

Why Massage Therapy Should Come First In Treatment Plan.

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Massage Therapy has been around for thousands of years. Every culture in the world has some form of massage, or bodywork, as a healing therapy. Today, massage [therapy](#) has become somewhat of a lost therapeutic art as new technology advances medicine with laboratory-created chemical compounds and the latest electronic diagnostic and treatment devices. Though wonderful, these modernizations have also removed the innate healing effects of human-to-human contact. The simple act of touch is so powerfully soothing, that it can reduce heart rate, release endorphins, and regulate breathing. There is no replacement for the healing power of touch.

One should think of [massage](#) therapy as [natural](#) medicine. It falls into the category of alternative medicine, but loses the spotlight to other more intriguing therapies, such as acupuncture and yoga. Although it's not as glamorous, massage should be considered as the very first therapy when it comes to treating pain in the body. Here's why.

The human body contains over 650 muscles. In the average person, muscle makes up about 40% of body weight. At any one point in time, specific muscles in the body are working to keep the body functioning properly. Therefore, muscles are continuously active in sustaining life. For this reason alone, one should make sure that their muscles are in the best shape possible. Massage addresses the muscular tissue and can help muscles regain suppleness and contract efficiently.

Skeletal muscles help lymphatic fluid flow from the tissues back to the heart. When muscles contract and relax, lymph is pushed throughout the lymphatic vessels. The muscular pumping action encourages systemic movement of lymph. The fluid circulation allows for proper immune system function, cellular waste removal, dead blood cell removal, and excess fluid removal for every area in the body. Consider that the effect of tight, constricted muscles will not only impede lymphatic drainage, but residual effects would be edema, poor trauma healing, and poor immune system function.

Muscles are innervated by nerves and supported by blood vessels. Clearly, an unimpeded nerve conduction pathway will allow muscles to contract completely. But, a blocked or pinched nerve may cause a muscle to feel weak, fatigued, or possibly painful. Blood supplies fresh oxygen to muscles and removes lactic acid along with other byproducts of muscular contraction. Without good blood flow, there will be lack of strength or cramping. Sometimes tight, knotted muscles can block or impede the flow of nerve signals and blood. This blockage starves muscles and causes pain. Also, some muscles can pinch off the blood or nerve supply to other muscles, thereby creating a rippling effect downstream from a problem area.

A trip to the chiropractor often realigns the skeletal structure when a subluxation or dislocation occurs in a joint. The bones may be getting adjusted, but the real offenders could be the attached muscles. Strain and imbalance in muscle structures can disturb correct joint articulation. When muscular forces have gone too far, the joints and bones will shift out of place. The muscles that tighten and injure the joint may also be painful to touch. They may reflexively trigger other nearby muscles to tighten up and protect the newly traumatized area. Frequent subluxations in a

particular joint could mean there is a bigger issue of muscular tightness and imbalance underlying.

Massage should be used for regular body maintenance. At the very least, a relatively non-active person should receive a massage once a month. This regular bodywork is a good way to keep up muscle function and stave off injury. For more active people, muscles should be massaged more frequently. It is easily forgotten that the body is a machine that needs care for optimal performance. Consider that people will put more money into car maintenance than into body maintenance. It should be planned part of the personal financial budget, not a luxury when discretionary income is available. To run some numbers, take the average cost of a massage at \$75. One massage a month amounts to a yearly expense of \$900. That's about \$2.50 a day, less than the cost of a Starbucks coffee. There are many benefits, some of which include minimizing pain relieving medications, lowering blood pressure, reducing chronic aches and pain, and improving overall health. The benefits of massage greatly outweigh its costs, as good health and longevity is invaluable.