

EFFECTS OF MASSAGE

Massage can stimulate and relax the body and the mind. The skin, blood and lymphatic systems are all stimulated, which boosts circulation, aids cellular renewal and removes toxic wastes. As tense muscles relax, stiff joints loosen and nerves are soothed, an all-over feeling of relaxation and well being comes about.

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

The nervous system is a highly complex network, which relays messages from the brain to the rest of the body. The part of the nervous system, which regulates many physiological functions, leaves the brain at the base of the skull and runs down the spinal cord, protected by the spine's bony vertebra. Millions of nerve endings run throughout the body, controlling much of the way it functions. Depending on the depth of the massage movements used, the nerve endings can be stimulated and smoothed.

THE SKIN

With massage comes an increase in blood circulation, this helps exfoliation of superficial dead skin cells, tones the skin and encourages its renewal process. Massage helps maintain the collagen fibres, which give skin its elasticity and strength, and keeps wrinkles at bay. The activity of the sebaceous and sweat glands, which lubricate and moisturise the skin, is regulated.

MUSCLES

With the increase in blood flow, the blood's vital nutrients circulate more efficiently. Massage is popular with sports men and women because it can improve muscle tone, restore mobility, and ensure the elimination of waste products after exercise. With regular massage, strains and sprains heal more rapidly, while calf cramps and stiff muscles can become a thing of the past. Massage before an exercise session will help loosen and warm up the muscles, or afterwards it will ease sore aching limbs.

DIGESTION

Massage mobilises the digestive system so that the processes of assimilation and elimination are improved, helping problems like constipation and flatulence. The digestive system is quick to respond to stress and the reduction of anxiety and tension, which comes with regular massage, has a regulating effect on the digestion.

THE BACK

The shoulder is one of the first places in which most people experience tension. The shoulder are designed for flexibility and to provide the widest range of movement, however sitting for long period of time, or poor posture can lead to the shoulders becoming stiff and losing their flexibility. When this occurs it has immediate effect on the body by restricting the thoracic area and so affecting the breathing. It can also slow down the circulation, creating headaches and poor digestion and generally throwing the body out of balance. Massaging this area has many beneficial effects.

CIRCULATION AND LYMPHATIC SYSTEMS

By dilating the blood vessels, massage increases the blood circulation. A good circulatory system means that an efficient supply of the blood's constituents, including oxygen and nutrients, reaches the billions of individual cells. This is vital for the healthy functioning of the whole body, from the muscles to the internal organs such as the kidneys and liver.

At the same time, the increase in blood circulation helps accelerate the lymphatic system, which absorbs and eliminates waste substances. Unlike the blood circulation, which has the heart to pump it round, the lymphatic system has no pump of its own and is dependent on muscular action for its efficiency. Massage is a very important means of speeding up the flow of the lymph, encouraging a more effective filtering and elimination of waste throughout the body. An efficient lymphatic system provides the body with a strong immune system to fight against infections and disease.

THE NECK

The neck is a strong complex region containing an elaborate lattice of muscles and vertebrae, which allows the head to move in variety of directions. In its normal state, the head is designed to balance perfectly upon the neck without imposing any strain.

However, the majority of us tend to stick our necks out when we are talking whilst working on the computer, watching television etc and this throws the head out alignment and results in the neck muscles having to tense up to take the weight tremendous tightness congestion reducing neck mobility and often resulting in headaches and eyestrain. In addition as the neck becomes more stiff and tense, it has a knock on effect on the shoulder. Massaging this area can help reduce tension and increase mobility, which then allows the head to move more freely.

THE SCALP

The head more than any other part of the body represents who you are. It is the centre of your nervous centre and inside it is located all the main senses, which gather information. Thin layer of muscle which, tightens when we are tense, resulting in headaches and feelings of anxiety covers the skull. If your head feels good you feel good. By relaxing the head with a massage, blood flow will improve energies will be rebalanced and a feeling of well - being will be achieved.

THE FACE

The face is part of the body that is most on display. It is the first place in the body where stress appears and can cause the scalp, eyes, jaw and mouth regions to tighten, which can result in ailments such as headaches, hair loss, eyestrain, neck and shoulder problems. Our facial muscles are subject to continual stress and tension our faces begin to lose their flexibility of expression and start to solidify into a mask.

When we are feeling troubled or making an effort to concentrate, our forehead and temples become tense and congested. If the temples become tight, this constricts the flow of blood and can not only lead to headaches and eyestrain, but can lead to hair turning grey around the temples as the hair roots are starved of nutrients.

Massage to the face will improve the blood and lymph flow to and from these areas, so eliminating any problems.

THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

The endocrine system is a group of glands throughout the body that control how fast a person grows and makes energy. To do this, the endocrine glands make chemical messengers called hormones. Some of these chemicals work throughout the body some work only in the one place. Where they work is determined by which cells have sites that the hormones can lock into.

The endocrine glands are called ductless because they do not store up large amounts of hormones, pouring them all out at once. Instead they release the chemicals directly into the blood stream drop by drop as soon as they are made. This kind of production helps the body function smoothly and steadily. Since the glands do not make hormones constantly, it is easy for them to make a little more or a little less, depending on what is needed. A special centre in the brain called the hypothalamus constantly measures hormone levels and directs these small adjustments.

The pituitary gland in the brain is called the master gland because its hormones actually control the production of the other glands. The front of the pituitary affects overall growth, plus the thyroid, adrenals, testes, ovaries and the production of milk after childbirth. The back of the pituitary makes one hormone that controls how much water the kidneys save and another that causes contraction of the uterus during childbirth.

The thyroid gland, which is located in the throat, makes the hormone that controls energy production and children's growth rate. Around the thyroid are four small glands called the parathyroids. Their hormone controls how much calcium is in the blood to help nerves and muscles work.