

## Massage as the Body's Workout

### Can Bodywork Sometimes Make You Sore?

Shirley Vanderbilt

You've just had a wonderful massage, and you go home feeling both relaxed and rejuvenated. But later that night you feel like you're coming down with something. Or perhaps the next morning, you wake up with twinges of muscle soreness, maybe some fatigue, and you just don't feel yourself. What happened? Chances are it's the massage, and it's perfectly OK.

Keith Grant, head of the Sports and Deep Tissue Massage Department at McKinnon Institute in Oakland, Calif., says, "It's very much like doing a workout. If the muscles aren't used to it, they often respond with some soreness." Grant notes this should last for no more than a day or two. If it lasts longer, the

therapist can find all the kinks that have built up from daily stress and too little or too much exercise. The whole point of a therapeutic massage is to release that tension, work out the kinks, and help your body relax so it can function at an optimal level. All of this work stretches muscles, pushes blood into them, and gets things working again.

#### A Closer Look

There are several theories, in addition to muscle function, as to why people sometimes experience after-effects from massage.

Massage can stimulate the lymph system, which is comprised of several organs

*"Nothing is so strong as gentleness. Nothing is so gentle as real strength."*

-Frances de Sales



A good massage can sometimes leave you feeling like you had a good workout.

massage may have been too intense, and the therapist should adjust for this in the next session. However, just as with exercise, when your body adjusts to having this type of workout, your physical response will also be less intense.

A professional massage is more than an ordinary backrub. Your massage

(thymus, tonsils, spleen, adenoids), hundreds of lymph nodes, and a multitude of vessels that run throughout the body. These lymphatic vessels carry a clear fluid, known as lymph, that circulates around the body's tissues, absorbing fluid, waste products, dead cells, bacteria, viruses, fats, and proteins

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from the tissue as it goes, while also giving passage to immune cells as they're needed. Massage can sometimes stimulate the lymph system, helping to eliminate toxins from the body. And if the body contains a high level of environmental or dietary toxins, you could feel some mild, flu-like symptoms. While most people come out of a typical massage feeling nothing but relaxed, some people do report feeling a bit nauseous. If this is the case, make sure to drink plenty of water and perhaps take a slow walk. Movement creates a greater lymphatic response and will hurry the process along.

Grant points to another theory being closely examined by experts. Neurological sensitivity, or "sensitization," looks at the "whole response of what's going on in a person." As Grant explains, massage provides a significant amount of input to the central nervous system and the body responds to that increased information. Pain and other occasional after-effects may be the result of a system that has received more information than it can handle at that particular time. And because the amount of sensory input we receive during any day or week is always fluctuating, sometimes we may be overloaded and other times not. It depends on the total stress (emotional, spiritual and physical) being experienced by the body at that moment.

## Minimizing Overload

So what can you do to minimize the sometimes uncomfortable side effects? It's important to communicate with your massage therapist regarding your expectations, as well as your current state of health. Your therapist can then tailor the massage to your personal needs and desires, and make adjustments in intensity or technique as the session proceeds. "I'd look at what's being done," says Grant. In some cases, a shorter or more soothing session may be more appropriate. In others, the therapist may need to change the kind of technique used. Much of this can be judged by how the person is feeling and responding during the massage.

In addition to communicating clearly with your practitioner throughout the session, following a few simple steps will help ease tenderness and maximize

benefits:

- UNDERSTAND THAT EVERY BODY REACTS DIFFERENTLY.

Your body is an organism made up of complex systems that react to a constantly changing influx of external factors.

- MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH PRACTICES.

This means keeping your mind free of negative clutter.

- DRINK PLENTY OF WATER IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING YOUR TREATMENT.

Continue to do so for the next day or two. This will rehydrate your tissues and ease the effects.

- TAKE IT EASY AFTER YOUR MASSAGE.

Go home, relax and just allow your body to find its balance naturally.

Getting a massage can do you a world of good. And getting massage frequently can do even more. This is the beauty of bodywork. Taking part in this form of regularly scheduled self-care can play a

huge part in how healthy you'll be and how youthful you'll remain. Budgeting time and money for bodywork at consistent intervals is an investment in your health. And remember: just because massage feels like a pampering treat doesn't mean it is any less therapeutic. Consider massage appointments a necessary piece of your health plan, and work with your practitioner to establish a treatment schedule that best meets your needs.

Like exercise, making bodywork a habitual practice is good for your health. And if you wake up the next morning a little sore, it's probably because you had a really good massage.



Bodywork can stimulate the lymph system, which can help detox the body.

# Elimination Effect

## Clear Skin Depends on Internal Wellness

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Do you often wonder why a skin blemish has not resolved or why acne outbreaks continue in spite of countless therapies? If so, you may need to dig a bit deeper and look inside--inside your body, that is. Good digestive health and the health of your colon can mean healthy skin.

### THE QUESTION IS, HOW?

Both the colon and skin are responsible for absorbing and releasing chemicals, water, and other metabolic products. The colon is the largest internal organ in the body. Its function is specifically to absorb food, nutrients, and water.

One function of skin is to help the body breathe. It inhales and exhales similar to how the lungs work. Inhalation and exhalation by the skin allows it to open pores and perspire. So, sweating is a good thing.

When the colon is unable to get rid of waste produced from food, the colon becomes constipated and toxic. The skin also becomes toxic in trying to perform the elimination function, and often

results in skin eruptions in the form of acne, eczema, and psoriasis.

### PREVENTION

You can avoid some of this trouble with these tips:

- Consider removing certain foods from your diet--especially dairy. An allergy to milk and other dairy products can cause severe acne.
- Drink at least 64-80 ounces of water every day, as it lubricates the colon and helps with regularity.
- Refrain from dehydrating beverages like alcohol, coffee, and soda, as they can cause constipation.
- Strive for a daily bowel movement--try 1-3 teaspoons of ground flax seeds added to your breakfast.

Beautiful skin starts from the inside out. Adopting these practices will not only improve colon and skin health, but will promote your overall health as well.



Water intake can clarify skin.

# The Scoop on Sugar

## Not Such a Sweet Story

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Most people have no idea just how much sugar is in the foods Americans consume. However, this sweet culprit may be behind many health issues, including skin problems. Here's why.

When refined carbohydrates, otherwise known as simple sugars, are consumed in excess, they cause an increase in blood sugar levels. This excess sugar (glucose) attaches itself to proteins and is referred to as glycosylation. All cells in our bodies have a protein component to them including our hormones, enzymes, cholesterol, and immune cells. As proteins become coated with glucose, they are unable to work effectively.

Collagen, that vital component of a glowing complexion, makes up 40

percent of the proteins in the body. Glycosylation hastens protein cross-linking, which weakens collagen. The result: wrinkles.

But wait, there's more. Sugar also causes an increase in levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, which can interfere with hormonal balance and increase inflammation. Skin inflammation can manifest as acne, puffiness under the eyes, and eczema. Sugar also increases insulin levels and reduces sensitivity of insulin. In fact, research shows people with acne process sugar poorly, which could be a direct result of high cortisol and high insulin levels in the blood.

And finally, sugar depletes the necessary nutrients required to keep the immune

system healthy. For example, sugar interferes with the way the body uses vitamin C, which is needed for the formation of collagen and elastin as well as immunity. It can also lead to sluggish digestion, which also affects the skin.

The best way to steer clear of sugar is to read labels. Avoid products that list sugar in the first three ingredients, and be aware of words ending in "ose" such as sucrose, dextrose, and maltose, all of which are sugar indicators. Also avoid processed foods and refined carbohydrates, such as white flour, white rice, and white potatoes.

Whenever the sweet allure of sugar tempts you, remember, sugar-free is key to beauty.

*"We never touch  
people so lightly  
that we do not  
leave a trace"*

-Peggy Tabor Millin

Have you taken time out for yourself lately? Now is a great time to schedule your, in home, personal retreat. Whether for relaxation or therapeutic purposes...You owe it to yourself.

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- Swedish massage
- Deep tissue
- Foot reflexology
- Facelift Massage
- Special events/parties

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