



May/June 2005

Volume 3 Number 3

RELAX AND RE-ENERGIZE WITH SEATED-CHAIR MASSAGE

Abbott Northwestern Hospital's Institute for Health and Healing is introducing a new way to provide massage therapy. Called seated-chair massage, it is a simple way to relax tense muscles and energize the body. It has been shown to benefit a variety of people:

- ❖ Employees were more productive and had higher morale.
- ❖ College students fared better on a series of mathematical computations.
- ❖ Nurses rated their pain intensity lower and overall mood state higher.

A trained massage therapist performs seated-chair massage while the client sits in a specially designed chair. Sitting in the massage chair is like sitting in a regular chair backwards – as the client leans forward, a chest pad and face cradle supports the body in an ergonomic, comfortable position. The therapist stands behind the client and works on the muscles of the neck, shoulders, back and arms. Most seated-chair massage sessions are 10-15 minutes. The massage is applied directly over the clothing using no oils or lotion.



If a client is apprehensive about a session on a massage table, seated-chair massage can be a good way to introduce him or her to the benefits of massage. In addition to decreasing muscle tension, massage therapy is believed to increase circulation of blood and lymph fluid. This increases digestive and immune function, improves sleep quality, releases endorphins (the body's natural pain killers) and has many other beneficial effects.

Like any intervention, seated-chair massage affects different people in different ways and is not for everyone. Pregnant clients, those with a history of seizures or those with blood clotting issues may need a doctor's permission to receive seated-chair massage. In those cases, a slight adjustment to the massage protocol may be required. For instance, if a client has not eaten in the two hours prior to the massage, the therapist ends the session with massage practices that bring the blood pressure back up and invigorate the client. The therapist has each client complete a health screening and asks questions to determine how the massage can be of the most benefit.

Some clients may question if they will be too relaxed to return to work. Because seated-chair massage only takes 10-15 minutes, it takes advantage of a physiological trick in the body. When a client receives massage therapy for 20 minutes or longer, adrenaline production decreases, which relaxes and slows the body's internal processes. When less than 20 minutes, the body releases a small amount of adrenaline – just enough to recharge the client's

energy level. While skilled massage techniques help to work the tension out of the muscles, the client leaves the session feeling alert and re-energized.

For more information about seated-chair massage, call the Institute for Health and Healing at 612-863-3333.



REDUCING CHRONIC INFLAMMATION WITH DIET

Chronic inflammation is associated with several chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis and asthma.

Inflammation is regulated by a group of hormones known as prostaglandins, some of which increase the inflammatory response and some that reduce it.

Inflammation can be a beneficial response used by the body as a healing mechanism. It is the body's first line of defense against many bacteria and viruses, helping us to maintain our health. However, when the inflammatory response does not get turned off it becomes chronic and damaging.

The inflammatory response can be influenced by diet. To reduce inflammation:

❖ Eliminate fats that encourage the production of pro-inflammatory prostaglandins. Topping the list of these "bad fats" is trans fatty acid or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil found in some margarine and many

processed baked goods and crackers. Also reduce foods containing omega-6 fatty acid, especially corn oil, sunflower seed oil and cottonseed oil.

❖ Increase your intake of omega-3 fatty acids by using olive oil and eating salmon, sardines, walnuts, pumpkin seeds and freshly ground flaxseeds or oil. The omega-3 fatty acids increase production of anti-inflammatory prostaglandins.

In addition to foods with omega-3 fatty acids, other foods are gaining attention as the anti-inflammatories: pineapple, onions, ginger, turmeric and soy products.

Whether the goal is reducing inflammation or curbing disease, adding these foods to the plate is one more step toward better health.

For more information, contact Carolyn Denton, MA, LN, 612-863-6259 or carolyn.denton@allina.com.



THE ART OF HEALING

Show Features Images of Upper Mississippi River Valley

The Art of Healing is an art show on display at the Institute for Health and Healing's Outpatient Center. Each month a different local artist is invited to display her or his work at the Institute. The art exhibited portrays visions of health, healing and spirit.

Chris Meyer is the featured artist for May. Meyer is a printmaker from the Upper Mississippi River Valley. Her

landscape monoprints of this area exude a quiet, strong presence that conveys a deep sense of serenity to the viewer.

In describing her work, Meyer refers to "kami," a concept that is part of the Japanese Shinto religion. She writes that kami is understood to mean anything that can inspire "a feeling of awe, reverence or mystery. When something is said to possess kami-nature, it has a power to awaken within

us a sense of beauty, joy or fascination with the universe. It may be expressed as a love of life itself. The river and bluff area has had a profound effect on my mental, emotional and spiritual outlook. This show is an attempt to evoke the spiritual effect of the river and the river valley."

To see Meyer's work, visit the Outpatient Center weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



WASIE CORNER

News from the Wasie Fitness Center

THE WONDERS OF WALKING

Beginning a walking program is an easy way to incorporate physical activity into your life. Whether your goal is to lose weight, strengthen your bones, relieve stress or keep your heart healthy, walking can help.

Numerous benefits result from walking at a moderate pace for 30 minutes three times a week. Regular walking:

- ❖ reduces cholesterol and blood pressure
- ❖ burns calories and helps you lose unwanted pounds
- ❖ prevents diabetes by improving the body's ability to use insulin
- ❖ eases the pain and stiffness of arthritis
- ❖ improves sleep
- ❖ builds strength, flexibility and stamina
- ❖ enhances mental function
- ❖ counteracts anger, depression and anxiety.

To keep from getting bored, build in some variety:

- ❖ walk with a friend, family member or pet
- ❖ walk at different times of the day
- ❖ try new routes, including your neighborhood or a park, or walk on a treadmill or at the mall.



Walking is an activity that practically anyone can do. All you need is a good pair of shoes. Just remember to replace your shoes every six months or 600 miles.

As the weather gets warmer, many people enjoy walking outdoors. Here are tips to keep you safe while exercising outside:

- ❖ **Face the traffic.** If you are not able to walk on a sidewalk or path, always walk in the direction of oncoming traffic.
- ❖ **Dress correctly.** Make sure that you are visible to drivers. When it is dark outside, wear light-colored or reflective clothing.
- ❖ **Walk defensively.** Don't assume that drivers will give you the right-of-way.
- ❖ **Vary your route.** Don't walk the same route at the same time every day. This is for your personal safety and also adds variety to your exercise.
- ❖ **Keep right.** This will allow for faster walkers, runners and cyclists to easily pass.
- ❖ **Remove jewelry.** Don't bring valuables on your walk.
- ❖ **Leave the headphones at home.** This will allow you to be more alert to your surroundings.



WALK THE GREENWAY

If you are interested in exercising during your lunch break, try Walk the Greenway with the Wasie Fitness Center. Participants meet outside of the Wasie Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The group leaves promptly at noon and walkers can return anytime within the hour. All levels of walkers and runners are welcome, so bring a co-worker or come alone.





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INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND HEALING: **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Registration is required for all classes unless otherwise noted. To register or for more information, call 612-863-3333.

Special Events

Healing on All Levels with Bach Flower Essences

- ❖ Thursday, May 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ \$35

Series Programs

More Yoga for Beginners

- ❖ 6-week series
- ❖ Thursdays starting May 5, 5-6:15 p.m.
- ❖ \$79

Yoga for the Lower Back

- ❖ 6-week series
- ❖ Mondays starting May 2, 5:30-6:45 p.m.
(not Memorial Day)
- ❖ \$79

Therapeutic Yoga for Cancer

- ❖ 6-week series
- ❖ Mondays starting May 2, 7-8:15 p.m.
(not Memorial Day)
- ❖ \$79

One-Time Classes

Healing Her Heart: Stress Mastery for Women

- ❖ Tuesday, May 3, 6:30-8 p.m.
- ❖ \$10

Personal Safety for Adults and Families

- ❖ Thursday, May 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ No charge

Community Drum Circle

- ❖ Thursdays, May 12 and June 16, 6:30-8 p.m.
- ❖ \$5/session

The Basics of Aromatherapy: Essential Oils for Summertime Use

- ❖ Tuesday, May 10, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ \$20

Multiple Choice: A, B, C or D – Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

- ❖ Tuesday, May 17, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- ❖ \$20

How Can Energy Healing Benefit You?

- ❖ Tuesday, May 24, 7-8 p.m.
- ❖ \$20

What is Integrative Medicine?

- ❖ Thursday, May 26, 7-8 p.m.
- ❖ No charge