



Staying in Touch®

Body & Sole

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December 2010

Holiday Greetings!

It's about time to wrap up all the holiday preparations and settle down for some holiday rest and relaxation.

One of the best things about this holiday season is making time to reconnect with friends and family and to reflect on what gives our lives special meaning. Enjoy all those memorable moments.

This month's newsletter has a few recent reports on health studies you should find interesting. Day-to-day living leaves little time to consider how our lifestyle choices can affect our future health and happiness. These articles can remind us all to make our health a priority.

It also serves as a valuable reminder that massage is one of the best ways to support your health and well-being. Be sure to schedule your next massage before too long; you know it will make you feel better!

If you're still doing some holiday shopping, remember that massage gift certificates make wonderful gifts for those special people in your life.

Make the most of your holiday visits; see you soon!

For Good Health, Sleep on It

Sleep is essential to good health, and massage has been found to reduce insomnia. ... New research shows that people who sleep poorly or do not get enough sleep have higher levels of inflammation.

Internal inflammation contributes to many maladies, including stroke and heart disease.

The results come from surveying 525 middle-aged people participating in the Morehouse-Emory Partnership to Eliminate Cardiovascular Health Disparities (META-Health) study on sleep quality and sleep duration.

Researchers from Emory University School of Medicine and Morehouse School of Medicine found acute sleep deprivation leads to an increased production of inflammatory hormones and changes in blood vessel function, but say that more

research is needed on the physiological effects of chronic lack of sleep.

Individuals who reported six or fewer hours of sleep had higher levels of three inflam-

matory markers: fibrinogen, IL-6 and C-reactive protein, according to an Emory University press release. C-reactive protein is used extensively as a marker of inflammation and heart disease risk.

Previous research has shown that people who sleep between seven and eight hours per

night live longest, and that especially short or especially long sleep durations bring higher mortality, the press release noted; and researchers find that short and long sleep durations are often seen together with high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and psychological stress, all risk factors for heart disease and stroke.



New Report Reflects High Stress Levels in Americans Young and Old

When it comes to scheduling a massage therapy appointment, stress is a main motivator. A recent report shows that Americans are stressed to the point that psychologists involved in creating the report fear stress may become a public health crisis.

Findings from the American Psychological Association's (APA) 2010 Stress in America survey signal an alarm about the long-term impact chronic stress could have on physical and emotional health, and the health of families as well, psychologists said in an APA press release.

"America is at a critical crossroads when it comes to stress and our health," said psychologist Norman B. Anderson, Ph.D., APA's chief executive officer and executive vice president. "Stress is hurting our physical and emotional health and contributing to some of the leading causes of death in this country."

The survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive in August. It shows that Americans appear to be caught in a cycle where they manage stress in unhealthy ways and lack the willpower and time to make healthy lifestyle or behavioral changes, the press See "[High Stress Levels ...](#)" continued on back page

Walking off the common cold

A mile or two a day may well keep the doctor away, says *LiveScience.com*. Researchers at Appalachian State University in North Carolina monitored the health of 1,000 people, ages 18 to 85, for three months in the fall and winter, and quizzed them on their health and fitness habits. The people with the fewest and least-severe colds, it turned out, were those who exercised five or more times a week: Their cold symptoms ended 43 percent to 46 percent sooner than those in people who worked out once a week or not at all, and the symptoms themselves felt 41 percent less severe. "We looked at diet, we looked at mental stress, weight, education levels, gender, on and on," says study author David Nieman. "The most powerful weapon someone has during cold season is to go out, on a near-daily basis, and put in at least a 30-minute brisk walk." More frequent exercise gets immune cells circulating and appears to put them on alert. —*The Week Vol 10 Iss 490*

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Remember: Massage also helps to boost your immune system!

High Stress Levels ... *(continued from front page)*

release noted. Children as young as 8 years old are reporting physical and emotional health consequences often associated with stress. ...

"All of us, including the medical community, need to take stress seriously since stress could easily become our next public health crisis," said Anderson.

Among the results:

- One-third (32 percent) of parents report that their stress levels are extreme. (A level of 8 to 10 on a 10-point scale.)

- Parents overall say they are living with stress levels that exceed their definition of healthy. (Parents report an average stress level of 6.1 on a 10-point scale while the average healthy level of stress reported by parents is a 3.9.)

- While many people feel it's important to manage their stress (69 percent say managing stress is extremely or very important), few are being successful in their efforts (only 32 percent believe they are doing an excellent or very good job of managing their stress).

Source: massagemag.com

Looking for a gift that will put a smile on their faces? How about a massage gift certificate?

Nothing offers a greater reward than the gift of health and well-being.

Holiday shopping made easy — Call today!

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The words that enlighten the soul are more precious than jewels.

—Hazrat Inayat Khan

The content of this newsletter is not intended to replace professional medical advice. If you're ill, please consult a physician.

December Gift Certificate Specials

**3 – one hour massages \$105 (Save \$30)
(Must be used by the same person)**

One hour massage \$40 (Save \$5)

Reflexology \$25 (Save \$5)



Share this newsletter with a friend!



Even One Massage Session Produces Measurable Benefits, Research Shows

Most massage clients will attest that the more massage they receive, the better they feel and function. New research shows that even one massage-therapy session "produces measurable biologic effects" and may have implications for managing autoimmune and inflammatory conditions.

Researchers from ... Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California, set out to determine the effects of a single session of Swedish massage on neuroendocrine and immune function.

"Massage therapy is a multi-billion dollar industry in the United States with 8.7 percent of adults receiving at least one massage within the last year; yet, little is known about the physiologic effects of a single session of massage in healthy individuals," the study's abstract noted.

One group of people received a 45-minute Swedish massage session while a control group received a light-touch control condition. Both groups comprised medically and psychiatrically healthy adults, 18-45 years old.

The researchers hypothesized that the massage session would enhance immune function, according to the report published on www.pubmed.gov.

The results showed that compared to light touch, Swedish massage "caused a large effect size decrease in arginine-vasopressin [*a hormone that plays a key role in homeostasis, and the regulation of water, glucose, and salts in the blood*], and a small effect size decrease in cortisol [*a hormone released in response to stress*]. Massage increased the number of circulating lymphocytes [*a type of white blood cell in the immune system*] ..."

The researchers noted, "preliminary data suggest that a single session of Swedish massage therapy produces measurable biologic effects. If replicated, these findings may have implications for managing inflammatory and autoimmune conditions."

"A Preliminary Study of the Effects of a Single Session of Swedish Massage on Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal and Immune Function in Normal Individuals" is running in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. Source: www.massagemag.com



Relaxation During the Holidays

Do your feet and legs ache at times from day to day, perhaps from working on concrete floors, climbing ladders or step stools decorating for the holidays, or just from normal daily activities? During the holiday shopping season they can bother you even more since you may increase the stress to them. Let's remember our shoulders can get tense from carrying extra packages during this season too. Try the following helpful exercises now and throughout the year to relieve the discomfort you experience. You'll feel so much better.

Self-Care Feet and Calf Exercises:

Excerpt from *Massage Today*, Sept. 2010 P. 8, "What About My Feet?" by Sharon Puszko

The Drunk Flamingo:

Standing on stable ground, balance on one foot with your eyes open. Once you can do that for one minute, try it with your eyes closed. Master that and then move to an unstable surface such as: a mini-trampoline, foam block, wobble board or Bosu trainer.

Toe Tug:

Loop one end of an exercise band around a sturdy table leg or bedpost. Sit with your legs straight in front of you, and loop the other end around the top part of one foot. The band should be anchored straight in front of you and be taut, and it should be taut when your foot is pointed away from you. Pull your toes toward you, keeping your leg straight. Go as far as your ankle will let you. Release slowly, returning to the starting position. Do two sets of 20 cm each leg.

Bone-knee Wall Stretch:

Runners often forget to stretch the soleus – a muscle deep in the calf that attaches to the Achilles. Doing a calf stretch with a straight leg hits the gastrocnemius, but that's only half the battle," Schneider says. Here's how to target the soleus: Stand with your palms against a wall, one leg forward, and one leg back. Lower into a "seated" position with legs bent. Lean into the wall until you feel it in your back calf. Hold 30 to 45 seconds then switch legs.

Negative Calf Raises:

Stand on a step with your toes on the edge and your heels hanging off. Push up with both feet into a calf raise. Lift one leg off the step, and lower your other leg so that your heel drops below the step. Take at least 10 seconds to lower it all the way down – that's the eccentric part of the move and has been shown to help prevent Achilles tendinitis.

Plantar Stretch:

Sit down barefoot and cross your right leg so that your ankle rests on your left thigh. Hold your toes and bend them back toward your shin, stretching plantar fascia. A study showed that people suffering from plantar fasciitis had a 77 percent chance of returning to full activity within three to six months after performing this stretch. Researchers suggest that you do the stretch 10 times at least three times a day (once or twice a day doesn't produce as strong of an effect).

Self-Care Shoulder Exercises: Lewis Circles

These exercises were devised by Paul Lewis, RMT, BA, and Fitness Instructor. They are good to be done prior to or after physical activity for most people. When working on a computer for extended periods of time, lifting patients, etc., these exercises loosen stiff shoulders.

Standing up, place fingertips on top of your shoulders. Bring elbows to front which rounds the back and lengthens muscles between the shoulder blades. Lift your elbows straight up, then to the sides opening the chest area which lengthens the pectoralis muscles, now back down to your sides and to the front. Bring your chin to your chest, lift up and out.

Bring elbows as close to your ears as you can. Breathe in as you bring your elbows up, exhale as you lower them to your sides again. Now add the legs, bend knees, chin to chest, and rise up on your toes and down.

Reverse direction, inhaling and exhaling with each circle. Do 3 or 4 times in each direction.

Now you should be more relaxed for the holiday season and can experience less muscle tension between massage appointments.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

Judy

