

What is new at Touching Well

Guess what is new at Touching Well? I am physically distancing, that means seeing no clients in person. I have spent the last couple of weeks cancelling my clients, trying to speak to all of them. I have also set up Skype and Zoom, at the weekend I hosted my first Zoom meeting. And I have worked on the **Massage Message**, which is ready a month early.

I am certainly missing my regular treatments, don't you? I would like to offer on-line sessions. We can do everything apart from the actual treatment on-line, obviously virtual touch is not quite the same. We can cover self-help techniques, such as stretches and self-massage. Many issues are eased by a chat and a few stretches.

Now, having talked about stretches, I would like to give you general tips:

They should "feel good" and not hurt. Some may feel a little uncomfortable or stinging (that is the fascia unsticking).

Go slowly. Give your fascia time to lengthen. Breathe. Hold for 10-12 seconds. Then move gently for a

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slightly different stretch.

Stay safe, hold on if needed.

Be creative, playful.

Notice how you are feeling. Go with your body. Be kind to yourself.

I will endeavor to put stretches and self-care tips on my website, Touching Well's top tips. Here is the first one, neck stretches.

Sit or stand upright, lift up from your chest, tuck your chin in slightly.

Slowly turn your head to one side, hold when you can't turn any further, attempt to look behind you. Hold. For extra interest move your jaw, open and close, screw up your face, big slow movements. Turn your head to the other side, and do the same. Notice the difference.



Now bring one ear to the near shoulder, let the other shoulder drop. Wait. Next bend your arm at the wrist and stretch your arm out, imagining that it is elongating like a telescope. Hold. Place your hand just above your ear and let the weight of your arm deepen the stretch. Don't yank or pull. Fine-tune the stretch with small movements until you find the point that feels really good.

Slowly nod. Make sure to tuck in your chin. Interlace your fingers and place them at the highest point of your head. Feel the weight of your arms. Try small movements from side to side. Uncurl, look up, open your chest.



To finish, roll your shoulders, shake out, put some music on, move about. Or go back to what you need to do.

Wishing you a spring in your step,

Regina Dengler



Long sitting → muscle stiffness.

You may have noticed yourself, long periods of sitting down are not good for your back - you tend to feel quite uncomfortable after a while. You also feel stiff - at least I do after an extended period at the computer.

A study looked at whether a roller massage of the back helped with muscle stiffness. Muscle stiffness was

measured in 59 office-workers, before, after sitting and after “intervention”. They did their usual desk work for four and a half hours (a long time without a break!) and then half had a roller massage for 8 minutes and half were standing for eight minutes. Surprise, surprise, the back was stiffer after 270 minutes of sitting. The standing did not change that. However, after the roller massage the back was even slightly looser than before they started sitting down. “This study indicates that short-duration tissue manipulation can be an effective active break between prolonged sitting periods to prevent musculoskeletal issues, such as musculoskeletal discomfort and back pain.” (Appl Ergon. 2020 Jan;82:102947).

The roller massage sounds like a good idea to me. I use the roller a lot on myself, particularly at the moment where a massage from a professional is not possible due to the lockdown. The other advice is not to sit for too long periods, have breaks, move about, roll your shoulders, change your focus ...

Stiffness is not related to pain

The aim of the following study was to investigate whether stiffness of the tissue is related to chronic neck or back pain, and if it can be eased by cupping massage.

Forty people, half with neck and half with back pain took part in this study. The researchers used a

myometer, which measures muscle contraction, and by implication, stiffness. They measured first the painful side, then the other side. The stiffer side was treated with a cupping massage (or moving cups), the other side was used as a control. They took four measurements in 5 minute intervals after the massage, as well as 24 hours afterwards. They also asked about pain before and 24 hours after treatment. The results were interesting: the painful side was not necessarily stiffer than the more comfortable side. Initially the stiffness reduced on the treated side, but after 24 hours the

tissue was back to how it was before the treatment. Pain decreased significantly 24 hours after the cupping massage. (Evid Based Complement Alternat Med. 2019 Dec 21). Although stiffness is not necessarily related to pain, however, treating it is likely to reduce pain.

Feedback from massage at an annual Health Fair

Really helpful with sorting out tension in my neck and upper back.

Excellent massage once again. Lovely way to start the day. Would definitely recommend to anyone.

Absolutely lovely massage - could have fallen asleep. Now I feel very refreshed.

Really amazing. I feel very relaxed and energised. My shoulder, which has been in pain, feels so much looser. Thank you.

Relaxing and calming massage. I would definitely benefit from this massage regularly.

Relaxing. Helped me with my sore neck. Thank you.

Really enjoyed the massage. Thank you very much. Professional service.

Restorative. Thank you so much.

Loved the massage, I feel totally different from before I came.

Good strong hands. Perfect to loosen the knots from a day at the desk. Very relaxing. I feel amazing afterwards.

Enjoyed the massage today. It released tension and was invigorating.

Very much enjoyed the massage today. I left relaxed and more flexible.

Was lovely and relaxing and found all the knots.

I feel taller and aligned. Thank you.

Was very relaxing. I could feel the tension leaving me.

We were three practitioners and massaged 60 employees between us.

Massage helps with recovery after running

Forty-eight male well trained runners performed an exhaustive interval running protocol. They also had an incremental treadmill test 24 hours after the run at 3 speeds: 12, 14, and 16 km/h. They were randomly assigned to a massage, cold water immersion or rest. They repeated the treadmill test two days after the first test. There was no difference in recovery time between runners resting or being immersed in cold water. However, those who received a massage did recover faster, and had better biomechanics in the repeat treadmill test. (J Strength Cond Res. 2019 Nov 27).

Myofascial release affects wound healing

A study was done in the lab and on the computer. It looked at how wounded bioengineered tendons respond to MFR (Myofascial Release). The researchers cultured the tendon, then injured it with a steel cutting tip. They also measured a MFR technique, first on a real human, marking tissue displacement and stretch. They then applied this to the cultured wounded tendon and took photographs, measured wound size and took loads of other wound healing measurements. They found that MFR significantly reduced the size of the wound. It increased collagen density (good for tissue regeneration) and cell deposition at the wound site. This requires an increase of fibroblasts, as they are essential in the collagen production. (J Manipulative Physiol Ther. 2019 Oct;42(8):551-564).

Gently stretching and mobilising the tissue can help with healing.

Leg massage

Those of us who have had massage know that a massage has systemic (overall) effects, that is why (for

example) a facial is so relaxing. A study investigated how effleurage (long, smooth, rhythmic strokes) of the leg affects blood flow, both locally and more generally. This study looked at two different kinds of effleurage on a randomly chosen leg for five minutes on young (20 year olds) healthy people. They took loads of high tec measurements before, after and 30 minutes after, in both legs. They found that this five minute massage increased the circulation in both feet and legs. (J Appl Physiol (1985). 2020 Mar 19).

Recent feedback

Regina is a magician.

She knows the body very well, including the nerves, tendons and ligaments. She can tell you what is causing the issue by feeling it. She really gets deep down to treat the issue which is unbelievable hence me using the word 'magician'

5 years ago I had a car accident resulting in whiplash to my upper and lower back, which was left untreated, resulting in the discomfort radiating out to my shoulder. After 8 physio, 12 chiropractor and 24 osteopathy treatments only my lower back was better. The other issues were just getting worse over time.

Regina used a combination of techniques including myofascial release to give me 24 hours of nearly complete comfort after the first session, which was absolute bliss, something I'd not had for 5 years. Absolutely amazing.

She always asks if you're comfortable so she is applying the correct pressure for you.

I have been going once sometimes twice a week since December and will continue to go for maintenance once my neck and shoulder are back to pre accident comfort.

If you have persistent issues where other treatments have failed you, I suggest giving Regina a try. I hope it helps as much as it has me. Can't recommend her enough.

Natalie Neale, Melton

Acupressure for breast feeding

There have been a series of studies looking at the effects of acupressure on breast feeding. To summarise, acupressure three times a week of the points CV18, ST17, SI1 increases milk production (Enferm Clin. 2020 Mar;30 Suppl 2:615-618) and three daily half-hour massages increase the level of prolactin (Enferm Clin. 2020 Mar;30 Suppl 2:577-580). In many cultures women receive daily massage after giving birth. This is one of the reasons why.

Massage for Parkinson's disease

The main motor symptoms of Parkinson's are a tremor (involuntary shaking), slow movement and stiff and inflexible muscles. Other symptoms include anxiety and depression, balance problems (danger of falls), loss of smell, insomnia and memory problems. There is currently no cure, the aim of treatment is to improve quality of life.

Some of the symptoms are eased by physiotherapy and massage treatment. The following review asked which types of massage approaches are most helpful. They looked at almost twenty years worth of research articles and found twelve studies. All massage approaches were shown to induce relaxation, this was usually measured by stress hormones in the urine. Quality of life was improved by most massage styles, including whole body massage and reflexology. Non-motor symptoms improved upon different massage techniques. Regarding motor symptoms, classical therapeutic massage, Traditional Japanese (Anma) massage, Thai massage, and neuromuscular therapy seemed to improve motor symptoms, whereas Yin Tui Na technique (a type of Chinese massage) combined with acupuncture seem to worsen motor symptoms.

(Complement Ther Med. 2020

Mar;49:102340).

Massage appears to help with Parkinson's disease, both with the movement issues and the other symptoms.

MFR helps with breathing

This Polish study looked at how "soft" tissue therapy (often the tissues in question are anything but soft and stretchy) affected women after breast cancer treatment. They were particularly interested in breathing and chest mobility.

Forty-nine women took part in the study. These women had a (radical) mastectomy,

radiotherapy, chemotherapy and hormone therapy (the latter two depending on the type of breast cancer). Measurements were taken before surgery, 4 days, one, three, six and twelve months post-surgery, a total of six examinations. They measured lung function (using a spirometer), chest mobility, and pain. All women participated in a year long rehabilitation programme. Half of the women were randomly allocated to receive additional soft tissue therapy, which was a combination of MFR and METs (Muscle Energy Techniques - you are asked to resist a gentle stretch only a little - I use it quite often). They received this additional treatment twice a week for 11 months starting one month after surgery. Not surprisingly, pain, breathing and chest mobility changed significantly between pre-surgery and one month post-surgery for all women in the study. The participants also continued to improve with a reduction in pain, increased lung function and chest wall mobility during the 12 month rehabilitation programme. Differences between the group receiving additional soft tissue therapy and the control group emerged from six months onwards. Women had

significantly improved chest wall mobility and (some) lung function values. (Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2019 Dec 13;16(24)).

Even with a year long intensive rehabilitation programme for women after extensive breast cancer treatment, women gained additional benefit from MFR and other soft tissue techniques. While pain had decreased over the year post-surgery, lung function and chest mobility were further improved with this therapy.

The above study is one of several of investigations of manual therapy to ease chronic pain in women after breast cancer treatment. Overall research suggests that manual therapies, such as myofascial release, trigger point therapy and massage, benefit women with chronic pain after breast cancer treatment.

(J Manipulative Physiol Ther. 2019 Sep;42(7)).



amandapalmer when you are quarantine gardening with @neilhimsself and a group of entangled young carrots brings a stifled sob to the back of your throat. to everybody out there quarantining alone and missing human touch, i am sending you the biggest, tightest, longest heart-hug i can muster. may these carrots show us all the way. i love you.

Risk factors for oedema after gyny cancer

Many patients don't know that they can get lymphoedema of the leg(s) after treatment of cancer in the pelvis, sometimes even years later. A study looked at what makes it more likely to develop lymphoedema after gynaecological cancer treatment.

It looked at records of women who developed lymphoedema post-surgery. They found 711 women across several treatment centres with lymphoedema. Their average age was fifty. More than half of the women developed lymphoedema 5 years post-treatment, in almost 30% the oedema manifested 10 years (or more) post-treatment. Being younger, having had cervical cancer or radiotherapy increased the likelihood of developing lymphoedema. The authors suggested that women need to be informed of the possibility of getting lymphoedema even a long time after cancer surgery with lymph-node removal. The data did suggest that a significant proportion developed their oedema of the leg a decade after the initial treatment (*Eur J Surg Oncol.* 2020 Jan 31). Should you develop sudden oedema have it checked out in case the cancer has come back (hopefully not) and get prompt treatment.

It appears from another study that lymphoedema could potentially be prevented, or at least delayed, by prophylactic decongestive (lymphoedema) therapy applied after gynaecological surgery. In the control group a third of women developed lymphoedema up to one year after a hysterectomy with lymph node removal, in the treatment group fewer than one in six women had lymphoedema. Moreover, on average, the leg(s) were less swollen in the treatment group. (*Int J*

Gynecol Cancer. 2020 Feb 26).

Cellulite

is common in women, it has to do with how we store our fat. Everyone stores their fat in compartments separated by connective tissue, in men it is at a 45°, for women at a 90° angle to the surface of the skin. In men, no matter how fat they are, it is stored in a compact fashion. In women, both lean or not so lean, fat is stored in these compartments with the fat tissue making slight bulges, sometimes giving the appearance of orange skin. This in itself is not a problem, what can be a problem is that it is seen as a problem. Cellulite proves resistant to treatment, regardless to what the internet is telling you. Massage and MLD help the skin to look better in the short term, and you feel loads better, but the basic structure remains the same. Much to my surprise I found a study from a small company my brother used to work for testing a vibration device. They had 40 healthy women testing this machine on the outside and the back of their thighs for 12 weeks. Twenty women continued to use device for another 12 weeks. They took measurements, both subjective and objective, before, after 12 and 24 weeks. They found that the cellulite appeared better after the use of the vibration device, but reappeared when stopped. (*Int J Cosmet Sci.* 2020 Mar 17). The same improvement can be achieved with regular skin brushing and (self) massage to increase the circulation and lymph flow. Then the skin generally looks and feels better.

Recovering after lipoedema surgery

Saw Regina on Monday for an MLD session for my Lipoedema. She was absolutely wonderful, my legs felt so much better and lighter.

What a great start to my week! ♥

Samar O, Nottingham

Women with lipoedema benefit from MLD and compression, but in the long term they often need debulking surgery, i.e. a series of liposuction in the affected areas, usually the legs and hips. Post-surgery they benefit from MLD and Deep Oscillation a lot!