

The Benefits of Facial Massage

Natalia Doran

A well-performed facial massage is a wonderful treat that will help relieve puffiness and improve skin tone and complexion. Other physical benefits of a facial massage include stimulation of the skin's immune mechanisms, firming of weak muscles, tissue regeneration, and antiaging effects. There are also many mental benefits, including stress relief and a greater awareness of the body-mind connection.

How the Skin Moves Nutrients

In order to fully understand the benefits of facial massage, it is helpful to understand the anatomy and physiology of the skin.

layer, the epidermis, does not have a direct blood supply--all nutrients, water, and oxygen needed to feed these cells must come from the dermis. If nutrients are lacking in the dermis, the skin cells will be undernourished.

To move from the dermis to the epidermis, nutrients must cross the basement membrane that joins these two layers. Small molecules, such as water, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and glycerol, can cross this membrane by diffusion. Larger molecules must cross by facilitated diffusion (being carried across by proteins). Nutrients or other substances that exist in lower concentrations in the dermis than in the epidermis must be moved into the



There are many physical and mental benefits to facial massage.

We all know that skin is a complex organ consisting of a number of specialized cells. Its functions include pH and temperature regulation, and sebum and sweat production. The condition of the integumentary system (the skin and its components) depends on homeostasis and the coordination of circulatory, nerve, muscular, endocrine, and lymphatic systems. The skin's outer

epidermis by active transport. Water, an effective transportation system, can pass through membranes in response to changes in ion concentration. Hormones and mechanical movements, such as massage, can regulate the rate at which water passes through the membrane.

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*Wise people
are not sick.
They are sick of
being sick, so
they are well.*

-Tao Te Ching

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What about absorption from the outside of the skin into the underlying tissues of the body? Skin permits absorption, but the tightly located coenocytes and lipids between cells make absorption limited. When products are applied to the skin, certain elements play a role in the absorption rate, including the features of the skin, changes in skin barrier function, size of product molecules, and the type of delivery system used in the product.

Connective tissue also plays a role in how the skin moves nutrients. All substances that are transported in the blood must pass through the connective tissue to reach the cells or to be removed as waste. Connective tissue contains cells that produce collagen and elastin, and a half-gel, half-fluid binding mass called the ground substance, which surrounds every cell. Through the ground substance, nutrients are transported from the blood capillaries to the cell, and waste products are moved from the cells to the capillaries. The condition of the ground substance will affect the diffusion rate of nutrients and waste products, creating the cells' environment. This environment can be clean and healthy, or polluted with metabolic wastes.

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 is responsible for draining 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, as the lymph cleanses each cell and drains away the debris in a circulatory system powered only by breathing and muscle movements. With mechanical manipulation such as 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, removing waste products. 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.

Natalia Doran, MD, is the founder and president of

the International Skin Beauty Academy in Illinois. She has a medical degree in dermatology and a master's degree in educational psychology.



Pamper yourself, and do a good thing for your body too!

No Pain, No Gain?

Bodywork Doesn't Have to Hurt to be Effective

Cathy Ulrich

Some people believe massage must be painful to be effective. While some modalities may be intense, this doesn't necessarily translate to a knuckle-biting experience. In fact, painful bodywork can be counterproductive. If you can't breathe comfortably, want to tighten up, make a face, or curl your toes, the technique is too much for you. Your body will go into a protective mode and actually block any positive change.

"No pain, no gain" just doesn't have to apply when it comes to bodywork. Be sure to provide feedback to your practitioner so that you're on the same page. Think of it as a "scale of intensity." On my scale, zero is not touching you and ten is pain--not the worst pain you've ever felt but the place where you want to hold your breath, tighten up, make a face, leave your body. That's a ten.

You shouldn't ever have to be in a pain range to get results, and be sure to let your practitioner know if you're in an

eight or nine range. They may stay at that level if that's where the therapeutic value will be attained, but again, only if it's manageable and you're not tightening up.

And every single client is different. Not only do individuals all start in different places, but their bodies respond differently, and their pain thresholds are extremely varied. What one person finds heavenly, another calls torture.

If it does feel too painful, be sure to tell your therapist. Usually, a practitioner can simply slow down to ease the intensity without losing therapeutic value. Sometimes, if you are nervous or stressed, just remembering to breathe will make your body more open, and you'll remain comfortable.

Bodywork needn't be a test of how tough you are. By giving your therapist appropriate feedback and understanding that painful techniques aren't really helping your body heal, you'll have a

great experience in the session and feel better afterward.



Therapeutic massage actually feels good.

Massage for Seniors

Bodywork Improves Quality of Life

Almost 35 million Americans are age 65 or older, and about 2,000 more reach this age every day. As the U.S. demographic shifts to an older population, it's important to find ways of helping our elders maintain their health and vitality. Massage for seniors is gaining importance as an alternative therapy to increase quality of life, and many massage therapists are getting special training to better serve this growing population.

SENIORS' SPECIAL NEEDS

While similar in technique to other forms of massage, geriatric massage considers the special needs of the elderly. The specialty trained practitioner knows about positioning for greatest comfort and will often have the client rest in the same position for the entire massage. Mobility challenges

may dictate the massage be done in a bed or wheelchair. The therapist may also work both sides of the body at the same time to enhance body awareness, or only work hands and feet, if the client prefers. Sessions may be limited to 30 to 45 minutes, as older clients often do better with shorter, more frequent, massages.

The geriatric massage therapist is aware of health issues associated with aging and how to safely work with this type of client and with associated physicians. Consequently, the practitioner is able to individualize the massage service based on the client's health, mobility, and comfort level.

BENEFITS OF GERIATRIC MASSAGE

A recent study conducted at the Weaver's Tale Retreat Center in Oregon looked

at the effects of massage for elderly clients. The results of the two-year study showed that participants experienced a decrease in breathing rate of 50 percent and an improvement in range of motion, posture, body awareness, skin color, and muscle tone. Furthermore, it is well documented that caring touch benefits emotional well-being in seniors -- a population at greater risk of suffering from depression.

Massage therapy can add to the quality of a senior's life, both physically and emotionally. Consider booking a session for someone you love, and make a difference in their life.

Exciting News and Upcoming events:

Deep Roots Massage is working with Halo Soaps to combine the powerful healing properties of therapeutic grade essential oils into a lovely, convenient all-natural bar soap for your specific needs. Release muscle tension and improve circulation, exfoliate, moisturize, soothe and heal painful and annoying skin conditions, and lift your spirits with truly healing aromatherapy. Soaps also include a premium line of Active Manuka Honey and Pink Himalayan Salts.

Bay View Gallery Night - Friday 9/27 5pm-10pm
Over 45 local businesses and well over 100 artists!
<http://www.bayviewgallerynight.com/>

Bay View Bash - Milwaukee's Largest Volunteer Street Festival Saturday 9/21 11am-10pm
Deep Roots Massage will be offering Revitalizing Chair Massage, Fine Herbal Skin Care, Aromatherapy and other surprises!
Love and light,

Shannon Ellis
LMT, Licensed Aesthetician

Deep Roots Massage

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