

What is new at Touching Well?

So far 2013 seems to be the “belly year” for me. In February I participated in the Self Care course of [Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy™](#). They practically begged me (and my friend and colleague Jackie) to go on to practitioner's level, which I was planning to do anyway. I first looked at this during my pregnancy massage training 7 years ago, but was put off by the cost. It is a big investment, but at least I can now train in England rather than Belize. That is planned for November. In the mean time I'll practice my self-care massage...

In April I was at a “[Love Your Guts](#)” seminar, the first of three. We looked at, and worked on, all the layers of our belly, from the skin to the muscles in front of the spine, plus breath, lymphatic and energy work. Very powerful! The next two Love Your Guts seminars are specifically on the digestive system and the pelvis.

What does that mean for you, actual or potential clients, members of the public? Even I, who had not had any abdominal surgery, digestive or other problems, found this work very moving (in more than one way). So you don't need to have anything wrong with you to benefit hugely ... However, belly massage could really help you, for instance, with IBS, diverticulitis, constipation, endometriosis, asthma, back and hip problems. If you think about it, the belly is the centre of our body,

- it houses our guts, liver, kidneys and pelvic organs,
- is connected to our lungs via the

diaphragm,

- is enveloped in layers of fascia that extend everywhere in our body,
- has major blood and lymph vessels,
- has major postural muscles,

so helping everything to be at ease will affect you on many levels. And in case you are wondering, it is safe and effective in pregnancy, too. There are only a few conditions where it's definitely not advised, but if you had those you would not be wondering about having a massage, you would be very ill (*acute* inflammatory conditions, aortic aneurysm, heart failure).

This massage is not of the quiet kind, you will learn about your guts, be encouraged to engage with your belly, breathe and connect, we will work together, go on a journey, be curious and playful, light-hearted and serious, go with the flow ...

Recently I have re-discovered Pulsing, something I learned more than 20 years ago. Someone who also trained with Guy Gladstone came from Coventry to have a treatment. A blast from the

past which has inspired me to do more.

I had my very first Pulsing treatment today - it absolutely rocks! I was rocked and rocked and then rocked some more until my limbs felt all loose and free and my whole body drifted into a state of deep relaxation whilst feeling energised throughout. I will be back for more.

Annette, Rainworth, Nottinghamshire

Wishing you a spring in your step,

Regina Dengler

In this issue

On-Site Massage

- Exercise at work
- Foot massage helps carers
- Recent feedback

Massage with a difference

- Self massage helps osteoarthritis
- Treating very sick people
- Massage *does* ease pain
- Upping the “feel good” hormone

Manual Lymph Drainage

- MLD and fertility
- MLD to prevent lymphoedema?
- Preventing pre-mature ageing?!?



Exercise at work

Sometimes exercising muscles that are used a lot can prevent them from getting painful. This is particularly true in the workplace, where many employees face repetitive tasks. A recent study tested this on garment workers in Brazil. Participants, most of them younger than 40, were asked about their pain and its intensity before and after an exercise programme (or a study period in the case of the control group). The participants did 15 minutes exercise at work per day, mostly a combination of stretching and endurance with

a couple of minutes self massage and relaxation. The workers who exercised every day had significantly less pain in the neck, and also a reduction in pain intensity in shoulders, arms, fingers and wrists that are most often strained during sewing. The exercise targeted muscle groups that are more tense in sewing tasks. The authors recommend its use because it

can reduce muscle and joint pain. (Work. 2013 Jan 28). I find it frightening that pain in young(ish) garment workers in most joints of the upper body seem to be accepted as given. But recent accidents in the garment industry (fire, building collapse) don't imply good

working conditions. If you suffer from muscle pain from work, a few stretches and strengthening exercises, plus switching off for a minute or two, could do you a lot of good.

Foot massage helps carers

Caring for a person with dementia can be physically and emotionally demanding, with many long-term care staff experiencing increased levels of stress and burnout. Massage has been shown to be one way in which nurses' stress can be reduced (see previous newsletter). In a recent small study

nine carers received up to twelve 10 minute foot massages over a 4 week period, while 10 other carers had a ten minute break as a control group. The blood pressure dropped after each massage session, and also anxiety was lower. Carers liked the massage, and it was found that a 10 minute session could fit in during

the working day. This was a very small study, but even then the differences came out. Now these results need to be tested in a larger study. (BMC Nurs. 2013 Feb 18;12:5).

Recent feedback

Straightened me after a long shift forklift truck driving.

Jason, Sangenic, Mansfield

Released my frozen shoulder.

Julie, Sangenic, Mansfield

I had a very bad neck and shoulder pain for a few days. 15 minutes treatment made a huge difference. The next day the pain was completely gone!

Dave, Sangenic, Mansfield

It has been 4 months since my first massage with Regina. From the first session I was blown away by the different techniques she used. She always makes notes of how I feel before each session and asks for feedback from the previous session. Due to her knowledge of anatomy she is always able to put her fingers on the muscles that hurt and so works precisely where needed for maximum effect. After each session I leave with better posture and the tension in my neck and shoulders has been greatly relieved. Bliss.

Ruthie, Carlton, Nottingham

Absolutely fantastic. I feel like I have my life back! The tightness in my chest has disappeared and I can breathe better. I have a lot more energy.

Heather, Retford, after a few minutes of Deep Oscillation

Self massage helps osteoarthritis

I had good results for people with knee and ankle problems. I find that releasing tension and gently stretching the muscles of the leg, plus strengthening exercises, usually does the trick. A recent study shows that we can go one step further: self massage of the quads (quadriceps muscles on top of the thighs). There was no difference in the range of motion, but the self-massagers reported less knee pain, stiffness and better function of the knee. (*Int J Ther Massage Bodywork*. 2013;6(1):4-14).

"I remember my first words to Regina "Please don't touch my knees". After facing the prospects of a double arthroscopy and eventual knee replacements, my regular sessions with Regina have now even resulted in me being able to kneel. Arms and legs in some unusual positions and her ability to always put her finger on the right spot are at times unbelievable. Muscles loosened, posture straightened, feeling relaxed, I walk out 6" taller. I can hardly ever wait for my next session. My Advice. Try it!"
Julie, Carlton, Nottingham

Treating very sick people

If you have congestive heart failure, the last thing you want could be a massage. However, a recent study found that exactly that might help you to feel better. Sixty-four people of various severity of congestive heart failure received back massage. They found that not only was the anxiety reduced, but also they were breathing better and the blood had more oxygen in it. This was particularly true for men. There was no control group, the study was based on before and after massage measures. (*J Altern Complement Med*. 2012 Nov 27).

Patients at a cancer infusion treatment centre received Reiki by volunteers, and really liked it. They found it improved their pain, mood, distress, sleep and appetite, and they requested

more of it. (*Am J Hosp Palliat Care*. 2013 Mar;30(2):216-7). Even people who are quite ill, possibly at the end of their life, do benefit from treatment. Obviously it has to be carefully tailored to them.

Massage does ease pain

I find that massage helps me when I am experience pain. I found a study that tests this on 96 young, healthy women. Pain was induced by electrical stimulation. Half of them received a 15 minute massage. There was no difference in pain intensity, threshold, or tolerance. However, the massage group experienced the pain as less unpleasant, and stayed more relaxed, compared to the women who did not receive a massage. (*J Health Psychol*. 2013 Jan 29). If one cannot change the occurrence of pain, massage can influence how we experience it. Of course, massage can also influence the reason why we get it in the first place...

Upping the "feel good" hormone

Oxytocin is a hormone that best known for letting down the milk during breast feeding. However, it has many other functions, it makes us feel good, decreases pain and helps with

social bonding. It has long been claimed that massage increases the level of oxytocin in the blood, and a recent study has shown that this is indeed the case. It also shows that it lowers the stress hormone ACTH. Ninety-five people at University of California in Los Angeles participated, 65 received a 15 minute massage, while 30 rested for quarter of an hour.

Blood was taken before and after. It was found that oxytocin was significantly increased in the massage group, while the stress hormone was lowered. (*Altern Ther Health Med*. 2012 Nov-Dec;18(6):11-8).



Oxytocin (ball-and-stick) bound to its carrier protein neurophysin (ribbons)

MLD and fertility

Women who decide to go along the route of IVF for not being able to conceive, are likely to receive hormone therapy, intrauterine insemination, and/or in vitro fertilization. These tend to be expensive, and carry different levels of short-term and long-term health risks. However, many of the issues that contribute to infertility can be traced to scar tissue, restriction of the fascia and lymphatic congestion in the pelvic region. Manual therapy techniques exist to release fascial restrictions, to mobilize tight ligaments, and to drain congested lymphatics, all of which can be applied to the reproductive system. In a recent case study ten infertile women received 1 to 6 sessions of manual therapy applied to the pelvic region. This included specialised massage and lymphatic drainage. Six of the 10 women conceived within 3 months of the last treatment session, and all 6 of those women delivered at full term. (*J Am Osteopath Assoc.* 2012 Oct;112(10):680-4). These results are very encouraging as they confirm the experience of MLD and massage therapists – and of course many women – and were written up in the medical literature.

MLD to prevent lymphoedema?

Should a woman have MLD after treatment for breast cancer to prevent the occurrence of lymphoedema? There are many benefits to the treatment – having a positive experience after all that medical intervention, softening scar tissue, decongestion of the area, relaxation, TLC, ... But it prevent permanent lymphoedema? Until recently the answer was no, it does not. A recent study in Germany showed questions this: 33 women received MLD, 34 did not receive MLD after treatment for breast cancer. The arm on the affected

side was measured pre and post breast cancer treatment, and again after half a year. Women who had not received MLD the arm volume had increased after six months, while it had stayed stable in the group of women who received MLD. It was found that this applied to all women who received MLD, whether or not they had lymph nodes removed, or different kinds of surgery. MLD in this study also prevented lymphoedema in women who had breast cancer treatment that carries a higher risk of lymphoedema: surgery plus radiotherapy. (*Lymphology.* 2012 Sep;45(3):103-12.). What does it mean for a woman after breast cancer treatment? Have some MLD (in Germany routinely prescribed), it will help with recovery, and it might prevent lymphoedema.

Preventing pre-mature ageing?!?

When do we age pre-maturely? In our society women always age pre-maturely, wrinkles and sagged skin are not considered to be desirable at any age! Never mind, help is at hand, a Russian study on 50 people has shown that Deep Oscillation, or the application of a pulsed low-frequency electrostatic field (PLFESF), did reduce various “bio-markers of ageing” in the skin after ten 15 minute treatments every other day. (*Vopr Kurortol Fizioter Lech Fiz Kult.* 2012 Nov-Dec;(6):9-11). This does not surprise me, after Deep Oscillation the skin definitely *feels* younger, more elastic and vibrant. Have you tried Deep Oscillation on the face? It's wonderful, your face feels fully *alive!*

Another recent study on Deep Oscillation showed that it is indeed anti-inflammatory (reduces inflammation) and *does* help with lymphatic drainage. (*Eur J Dermatol.* 2013 Feb 1;23(1):59-63). Deep Oscillation also helps with Raynaud's disease (spasm of blood vessels in response to cold or stress) as part of systemic sclerosis (a rare, chronic rheumatic disease) in combination with biofeedback. (*Rheumatol Int.* 2012 May;32(5):1469-73).