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How Massage Therapy Can Benefit Your Patients

By Deborah Solomon

An increasing number of chiropractic offices are benefiting by offering massage therapy to patients. Not only is massage relaxing; it has numerous therapeutic effects, including, but not limited to:

- reducing blood pressure and heart rate;
- increasing local blood flow;
- increasing thoracic gas volume, peak flow and forced vital capacity;
- increasing cytotoxic capacity (activity level of the body's natural "killer cells");
- strongly influencing lymph flow;
- improving gait, range of motion and foot-to-floor force;
- reducing muscle tension and pain after repeated treatments;
- reducing pain, stiffness and fatigue;
- reducing anxiety, tension, pain and depression in cancer patients;
- reducing posttraumatic headache;
- increasing muscle tone and flexibility;
- reducing morning sickness in pregnant women;
- decreasing duration of labor, hospital stay and postpartum depression; and
- applications to sports medicine.

I have worked for chiropractors for over 12 years in various capacities. As a massage therapist, I market myself to the public, often bringing in new patients to the office. Patients unfamiliar with chiropractic are often more likely to consider massage than having their backs "cracked." Once they meet the doctor, it is easier to refer them for chiropractic care. Without fail, I can palpate an area in need of a chiropractor's touch. I ask, "Is that tender? Have you ever seen a chiropractor?" It's a gentle lead-in to refer them to seek

chiropractic care. Also, the doctor refers motor-vehicle-accident patients to me for soft tissue work. It's a symbiotic relationship.

By working together toward the common goal of helping the patient get well (and stay well), the chiropractor and the massage therapist can both reap the benefits. Since more and more insurance companies now recognize the value of massage therapy and are pay accordingly, it's an all-around great tool to increase the growth of your practice.

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Deborah Solomon, LMT

Tulsa, Oklahoma



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