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american massage therapy association™

# Massage Therapy Research Roundup

A growing body of evidence shows that massage therapy can be effective for a variety of health conditions. Massage is rapidly becoming recognized as an important part of health and wellness, and research is indicating some of what takes place in the body during massage therapy.

**Here are some recent findings on the benefits of massage therapy for health and medical reasons, compiled by the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA).**

## Massage Therapy for Pain of Osteoarthritis of the Knee

Research supported by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) showed that sixty minute sessions of Swedish massage once a week for those with osteoarthritis of the knee significantly reduced their pain. Each massage therapy session followed a specific massage protocol. This is the latest published research study indicating the benefits of massage therapy for those with osteoarthritis of the knee.

Perlman AI, Ali A, Njike VY, et al. Massage therapy for osteoarthritis of the knee: a randomized dose-finding trial. PLoS One. 2012; 7(2):e30248.

## Massage Therapy for Inflammation after Exercise

Research through the Buck Institute for Research on Aging and McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario indicates that massage therapy reduces inflammation of skeletal muscle acutely damaged through exercise. The study provides evidence for the benefits of massage therapy for those with musculoskeletal injuries and potentially for those with inflammatory disease, according to the lead author of the research.

J. D. Crane, D. I. Ogborn, C. Cupido, S. Melov, A. Hubbard, J. M. Bourgeois, M. A. Tarnopolsky, Massage Therapy Attenuates Inflammatory Signaling After Exercise-Induced Muscle Damage. Sci. Transl. Med. 4, 119ra13 (2012).

## Massage Therapy for Chronic Low Back Pain

Research released in July 2011 expanded on previous studies demonstrating the effectiveness of massage therapy for chronic low back pain. Researchers found that “patients receiving massage were twice as likely as those receiving usual care to report significant improvements in both their pain and function”. The study was conducted over 10 weeks through Group Health Research Institute.

Cherkin DC, Sherman KJ, Kahn J, Wellman R, Cook AJ, Johnson E, Erro J, Delaney K, Deyo RA. A comparison of the effects of 2 types of massage and usual care on chronic low back pain: a randomized, controlled trial. Ann Intern Med. 2011 Jul 5;155(1):1-9.

## Massage Therapy for Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a chronic syndrome characterized by generalized pain, joint rigidity, intense fatigue, sleep alterations, headache, spastic colon, craniomandibular dysfunction, anxiety, and depression. This study demonstrated that massage-myofascial release techniques improved pain and quality of life in patients with fibromyalgia.

Castro-Sánchez, A.M., Matarán-Peñarrocha, G.A., Granero-Molina, J., Aguilera-Manrique, G., Quesada-Rubio, J.M., Moreno-Lorenzo, C. (2011). Benefits of massage-myofascial release therapy on pain, anxiety, quality of sleep, depression, and quality of life in patients with fibromyalgia. Evid Based Complement Alternat Med. 2011:561753.

## How to Find a Professional Massage Therapist

Finding a professional massage therapist is vital to a positive massage experience. AMTA massage therapists have demonstrated a level of ability through education and/or testing, adhere to a code of ethics and must meet continuing education requirements. AMTA offers a free professional massage therapist locator service at [findamassagetherapist.org](http://findamassagetherapist.org).

## About AMTA

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) is a professional association of more than 56,000 members. AMTA provides information about massage therapy to the public and works to improve the professional climate for massage therapists. The association also helps consumers and healthcare professionals locate professional massage therapists nationwide, through AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist® free national locator service available at [findamassagetherapist.org](http://findamassagetherapist.org).