

What is new at Touching Well

Letting you down gently

This is now an option, if not a necessity, at the end of each session. The reason for that is my new, height adjustable massage table. It is as singing and dancing as you can get: head and leg part go up and down, arms pieces go down and obviously it is height adjustable. The latter feature is the reason for my new table, I started to get back ache from leaning over too much during MLD and deep oscillation treatments.

My talented daughter Sonja sewed the new towels, you won't believe how much the edges fray without the bias binding. Here is a bit of advertising for her: you can commission her for a new coat or blouse sewn from Ikea's finest or other material.

Hot and cold stones

I have recently expanded to offer hot and cold stone massage. In the past I have used gel packs to warm muscles prior to loosening them with massage, so I thought I can just as well do a course and be insured using heat in my treatments.



"I love the gentle warmth of the stones. And the weight of them. It is somehow reassuring."

I have started to call the super relaxing massage "cloud nine" (as opposed to a treatment focussing more on areas of tension – you can have both), the hot stones elevate this type of massage to "cloud seventeen plus".



Melting stress

Massage, particularly the "cloud nine" kind, are marvellous for stress relief, so is foot massage and

reflexology. This has been found in a recent study, which compared fascia therapy, reflexology, hypnosis and music therapy. 308 (more or less) healthy individuals chose one of the above therapies and had a single session. On another occasion the same individuals had a rest period, which served as a control "treatment" to compare to. It was found that anxiety decreased in all treatments, including resting. In terms of overall stress reduction, fascia therapy, reflexology and hypnosis were effective. (Int J Ther Massage Bodywork. 2017 Sep 13;10(3):4-13).

Wishing you a spring in your step,

Regina Dengler

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Preventive chair massage

When I sit for prolonged periods at the computer, I certainly feel it in my neck and shoulders, particularly when things don't go to plan. From on-site massage experience I can confirm that this is true for others. A recent study looked at whether on-site massage or listening relaxing music would help with neck and shoulder tension in white collar workers. 124 office workers in their mid-thirties were randomly assigned to chair massage, relaxing music sessions or control group for four weeks. Pain perception was measured using the algometer (remember from the last Massage Message) and relaxation levels were assessed using changes in the pulse rate before and after the programme. It was found that listening to relaxing music was – well – relaxing, but the level of general tension and the pain threshold stayed about the same. The control group remained unchanged. In the on-site massage group, the pain perception went down, so did the general tension level, thus the relaxation level went up. (Adv Exp Med Biol. 2017 Jul 19).

Having discovered Regina & her amazing magic hands several months ago I would very strongly recommend her.

As a manual therapist myself & an educator of anatomy/biomechanics & human movement it has been a challenge to find someone I trust to provide me with this particular service.

From the very first time Regina demonstrated her skills on me, I knew! Her technical ability is phenomenal & even now she still amaze me with her accuracy, awareness & ability to provide the most outstanding manual therapy service.

Our professional relationship improves the more we work together & I'm able to request specific work but instinctively Regina can often make valuable recommendations as she works with on me.

This kind of service should not simply be used as a corrective or reactive measure but should be used as a preventative measure. Regina is the best in the area & I feel very lucky to have found her.

We pay to service & MOT our cars and yet we can buy a new car!!

Rachel France

Managing Director Biomechanics Education Ltd

Tennis elbow and co.

A recent study looked at the various treatment options of lateral epicondylitis, commonly known as a tennis elbow, both, in the short (6-12 weeks post-treatment) and longer term (6 months after treatment). Study participants were randomly allocated one of three treatments: splinting and stretching, a cortisone (steroid) injection, or a lidocaine (local anaesthetic) injection with deep friction massage. They measured pain reported, disabilities in the arm, shoulder and hand (the DASH scale), and grip strength. In the short term all three groups reported a decrease in pain. DASH and grip strength improved in the short term in the deep friction massage and cortisone injection group. In the longer term all measurement improved significantly only in the deep friction massage group. The authors conclude that “deep friction massage is an effective treatment for lateral epicondylitis and can be used in patients who have failed other nonoperative treatments, including cortisone injection.” (J Phys Ther Sci. 2017 Mar;29(3):511-514). A review of studies on carpal tunnel syndrome found that there is no evidence (due to lack of studies) for long-term benefit for any conservative (non-surgery) treatment. There was (moderate) evidence for electrical therapies in the medium and short term. For myofascial release and trigger point therapy there was evidence for short term improvement, studies looking at longer-term improvements are lacking – and expensive. (Arch Phys Med Rehabil. 2017 Sep 20). If these therapies are shown to work in the longer term, surgery could be avoided more often.

“I have longstanding issues with carpal tunnel and trigger finger on my right hand. At my last massage session Regina spent time massaging muscles around my thumb and my wrist. It definitely made a difference on how sore my hand feels during the day. I feel I have slightly more movement in the joints.” Hazel, Beeston.

Another study of studies (meta-analysis) looked at whether massage is an effective treatment for shoulder pain. The analysis included 15 studies with a total of 635 participants. It was found that massage is an effective treatment for shoulder pain, both in the short and long term. (J Phys Ther Sci. 2017 May;29(5):936-940).

Massage in pregnancy and labour

Massage is good for stress relief, and that is particularly so for Aromatherapy massage in pregnancy. I would have appreciated being in the treatment group of the clinical trial showing this: 24 pregnant women received a 70 minute aromatherapy (with 2% lavender essential oil) massage every two weeks for a total of 10 sessions. For comparison 28 women received standard anti-natal care. They measured cortisol and immunoglobulin A (IgA) levels in the saliva for stress and immune function respectively. It was found that the stress hormone was down and immune function was up immediately after treatment, and in the longer term. Thus this trial shows that aromatherapy massage significantly reduces stress and enhances immune function in pregnant women.

(*J Altern Complement Med.* 2017 Aug 7).

I have written a few times about massage relieving labour pain, I offer a training session for birth partners on how to support women during birth (and before and after) using massage. A recent review of studies shows that massage during labour indeed reduces pain. (*Iran J Nurs Midwifery Res.* 2017 Jul-Aug;22(4):257-261). Not only does back massage reduce pain during labour, but it also shortens the birth and helps women to feel satisfied with the birth experience. (*Complement Ther Clin Pract.* 2017 Aug;28:169-175).

Tiffany Field, Director of the Touch Research Institute in Miami published a review on depression during pregnancy. Risk factors for pre-natal depression include demographic measures (lower socioeconomic status, less education, non-marital status, non-employment, less social support and health locus of control, unintended pregnancy, partner violence and history of child abuse) and physiological variables (cortisol, amylase, and pro-inflammatory cytokines and intrauterine artery resistance). She found that massage, psychotherapy, peer support, yoga, tai chi, and aerobic exercise are effective in preventing pre-natal depression. Interestingly, prenatal antidepressants

(specifically SSRIs) can have negative effects such as internalizing problems and a greater risk for autism spectrum

disorder. (*J Pregnancy Child Health.* 2017 Feb;4(1)).

Surgery for neck pain?

A review in the BMJ looked at the evidence for different neck pain treatments. It was found that surgery was more effective than conservative treatments in the short term, but not in the long term for most of the people studied. Exercise has the strongest evidence to help with neck pain, and there is some evidence that massage, acupuncture, yoga and spinal manipulation helps, too. Muscle relaxants and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are effective for acute neck pain. (*BMJ.* 2017 Aug 14;358:j3221). Another study found that myofascial release is more effective in the short term for people with neck pain than a physiotherapy programme. (*Am J Phys Med Rehabil.* 2017 Jul 3).

Compression at trigger points in the neck can provide immediate relief of pain and reduce the sympathetic nerve activity that exacerbates chronic pain. A recent study looked at what is happening during trigger point therapy with the nervous system and found that the treatment “alters the activity of the autonomic nervous system via the prefrontal cortex to reduce subjective pain”. (*Front Neurosci.* 2017 Apr 11;11:186).

Fibromyalgia and MFR

Over the years I have seen people with fibromyalgia (fibro as they call it), who have been recommended exercise as the sole treatment. A study compared exercise alone with exercise plus connective tissue massage, a form of myofascial release (MFR). Forty people were divided into two groups, both had an exercise programme but 20 also received MFR twice a week for six weeks. The study suggested that exercises with and without MFR might be effective in helping with pain, fatigue and sleep problem and increasing overall health and quality of life. Adding the MFR to exercise is even better in improving pain, fatigue, sleep problem, and role limitations due to physical health.

(*Rheumatol Int.* 2017 Aug 24).

I can't believe my legs!

I have always suffered with arthritis in the knees. Not any more since my first reflexology massage. The constant aches and pains in my legs have vanished altogether. I generally feel so much better in myself.

I always say that I can never relax. That too is no more since the lovely relaxing face, neck and foot massage today. I was so relaxed that I almost fell asleep. I feel marvellous! Thank you Regina. Janet Hoyle, Carlton, Nottingham

Deep Oscillation stretches hamstrings

In the sports world tight hamstrings are usually treated with stretching, foam rolling, massage or similar. All of which can involve a certain level of discomfort as the muscle and fascia are loosened. A novel way of increasing the flexibility of the hamstrings is Deep Oscillation Therapy, or DOT, as the researchers call it (I like that abbreviation!). This study was performed on 29 young (23 years), healthy and sporty (minimum 200 minutes exercise a week) people. They received DOT for 28 minutes. Participants were assessed pre- and post DOT for hip flexion, issues with hips and groin, and perception of change after treatment. Hamstring flexibility did indeed increase after DOT. This increase was positively correlated with the participants perception of the effectiveness of the treatment. In other words, the “objective” measurement and the clients’s perception did match. (*J Sport Rehabil.* 2017 Jul 17:1-25). DOT is certainly more relaxing and comfortable than foam rolling or stretching with tight hamstrings. And tight hamstrings need to be loosened, as they are risk factor for injuries and back problems.

MLD for recovering after exercise?

Some physical methods are reported to help with skeletal muscle regeneration, decreasing muscle soreness, and shortening of the recovery time after exercise. The evidence I have seen is thin on the ground. A recent study assessed how various types of MLD affect the recovery after exercise. Eighty Martial Arts athletes were divided into four groups: MLD, Bodyflow therapy (a type of lymph drainage) and MLD using deep oscillation. They looked at the re-generation of the forearm muscles after exercise. They measured various parameters on the muscles (strength, tension, pain threshold, venous blood flow), as well as markers of muscle recovery in the blood, before and after a muscle fatigue test, immediately, 20 minutes, 24 and 48 hours after the test. Not surprisingly, the maximal strength of the muscles decreased in all subjects after the muscle fatigue test. However, in all three treatment groups maximal muscle strength was higher after recovery time. The athletes were less tense after MLD. It was found that manual methods of lymphatic drainage with or without deep oscillation, improves post-exercise regeneration of muscles. (*Clin J Sport Med.* 2017 Aug 16.).

Recent feedback

I am a more mature lady who underwent Vaser lipo. to abdomen and flanks in February 2017.

I expected a certain amount of pain/discomfort from the Vaser procedure itself, and was sceptical of the 6 sessions of MLD therapy recommended by my surgeon in case it might inflict more pain or discomfort on top of my post surgical discomfort. I couldn't have been more wrong!

My treatment with Regina began only 2 days post procedure. It was apparent that she understood exactly how I felt and what was needed. She explained clearly what I should expect from the technique and ensured I understood what was happening to my body, post procedure.

After 1 session the areas were noticeably less swollen; there was NO pain whatsoever from the massage. Noticeable improvements continued at each session and I felt so good after each that I decided to continue beyond the recommended 6 treatments.

The vibrational effect from the Deep Oscillation massage is both soothing and painless. After 6 sessions my result was pronounced to be 'excellent' by my surgeon at my follow-up; so excellent in fact, that he asked for Regina's card in order to recommend her to other patients.

I researched my after care as thoroughly as I did my surgical procedure and truly believe that the former is just as important as the latter. So my advice to anyone in a similar situation – please don't hesitate to visit Regina for post-surgical (or any massage) therapy.

I am now having massage treatment on other unrelated muscular pain and find Regina's techniques here to be most beneficial too.

Carol, Nottingham

