

What is new at Touching Well?



Superhome

Since the beginning of the year Touching Well is located in a [SuperHome](#).

We have invested heavily

in energy efficiency over the last years, such as external insulation and a wood burning stove in the treatment room. We managed to reduce our emissions by 78%, which qualifies as a SuperHome. Few of you might remember the state of the house when we bought it- you could see through the window frames. Even if you don't want to book a treatment, our house is open to the public twice a year, book through the SuperHomes website.

... and a super recovery after a fall

At the end of February I had a fall and subsequent surgery.

I fell down the stairs at a friend's house

with a vengeance. I stumbled at the top and could not catch myself. I was badly bruised, could hardly breathe due to shock and my whole back was in spasm. I was conscious for the whole episode, had not banged my head, and could move and feel my whole body. I could move with pain, but I could not support my upper body weight. It

turned out that I had two compression fractures at the front of the spine (Th11 and Th12). This meant that I had to have surgery. They basically expanded the two vertebrae with a balloon to the original

shape, and then filled it with medical cement. And it was magic. When I woke up I could breathe better, sit up, and walk (after a few hours)! I was so excited. What a shift!

I have been told that it would take six weeks off sick and then a further six weeks for the muscles to adjust. But then my back should be okay. Hurray!

As I am writing I am back to work. I really missed my clients, it was the first time that I had to cancel due to illness. I would like to thank those clients for their understanding and concern.

This, plus the love and care from family and friends, helped me through this difficult period.

What helped on the physical side initially was Deep Oscillation. I was only allowed massage after 3 weeks. I counted the days until I could have one. Then I started to go swimming, plus walking and generally moving about. Sitting and standing for longer periods is still difficult. Now I

am on a regime of stretches and building up my strength. When I was discharged from hospital I could not lift a full kettle, but now I can lift my massage chair, and soon I will be able to carry the massage table.

I realise that I could have damaged myself a lot more, the kind of fracture I had can leave people paralysed (plus all the other possibilities - it does not bear thinking about).

I feel grateful for all the care and understanding I received in that challenging time, and was so glad to see my faithful clients after a seven week break.

Wishing you a spring in your step,

Regina Dengler

In this issue

On-Site Massage

The Spine Squeezer

The many uses of a tennis ball
Recent feedback

Massage with a difference

Aromatherapy & Menopause

... and painful periods

Lavender oil for infant colic

Massage & yoga lift you

Manual Lymph Drainage

Fancy a tattoo

Look after your scar

Compression for painful legs?



The Spine Squeezer

When I massage on the massage chair on-site, I sometimes use a massage tool. I have already introduced the Bongers to you. They are for waking people up as they have to go back to work. In this issue I would like you to meet the Spine Squeezer. This the name given by an enthusiastic client. I use it to work the muscles next to the spine.



Underneath these our spinal nerves branch off from the spinal cord. Loosening the many muscles round the spine affects these nerves, thus benefiting our breathing, heart, digestion, arms and legs, and all the rest of our body from the head down.

The many uses of a tennis ball

You might not have thought, besides tennis there are other uses for these round things. Here are three possibilities:

Get a sock and put two tennis balls in it, make a knot in the sock so that the balls are next to each other with a little space between them. Lie on your back on a softish surface, such as a carpet, yoga mat or firm bed, and put the sock with the balls at the top of the neck just below the edge of your scalp. Let your head rest on the balls, wiggle around until you find the right spot. After a few minutes relaxation, move the balls down to

the shoulder area, the balls resting either side of the spine. Relax, breathe. You can work with the ball pressure all the way down the spine, until you come to your sacrum. If it is too painful, stop. You may try a softer surface and/or a folded towel over the balls. If it does not feel good and releasing of tension, don't do it!

Find a piece of wall where you don't care if the surface gets ruined. Put one tennis ball between your buttock and the wall. Lean into it, relax, and then move around so that you massage the buttock with the ball. This can do wonders for lower back ache.

Bend forwards with soft legs (protecting your lower back). Notice how much you have your legs bent and how flexible your back feels. Stand tall and balance on one leg next to something to hold on to should you lose balance. Roll a tennis ball under the other foot for 3 minutes. Really massage the sole of the foot with the ball! Stand on both legs and bend down again. Notice how the stretch feels now. A bit unbalanced? To even out repeat on the other side. Bend over again and check how you can bend now! Should feel balanced and a bit easier.

Recent feedback

I don't get so much of that heavy feeling and my boots zip up more easily. Jo, Carlton, Nottingham after 2 sessions of MLD.

Since I have been coming here for regular massage I feel a lot calmer. Even my mother noticed. Rebecca, Carlton, Nottingham

I have got more information and advice in one session than in five years of medical consultations. It motivated me sort out my health issues. Josie, France

After my session with Regina my lower back problem was instantly restored – from barely being able to bend down to performing and dancing on stage completely pain-free! All this was down to one session of Deep Oscillation therapy. Sarah Hewson, Arnold, Nottingham

Aromatherapy and the menopause

Menopause marks the end of a woman's natural reproductive life. It can be associated with a number of unpleasant symptoms (I have some experience in this!). The question is whether aromatherapy massage helps.

To answer this question, 90 menopausal women were assigned to three groups: an aromatherapy massage group, a placebo massage group, or a control group. In both massage groups women received 30-minute massage treatment twice a week for 4 weeks. For the aromatherapy group an "aroma oil" was added to the base oil, whereas women in the placebo massage group received their 8 massages with plain oil. No treatment was provided to participants in the control group. Initially they found no difference between the groups. However, at the end of the trial both massage groups reported fewer menopausal symptoms than the control group, with the aromatherapy massage being slightly more effective.

This means that massage is effective in reducing menopausal symptoms, and using aromatherapy oils gives additional benefits. (Menopause. 2012 Apr 30). As so often with massage: it is effective on its own, but using essential oils adds an extra dimension.

... and painful periods

A further study found that aromatherapy massage helped with painful periods (dysmenorrhea). The women used Lavender, Clary Sage and Marjoram in a 2:1:1 ratio. This was diluted in unscented cream at 3% concentration for daily abdominal self massage from the end of the last menstruation continuing to the beginning of the next menstruation (J Obstet Gynaecol Res. 2012 May;38(5):817-22). A word of warning: do not use Clary Sage oil when pregnant – unlikely in this case as menstruation and pregnancy don't usually go together.

Lavender oil for infant colic

Both my children suffered under infant colic – it was hard for all concerned. I would have done anything to help them. The possible solution was in my aromatherapy box all the way along: lavender oil. Research was recently carried out with 40 normal babies with signs of colic aged between 2 and 6 weeks. Infants in the treatment group received abdominal massage by their mothers using lavender oil, while those in the control group did not get the massage. The infants in both groups were monitored once a week for five weeks. The effect of the massage was measured in terms of changes in the length of time the babies cried per week. The use of abdominal massage using lavender oil was found to be effective in reducing the symptoms of colic. (Int J Nurs Pract. 2012 Apr;18(2):164-9). Is it the massage or the lavender oil or both?

Massage and Yoga lift you

Another trial looks at the effects of massage and yoga in pregnant women who suffer under depression. Eighty-four pregnant depressed women all received standard antenatal care, with 28 randomly assigned to the yoga group and 28 to the massage group. The trial lasted for 12 weeks, where women had a yoga or massage session of twice a week for 20 minutes. Both yoga and massage therapy had similar positive outcomes compared to the 28 women on standard ante-natal care: They reported a larger decrease in depression and anxiety and their back and leg pain had improved. They could relate better to others, were more likely to carry their baby to term and the baby had, on average, higher birth weight. (J Bodyw Mov Ther. 2012 Apr;16(2):204-9) What a marvellous benefit for eight hours of yoga or massage during pregnancy. What would have happened if women did both, yoga and massage?



Fancy a tattoo?

Usually compression garments are not a fashion statement! The choice of garments within the medically necessary is rather limited. It is usually between brown and brown and black (if you are lucky). At least there are now more and more products on prescription, even if you have to have them made specially for you.



In May a brand new company opened for trading, **Chic Compressions**. They are selling the most amazing arm sleeves and matching gauntlets. You can choose between a sleeve that looks as if you have an elaborate tattoo, denim or leopard effect, or 27 more designs. In addition they have a match your skin service stocking garments in 30 different skin tones. The sleeves come in 3 sizes and two compression classes. The only drawback is the price: they cost more than three times as much as a normal sleeve.



Look after your scar

The survival rates of women with breast cancer have improved drastically over the last few years. 77% of women are likely to be alive 10 years after treatment ([Cancer Research UK](#)). These women have to deal with the long term consequences of cancer treatment, which are varied and more frequent than thought. After all, they had

aggressive surgery (to keep them alive!) and radiotherapy. The cancer treatment damages nerves, blood and lymph vessels, muscles and fascia, causes fibrosis and scar tissue. Not to mention the psychological scars. The consequence of this treatment can take years to manifest. It could be lymphoedema, but also restrictions in the range of movement, numbness or pain. This is not to scare you, but rather to be wise and pro-active.

There are many things you can do, treating lymphoedema, keeping active, enjoying life ... What you might not do is looking after your scar. The scar (including the area treated with radiotherapy) is like a barrier. Help it to become more alive. Massage it, stretch it, move the tissues around, make sure they don't stick to each other, use a moisturiser. It is never too late!

Compression for painful legs?

In lipoedema the fluid is not between the cells (as in lymphoedema), but inside the fat cells. It affects mainly women's hips and legs. It can be very painful, to the extent that lipoedema is also known as painful leg syndrome. The treatment for this is the same as for lymphoedema, however, the compression is often not tolerated. When I visited the Földi Clinic, a specialist hospital in Germany, it was common practice to treat "painful legs" with compression (and MLD, weight loss, etc), and the legs indeed became less sensitive after a while. This is confirmed by a recent study in Hungary. 38 women with lipoedema were enrolled in the study with 19 patients undergoing a 5 day course of intensive treatment and 19 serving as the control group using only moisturisers. The 5 day treatment regime reduced the leg volume and the fragility of lymph and blood vessels (meaning less bruising). In addition, women with lipoedema reported less pain in their legs after the course of treatment. ([Lymphology. 2011 Dec;44\(4\):178-82](#)).