



# Staying in Touch®

## Are you ready for autumn?

It's time to shift gears and make the move into the busy back-to-school season. Be sure to make room in your schedule to take care of yourself, so you can be there for those who count on you.

This month's content comes from excerpts of two health-inspiring online articles. The feature article addresses aspects of massage that many overlook—the health benefits beyond just feeling good.

The second piece brings attention on how you can improve your health outlook as you age by monitoring your diet.

Sometimes just understanding the importance and the benefits you can receive from massage or a slight change in your diet or your health routine can be the catalyst for adopting new routines that can change your life for the better. So keep exposing yourself to information that inspires you toward a healthier and happier life.

Have a great month; see you soon for your next massage!

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## Surprising Things That Happen to Your Body After a Massage

by Samantha Grindell

[I]t's no secret that massages are a super effective way to destress ... But what do we actually get out of the experience, and what happens to your body after a massage?

Although massages are fairly common—about 25% of men and 21% of women in the U.S. got a massage in 2021, according to an annual industry report by the American Massage Therapy Association—not many people know about the actual reasons they make your body feel so good. As it turns out, the effects on your body are more than just what you can feel immediately; some of the impacts can last long after the actual session. Read on for some of the weird and interesting ways your body and brain respond to a professional massage.

**Your stress levels decrease—** Massages are designed to relax you, but it's surprising to discover they can actually influence how much stress you're carrying in your body. In fact, a 2020 study published in *Scientific Reports* measured and confirmed that even just 10 minutes of massage is psychologically and physiologically regenerative, as it was shown to activate the parasympathetic nervous system. ...

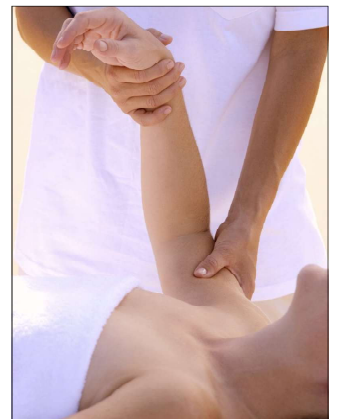
"More research is needed to figure out exactly why massage helps you manage stress and anxiety and what direct chemical effects are at play. The body is complex," says Beret Loncar, licensed massage therapist and owner of Body Mechanics Orthopedic Massage in NYC. Though we may not know the exact how and why yet, it's definitely the case that massages help reduce stress and anxiety, especially over time.

**Your heart rate will lower—** Relatedly, massages have been shown to decrease blood pressure and heart rate, both of which aid in greater cardiovascular recovery. "A typical Swedish massage generally lowers your BP and heart rate, sending you into a biological state of 'rest and digest,' which helps you regulate your autonomic nervous system, aka stress," Loncar says. "This state is also the state where we do our tissue repair." Moreover, a 2021 study conducted by researchers at Harvard and published in *Science Translational Medicine* found that massages were shown to speed muscle recovery and that there is a clear connection between mechanical stimulation (massage) and immune function.

**You can alleviate pain—** The point of a massage is to get your body to relax. However, it has been shown to do more than help you just chill out. "Massage can also help you mediate pain," Loncar says. "Provided it is done correctly, and the massage is not too deep or creating pain itself [...] massage can be an excellent pain reliever." A 2016 meta-analysis published in *Pain Medicine* concluded that based on the compiled evidence, massage therapy should be strongly recommended as a pain management option. ...

That being said, it likely won't be a replacement for any pain treatment, but rather a helpful addition. "Most people might think of massage as a luxury, but for many people,

(See **Massage ...** on back page)



## Massage ...

(continued from front page ...)

it can be a management option that helps them use less medication,” Loncar says. “Always talk to your doctor about this option, and never quit medications without their consult.”

### **You build sensory awareness—**

Massage by definition involves touch. Through that facet alone, you actually work on your sensory awareness, paying attention to how each touch makes you feel. “Many people with trauma of different kinds actually self-select into massage therapy treatment as a safe way to experience touch,” Loncar says. “There is also most likely a very complex sensory awareness process happening, akin to a sensory meditation while you are being massaged. Focusing on sensations in your body can be very good for the mind.”

### **You can help regulate your emotions—**

Though massages come in a physical form, they have long-term emotional and psychological effects as well. “Because stress, anxiety, and pain directly affect mood, managing these things can be a mood enhancer,” Loncar explains. “Your brain and your body have to work together, like it or not, and so treating your body right can make your brain happy. ...”

**Source:** [www.romper.com](http://www.romper.com)

## A banana a day could improve blood pressure and heart health for women

Eating more potassium-rich foods like bananas, avocados, and salmon could protect older women against a heart attack or stroke, a new study reveals.

Specifically, researchers say potassium is an essential mineral that lowers blood pressure, especially among people who consume too much salt. A potassium-rich diet can also combat cardiovascular disease, the world’s biggest killer.

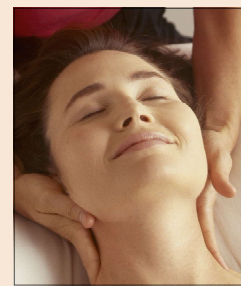
“It is well known that high salt consumption is associated with elevated blood pressure and a raised risk of heart attacks and strokes,” says Lead author Professor Liffert Vogt from Amsterdam University Medical Centers in a media release.

“Health advice has focused on limiting salt intake but this is difficult to achieve when our diets include processed foods. Potassium helps the body excrete more sodium in the urine. In our study, dietary potassium was linked with the greatest health gains in women.”

The findings are based on a study of nearly 25,000 men and women between 40 and 79 in the United Kingdom, tracked by researchers for roughly two decades. As daily potassium intake increased, blood pressure went down in women with high salt intake. ... **Source:** [studyfinds.org](http://studyfinds.org)

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**When I hear somebody sigh, 'Life is hard,' I am  
always tempted to ask, 'Compared to what?'**

**—Sydney J. Harris**

*The content of this newsletter is not intended to replace professional medical advice. If you're ill, please consult a physician.*