Using Massage for Lupus Treatment

by DONNA SCHWONTKOWSKI

What to Know About Massage for Lupus

Massage therapy can be very beneficial to those who have numerous disorders, including multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, fibromyalgia, arthritis, cancer and chronic fatigue. Of course, it's also beneficial to those who have any type of body aches and pains, including headache.

But what about lupus? Is massage for lupus helpful?

Beware of Those Who Are Unqualified

The answer is yes, but always use a licensed massage therapist who knows what's going on.

This may seem obvious, but let's say you have a caregiver who is learning massage on weekends. Should you let the caregiver 'practice' on you? No — lupus is a serious disorder and you don't want to risk internal bruising.

A massage therapist is well trained in what happens in the body in different types of health conditions and is more attuned to the effects of different types of touch on patients' bodies.

It's quite common that someone might approach you as a lupus patient and want to rub your shoulders and neck. However, without the knowledge of the vertebral artery location, they could end up squeezing the artery and temporarily stopping the blood flow to your brain! If you have liver issues, pressing on your liver inadvertently may not help you, but instead will send you in a spin that exaggerates your symptoms.

Massage can be exceptionally helpful to you — but only when you have a trained massage therapist.

What Are the Benefits of Massage?

The benefits of massage therapy on the body are many:

- Boosts immunity
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces pain in the body
- Increases flexibility and range of motion in the joints
- Improves posture
- Decreases depression and anxiety

Three Massages You'll Love if You Have Lupus

Excellent massages that would suit many patients with lupus include the aromatherapy massage, the raindrop therapy massage, and Swedish massage. You are most likely already familiar with Swedish massage, but

perhaps not the other types of massage.

Aromatherapy Massage

Aromatherapy massage is the use of specific types of aromatic essential oils either in the room at the same time when a massage is being performed, or the use of the specific aromatic essential oils in massage oil where it connects directly with the skin.

For example, let’s say you like the smell of lavender. Your massage therapist might see that you are a little irritated and edgy about something so she adds a few drops of lavender to the massage oil. Meanwhile, she diffuses the essential oil of roses into the air. The smell of roses always calms people down and makes them feel more loving. Thus, by using essential oils that smell pleasant she is able to bestow upon you greater benefits.

Another example of aromatherapy used in a massage might be for the massage therapist to use chocolate lotion as she massages you. Everyone loves the smell of chocolate! It instantly makes people feel good.

Raindrop Therapy Massage

Aromatherapy is also an important component in raindrop therapy massage. About nine different essential oils are used, including basil, marjoram, wintergreen, peppermint, cypress, thyme, oregano, and aroma siez.

Drops of these are placed on the soles of your feet and on your spine/back, then massaged into the skin. In between each set of new essential oils, there’s a waiting period as the massage therapist waits for your body to utilize the essential oils.

This type of massage is one that even benefits the massage therapist! You will feel very alert, calm, happy, and have less pain, greater range of motion and a renewed sense of life. The therapist doesn’t dig into trigger points, doesn’t search out ropy areas that need to be massaged out (and may hurt). Instead, the essential oils do all the work — naturally.