



Massage therapy in the role of an analgesic. ¹In October 2005, CBS News released a story about a survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation where a national sample of more than a thousand adults reported that 90 percent felt massage was good for a person's health, 93 percent agreed with the statement that massage can be effective for pain relief, and 57 percent who discussed massage with their physician said this health professional strongly recommended or encouraged them to get a massage. In the story, Tiffany Field, PhD, at the University of Miami School of Medicine stated, "Basically we have found massage to be effective in chronic pain syndromes in arthritis and diabetes; in

depressive disorders such as ones that involve addiction like eating disorders; in chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia and other autoimmune disorders - HIV associated diseases too... We have looked at the A-to-Z of medical conditions, and we have not found a single condition massage has not been effective for." ²In what some might consider a true test of its value, massage has even been shown to ease the chronic pain and other miseries suffered by cancer patients. ³A 2004 study of more than 1200 patients at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center published in the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* found that massage reduces symptoms such as anxiety, nausea, and pain by about 50 percent. ^{4,5}For musculoskeletal injuries and related disorders, treatment groups receiving massage almost always showed significant improvement over the control groups or the groups receiving only standard medical care. ^{6,7}Postoperatively, the rate of decline in the unpleasantness of postoperative pain was accelerated by massage when used adjunctively with opioid analgesia. ⁸Massage appears to work on several levels. It can increase blood flow to and from the affected area(s), and enhance the effectiveness of certain medications. It also triggers the release of opioids in the brain, speeds up the flow of oxytocin, and lowers the levels of cortisol and substance P. ⁹Is massage safe? The usual answer is yes, when performed by an experienced technician. However, it is not entirely risk free. There are more than 200 different massage techniques, and some may not be appropriate for the patient's condition. It is also important that both the patient and the therapist be alerted to any contraindications. Is massage cost effective? ¹⁰An increasing number of randomized clinical trials point to massage as a safe and relatively inexpensive intervention that can improve health outcomes and reduce the need for more expensive medical treatments. At our practice, Medicare and most insurance will cover prescribed therapeutic massage (CPT 97124, 97140).

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.

1. Opinion Research Corp., Princeton, NJ; August 11-14, 2005; Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD; ©2005 WebMD
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3. Cassilbeth, BR., Massage therapy for symptom control. *Journal of Pain and Symptoms Mgt*, Sept 2004 28(3): 244-249
4. Walach, H., Efficacy of massage therapy in chronic pain: a pragmatic randomized trial. *J. Alt Comp Med*, 9, 837-846
5. van den Dolder & Roberts, A trial into the effectiveness of soft tissue massage in the treatment of shoulder pain. *Aus J Physio* 49, 183-8
6. Piotrowski, M., Massage as adjuvant therapy in the management of acute postoperative pain. *J Am Coll Surg.*, 197, 1037-46
7. Nixon, M., Expanding the nursing repertoire: The effect of massage on postoperative pain. *Aus J of Advanced Nursing*, 14 21-26