

NEUROMUSCULAR THERAPY CENTER, INC. PHYSICIAN NEWSLETTER

Innovative Physical, Occupational, & Massage Therapies for Pain Relief and Injury Rehabilitation



Knee Pain - Osteoarthritis: ^{1,2}Perlman et al. (2006) conducted a randomized controlled trial to study massage therapy for osteoarthritis of the knee. The study involved 68 patients with radiographically confirmed osteoarthritis of the knee. The study participants were assigned to either treatment of twice-weekly sessions of massage in weeks one through four and once-weekly sessions in weeks five through eight or to the control group. The therapists administered a standard Swedish full-body therapeutic massage technique and a standard protocol for the study intervention, which included petrissage, effleurage and tapotement techniques used at the therapist's discretion. The

usual care included pain medication, exercises, or hot and cold therapy. The control group continued to receive conventional medical care during the initial period, then crossed over to receive massage (weeks 9–16) after an initial eight-week delay. Outcome measurements were collected at baseline and after completion of interventions (weeks 8 and 16) in both groups. The Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index (WOMAC) pain and functional scores and visual analog scale of pain were used the outcome assessment. The group receiving massage therapy demonstrated significant improvements in the mean WOMAC global scores in areas of pain, stiffness, and physical function domains and in the visual analog of pain scale. The authors noted that study limitations were that the study involved a single intervention and a duration of only 16 weeks. It was also noted that osteoarthritis is a chronic condition, and longer studies will be needed. The authors concluded that this pilot study suggests that massage therapy is efficacious in treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee with beneficial effects persisting for weeks following treatment. Further clinical trials are warranted to determine optimal treatment protocols, absolute efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and generalization to other patient groups. *Editor's note:* Standard Swedish massage is not generally covered by insurance. However, our therapy programs incorporate many massage techniques with other therapies, exercises, activities, and neuromuscular re-education; and when properly administered by qualified providers, these therapies are covered by Medicare and most insurance. Also, most of our therapists would prefer to use neuromuscular techniques (rather than Swedish massage), as they more specifically target problem areas including the connective tissues.

Please consider asking your doctor for a referral to our practice if you are bothered by pain, suffer from an injury, or are planning a surgery. You can print a referral form (Rx form) from the home page of this website.