

# Massage Therapy for Parkinson's

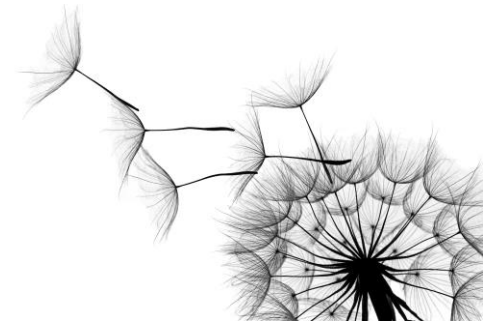
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# Why Massage Therapy?

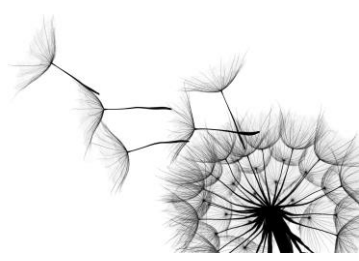


People seek massage treatment for varied reasons

**It's great supportive care!**

- Pain Management
- Injury Rehabilitation
- Manage Complex/Chronic Conditions
- Maintain/Enhance Wellness
- Promote Sleep
- Surgical Recovery
- Improved Athletic Performance
- Hospice Support
- Connection to self and others
- Maintain & improve flexibility/mobility

# MASSAGE MYTHS



- ~~Massage has to be painful/make you sore to be effective~~

- NOT TRUE- very deep pressure causing bruising or persistent soreness may actually lead to chronic inflammation

- ~~Massage flushes “toxins”~~

- Your kidneys and liver do a great job of this function. There is no evidence that massage on its own can do this

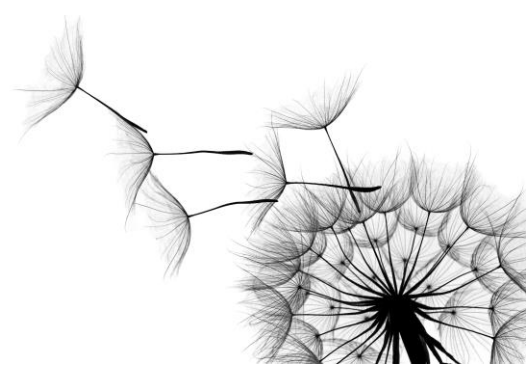
- ~~Massage releases built up lactic acid in muscles~~

- Lactic acid produced during exercise is broken down by the body's own metabolic processes within a few minutes

- ~~You need a massage to “break up the knots/adhesions”~~

- Tense vs. relaxed muscle fibers DO feel differently, and tense fibers often feel better when they are relaxed. This process is mediated by your Central Nervous System.

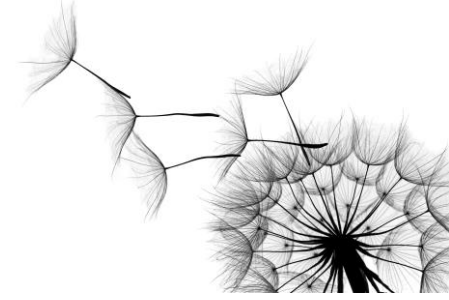
## So how DOES massage help?



*Your skin is the largest organ of your body, and through positive touch, massage therapy allows direct access to your Central Nervous System (CNS) which governs your body functions. A healthy, robust CNS has an increased capacity to direct healing, restore balance, and cope with pain and stress. After massage, people may show measurably elevated levels of hormones needed to promote healthy CNS function.*



## So what does that even mean?



- What current research tells us.....

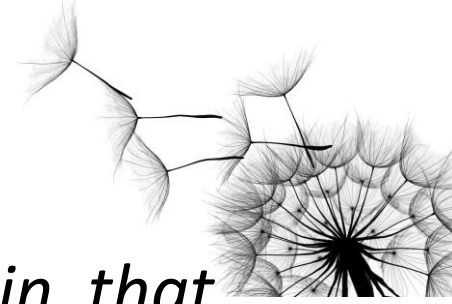
*Positive physical touch stimulates the parasympathetic (rest and digest) nervous system, and down-regulates the sympathetic (fight or flight) nervous system.*

- How do we know that?????????

*We can measure circulating levels of different hormones before and after massage. Levels for stress hormones like cortisol are reduced.*

*Levels of serotonin, oxytocin, dopamine, and endorphins, which are neurotransmitters responsible for feelings of well-being are increased.*

# So what about pain? How does massage help with that?



*“Pain is your body’s danger signal. Pain is an output from your brain that leads your mind and body to the next steps needed to keep you safe.”* Jenni Rawlings

Sometimes a pain response is logical and beneficial, such as when you quickly pull your hand back from a hot stove burner.

Other times.....not so much. Your brain continues to send the pain signal long after the “threat” is gone, and the signal is no longer beneficial.

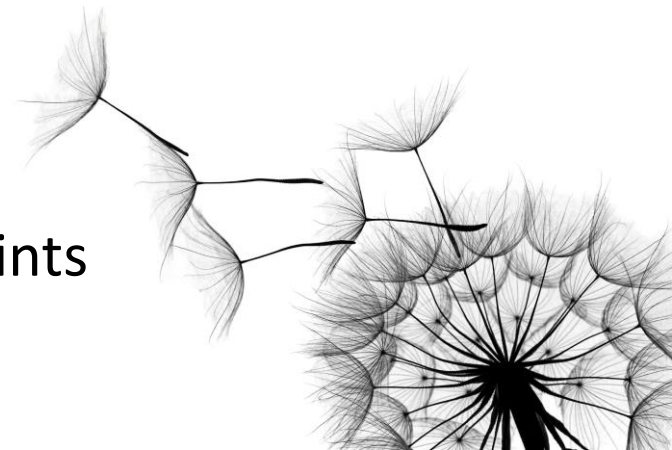
**Massage is one way to help “rewire” your CNS to stop sending a pain signal no longer has a protective purpose. Sometimes these changes are temporary, other times, they may be long-lasting or permanent.**

# For those affected by Parkinson's:

*Massage is beneficial complementary care. It should work in tandem with your regular medical care and is not a replacement for your other treatments.*

**Studies from the NIH and the University of Miami report Parkinson's patients receiving massage experience the following benefits:**

- ❖ Reduction in muscle stiffness
- ❖ Reduction in muscle tremors
- ❖ Improved quality of sleep
- ❖ Improved endurance
- ❖ Increased quality and range of motion in major joints

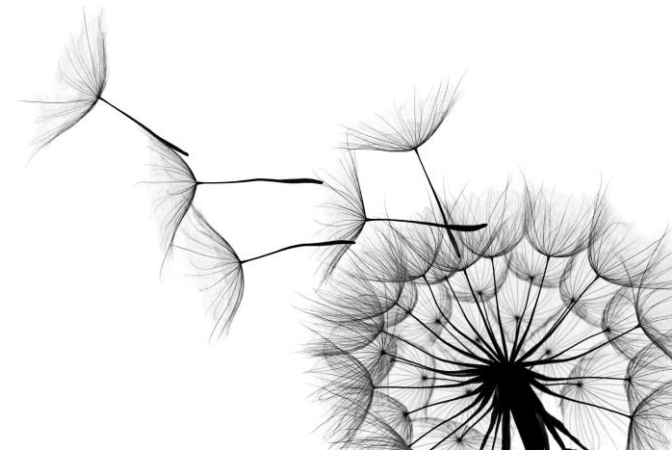


# My Observations as a Massage Therapist

- ❖ Temporary reduction in involuntary movements
- ❖ More balanced muscle tone
- ❖ Improved joint range of motion, better quality of movement
- ❖ Temporary improvement in gait
- ❖ Longer sessions do not always mean more progress or improvement
- ❖ Allow extra time and grace for treatment preparation and recovery

## What my patients report

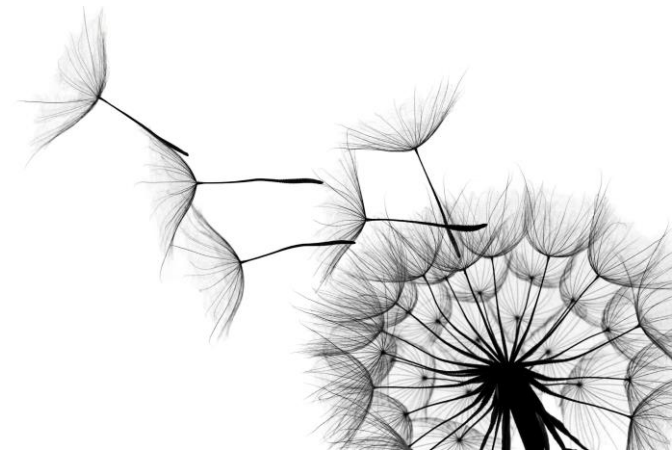
- ❖ Improved quality of sleep
- ❖ Improved sense of well-being
- ❖ Feeling more connected to and in control of their bodies
- ❖ Reduction in fatigue





## Other things to remember:

- ❖ Each person's experience with treatment is unique
- ❖ What works best for one individual may not work for another.  
Communication between patient and practitioner is critical for success
- ❖ More is not always better



# Questions?

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