

What Type of Massage is Best for Me?.. cont'd
therapist what modalities he or she is trained in and what might be the most benefit to you. We always want to work within your comfort zone, so if at any time the pressure feels too deep, or any movement causes you discomfort, please let us know immediately.

How Often Should I Receive Massage?

Your massage therapist may suggest a treatment plan based on the issues you want to address, such as the severity of your pain, stiffness, and movement limitations. Some people find that regular weekly appointments are most helpful in managing their symptoms.

If your muscles and joints are extremely tense and stiff, or you are suffering from a lot of stress and anxiety, you may want to schedule twice-weekly visits for a few weeks, and then begin to stretch out the time between visits—but not for too long. Once your muscles feel more relaxed and pliable, we don't want you to fall back into the same old pattern of stress and tension that contribute to your pain and discomfort.

We realize finances are also a consideration; check with your therapist to see if a package plan is available for those who are getting ongoing massage, or if your massage may be covered under insurance. It's worthwhile to speak to your physician about it; even if your plan wouldn't normally pay for massage, it may be covered if your doctor prescribes it as part of your treatment protocol.

A Complement to Medical Care

Massage therapy is a complement to your medical care, not a substitute for it. Parkinson's is a debilitating disease, and though massage can offer great relief for some of the symptoms, it's not a cure, and it's always important to continue following your doctor's prescribed treatment. Once you begin receiving massage therapy, if you notice that your sleep is better, your pain and stiffness are less, or your anxiety level has decreased, please mention it to your physician; it may be that adjustments will be made to your medication based on your improvement.

References:

1. National Parkinson Foundation, www.parkinson.org
2. Frey Law, L.A., Evans, S., Knudtson, J. Nus, S., Scholl, K., Sluka, K.A. (2008). Massage reduces pain perception and hyperalgesia in experimental muscle pain: a randomized, controlled trial. *J Pain*. 9(8), 714-21.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Insufficient sleep is a public health epidemic. 01/13/2014.
4. American Massage Therapy Association, Approved Position Statements. Massage therapy can help improve sleep. 2012.
5. Moyer CA, Rounds J, Hannum JW. A meta-analysis of massage therapy research. *Psychology Bulletin*. 2004 Jan;130(1):3-18.

This brochure is intended for information only. Contact your physician for diagnosis of medical conditions, and for advice on whether massage might be beneficial for you.

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Parkinson's Disease

How Massage Therapy Can Help



**THERAPEUTIC
MASSAGE**
For a Healthier Life

Therapeutic Massage for Parkinson's Patients

Parkinson's Disease is a neurodegenerative brain disorder that develops slowly in most people. Most people's symptoms take years to develop, and many people live for years with the disease. The simple explanation is that the brain stops producing the neurotransmitter dopamine. Less dopamine means less ability to regulate physical, mental, and emotional function. While the disease itself is not fatal, complications resulting from Parkinson's are the 14th biggest cause of death in the US. There is currently no cure, but drugs and different therapies, including massage, can help alleviate symptoms.¹

The Symptoms of Parkinson's

Parkinson's has many symptoms, including tremors and shaking, loss of the ability to smell certain odors, dizziness and fainting, interference with sleep, muscle soreness and joint stiffness, and stooping, to name a few. As with any long-term debilitating condition, there is the added component of stress, anxiety and depression that occurs whenever a serious illness affects your activities of daily living. Research supports massage therapy as a useful intervention for several of the symptoms associated with Parkinson's.

How Massage Therapy Can Help

Musculoskeletal pain and joint stiffness respond well to massage therapy.² Parkinson's occurs most frequently in those over the age of 50, who may already be feeling effects of aging, such as reduced muscle tone and stiffer tendons, and more general aches and pains. Massage can help relieve the muscle spasms and rigidity associated with Parkinson's.

Many people with chronic symptoms find that they can be more physically active and less dependent on pain medication when receiving regular massage. Daily exercise is recommended for those with Parkinson's, and massage can help keep the body flexible in order to facilitate that. According to

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, insufficient sleep is a public epidemic, and persons who have poor sleep are more prone to chronic diseases, increased mortality, and decreased quality of life.³ Those with Parkinson's may suffer from numerous sleep disturbances, including sudden jerky or thrashing movements, frequent waking, and even falling out of bed. Numerous research studies have shown that massage therapy can help improve sleep, resulting in less restlessness during sleep and an increase in longer periods of sleep.⁴

The most impressive body of research to date in massage therapy shows that massage is effective at lessening the symptoms of trait anxiety and depression, with a course of treatments providing benefits similar in magnitude to those of psychotherapy.⁵ The Parkinson's patient and their caregivers are often faced with the emotional, mental, and physical stress of dealing with the disease and the unavoidable upsets that accompany debilitating illness. A single massage has been shown to reduce state anxiety, blood pressure, and heart rate.



What Type of Massage is Best for Me?

There are many different types of massage.

- ♦ **Swedish massage** incorporates long, slow strokes, kneading, friction, vibration, and percussive strokes. Swedish massage is very relaxing and stress-relieving, and can ease tense muscles without going very deep into the tissue.
- ♦ **Deep tissue** techniques may include neuromuscular therapy, myofascial techniques, muscle stripping or other modalities that go deeper into the muscle and connective tissues.
- ♦ **Thai massage** involves assisted yoga-like poses accompanied by deep static and rhythmic pressure. Thai massage is performed with the recipient dressed in loose, comfortable clothing.
- ♦ **Shiatsu massage** is also performed through the clothing, and is the application of acupressure applied with the palms, thumbs, and fingertips. Shiatsu is profoundly relaxing.
- ♦ **Stretching techniques and joint mobilizations**, both active and passive, may be incorporated into your massage. The therapist may have you offer resistance to help build and maintain muscle strength and flexibility.

Many therapists tend to work from an eclectic standpoint, incorporating more than one modality into a session. It's always appropriate to ask the

We're Concerned with Your Concerns

You may be worried about the logistics of getting massage—even wondering about something as simple as whether you'll be able to get on and off the massage table, or whether it's okay to ask the therapist for help in removing your shoes. We're committed to your safety and comfort, and your massage therapist will assist you as needed. Your therapist will talk with you about your health and your goals for massage therapy prior to the treatment, and may want to speak with your physician about your therapy, with your permission. Please feel free to ask any questions and bring up any concerns you may have about receiving massage. Please let your therapist know if you are uncomfortable in any way during the massage.