

Massage for Arthritis

Experts predict that one-third of Americans will get arthritis as they age, yet most sufferers may not think of massage when they start to explore which therapies might ease their pain. While it is doubtful an arthritic joint can “heal” completely with massage, it can feel better. And for an arthritis sufferer, *better* is a welcome word, particularly when there are no side effects involved.

According to the Arthritis Foundation, an increasing number of doctors are recommending massage to their arthritis patients to help relieve the pain and stiffness caused by their disease. Massage can increase circulation around painful joints, bringing healing oxygen and nutrients, including amino acids, to rebuild tissue. Many massage therapists report that their arthritic clients find better and longer-lasting relief from massage than from pharmaceuticals.



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Bodywork for Baby Boomers



member



The Baby Boomer Generation

Unlike generations that have come before, baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—are undoubtedly a generation on the move. Staying fit, and setting aside time for invaluable self-care, like massage and bodywork.



Massage Benefits for Boomers

- Improves range of motion and decreases low-back pain.
- Increases circulation, allowing the body to pump more oxygen and nutrients into tissues and vital organs.
- Provides exercise and stretching for atrophied muscles.
- Reduces swelling and scar tissue.
- Reduces recovery time from injury/surgery.
- Reduces stress, a major contributor to disease and ill health.
- Releases endorphins, the body's natural painkiller, thereby reducing the need for medications.
- Stimulates lymph flow and supports the body's natural process of detoxification.

Improved Circulation, Healthier Skin

With age, circulation slows and skin loses its vitality. Experts say massage combats these effects by increasing circulation through the manipulation of tissue, improving the appearance and condition of the skin and its elasticity, and toning muscle tissue. Massage has a stimulating cellular function in the hypodermis, dermis, and epidermis layers of the skin and also increases the production of skin-nourishing sebum.



Soothing the Pain

Pain is a constant source of grief for an aging body, especially if that body has been abused over time through excess and neglect. Yet, it's never too late



to make amends with your physical self. The passive movement in massage keeps joints more mobile and stimulates the synovial fluid, which lubricates the joints and nourishes the articular cartilage. Massage also prompts the release of endorphins and other pain-reducing neurochemicals.

Immunity and Stress

Did you know that the majority of disease we encounter today is associated with stress? Not only that, stress is a huge factor in premature aging of the body. Researchers say chronic stress ages the body, weakens immune cell function, and can make cells appear up to 17 years older than they really are. Massage deftly attacks stress, while boosting the immune system.

Massage encourages the release of oxytocin, a stress-reducing hormone in the body most often associated with birth and bonding, and activates the parasympathetic nervous system and its relaxation response. Massage also decreases beta brainwave activity, increases dopamine and serotonin levels in the body, and reduces cortisol levels, all of which are linked to decreased stress.

Massage Combats Aging

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, preventing disease and injury is critical to reducing the expected growth of health-care and long-term care costs, as more than 70 million baby boomers cross the 60-year-old threshold. If you're wondering how you can stave off the effects of aging, the preventative and restorative nature of massage and bodywork might be just what the body ordered.