

A SHOW OF HANDS

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Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

Check Out Chair Massage

You Deserve a Break in Your Busy Day

Cathy Ulrich

Ever been curious about the chair massage area at the mall? Or wondered why your company offers massages in the conference room on certain days? Does it seem strange people want to get massages in an odd-looking chair during a busy workday? Well, maybe they're on to something. In fact, a small investment in a chair massage session can lead to a significant pay-off.

Chair massage--also called seated or on-site massage--provides a host of benefits, including reducing stress, improving mental clarity, and enhancing work performance. And the time investment is minimal: short five-, ten- or fifteen-minute sessions can often do the trick.

During the Work Day

In short, this study shows what chair massage enthusiasts have known for some time: even a short massage can help relax tight muscles and remind the body to breathe. Although full-body massages are optimal, taking time out for one in the middle of the workday can lull you to sleep, and it can be difficult to schedule it into your day. On the other hand, a chair massage during an afternoon break may be a better alternative, particularly when you need to be energized, so you can better focus for late-day meetings or evening responsibilities. Besides, the short massage session time--often the same as your coffee break--keeps you from

A smile is your greatest social asset.

-Zig Zigler



Productivity increase and stress reduction are both benefits of chair massage in the office.

In a study done at the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami, researchers found that when participants got a fifteen-minute chair massage just twice a week, their anxiety levels were lower, their brain waves proved they were more relaxed and alert, and their stress levels were measurably reduced. The study also showed improved speed and accuracy on math computations.

stressing about being away from work too long.

You don't have to undress, you don't need the privacy of a table massage, and you're ready to get back to work feeling refreshed.

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Office Hours and Contact

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Chair massage can also be a great introduction into the world of bodywork. If you've always wondered why some people are adamant about getting massages, or if you've been trying to explain to a friend or coworker why bodywork is so wonderful, chair massage is an excellent way to get a sampling.

The Massage Chair

The key to comfort for on-site massages is the specially tailored chair. It's important you feel fully supported and at ease so you can relax for your session. With pads to support your face, chest, arms, pelvis, and knees, a massage chair is surprisingly comfortable. And the chair's design puts you in a position that relieves tension even before the therapist starts working.

Massage chairs are fully adjustable so your practitioner can tailor the chair specifically to your body with just the release of a few levers. The unique design allows your therapist to easily access areas on your body--such as the neck, shoulders, and back--that may be the tightest.

Is It Effective?

You may wonder how a massage can be effective when the practitioner works through your clothes and without oils.

Chair massage has its roots in a centuries-old Japanese massage technique called amma. A predecessor to the better-known shiatsu, amma is done while seated, and therapists are trained to work specifically on the body's pressure points. Pressure point work, especially on the areas made accessible by the position of the massage chair, can free muscles and relieve stress and tight tissues without working directly on the skin. Therapists are skilled at palpating and working through clothes. In minutes, you feel relaxed, alert, and comfortable as your tension melts away. And, since no oils or lotions are used for chair massage, you can go right back to your day without feeling like you need to shower.

Your Trouble Spots

Once you decide how long you want your chair massage session to last, your therapist will adjust the routine for maximum effectiveness. These sessions can be very beneficial in treating

work-related issues, such as repetitive stress conditions and muscle tightness caused from sitting in front of a computer.

Be sure to tell your massage therapist of specific concerns you have, such as carpal tunnel syndrome or shoulder or neck stiffness. Your practitioner may suggest a longer session for your next visit to fully address your needs.

What's the Cost?

Chair massage is an economical bodywork option because the sessions are relatively short.

Typically, a therapist charges about a dollar a minute. While tipping is common practice, practitioners do not automatically expect it. Chair massage enthusiasts will tell you \$15 is an excellent investment in your health--and it feels great.

Talk To Your Employer

More and more companies are offering chair massages for their employees. Increased productivity and employee appreciation are just a couple of the benefits acknowledged by management. Some companies pay for the services, while others provide space for chair massage and employees pick up their own tabs.

If your company doesn't already offer chair massage, ask your human resources director if it's possible to bring this service into the office. Whether your employer pays for it or you do, you win, because you're able to make it through a stressful week a little more relaxed.

If you encounter a chair massage opportunity at work, at a local fair, or grocery store, do yourself a favor and sign up. You'll be happy you did.



The specially designed massage chair allows practitioners to access chronically tense areas.

Facial Massage for Lymphatic Drainage

Natalia Doran

A well-performed facial massage will help relieve puffiness and improve skin tone and complexion. Other physical benefits include stimulation of the skin's immune mechanisms, firming of weak muscles, tissue regeneration, and antiaging effects. Mental benefits include stress relief and a greater awareness of the body-mind connection. And applying pressure and movement through massage can help to normalize the function and composition of the connective tissue, and free it of harmful substances.

Lymphatic Massage

The body's lymphatic system drains away the debris from our cells. It transports water out of the tissue, along with waste substances: bacteria, cell fragments, immobile cells, inorganic substances, large molecular fats, proteins, and viruses. This process is constantly happening all over the body. With massage, the lymph system can move up to 10 times more fluid than it normally does.

Manual lymph drainage (MLD), which was developed by Emil Vodder, PhD, is a type of gentle massage that accelerates the natural circulation of the lymph and encourages its movement away from swollen areas. MLD is firm, but gentler than ordinary massage. Because the lymph vessels are all interlinked, lymph flow will be affected in the entire region of the area being massaged. Other types of lymphatic massage include lymph drainage therapy, developed by Bruno Chikly, MD.

A facial massage that involves lymphatic work improves circulation to the skin, which increases nutrition to the skin cells and speeds up the filtering of water in and out of cells. The vasodilation of the surface capillaries during massage improves skin color, and facial massage also improves elasticity and suppleness of the skin. With facial massage, the skin becomes more balanced, less prone to breakouts, and more resistant to infection. Massage movements also influence muscular hypertension

through the autonomic nervous system.

Natalia Doran, MD, is the founder and president of the International Skin Beauty Academy in Illinois.



Facial massage has a host of health benefits.

Don't Get Sick!

Prevention is Key

Leslie Roste

Regardless of whether the threat is a simple cold or the flu, there are several things you can do to protect yourself from unnecessary downtime.

Proper Hand Washing

This gets top billing because of its true effectiveness in preventing illness. The most important aspects of hand washing are the length of time (at least 30 seconds) and the amount of friction you use, not the water temperature. In fact, warm water is better than hot, as hot water dries the skin, leaving more microscopic openings on its surface. In cases where hand washing is not practical, keep hand sanitizer available. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can also contribute to drying of the skin, so be diligent about moisturizing.

Immunizations

Have you had all your shots? The most underimmunized group in America is women aged 30-55. Check with your physician to make sure you are up-to-date on everything from influenza to tetanus.

Fluids and More Fluids

Staying well hydrated clearly benefits our skin, the largest organ of our immune system. The advice to stay adequately hydrated is even more important in the cold, dry months of winter.

Eat Your Vitamins

A balanced diet, which includes all food groups, gives your immune system the resources it needs when it faces a challenge like the flu.

Eight Hours of Sleep

Research continues to prove how vital

this is to every part of our well-being. It affects everything from our ability to resist illness to managing weight.

Hands and Face

It is important to keep your hands away from your face--particularly the eyes, mouth, and nose, which are favorite points of entry for viruses. Start paying attention to how frequently you touch your face. Break the habit, and you could reduce your risk of colds and flu this season by more than 50 percent.

Leslie Roste has degrees in nursing and microbiology and is employed by King Research in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

*The ultimate
source of
happiness is our
mental attitude.*

-Dalai Lama

Welcome to "MESSAGE U."

Today's Subject: OFFICE MESSAGE to say, "Thank you!" during The Holidays

The Holidays are right around the corner. It's time to say "Thank you" to your employees, co-workers or Team for a job well done all year. But how? The Answer: Chair Massage.

Professional and unforgettable, Chair Massage offers companies large and small the opportunity to affordably and efficiently reward their Teams with an experience that makes everyone involved feel better. For Employers it may also be a tax-deductible event and for employees a benefit which enhances camaraderie and productivity.

Note: The preceding information is not medical advice. Please check with your doctor prior to starting any new exercise or nutrition plan - especially if currently under a doctor's care or if you have any pre-existing medical condition(s).

For more information, please visit our website at: www.handnhand.biz.

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