

Invest in Your Health

Massage Offers Excellent Return on Investment

"Invest for the long term" is great financial advice, but it's also great healthcare advice. Never is investing for the long term more important than when you are making day-to-day decisions about your health. There are short-term gains from taking care of your health, to be sure, but the long-term benefits are not to be underestimated.

You already know the value of bodywork. For all the short-term stress and pain relief you get from massage today, there are lasting rewards you'll thank yourself for down the road. Massage therapy as a preventive measure and part of an ongoing care regimen can mean fewer visits to the doctor, as well as fewer

emotionally and spiritually, and maintain harmonious relationships with coworkers, family, and friends.

Research supports the value of massage. Massage provides many benefits, including improved concentration, energy, circulation, and self-esteem, as well as reduced stress, fatigue, and pain. It's helpful with more acute health conditions, also. If you, or a loved one, are already dealing with a health condition, massage is an even more important part of your healthcare planning.

Research shows:
-- Alzheimer's patients exhibit reduced irritability, pacing, and restlessness after



Massage is a health investment, helping to manage stress, support wellness, and boost immunity.

co-pays, prescriptions, and over-the-counter medications. Ultimately, it means a healthier and happier you.

An Excellent Value

As you plan the family budget, ponder how massage therapy impacts your ability to make good decisions, cope with extra responsibilities, stay on an even keel

neck and shoulder massage.

-- Deep-tissue massage is effective in treating arthritis, back pain, fibromyalgia, and osteoarthritis.

-- Fibromyalgia patients receiving massage have fewer sleep problems and less anxiety, depression, fatigue, pain, and stiffness.

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"Let go of anger--it is an acid that burns away the delicate layers of your happiness."

-Author Unknown

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-- Massage during labor appears to help block pain, reduce stress and anxiety, and relax muscles. Some medical professionals say massage shortens labor.

-- Massage can reduce sports-related soreness and improve circulation, and is beneficial in reducing symptoms associated with arthritis, asthma, burns, high blood pressure, and premenstrual syndrome.

-- Oncology patients show less anxiety, depression, fatigue, nausea, and pain following massage therapy.

-- Preterm babies receiving massage therapy gain more weight and have shorter hospital stays.

-- Massage therapy is effective in reducing post-surgical pain and can even reduce the time required for post-operative hospital stays.

You may be trimming some extras out of your budget, as many Americans are. When weighing what goes and what stays, consider what an excellent value massage is, especially in relation to things that may be less valuable, but still cost you plenty. The price of massage has remained stable in recent years, while the cost of movies, dining out, and sports events have risen. Which of these activities has the power to improve your health and which has a better return on investment?

Get Creative

There are many ways to keep massage in your life if you use your imagination. While vacations are definitely needed right now by just about everybody, more and more Americans are staying closer to home and taking "staycations." How about planning a healthy, home-based vacation and including massage as part of your relaxation?

When it comes to gift-giving occasions, why not give and ask for massage gift certificates? Massage makes a wonderful replacement for flowers that wilt, sweaters that don't fit, or another box of fattening candy. Some folks buy spa packages or put together their own outings with a massage, a museum excursion, or lunch at a favorite restaurant. Mothers, daughters, aunts, and grandmothers are enjoying spas together and massage is a key part of the package. These events create bonding experiences that launch new traditions and reinforce a healthy lifestyle.

Gift certificates for chair massage at airports are an option for weary travelers, as is chair massage at malls for package-laden shoppers. If you are an employer, consider gifting your staff with on-site chair massage, which has been shown to reduce stress and improve performance. Just think of it as the ultimate pat on the back for staff and one that pays you back.

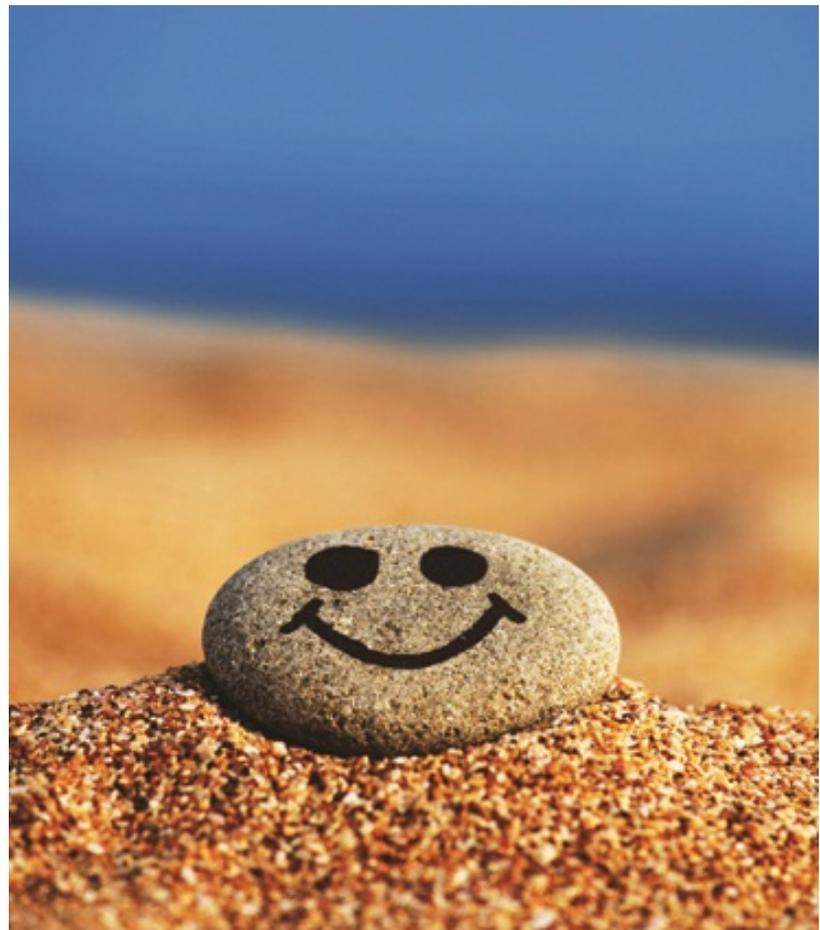
Maintain Well-Being

You may be tempted to trim your wellness budget when economic times are tough. Yet, a recent national consumer survey showed most massage-minded Americans are still committed to maintaining the health benefits they experience with massage. It only makes sense. The better you feel, the better job you can do of caring for yourself and your loved ones. Massage therapy will also help families under stress create healthier households, and

more focused and relaxed moms and dads. Children are sensitive and often pick up on tension in a household; parents who are taking care of themselves are more likely to provide a sense of calm to their kids. This goes for caregivers of aging parents, too.

Now, more than ever, massage should play a role in reducing your stress and strengthening your health. When people feel their best, they are more able to face the challenges difficult times present. With greater health and peace of mind, you can face difficulties with poise, clarity of purpose, and strengthened emotional reserves.

Truly, massage is more than a luxury--it's a vital part of self-care that has a positive ripple effect on you as you work, play, and care for others. Investing in your health is one investment that's sure to pay off.



The value of bodywork runs deep, for nothing is more valuable than good health.

What is Qi?

A fundamental concept of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) dating back over 3,000 years, qi (pronounced "chee") is the Chinese word for energy, which also carries with it connotations of air, breath, and life force.

In TCM, it is understood that everything from humans and animals to rocks and trees is filled with qi. This energy facilitates function, communication, and connection and is the uniting force of the universe, as well as the animating life force in all objects.

Qi in the Body

Qi flows through the body via 14 meridian channels, which run either up or down throughout the body along specific pathways. These pathways deliver energy to organs, structures, and systems in a constant pattern, and when qi is flowing unimpeded along these meridians, a person is said to be in balance.

Illness, injury, stress, and other trauma

can cause blockages along these meridians, thus impairing or stopping the flow of qi and resulting in energy congestion. Several TCM techniques are designed to clear these blockages and restore balance and flow to the body's energy.

Working with Qi

Along each meridian are points, known as acupoints or pressure points, where these energy blockages are likely to occur. Significant acupoints are also known as trigger points, and these are often starting points for therapists working to clear congested qi.

An important principle of qi is that clearing blockages at certain trigger points will help restore flow and thus impact parts of the body that are connected along the various meridians. For example, this could mean that working on someone's foot might benefit an internal organ like the liver, or benefit his or her heart. This concept further illustrates that qi in the body is

one balanced system in which one imbalance can affect several body parts and even alter emotional states.



Keeping qi in balance.

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.

*"To the world
you may be one
person, but to
one person you
may be the
world."*

-Author Unknown

Wishing you, your family, friends, and colleagues a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year! Yes, it's time for the new year's resolutions massage, yoga, exercising, walking, running, hiking, healthy eating, laughing, playing, drinking water, and most of all enjoying yourself:) Here's to 2015!
Best Wishes, Julia

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