practices.”

Recent studies indicate that massage therapy may help injured muscles heal faster and speed recovery from some types of surgery. Massage may also help relieve the symptoms of a variety of conditions, from migraines to back pain, and even help lessen the side effects of cancer treatment.

As the body of research on the health benefits of massage therapy grows, insurance companies are taking note. The number of people surveyed who indicated their last massage was paid by an insurance company or a co-pay doubled from last year.

While there’s strong interest in massage therapy for health reasons from all age groups, there’s been a particular increase in understanding of the value of massage among 18- to 24-year-olds. According to the survey, 72 percent of these “Generation Y” respondents disagree that mas-



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sage is just a luxury, and 48 percent of them have already had a massage to relieve pain.

Additional findings from the survey include that:

- Men and respondents 65 and older are especially likely to get massages for medical/health reasons;
- Women indicated massage therapy was their first choice when asked “what gave you the greatest relief from pain?” (24 percent versus 22 percent who chose medications as their number one pain-relief choice);
- Men placed massage (at 19 percent) second only to medications (24 percent) for pain relief;
- Almost one out of three (32 percent) of Hispanic respondents chose massage therapy as their preferred choice of pain relief, and more than half (57 percent) of Hispanics have had a massage to relieve pain.

Regardless of a person’s age or reason for seeking massage, finding a qualified massage therapist is very important. Those seeking massage should ask massage therapists whether they’re licensed to practice massage, if they’re Nationally Certified in Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork and where they received massage therapy training.

AMTA offers a free professional massage therapist locator at www.findamassagetherapist.org.

What Type of Massage Do You Need?

It is important to discuss your physical condition and what you hope to achieve from massage with your massage therapist. The four most common types of massage are:

- **Swedish massage:** a gentle, relaxing massage using a system of long strokes, kneading and friction techniques
- **Deep tissue massage:** beneficial for muscle pain from an injury, such as whiplash or back strain
- **Sports massage:** can help prevent athletic injury, keeps the body flexible and may aid in healing the body in the event of an injury
- **Chair massage:** massage of the upper body while fully clothed and seated in a special portable chair; meant to relax and improve circulation.

Visit www.findamassagetherapist.org or call toll-free at 888-THE-AMTA (888-843-2682) to find a professional AMTA massage therapist.

