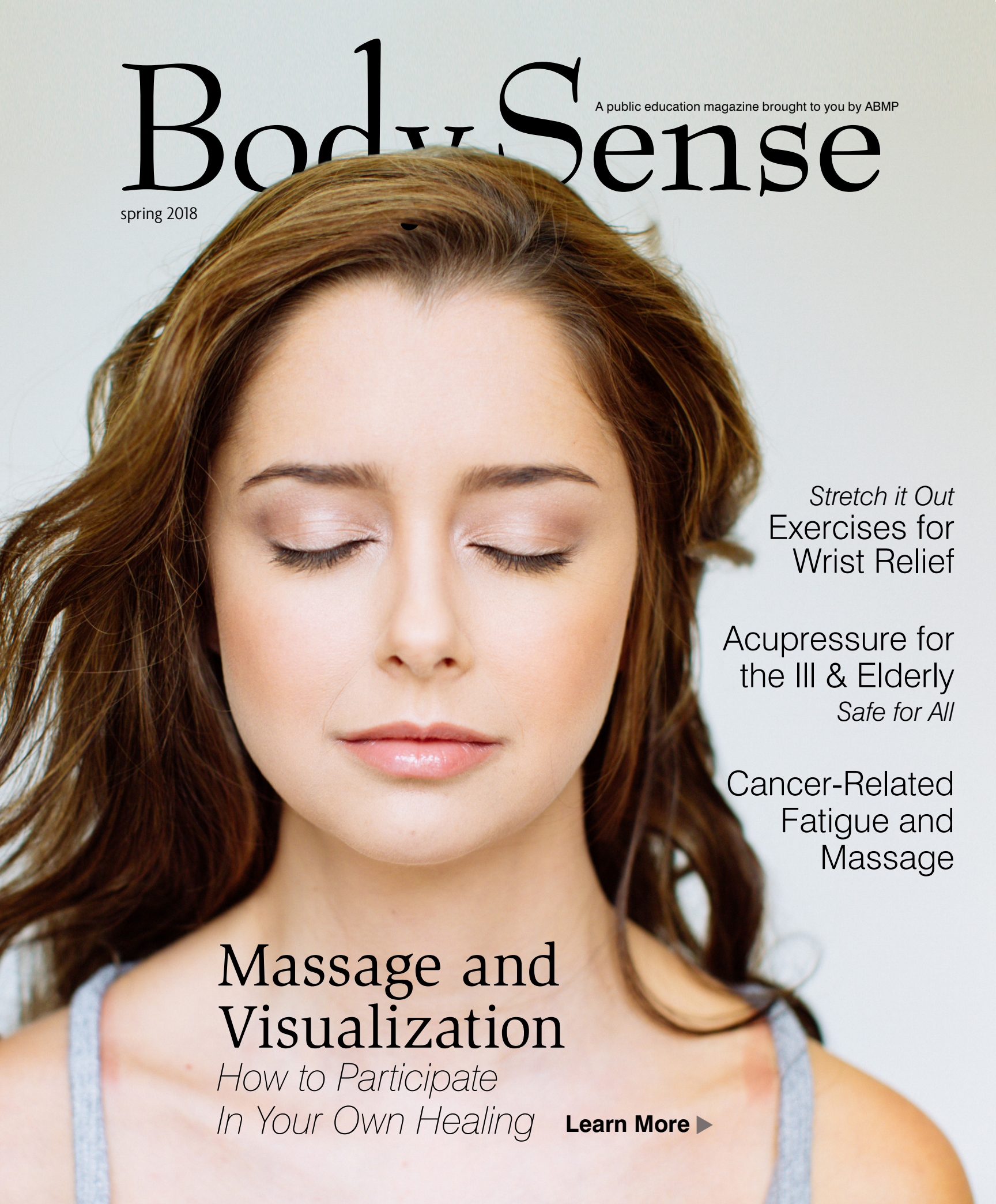
Body Sense

A public education magazine brought to you by ABMP

spring 2018



Stretch it Out
Exercises for Wrist Relief

Acupressure for the Ill & Elderly
Safe for All

Cancer-Related Fatigue and Massage

Massage and Visualization

How to Participate In Your Own Healing

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EDITOR'S NOTE

KARRIE OSBORN, EDITOR
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SPRING INTO SPRING

Body Sense Editor Karrie Osborn

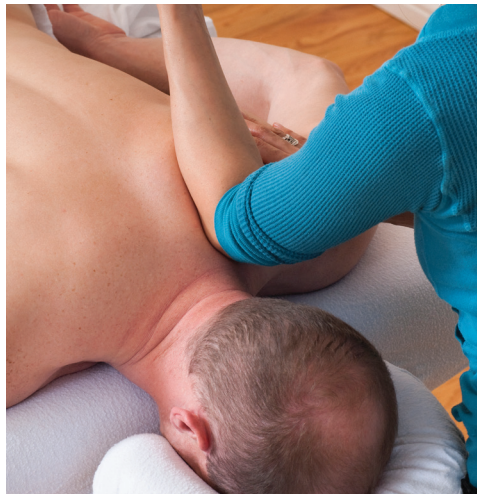
Stuffed closets to purge, basement cobwebs to dust away, dirty decks to sweep.

It's all part of the regimen we tackle this part of the year—the annual spring clean. It is so satisfying to drop those bags of old clothes off for donation, to open a newly organized linen closet, or to smell the sun-kissed scent of freshly washed throw rugs hung out to dry. But, did you know your body needs some seasonal upkeep as well?

This is the time of year to consider a spring clean of your body. Top on that list? Massage and bodywork! Just like throwing out raggedy towels or expired cosmetics, your body needs some help throwing out all that baggage from the seasons previous. Dealt with a little family drama during the holidays? The physical aftereffects of that stress are likely still hanging around, as are the anxiety dust bunnies from that important project at work, or the lingering effects of that tumble you took on the ski slopes over the winter.

In addition to booking some massage appointments, you can facilitate your body's spring clean in other ways as well: clean the cobwebs out of your gut by putting yourself on a healthier fresh-food diet, clean the cobwebs out of your mind with some meditation practice or brain acuity games, or clean the cobwebs out of achy joints and muscles by getting outside for the physical activity your body craves.

Spring is the time for renewal—enjoy it and embrace it. Now, get started by checking your massage therapist's next available opening!



After you have a massage, how likely are you to mention it to other people?

72% of adults age 21–34 who responded to the "National Health Care Survey" in 2017 were very/fairly likely to tell other people about the good work they had received from their massage therapist. Who do you tell? Share your experiences so that others also understand the value of frequent massage!

Body Sense
massage, bodywork & healthy living

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Massage Reduces Cancer-Related Fatigue

A recent study published in the medical journal *Cancer* found that Swedish massage therapy, delivered over the course of six weeks to breast cancer patients, provided a significant reduction in their cancer-related fatigue (CRF). CRF is a persistent, exhausting condition affecting approximately one-third of cancer survivors.

The study, conducted by researchers at Emory University in Atlanta, enrolled 66 female stage 0–III posttreatment breast cancer survivors who had received surgery and radiation and/or chemotherapy/chemoprevention. The participants, who were unfamiliar with massage therapy, were given a weekly 45-minute Swedish massage by licensed massage therapists over the course of six weeks.

The recipients reported they experienced "clinically meaningful" improvement in their CRF as a result of the massage therapy. While still in early-trial phase, this research has significant implications for cancer patients going forward.

For more information, read the full study at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29044466.

BODY SHOP

OLA TROPICAL APOTHECARY

Handmade in Hawaii with locally sourced tropical oils, this luxurious body lotion is light and exotically fragrant. It is formulated to hydrate and absorb quickly to help repair, replenish, and heal skin. Available in five scents: Coconut, Rainforest, Passion Fruit, Pikake, and Plumeria. $29 (8 ounces). www.hawaiianbodyproducts.com.

FARMHOUSE FRESH NIGHT CREAM

Three Milk Ageless Night Cream is rich and intensely hydrating, with a time-release delivery system of pure-form retinol. The slow-release system ensures it delivers softness, illumination, firmness, and more, without the side effects normally associated with pure-form retinol. $45 (1.7 ounces). www.farmhousefreshgoods.com.

CLEAR AWAY ROOM BOOST

Created by ADORAtherapy founder and aromatherapist Adora Winquist, this room spray is an ideal accent to help clear the air and energy in your home. It is derived in the United States from natural, wild-crafted, biodynamic ingredients that are vegan and cruelty-free. $40 (3.38 ounces). www.adoratherapy.com.

Clean Up Your Skin . . . And Your Diet

By Alex Caspero

Being mindful of what you put on your plate is important to your skin's health. Sure, genetics and lifestyle play a part, but your diet is one of the most controllable of the environmental factors that cause skin damage. You can begin to clean up your diet, and your skin, with these three foods.

1. ALMONDS

Loaded with vitamin E and monounsaturated fat, almonds help skin stay supple by keeping cell membranes hydrated.

2. BLUEBERRIES

Rich in antioxidants, this berry helps combat oxidative damage caused by pollution, pesticides, and UV radiation.

3. SPINACH

In addition to being a rich source of antioxidants, spinach also contains folate, which can help reduce skin cancer risk by repairing the DNA in sun-damaged cells.

Now, put them all together for a great spring clean-up smoothie for the body.

Skin Cleanse Smoothie

1 cup unsweetened almond milk
1 cup baby spinach leaves
1 large ripe frozen banana, chopped into large chunks
1 cup frozen blueberries
1 tablespoon almond butter
1 tablespoon chia seeds
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2–3 ice cubes

Place all the ingredients into a high-speed blender and blend until smooth. Serves 2.

The Power of Imagery

How to Incorporate Visual Meditation to Help Physical Healing

By Cindy Williams, LMT

How much do you participate in your own healing? Making that massage appointment was a great step, and sometimes blissing out is exactly the level of healing participation you need in that moment. But sometimes, fully participating in the therapeutic experience can change the outcome.

After 18 years of practicing massage, I'm of the mind-set that in order to receive a complete therapeutic experience, clients must participate in their treatment. One of my favorite ways to include my clients in their healing process is to educate them using imagery—first teaching what is happening inside their body, then giving them a take-home visual meditation to practice daily.

LOOK INSIDE THE BODY

After a severe 35-foot fall when climbing, I participated in the healing process as I recovered from my own injuries. And, while bodywork, nutrition, and exercise all played a significant part in addressing my chronic pain, nothing advanced my healing process like using imagery. First, however, I had to understand how the compromised body part worked when it was healthy.

Even though I had been trained in anatomy and physiology, after my injury, I still pulled out my anatomy books and studied the area that was causing pain. I memorized as much detail as I could from pictures. At the time, I was also seeing a pain-management specialist, so when I was in his office, I studied the chart on the wall detailing the spine (one of my primary concerns was a bulging disk in my lumbar region). I also noticed he had a model of a spine, so I touched the vertebrae so that my mind could absorb the shape of the bones and how the disks lay between them using not just my sense of sight, but also my sense of touch. Engaging as many senses as possible helps embed the information into memory.

I asked the doctor to show me the MRI and explain how the disk bulged, how the nerves came off the spine, and how the muscles stiffened around the injured area. My entire plan was to use this information to envision how my body currently was, and then imagine the area changing and returning back to a healthy state. Even if you aren't seeing a doctor for your pain, your massage therapist can help you learn about what is going on inside your body.

Below are three steps for using images and visual meditation to support the unwinding of dysfunctional patterns in your body.

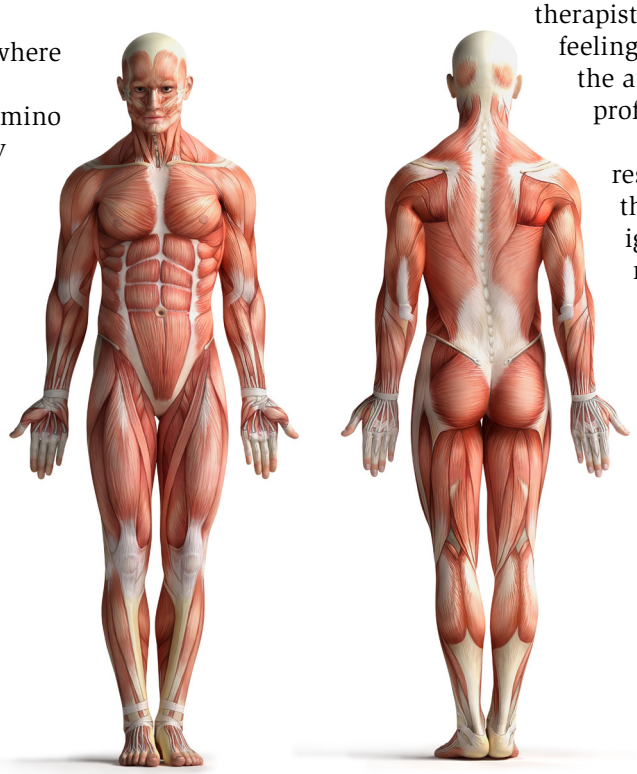
STEP ONE: 1

Ask your massage therapist to show you pictures of the bones and muscles in your area of concern and explain how they work.

REQUEST A LESSON IN "BIG PICTURE" ANATOMY

You can easily tell your therapist where it hurts, but you don't necessarily understand why it hurts, or the domino effect one area can have on nearby and distant structures. When you see an image of the muscles that are present at your reported area of pain and are offered context for how the area functions with nearby muscles, you can tune in and support healthy function.

Your massage therapist might use online programs such as Primal Pictures, textbooks with clear and colored pictures, muscle charts, and trigger-point charts to educate you. They might even have skeleton, spine, or joint models you can touch and feel.



STEP TWO: 2

Ask your massage therapist to help you touch and engage the area you are learning about while holding the image of it in your mind.

SEE IT, TOUCH IT, MOVE IT

Now that you have a big picture in mind, touch the muscles you are seeing on your own body.

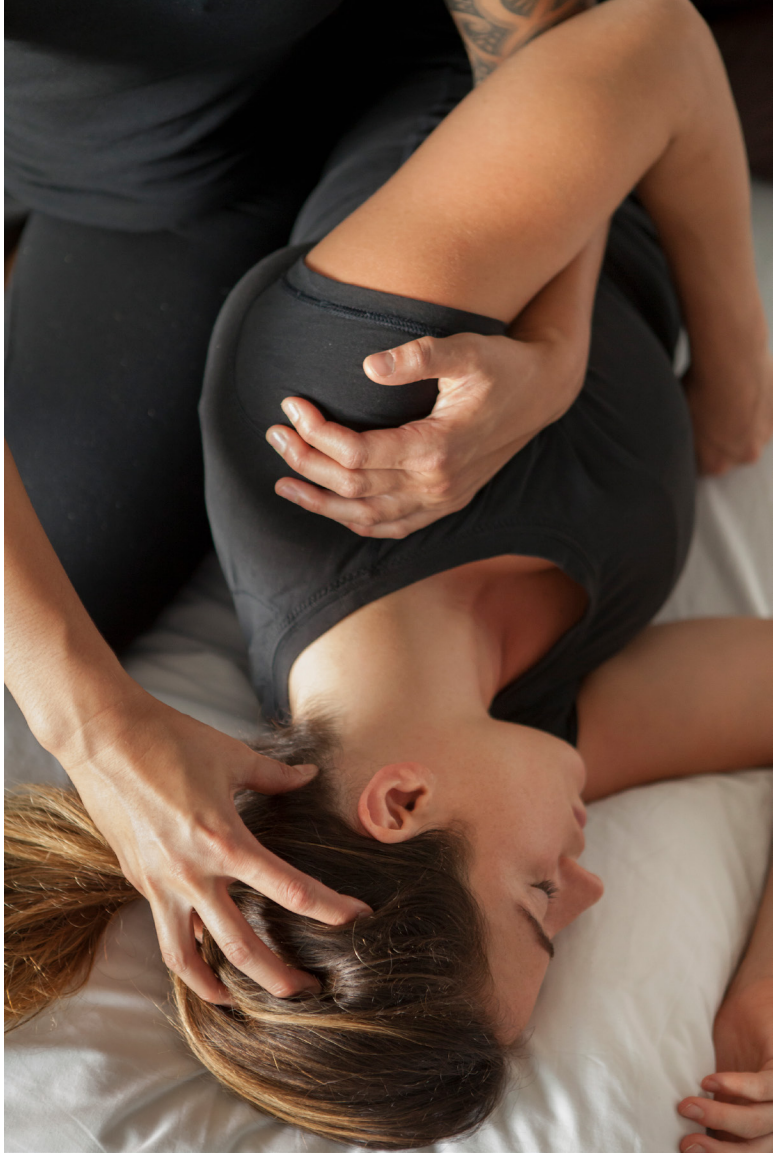
For example, if you touch your pectoralis minor muscle with a picture of it in mind, the brain will direct a signal down the neural pathway to the pectoralis minor. Just this simple amount of attention can begin altering how it functions and promote the healing process.

Next, have your massage therapist assist you in moving within the range of motion of the joint that the muscles are acting upon. Or, you could simply contract and relax a specific muscle, or group of muscles, that work together with your massage therapist's guidance. Seeing, feeling, and now moving the area will create profound effects.

Commonly, pain resides in an area that is otherwise ignored, thus the reason for pain. Pain is the body's SOS signal. Yet, far too often the call for help is ignored. Giving attention and directing the senses to an area of pain causes a near-immediate reduction in its intensity.

STEP THREE:

Practice visualizing and moving the structures you have learned, imagining the desired outcome, for 10–20 minutes per day. Keep a short daily log of any changes you experience so you can chart your progress and stay inspired.



BRING IT HOME

Few changes last without consistent practice. Commit to 10–20 minutes a day focusing on visualizing and feeling the movement pattern that is causing pain, and it will undoubtedly result in improvement. Your massage therapist can email pictures to you so you can look at them before each visual meditation and remember what to focus on.

Athletes have used visualization techniques to improve athletic performance with great success for a long time. Studies in brain patterns tell us the same patterns that activate while performing a physical activity are activated when simply envisioning the activity and not actually performing it.

From personal experience, I can say that combining images of anatomical structures with a visualization practice devised to alter those structures (such as softening a muscle, releasing a trigger point, or improving blood and lymphatic flow to an undernourished area) can be nothing short of miraculous for the healing process. Many of my clients have engaged in this process with amazing results as well.

DOES IT REALLY WORK?

Does understanding how the compromised parts of your body are structured and function help you to heal them? I absolutely believe it does. Is a massage therapist's educated work alone enough to cause lasting results? Perhaps in a few cases, yes. But, in most cases, each individual who finds their way to a massage table carries more power to heal themselves than the therapist. Knowing this extends your therapist's role from practitioner to educator.

I invite you to open yourself to this knowledge by asking your massage therapist to teach you about the parts of your body that hurt: showing you pictures, charts, and models, and explaining simply how that part of you is designed to move. In this way, you will increase your body awareness and your healing power.

Cindy Williams has served the massage profession as a practitioner, school administrator, instructor, curriculum developer, and mentor since 2000. She enjoys the challenge of blending structure with creative flow to provide balance in her classroom, bodywork practice, and life.

Comfort Touch

Acupressure for the Ill, Elderly, or Anyone Needing a Caring Touch

by Mary Kathleen Rose

Hazel never remembered my name. She often seemed confused about why I had come to her home, but once I began the hands-on bodywork session, she responded to my touch as if it were familiar. Hazel was 90 years old when her daughter first contacted me, hoping that massage could alleviate the chronic pain her mother experienced as a result of an injury and subsequent surgery to her hip.

I visited Hazel regularly in her home to give her massage. Usually, I worked with her lying face-up in her bed, making ample use of pillows to help her get comfortable. Sometimes she sat back in her reclining chair, and I pulled up a stool beside her to sit on as I worked.

I felt her sense of trust, as she smiled faintly and closed her watery blue eyes. I noticed the steady quality of her breath as she relaxed, letting go of the tension in her body.

When I saw Hazel, I used the nurturing acupressure techniques I developed while working with hospice patients and other elderly clients in my practice years earlier. This approach has come to be called Comfort Touch—a safe, appropriate, and effective form of bodywork for use with special populations, including the elderly and the acute and chronically ill, both in medical settings and home care.

SAFE FOR ALL

Comfort Touch is a nurturing form of acupressure that promotes deep relaxation and relief from pain. For many people with compromised health, conventional massage (with gliding and kneading strokes) can cause discomfort or even injury. Fortunately, for those people with conditions such as arthritis, lymphedema, neuropathy, and fibromyalgia, Comfort Touch is not only safe, but its broad, encompassing compression is very calming to the nervous system.

Comfort Touch is appropriate for people of all ages, including infants and children, pregnant women, and people coping with a diverse range of physical and mental challenges. It is beneficial to those in the last stages of life, patients coping with dementia, and those struggling with severe, life-limiting illness.

The techniques of Comfort Touch follow six guiding principles that can be summarized by the acronym SCRIBE. Simply stated, the practitioner learns to *Slow* down to connect with the client, maintaining a clear intention to offer *Comfort*, with an attitude that is *Respectful* of the person being touched. Direct pressure is applied *Into the Center* of the part of the body being touched, with *Broad*, *Encompassing* contact. While there is an apparent simplicity to this work, the practitioner will discover deeper layers of intricacy as they respond to the individual needs of each client.

Because techniques are based on compression, oil is not used and the client can be fully clothed. This makes the work highly adaptable. In addition to being on a massage table, it is possible for the Comfort Touch recipient to be in a regular bed, hospital bed, recliner, or wheelchair.

Practitioners of Comfort Touch are trained in specific techniques that take advantage of the relationship of tonic acupressure points in the body to the specific anatomy of the muscles. Primarily, these therapists apply broad compression to the bellies of the muscles, making the work soothing and noninvasive—never painful or uncomfortable.

THE POWER OF TOUCH

Throughout my years of practice, I have been inspired by the resilient spirit I have observed with the many people who have received Comfort Touch. I have come to know that even if someone is challenged by acute or chronic illness or injury, it is possible for them to enjoy the physical and emotional benefits of touch. Relaxing and reassuring to both the body and the mind, well-intentioned and comforting touch can make a big difference in the quality of one's sense of well-being.

Sometimes, when I visited Hazel, she would drift in and out of sleep during her Comfort Touch session. Other times she recalled stories or sang songs from her childhood. When touching her, I could feel a quality in her body's tissues that spoke to me of her many years of hard work on the family farm. Even as I comforted her with soothing touch, I could appreciate the love and care she had provided for so many others in her long and full life.

She seldom commented on the therapy itself, but one day as I held her hand to massage it, she said, "That sure does feel good. Why, I believe I could play the piano."

I looked at her a little surprised, and replied, "Hazel, I didn't know you played the piano."

She laughed. "Oh, I never could before!"

Mary Kathleen Rose, BA, LMT, is internationally known for her work in the development of touch as a complementary therapy in medical settings. She is the author of the textbook Comfort Touch: Massage for the Elderly & the Ill *and* Comfort Touch of the Hands & Feet: A Guide for Family Caregivers. *For more information, visit www.facebook.com/ComfortTouchNurturingAcupressure.*

If you are interested in trying this style of bodywork, or know someone who could benefit from the gentle, nurturing nature of Comfort Touch, ask your massage therapist about their training and experience. You can also check on www.massagetherapy.com to find a therapist who lists Comfort Touch as a modality they practice. For more information, visit www.comforttouch.com.

Wrist Relief

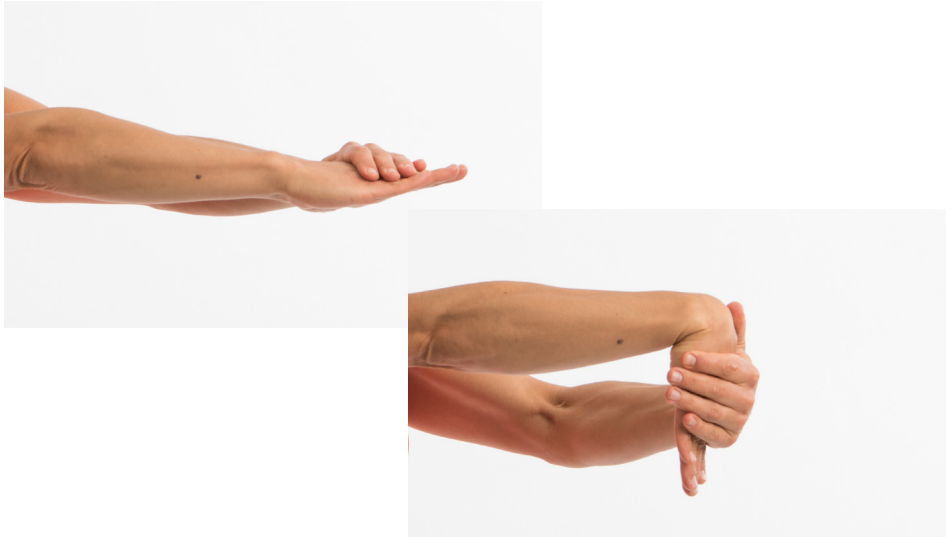
Oh, those aching wrists. A long day on the computer, repetitive movements in your job, and inflammation from pregnancy or weight gain can make your wrists and forearms scream in pain. Here are a few simple Active Isolated Stretches (based on the principle of short, repeated movements) to help ease the hurt.

WRIST EXTENSION

Begin with your arm fully outstretched in front of you and your hand palm-side up. With your opposite hand, grasp your outstretched fingers and hand, and gently pull down toward the floor, extending your wrist. Hold for 1–2 seconds, release, and repeat. The movement should be slow, gentle, and rhythmical.

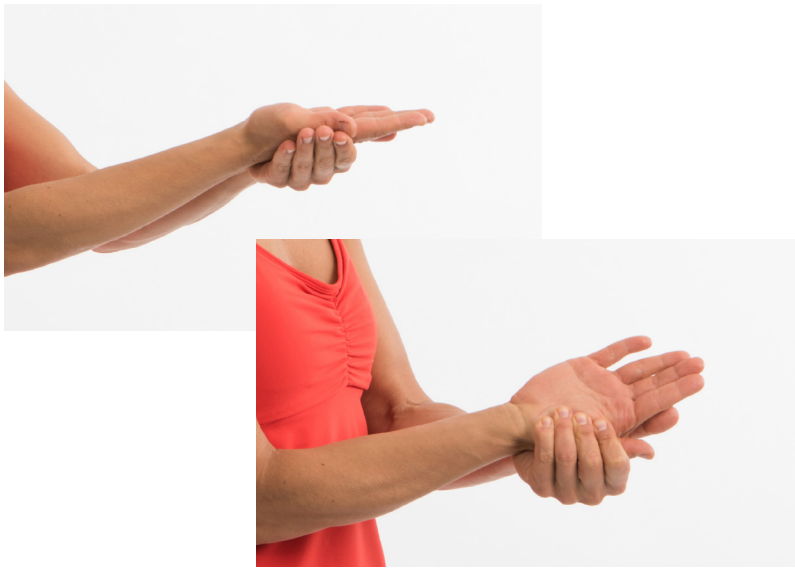
WRIST FLEXION

Fully stretch your arm in front of you, elbow straight, and hand extended, palm-side down. With your opposite hand, grasp your outstretched fingers and back of the hand to gently pull them down toward the floor, flexing your wrist. Hold for 1–2 seconds, release, and repeat. The movement should be slow, gentle, and rhythmical.



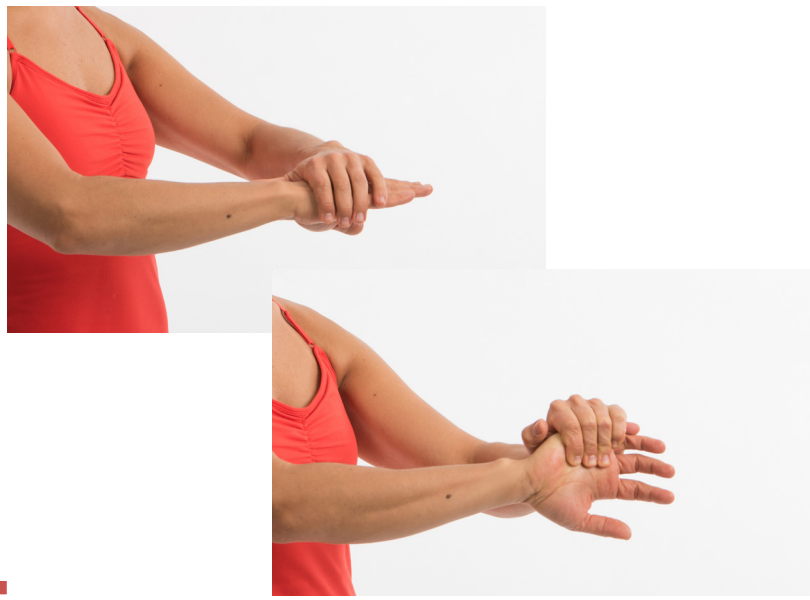
WRIST SUPINATION

With the arm bent at a 90-degree angle, and your hand extended palm-up in front of you, use your opposite hand to grasp the outer (thumb-side) edge of your hand from underneath. Gently rotate the hand away from you to stretch the tissues. Hold for 1–2 seconds, release, repeat. Slow and deliberate movements are necessary here.



WRIST PRONATION

With the arm bent at a 90-degree angle, and your hand extended palm-down in front of you, use your opposite hand to grasp the outer (pinky-side) edge of your hand. Gently rotate the hand toward you to stretch the tissues. Hold for 1–2 seconds, release, repeat. Make your movements slow and deliberate and change your active hand's positioning to find the best stretch.



Did You Know? Hot and Cold Care

Heat can loosen hand stiffness and cold is great for hand pain that is the result of activity or overuse. From submerging your hands in a bowl of uncooked heated rice to holding small, freezable gel pads, find the remedy that works best for your pain and use it!

It's Simply a Bad Idea

Tanning Bed Use Continues to Persist Despite Warnings

By Karrie Osborn

With spring break travels upon us, many teens and young adults are flocking to the tanning bed salon for some "color" before heading off on their beach vacations. But did you know that doing so can increase your risk of skin cancer by nearly 60 percent?

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, everyone who climbs into an indoor tanning bed faces an increased risk of skin cancer. But that tanning habit can have even more dire consequences for young people. Research shows that using indoor tanning beds before age 35 can increase your risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, by 59 percent, and this risk increases with each use.[1]

One significant issue of concern is that 45 percent of those who start tanning before age 16 do so with a family member.[2] And recent studies found that fathers, parents who had used indoor tanning devices themselves, and those who reported they had never received skin cancer prevention counseling from their child's doctor were less likely to believe adolescent indoor tanning was harmful.

"While it's not surprising that parents who have tanned themselves would have favorable attitudes toward their children's indoor tanning, it's important for all parents to understand the dangers of tanning at a young age and communicate those dangers to their children," says board-certified dermatologist Maryam Asgari, MD, MPH, FAAD, an associate professor in the department of dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital and the department of population medicine at Harvard Medical School in Boston.

"If you avoid tanning beds, especially when you're young, you can reduce your risk of skin cancer and early skin aging in the future," Asgari says.

Notes

1. The International Agency for Research on Cancer, "The Association of Use of Sunbeds with Cutaneous Malignant Melanoma and Other Skin Cancers: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Cancer* 120 (March 1, 2007); M. Boniol et al., "Cutaneous Melanoma Attributable to Sunbed Use: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis," *British Medical Journal* 345 (July 24, 2012): e4757; D. Lazovich et al., "Indoor Tanning and Risk of Melanoma: A Case-Control Study in a Highly Exposed Population," *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers Prevention* 19, no. 6 (June 2010): 1,557–68.
2. M. Watson, M. Shoemaker, and K. Baker, "Indoor Tanning Initiation Among Tanners in the United States," *JAMA Dermatology* (March 22, 2017). https://doi.org/10.1001/jamadermatol.2016.5898.

ASK THE EXPERTS

Q&A

"My father was in a recent auto accident and has whiplash. Can massage benefit him, and will insurance pay for it?"

Kristin Coverly, LMT, is a massage therapist and educator for Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals.

Yes, massage and soft-tissue therapy can often help with this typically complex injury. Seek a massage therapist who has specific training in whiplash techniques and consult with them on an appropriate treatment plan. Unfortunately, there's not a universal answer regarding insurance. Whether massage therapy is covered in an insurance policy varies from state to state depending on Personal Injury Protection (PIP) laws and the individual's health and auto insurance policies. While I hope massage is covered by insurance in your father's situation, the benefit of bodywork for his recovery is worth the out-of-pocket expense if it's not included. Best wishes for his recovery!

"I see so many labels on cosmetic products these days touting themselves as *natural*, *preservative-free*, *organic*. The latest is *chemical-free*. What does that mean exactly?"

There is no such thing as "chemical-free." Everything in the universe is made of chemicals, including the human body, which contains many chemical elements: carbon, nitrogen, sulfur, sodium, phosphorus, and even chlorine. Every human body function is possible because of biochemical reactions. Plants are no different. They grow and reproduce and have benefits to the skin because they are complexes of many chemical components. So, using the term *chemical-free* is not only wrong, it also shows an ignorance of science.

Mark Lees, PhD, MS, CIDESCO, is a skin care educator, product developer, therapist, and author.

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