



I have joined the Green Gym

Did you know that a five minute workout in a “green” space is just as good for your mind as a longer workout in the gym? 'Green exercise', exercising in a park



or back garden, can lead to an immediate improvement in mood and self-esteem. 'Something of light intensity such as a short walk can have as much of a positive impact as a more intensive work out.' Says Dr Jo Barton, a sports scientist who conducted the study for the University of Essex. “As well as protecting against future health threats, outdoor exercise could even increase life expectancy”. I like it....

Dr Jo Barton and Professor Jules Pretty analysed of 1,252 people (of different ages, gender and mental health status) drawn from ten existing studies in the UK. Surprisingly the research found that just five minutes of green exercise produced the largest positive effect, it led to mental and physical health improvements.

http://www.essex.ac.uk/news/event.aspx?e_id=1588

I feel excited about this research, since I can fit in a few minutes of gardening, walking or cycling, but not really very easily a session at the gym.

Another way of feeling good, both mentally and physically, is of course having a massage. In this issue I focus on mental well-being evoked by touch, even in stressful situations. I also put in a few exercises to prevent eye strain when working on a computer.

Wishing you a spring in your step, I am off to the “green gym”

Regina Dengler

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Shining light on it

Though work at the computer is unlikely to cause lasting damage to your eyes, it can still be very tiring. Long spells at in front of your monitor can cause eyestrain, burning or itching eyes, blurred or double vision, and tension headaches.

Here are some ideas to help your eyes:

- Have frequent breaks.
- Sit tall, don't let your face come towards the screen.
- Adjust the brightness controls on the screen to adjust to the light conditions of the room.

- Make sure the screen is clean
- Set up your software so that you can read it easily. Select colours that are easy on the eye.
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focussed and should not flicker or move.
- Close blinds or curtains to reduce glare.
- Adjust lighting to avoid glare on screen: the light source should come at a 90° angle, with low watt lights rather than high.
- Where possible, place monitor at 90 ° angle to windows and reduce overhead lighting.

http://dohs.ors.od.nih.gov/ergo_computers.htm

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf>

Eye Exercises

Blinking - produces tears to help moisten and lubricate the eyes

Yawning - breathe deeper and get more oxygen to the brain, and it also produces tears to help moisten and lubricate the eyes
Expose eyes to **natural light**.

Palming

1. while seated, brace elbows on the desk and close to the desk edge, keep your back straight
2. let weight fall forward
3. cup hands over eyes
4. close eyes
5. inhale slowly through nose and hold for 4 seconds
6. continue deep breathing for 15-30 seconds



Eye Movements

1. close eyes
2. slowly and gently move eyes up to the ceiling, then slowly down to the floor
3. repeat 3 times
4. close eyes
5. slowly and gently move eyes to the left, then slowly to the right
6. repeat 3 times

Focus Change

1. hold one finger a few inches away from the nose
2. focus on the finger
3. slowly move the finger away
4. focus far into the distance and then back to the finger
5. slowly bring the finger back to within a few inches of the eye
6. focus on something more than 8 feet away
7. repeat 3 times

Recent Feedback from On-site Massage

"A welcome massage. Just what I needed during this crunch period. Thanks." Sue, Monumental Games

"I am in heaven. Thank you. Danke schön."
Rebecca, Monumental Games

"Many thanks for the massage. It raises the staff morale. I look forward to my massage every month." Lisa, Sangenic

"A fantastic experience. I will definitely come every two weeks" Karen, Health and Safety, Sangenic International

Natural lifting

Massage and touch have long been known to affect our mental well-being. The medical world has cottoned on to this., and there are a number of research projects investigating the feel-good benefits of touch.

Stress, Anxiety and Headache

A small study looked at 18 people with chronic tension-type headaches. They received massage twice a week for 6 weeks. The study looked at depression, anxiety and stress. After six weeks of massage participants were less depressed and had less anxiety. There was a reduction in the number of events deemed stressful, and the impact of these stressful events was deemed to be less severe. Even though the study lacked a control group, it indicates that clients with chronic headaches can be helped by massage. Massage may not decrease the Headache pain (though of course it may), but the accompanying depression, anxiety and stress can be lifted by massage. Massage can disrupt the vicious circle of pain and emotional distress.

J Man Manip Ther. 2009;17(2):86-94.

Less stressed during treatment

To find out about the effect of massage on stress and mood, 34 women with primary breast cancer (undergoing standard treatment) were randomly split into two groups, one group received two half hour massages per week for five weeks, the other served as a control group.

After the massages the perceived stress

level was reduced at the massage group, and so was the cortisol blood level (an indicator of stress). The mood, especially anger and “anxious depression”, was less “disturbed” in the massage group.

This confirms that massage by itself does not solve the “big” problems (such as a diagnosis with breast cancer) but it does support you in dealing with them.

Arch Womens Ment Health. 2010 Apr;13(2):165-73.

Another recent study assessed the role of massage in aiding recovery after heart surgery, specifically how massage affects

Remembering

Remembering that rivers and streams course through the temple of my body -
Pooling, at moments, into love then moving on.

Experiencing the pathways; the mountains and valleys of my story -

The artful meandering, the merging systems of life that bow to greet each other.

A melody, floating endlessly through muscle, bone, sinew emerges -

A haunting tribute to God's universe that exists as me.

Kimberly Satterfield

pain, anxiety, tension, and satisfaction of patients.

All 58 participating heart patients received standard care, in addition half of them received a 20 minute massage 2-5 days after the operation, the other half had 20 minutes quiet time. Patients who had the massage reported less pain, anxiety and tension than those who observed 20 minute quiet time.

Patient feedback was markedly positive.

This pilot study showed that massage can be successfully incorporated into a busy cardiac surgical ward, with big benefits!

What I find remarkable is that they had only one 20 minute massage for such fantastic results! Sometimes it needs very little to make stressful situations a little more bearable.

Complement Ther Clin Pract. 2010 May;16(2):92-5.

Just in case MLD?

Here in Nottingham women (and men) are cared for very well if they are diagnosed with breast cancer. If they develop lymphoedema (swollen arm) after surgery (as at least 25% of them will do), they can feel as if they are hit with a double whammy. They (may) get fitted with a compression sleeve. They will be given a booklet with some advice. How to reduce

the occurrence of lymphoedema after breast surgery (with the removal of lymph glands) in the first place is the research question of the following study.

This study compared two groups of women after breast surgery: Both received an educational strategy. The intervention group was treated by a physiotherapist with a programme including manual lymph drainage, massage of scar tissue and shoulder exercises. The study looked at how many women developed lymphoedema within the first year after surgery. 116 (out of 120) women completed the one year follow-up. Of these, 18 developed lymphoedema (16%): 14 in the control group (25%) and four in the intervention group (7%), a significant difference ($p=0.01$). The conclusion of the authors is that early physiotherapy could prevent secondary lymphoedema in women after surgery for breast cancer one year after the operation. (BMJ. 2010 Jan 12;340)

This study is useful as it points towards a measure to prevent oedema after this type of surgery. I am offering MLD and scar mobilisation here in Carlton at Touching Well.



The Present Moment

To be completely present
completely accepted.
Nowhere to go—nothing more to be.
Simply to be present
within the present that
is the gift of massage.

Kathy Visgar

Recent feedback

“After I started having regular massages I started to feel more relaxed and calm. I have enjoyed coming here and would recommend these treatments for general well being and a more stress-free being.” Shaminder

I felt that I leave with the mood and attitude that I wanted – energized or relaxed or with clarity. And without neck ache. Thanks.” Emily