

The Massage Monthly

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Whiplash

Healing a Pain in the Neck

Hope Bentley

Getting rear-ended in traffic. Face-planting at the bottom of a ski slope. Tumbling over the handlebars on your bike. Whiplash comes in many forms and can become a long-term problem if not treated correctly. Fortunately, massage and bodywork can address the ache and discomfort that come with whiplash and prevent chronic pain down the road.

Understanding Whiplash

The term "whiplash" came into use in 1928. Doctors will sometimes use "hyperextension injury," to describe it, but "whiplash" is a more visceral account of what has happened to the victim's

Car accidents are the most common causes of whiplash. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons reported that about 20 percent of people who have been in rear-end collisions later report whiplash symptoms. Whether front to back or side to side, whiplash can affect muscles all the way into the victim's back and arms. The most serious form of whiplash compresses nerves in the neck and cause multiple sprains of the ligaments.

The good news is, serious hyperextension injuries are in the minority, as whiplash usually comes in the less serious version of the injury. "Fortunately, about 95 percent of the time whiplash tends to be more

*Find the light,
the bright, and
the fun in all
that you do.*

-April K.



Whiplash injuries can lead to headache as well as neck, jaw, and back pain.

neck. The neck itself has made a whip-like motion bending first towards and then away from the point of impact. As the head moves rapidly in one direction, the muscles in the neck receive the message to contract. The momentum of the head can cause strain or sprain to the muscles and ligaments in the neck as the head reaches the end of its movement.

superficial damage, like slight muscle strains and tears," says Ben Benjamin, Ph.D., a massage therapist who holds a doctorate in education and sports medicine. But whether the pain is minor soreness or serious discomfort, massage can provide relief and prevent chronic problems in the long run.

Continued on page 2

Office Hours and Contact

218-263-1501

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Monday: 10:30am-4:30pm

Wednesday: 10:30am-4:30pm

Thursday: 10:30am-4:30pm

E/O Friday by appointment

In this Issue

Whiplash

The Wonders of Water

MT Straight Talk

Continued from page 1

Whiplash Symptoms

The symptoms of whiplash include neck pain and stiffness, headaches, pain in the shoulder or between the shoulder blades (sometimes called "coat hanger pain"), low back pain, and pain or numbness in the arms or extremities.

Often people who suffer whiplash do not feel the effects until two or three days after the injury-causing incident. Benjamin explains that this delayed onset is because it takes time for scar tissue to manifest in the sprained or strained muscles and ligaments. And because scar tissue is more adhesive than regular tissue, people experience it as stiffness in the injured areas.

Whiplash affects primarily the neck, but victims shouldn't ignore the rest of the body. This injury can pull the long muscles on either side of the spine, which reach all the way to the tailbone and can cause discomfort along the way. Discomfort or stiffness in the chest and arms can also be due to whiplash. And headaches may be the result of slowed circulation to the head caused by the swelling in the injury.

Massage Can Help

Any massage that causes a general relaxation of the client's muscles can help relieve muscular pain in common types of whiplash injuries. In addition, massage increases the amount of oxygen that reaches the healing tissues and opens those tissues so they can receive oxygen and nutrients, thus speeding the healing process.

In addition to relaxation massage, specific bodywork methods ease acute whiplash discomfort and help prevent chronic fallout. For example, myofascial approaches restore fluidity to the fascia--normally a slippery tissue that surrounds all the moving parts inside the body--allowing freer movement of muscles and ligaments. Friction-based massage helps break up scar tissue and relieve stiffness. Trigger point therapy works by releasing tension held in tight knots of muscle. And any type of bodywork that stimulates circulation helps ease and prevent headaches.

Finally, the incident that caused the whiplash in the first place, (a car wreck, for instance) can be traumatic. Massage

helps relax a client's psyche as well as their muscles, helping her or him work through the emotional issues induced by the accident.

Because the neck is such a delicate part of the body, it is important to proceed with caution. Benjamin advises waiting a few days after the accident to seek treatment. This allows the initial scar tissue to knit, which is an important part of the healing process. The initial treatment should be extremely gentle, and if there is a chance of a fracture, a concussion, any disc problem or other serious injury, the client should make sure to see a physician first.

Let the Healing Begin

It used to be that physicians would immobilize whiplash injuries with a cervical collar, but now health care professionals advise a more temperate course for their patients.

"I recommend gentle neck movement within your range of motion while lying on a pillow," says Benjamin. Movement may help prolong the benefits of the massage by continuing to circulate blood, oxygen, and nutrients through the healing tissue. "Heat or cold, whichever feels better, can also help," says Benjamin. "Soaking in a hot bath can also be beneficial." Limiting physical activity for a few days and getting plenty of rest in the wake of a whiplash injury is also a good idea.

Whiplash is traumatic and should be addressed soon after the injury to avoid any chronic problems. If you or someone you love is suffering from the repercussions of whiplash, consider a bodywork session to ease the discomfort. Massage can help lessen muscle pain, induce relaxation, and ease the trauma often associated with whiplash. You'll be back to your old self in no time.



Bodywork has an arsenal of methods to treat whiplash injuries for a full recovery.

The Wonders of Water

For Skin Health and More

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Creams, nutritional supplements, treatments, lotions, and potions. We are always looking for the next miracle product to keep skin looking healthy and young. However, there is one essential, inexpensive, and often overlooked nutrient right at your fingertips: water.

Just as a car cannot function without oil, our bodies cannot function without water. After oxygen, H₂O is the most important component of the body, responsible for 65-70 percent of its composition. And of this, 80 percent is dedicated to the skin.

Water is the medium for various enzymatic and chemical reactions in the body. It moves nutrients, hormones, antibodies, and oxygen through the blood and lymphatic systems, and it also helps form the matrix of the skin. Devoid of water, the skin becomes dehydrated, resulting in a dry, dull tone.

It's likely that the moment a person feels

thirsty, mild dehydration has already set in. To keep the complexion looking smooth and blemish-free, drink water upon waking and continue drinking it throughout the day at one- to two-hour intervals. At least six 8-oz. glasses of water should be consumed daily and more if you are exercising, perspiring, and/or in hot weather. Ideally, intake should be between ten and twelve 8-oz. glasses of water a day. One note: Don't increase water intake all at once, as the kidneys and digestive system need time to adjust. Add one 8-oz. glass every day or every second day.

What counts toward your daily water intake? Just the basics: water and herbal tea. Caffeinated beverages and alcoholic drinks are diuretics that can contribute to dehydration, requiring even more hydration after drinking.

Not only is water important for skin health, it can also play a key role in the prevention of disease. Drinking eight glasses of water a day can decrease the

risk of colon cancer, bladder cancer, and potentially even breast cancer.



Water helps keep the body at optimum health.

MT Straight Talk

What Your Massage Therapist Needs to Know

Angela England

Most massage therapists guide first-time clients through an intake process that includes discussing health histories and other medical concerns. But talking with your therapist about these things should not end with your first massage. Before each session, take a minute to speak with your therapist about any new medical conditions or injuries, lasting aches and pains, or any other changes in your life. Here are some of the issues your massage therapist should know about.

Medical Changes

It's a good idea to regularly update your medical record with your therapist, especially if you've been diagnosed with an illness or medical condition--such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, a chronic autoimmune disease, or skin allergies--or are taking any new medications. Certain medical concerns

preclude you from receiving massage. Other conditions, such as pregnancy, simply change the way your practitioner approaches the session.

A New or Acute Injury

Maybe you spent hours driving to a destination getaway and your shoulders ache, or you stepped off the porch wrong and sprained your ankle. Any time you have a new ache, pain, sprain, twist, or pulled muscle, mention it to your therapist. Depending on the location and extent of your injury, the session may need to be postponed or the injury site avoided until more healing has occurred.

Personal Preferences

This category is less obvious, but equally important. Everyone has unique

preferences and sometimes there may be something you would like to change for your next massage. Whether you want to bring your own music, have the temperature adjusted, or be draped in an extra blanket, your therapist can easily adapt as long as you communicate your preferences.

Help your practitioner help you. Take a moment to check in with him or her before your next session.

Angela England enjoys doing massage, gardening, writing, and spending time with her three young children.

*You don't have
a soul. You are
a soul. You have
a body.*

-C.S. Lewis

OUR OFFICE HOURS ARE EXPANDING! Check out our new hours, starting September 1st, 2022
Monday - Thursday: 10am-5pm
Every other Friday: 9am-3pm
Please note Paula and Ashley have limited appointments after 5pm.

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH!

This September, enjoy 20% OFF foam rollers. We offer a wide variety of foam rollers - long and short, half and full, and even a mini version! Stop by during business hours to get yours.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Hibbing Health and Wellness Fair will be held on Saturday, October 15th. Contact the Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce for more details.

NOW ACCEPTING STUDENT APPLICATIONS!

We're pivoting our program to make it better than ever! Our program will now begin in June of 2023. If you've ever considered a career as a massage therapist, send me an email. I would love to meet with you to discuss the opportunities of entering a new career.

~ohanaschoolofmassage@gmail.com

Empowering you to heal yourself

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