



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Local massage therapist Sara Toogood gives a massage.

# Sit back and relax

## Massage therapist helps educate public about benefits of massage

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Attention anyone with an aching back, stiff neck and shoulders, or headache sufferers: It's National Massage Therapy Week (NMTAW), a chance for the general public to learn about the physical, emotional and medical benefits of massage.

"We want everyone to understand that massage is just one component (of) health care,"

said Sara Toogood, a massage therapist, who owns Bodywork Connections office on Holly Springs Road.

"Almost everyone can benefit from receiving a massage. Massage therapy effectively provides relief for a wide variety of musculoskeletal ailments and helps millions of (people) lead pain-free lives," she said.

Toogood is a licensed massage

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# Massage therapist gives back to community

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therapist with more than 20 years of experience. She moved from California to Holly Springs one year ago to be closer to her brother and his family.

"(Moving here allows me) to be an aunt and participate in the kids' childhood. I figured I could move with my 'hands-on' everywhere and when I approached Dr. Peter Atwell (a local chiropractor and town commissioner in Holly Springs) he offered me office space to open my practice," said Toogood.

The American Massage Therapy Association began sponsoring NMTAW last year as a way to help teach the public about the benefits of massage, clarify any misconception people may have about massage therapy, and introduce the different techniques used in the hands-on therapy.

One myth about massages is that it is sexual, said Toogood. A professional masseuse, she said,

will always keep the client covered with a sheet, during a massage. A client has the option to wear as much clothing as they feel comfortable with during the massage.

"It's all about comfort and what the client wants," she said.

Typically a massage therapist will speak with a first-time client about what kinds of pain he has been having and where, what he hopes to get out of getting a massage and his long-term goals for using massage therapy.

Often thought to be a luxury reserved primarily for the rich and famous, massage therapy doesn't have to be expensive and results can provide profound medical benefits.

One way to get a massage without spending a lot of money is to make an appointment at a massage school.

Advanced students attending massage schools are often required to complete a specific number of hands-on hours prior to graduating. What this means

is clients can get a massage at reduced rates. Some private massage therapists, said Toogood, will even offer a sliding scale fee based on income.

"Massage is so much more than a spa (and) pampering event. It doesn't have to be an indulgence but a necessary prevention. Not being able to afford a massage shouldn't be the reason someone doesn't have one. I mean, I try to work with people based on their income if money is a problem.

"No one thinks of their dental cleaning as an indulgence, or their annual medical checkup as a pampering event," said Toogood.

There are several different techniques used in massage therapy including Swedish, sports/stretching, muscle release and deep tissue and chair massages.

A chair massage offers a client a quick convenient way to get a massage if they are short on time.

This massage has the client,

fully clothed sitting down on a chair with their back to the therapist. The chair is not only adjustable to accommodate all heights and sizes, but it portable as well. Many businesses will hire a massage therapist to come into their place of work and give quick onsite massages for its employees.

Toogood will be offering 15-minute chair massages by appointment for \$10 on Friday, Oct. 24, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. as a way to introduce the public to the different types of massages available.

For more information about the American Massage Therapy Association, go to [www.amta-massage.org](http://www.amta-massage.org). or for information about Bodywork Connections, go to [www.bodyworkconnections.com](http://www.bodyworkconnections.com) or to schedule a massage with Sara Toogood call 567-5371.

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