

# Body Image

## Learning to Love Who We Are

The statistics are alarming. The majority of U.S. women--some estimate more than 80 percent--are unhappy with their appearance. At least 10 million young women, and 1 million young men have an eating disorder. Girls as young as 6 and 7 are expressing disapproval of their looks, and most fourth-grade girls are already diet veterans. Most unsettling is the fact that more women, and girls, fear becoming fat than they do dying.

### Combating the Images

How do you see yourself? Are you content with the person looking back at you from the mirror each morning or do you frown in frustration?

magazine covers, others are trying to teach young girls to love their bodies, beautiful imperfections and all. One way to combat the Hollywood hype and to create an appreciation for the bodies we have is through hands-on massage and bodywork.

### Why Massage Affects Body Perception

Being unhappy with our bodies has serious, and sometimes lifelong, ramifications. Feelings of unworthiness and self-loathing can set up a lifetime of self-deprecating behaviors. What regularly scheduled massage allows us to do is "get back" into our bodies and reconnect with ourselves. Massage can

*Everything you do can be done better from a place of relaxation.*

-Stephen C. Paul



Massage can help restore feelings of self-worth and nurturing--key for body image issues.

Unfortunately, many of us are unhappy with the person looking back. Whether it's lamenting about having a pear-shaped figure instead of an hourglass, or exhibiting more serious, self-hating body dysmorphic disorders, body image is under siege in our celebrity-fixated society. While Madison Avenue continues to airbrush photos of svelte, 120-pound supermodels for

help us release physical and mental patterns of tension, enhancing our ability to experience our bodies (regardless of their shape and size) in a more positive way. Just as it facilitates our ability to relax, massage also encourages an awareness of the body, often allowing us to more clearly see and

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### Office Hours and Contact

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identify destructive behaviors, including overeating or purging.

Massage also creates a sense of nurturing that is especially powerful when it comes to poor body image. Accepting the nonjudgmental touch of a trained therapist goes a long way toward rebuilding an appreciation and respect for your own body. If we find acceptance for who we are and how we look, we are giving ourselves permission to live comfortably in the skin we have.

## The Value of Massage

Research shows that touch is a powerful ally in the quest for physical and mental health. Not only does it help us be more in tune with our bodies, it can also help restore a sense of "wholeness" that is often lost in our segmented, overscheduled lives. When we regain that connection, it's much easier to remember that our bodies are something to be cherished, nurtured, and loved, not belittled, betrayed, and forgotten.

Valuable for every age and every body type, massage and bodywork have innumerable benefits. Here are a few:

- Alleviates low-back pain and improves range of motion.
- Decreases medication dependence.
- Eases anxiety and depression.
- Enhances immunity by stimulating lymph flow.
- Exercises and stretches weak, tight, or atrophied muscles.
- Increases joint flexibility.
- Improves circulation by pumping oxygen and nutrients into tissues and vital organs.
- Releases endorphins--the body's natural painkiller.

## Every Shape and Size

Whether a client weighs 30 pounds or 300 pounds, massage and bodywork therapists are trained to appreciate all bodies, without judgment, and to deliver the best care possible. As in any session, a therapist's goal is to create an environment that feels safe and nurturing for clients, all while delivering much needed therapeutic touch. For heavier clients, some minor adjustments might be needed in the delivery of the bodywork, but its nurturing, therapeutic, nonjudgmental role will remain unchanged.

## Through the Scars

We also have to remember that a negative body image is not necessarily about those few extra pounds on the hips. It might instead be tied to the scars of past injuries and surgeries. Massage can help here, too. For burn victims, research has shown massage can help in the healing process, while for postsurgery breast cancer patients, massage and bodywork can reintegrate a battered body and spirit. In addition to softening scar tissue and speeding postsurgery recovery, massage and bodywork for these clients is about respect, reverence, and learning to look at, and beyond, the scars.

## Finding the Stillness

Experts say that when the tissues start to let go and relax under a massage therapist's hands, profound shifts occur emotionally and physically. A softening happens, and the brain and body begin

to integrate again. The chasm between body and mind that created the eating disorder, or fueled the negative body image, begins to narrow. In her book, "Molecules of Emotion," Georgetown University Medical School professor Candace Pert explains that the body is the "actual outward manifestation, in physical space, of the mind." She says that if we generate negative energy in response to our appearance, it can eventually find its way into reality.

Self-acceptance, then, is paramount for living well, and massage/bodywork is a healthy path to get you there. Finding the stillness in a massage session allows you to just "be," without judgment. Partner that with the comfort that comes from allowing your body to be nurtured by someone else, and we begin to remember our value, regardless of our outward appearance, or what we perceive it to be.



Cultivating a positive sense of self, from the inside out, contributes to a life well lived.

# Facial Massage for Lymphatic Drainage

*Natalia Doran*

A well-performed facial massage will help relieve puffiness and improve skin tone and complexion. Other physical benefits include stimulation of the skin's immune mechanisms, firming of weak muscles, tissue regeneration, and antiaging effects. Mental benefits include stress relief and a greater awareness of the body-mind connection. And applying pressure and movement through massage can help to normalize the function and composition of the connective tissue, and free it of harmful substances.

## Lymphatic Massage

The body's lymphatic system drains away the debris from our cells. It transports water out of the tissue, along with waste substances: bacteria, cell fragments, immobile cells, inorganic substances, large molecular fats, proteins, and viruses. This process is constantly happening all over the body. With massage, the lymph system can move up to 10 times more fluid than it normally does.

Manual lymph drainage (MLD), which was developed by Emil Vodder, PhD, is a type of gentle massage that accelerates the natural circulation of the lymph and encourages its movement away from swollen areas. MLD is firm, but gentler than ordinary massage. Because the lymph vessels are all interlinked, lymph flow will be affected in the entire region of the area being massaged. Other types of lymphatic massage include lymph drainage therapy, developed by Bruno Chikly, MD.

A facial massage that involves lymphatic work improves circulation to the skin, which increases nutrition to the skin cells and speeds up the filtering of water in and out of cells. The vasodilation of the surface capillaries during massage improves skin color, and facial massage also improves elasticity and suppleness of the skin. With facial massage, the skin becomes more balanced, less prone to breakouts, and more resistant to infection. Massage movements also influence muscular hypertension

through the autonomic nervous system.

*Natalia Doran, MD, is the founder and president of the International Skin Beauty Academy in Illinois.*



**Facial massage has a host of health benefits.**

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# Good News About Ginger

*Shelley Burns*

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is known to aid digestion and strengthen the immune system. It is used as a home remedy (flat ginger ale) when feeling under the weather or nauseous, and is blended with honey and lemon in a drink to ward off a cold or flu. Now ginger has come back into the spotlight, this time to promote healthy skin.

One of ginger's active enzymes--zingibain--reduces inflammation, therefore reducing the risk of acne, psoriasis, and other inflammatory skin conditions. Ginger's antimicrobial and antiseptic properties can also kill the bacteria that causes acne. It promotes skin elasticity and firmness due to its antioxidants gingerol and shogaol, which have both been shown to fight skin-damaging free radicals.

To achieve these skin benefits, I advocate using actual ginger root. Why take capsules when you can use the root? It is cost-effective and has a great return on investment.

It's easy to use the root to make a cup of ginger tea. Peel the ginger root and cut it into thin strips. Steep the strips in a cup of boiled water for 10-15 minutes. If need be, sweeten the tea with other warming spices such as cinnamon and clove, along with agave nectar.

When you are unable to brew a cup of ginger tea, add a drop of ginger essential oil to your daily moisturizer. If you are looking at using it for other health benefits, such as reducing the pain of arthritis, you can massage the painful area with the essential oil. Please note essential oil is not for internal use.

Several new studies have also shown that ginger may help reduce anxiety. Not convinced yet about the benefits of ginger? Some say it could also work as an aphrodisiac, due to its promotion of blood circulation.

*Those who bring  
sunshine into the  
lives of others,  
cannot keep it  
from themselves.*

-James M. Barrie

Deep Roots Massage will soon be announcing lots of exciting news for spring and summer to come! You definitely do NOT want to miss out! New product, new menu items, discounts, membership savings and MORE! Stay connected.

In the mean time, enjoy this wonderful healing facial cleansing recipe for all skin types!

1 tsp Manuka Honey Active 16+  
1 drop Vetiver, Lavender or Rosewood Essential Oil  
6 drops Jojoba Oil

Combine these 3 simple ingredients to the palm of your hand, mix with fingers and apply to dampened skin. Wash skin in a circular motion using a wet silk sea sponge and rinse off with warm water or leave it sit on the skin for 20 mins before rinsing. Your skin's texture will be soft and you'll feel renewed!

Love and light,

Shannon Ellis  
LMT, Licensed Aesthetician

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