



What's new at Touching Well

Massage has been used for healing for thousands of years. Touching Well aims to use massage within the 21st Century in the context of work, family, stress and modern health issues.

In the last newsletter I wrote about the Iona School Well Being Day in February 2007. It involved a huge amount of work and it was good fun, for myself, the participating therapists and the people who came to it. Apart from the increase in Well Being, it also raised much needed funds for the Iona School.

For this year I am enrolled in the *NO HANDS* massage mastery programme. This is a support group and an advanced massage training programme. Those who came recently might have been offered a "transformational massage" (what a title!) - which has truly the potential to transform your life.

Wishing you a spring in your step,

Regina Dengler

Our deepest fear

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light,

not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves:

Who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel

insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest
the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,

we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

by Marianne Williamson from *A Return To Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles*

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Introduction

Work places have to be efficient and profitable in order to survive in the market place. This is all very well but can come at a price, namely workplace stress and muscular skeletal disorders (another word for bad back, neck, wrist,..). What can you do about it? Here are two suggestions: regular on-site massage (good for both problems), and giving people more control over their job.

This article focuses on the official figures. In the next issue we look at the stress response - what happens in our bodies when we get stressed.

Workplace stress - latest figures

The 2005/06 survey of Self-reported Work-related Illness (SWI05/06) prevalence estimate indicated that around 420 000 individuals in Britain believed in 2004/05 that they were experiencing work-related stress at a level that was making them ill. The Psychosocial Working Conditions (PWC) surveys indicated that around 1 in 6 of all working individuals thought their job was very or extremely stressful.

Estimates from SWI05/06 indicate that self-reported work-related stress, depression or anxiety account for an estimated 10.5 million reported lost working days per year in Britain. This is one million more than working days lost due to muscular-skeletal disorders.

(<http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.htm>).

Absence increased in 2006 as workers took an average of seven days off sick, losing 175 million working days and costing the economy £13.4bn, according to the latest CBI / AXA survey.

The research revealed that long-term absence of 20 days or more accounts for 43 per cent of all working time lost, costing

£5.8bn. In the public sector just over half of absence (52%) is long-term, while in the private sector this was over a third (38%). Short-term absences are a key concern. The great majority of absences are genuine, but employers believe around 12% are suspect and involve staff "pulling a sickie". That means 21 million days were lost in 2006 at a cost to the economy £1.6bn. Looking at all absences, the 2006 research shows an increase on 2005, when the average employee took 6.6 days off sick, and the total number of days lost was 164 million. In 2006 absence cost £537 per employee and accounted for 3.3 per cent of working time. (<http://www.cbi.org.uk>)

Stress, health and control over work

Industrial psychologists discovered that employees' control over their over job-related decisions – affects their health, their morale and their ability to handle their workload. Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham reported, in 1976, that control (in terms of job-provided autonomy) enhanced motivation and growth – in blue collar, white collar and professional positions. Then, in 1979, Robert Karasek found that workers whose jobs rated high in job demands yet low in employee control reported significantly more exhaustion after work, trouble awakening in the morning, depression, nervousness, anxiety, and insomnia or disturbed sleep than other workers. When workers facing high demands had more control, their stress was lower. Karasek's findings revealed to employers that they could improve job-related mental health without sacrificing productivity. That is, organizations could reduce job strain by increasing employee control or decision latitude, without reducing actual workload.

Evidence based massage

When I look through the medical literature I see a lot of calls for evidence based CAM (complementary and alternative medicine). My evidence base for massage is the feedback from clients and my own experience! Nevertheless, here is a brief review of new studies of the more scientific kind.

Massage relieves nausea in women undergoing chemotherapy

The aim of this study was to examine the effect of massage on nausea, anxiety, and depression in patients with breast cancer undergoing chemotherapy. 39 women with breast cancer undergoing chemotherapy were randomly divided into a treatment group, receiving five 20 minute massage sessions, and a control group (five twenty minute visits). It was concluded that massage reduced nausea, while there was no significant difference in levels of anxiety or depression. (J Altern Complement Med. 2007 Jan-Feb;13(1):53-7). Another study showed that vomiting during chemotherapy can be treated with acupressure using pressure point PC6. (Minerva Med. 2006 Oct;97(5):391-4)



Massage for people with burns

This study examined the effects of skin rehabilitation massage therapy (SRMT) on pruritus (itching), skin status, and depression for Korean burn survivors. It showed that the skin healed better and

was less itchy in those who received massage. The massage recipients were also less likely to be depressed. (Taehan Kanho Hakhoe Chi. 2007 Apr;37(2):221-6). Many techniques we use at Touching Well are designed to help with scarring and injury to the skin.

Acupressure for dementia

This study investigates the use of acupressure in decreasing agitated behaviours associated with dementia. Agitated behaviour is found in nearly half of all patients who have dementia. The presence of these behaviours increases the likelihood of injury, weakness, dehydration and lack of sleep and contributes to caregiver frustration and fatigue. The study found that agitation was significantly reduced during the acupressure massage period compared to the conversation (control) period in the study. (J Clin Nurs. 2007 Feb;16(2):308-15)

Aromatherapy for Cars!

The Spanish province of Valencia is planning an innovative bio-fuel project to imitate the successful Brazilian sugar cane strategy by using the aromatic residues of orange plantations for the large-scale production of bio-ethanol. Already now, Spain is the biggest producer of bio-ethanol in Europe, using mainly barley and wheat. Now scientists in Florida have found out that also orange peel can be fermented to bio-fuel: According to them, one tonne of citrus residues produces up to 80 litres of bio-ethanol. The Valencian region alone is supposed to have the potential of 37 million litres of bio-ethanol, enough for half a million cars! (www.welt.de)

Headache and MLD

Chronic tension-type headache (CTTH) is a disorder with daily or very frequent episodes of headache, lasting minutes to days, on 15 or more days a month (180 days/year) for at least 3 months. CTTH is a painful and common experience that negatively influences patient's quality of life. The aim of this study was to evaluate the outcomes of patients undergoing manual lymphatic drainage treatment for CTTH. The findings demonstrate that headache patients receiving MLD reported a reduction in pain frequency and intensity. *Recenti Prog Med.* 2006 Sep;97(9):462-5

De-tox and MLD

A client recently came after a de-tox had gone wrong, i.e. she went on a fairly radical de-tox diet while feeling well, and became ill as a result of it. I found that MLD combined with *NO HANDS* abdominal massage works very well for detoxification. The MLD stimulates the lymphatic system while the abdominal massage helps with clearing out the digestive system. The client mentioned above felt worse for two days, which is not uncommon after MLD, and felt a lot better after this.

Richard's leg

Earlier this year I saw a client with primary lymphoedema in his leg. His leg has been getting larger for eight years, and he had frequent episodes of cellulitis (infection of the tissues, turning into general infection). He had an intensive course of ten sessions of lymphoedema therapy, which was paid by his private medical insurance. His leg has decreased in size considerably, he can now fit into normal trousers. He has to wear a compression stocking at all times. In this way the oedema is managed, allowing for a good quality of life, although the condition cannot be "cured".



Recent feedback

"Thank you so much. That was absolutely amazing. I feel very, very relaxed and leave you full of confidence."

Tricky, Presenter at 96 Trent FM

"Very relaxing. Felt in heaven."

"That was excellent. I am ready to face the afternoon."

"My first massage—and it was great."

"Regina saves my life every time. She has been doing this for years.

It really helps me to be a better independent midwife. Touching Well—Healing Hands."

Kerri-Anne Gifford, NIMS (Nottingham Independent Midwives)

"I have my body back. I feel like myself"

NIMS client six weeks after the birth. *All NIMS clients receive 3 Touching Well massages.*