

# A SHOW OF HANDS

Spring 2008

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

## Whiplash

### Healing a Pain in the Neck

Hope Bentley

Getting rear-ended in traffic. Face-planting at the bottom of a ski slope. Tumbling over the handlebars on your bike. Whiplash comes in many forms and can become a long-term problem if not treated correctly. Fortunately, massage and bodywork can address the ache and discomfort that come with whiplash and prevent chronic pain down the road.

### Understanding Whiplash

The term "whiplash" came into use in 1928. Doctors will sometimes use "hyperextension injury," to describe it, but "whiplash" is a more visceral account of what has happened to the victim's

Car accidents are the most common causes of whiplash. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons reported that about 20 percent of people who have been in rear-end collisions later report whiplash symptoms. Whether front to back or side to side, whiplash can affect muscles all the way into the victim's back and arms. The most serious form of whiplash compresses nerves in the neck and cause multiple sprains of the ligaments.

The good news is, serious hyperextension injuries are in the minority, as whiplash usually comes in the less serious version of the injury. "Fortunately, about 95 percent of the time whiplash tends to be more



Whiplash injuries can lead to headache as well as neck, jaw, and back pain.

neck. The neck itself has made a whip-like motion bending first towards and then away from the point of impact. As the head moves rapidly in one direction, the muscles in the neck receive the message to contract. The momentum of the head can cause strain or sprain to the muscles and ligaments in the neck as the head reaches the end of its movement.

superficial damage, like slight muscle strains and tears," says Ben Benjamin, Ph.D., a massage therapist who holds a doctorate in education and sports medicine. But whether the pain is minor soreness or serious discomfort, massage can provide relief and prevent chronic problems in the long run.

Continued on page 2

*A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.*

-O.W. Holmes

#### Office Hours and Contact

**HAND & HAND Total. Body. Wellness.**  
**Tom Saulnier - CMT, ZBT**  
**805-501-2011**  
**handnhand5@yahoo.com**  
**www.mobilehands.biz**  
**Mon. - Sat., By Appointment**

#### In this Issue

**Whiplash**  
**Managing Arthritis**  
**Here Comes the Sun**

Continued from page 1

## Whiplash Symptoms

The symptoms of whiplash include neck pain and stiffness, headaches, pain in the shoulder or between the shoulder blades (sometimes called "coat hanger pain"), low back pain, and pain or numbness in the arms or extremities.

Often people who suffer whiplash do not feel the effects until two or three days after the injury-causing incident. Benjamin explains that this delayed onset is because it takes time for scar tissue to manifest in the sprained or strained muscles and ligaments. And because scar tissue is more adhesive than regular tissue, people experience it as stiffness in the injured areas.

Whiplash affects primarily the neck, but victims shouldn't ignore the rest of the body. This injury can pull the long muscles on either side of the spine, which reach all the way to the tailbone and can cause discomfort along the way. Discomfort or stiffness in the chest and arms can also be due to whiplash. And headaches may be the result of slowed circulation to the head caused by the swelling in the injury.

## Massage Can Help

Any massage that causes a general relaxation of the client's muscles can help relieve muscular pain in common types of whiplash injuries. In addition, massage increases the amount of oxygen that reaches the healing tissues and opens those tissues so they can receive oxygen and nutrients, thus speeding the healing process.

In addition to relaxation massage, specific bodywork methods ease acute whiplash discomfort and help prevent chronic fallout. For example, myofascial approaches restore fluidity to the fascia--normally a slippery tissue that surrounds all the moving parts inside the body--allowing freer movement of muscles and ligaments. Friction-based massage helps break up scar tissue and relieve stiffness. Trigger point therapy works by releasing tension held in tight knots of muscle. And any type of bodywork that stimulates circulation helps ease and prevent headaches.

Finally, the incident that caused the whiplash in the first place, (a car wreck, for instance) can be traumatic. Massage

helps relax a client's psyche as well as their muscles, helping her or him work through the emotional issues induced by the accident.

Because the neck is such a delicate part of the body, it is important to proceed with caution. Benjamin advises waiting a few days after the accident to seek treatment. This allows the initial scar tissue to knit, which is an important part of the healing process. The initial treatment should be extremely gentle, and if there is a chance of a fracture, a concussion, any disc problem or other serious injury, the client should make sure to see a physician first.

## Let the Healing Begin

It used to be that physicians would immobilize whiplash injuries with a cervical collar, but now health care professionals advise a more temperate course for their patients.

"I recommend gentle neck movement within your range of motion while lying on a pillow," says Benjamin. Movement may help prolong the benefits of the massage by continuing to circulate blood, oxygen, and nutrients through the healing tissue. "Heat or cold, whichever feels better, can also help," says Benjamin. "Soaking in a hot bath can also be beneficial." Limiting physical activity for a few days and getting plenty of rest in the wake of a whiplash injury is also a good idea.

Whiplash is traumatic and should be addressed soon after the injury to avoid any chronic problems. If you or someone you love is suffering from the repercussions of whiplash, consider a bodywork session to ease the discomfort. Massage can help lessen muscle pain, induce relaxation, and ease the trauma often associated with whiplash. You'll be back to your old self in no time.



Bodywork has an arsenal of methods to treat whiplash injuries for a full recovery.

# Managing Arthritis

## Exercise and Bodywork Keep Joint Pain at Bay

The word arthritis strikes fear in the hearts of older adults. It often signifies aging, pain, inactivity, and disability. However, new research shows moderate physical exercise can actually ease arthritis symptoms by decreasing pain and increasing a person's likelihood of living a normal life.

### Understanding Arthritis

The most common form of arthritis--osteoarthritis, or also known as degenerative arthritis--affects more than twenty million Americans. Osteoarthritis (literally meaning "bone-joint inflammation") is caused by wear and tear on joint surfaces and most frequently involves the hips, knees, lower back, neck, and fingers. More than half of people over sixty-five have some evidence of osteoarthritis on X-rays, although it doesn't always manifest as symptoms.

Many problems arise from a sedentary lifestyle. Joints lose flexibility and muscles lose strength, feeding the cycle of pain, inactivity, and more pain.

### Exercise Offers Sweet Relief

Vigorous walking, swimming, and bicycling boost the release of powerful endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. When done four to five days a week, these aerobic activities improve general cardiovascular health and aid in weight management (obesity is the single biggest risk factor for osteoarthritis).

Strengthening and stretching exercises targeted at maintaining joint flexibility and muscle strength--especially for at-risk joints--slow the progression of degenerative arthritis. Yoga classes and moderate weight lifting programs are excellent ways to improve strength and flexibility. Bodywork can also provide relief.

If arthritis is slowing you down, get serious with your exercise plan. Consult your physician; work with a professional trainer, physical therapist, yoga instructor, or bodyworker; and start a gentle, progressive exercise program. Your joints will reward you for it, and you'll free yourself from arthritic pain.



Stretching can slow degenerative arthritis.

# Here Comes the Sun

## Updated UV Index Shines Light on Rays

A crucial warning system has been recently updated for your skin's protection. In compliance with the World Health Organization, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Weather Service revamped the UV Index, a system created to alert people about the level of harmful ultraviolet (UV) light rays from the sun. Overexposure to UV rays can cause wrinkles and premature aging, skin cancer, cataracts, and immune system suppression.

Many factors influence the strength of UV rays: UV light is stronger in the summer, at higher altitudes, and in areas closer to the equator. It's also stronger at midday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when the sun is directly overhead.

The new UV index ranges from 0-11 with guidelines as follows:

0-2: **LOW.**

Minimal exposure for the average person, but watch for reflected UV from snow and water.

3-5: **MODERATE.**

Stay in the shade during midday. Cover-up outside.

6-7: **HIGH.**

Wear a hat, sunglasses, and a sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15. Avoid midday sun.

8-10: **VERY HIGH.**

Take extra precautions, and avoid midday sun. Wear protective clothing.

11: **EXTREME.**

Take all precautions, seek shade, and avoid midday sun. If possible, stay indoors.

As part of its daily forecast, the National Weather Service publishes the UV index for each area of the country. Go to [www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html) and enter your zip code to find your UV index for the day. The Weather Channel, as well as most local TV stations, include the UV index in their weather forecast. It can also be found at [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com).

For a detailed description of the UV index, or for more information on sun protection, visit [www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise).

*Holding on to  
anger is like  
grasping a hot  
coal with the  
intent of  
throwing it at  
someone else;  
you're the one  
who gets burned.*  
-Buddha

Ahhh....Spring is in the air. Flowers are blooming, grass is green and our TAXES ARE DUE!

April can be a wonderful month for opening your bodies, minds and homes to the warming, optimistic Springtime breezes. To many of us, it can also represent the cold chilling bluster of tax time.

What to do? Don't stress it!

Your forecast looks bright and sunny with a 100% chance of tax-stress relief through rest, a good diet and regular massage. Massage helps to maintain proper circulation, relax tense muscles and calm our emotions. A healthier body, mind and spirit equips us to take the chill out of taxes and warm up to the Spring and Summer months ahead.

HAND & HAND. Taking the stress out of life (and taxes), one massage at a time.

## HAND & HAND Total. Body. Wellness.

1230-5 Madera Road #178  
Simi Valley, CA 93065



**Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals**