



Staying in Touch

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WELLNESS NOTES From Jacky

Hello—

Have you made your plans and set new goals for the coming year? Please be sure to make your own health and well-being a high priority! The steps you take today determine your future.

If you haven't already done so, you can make your life easier and more enjoyable by scheduling your massage sessions in advance. It's so nice to have your next massage already planned and on your calendar, a special time set aside just for you.

Did you realize how effective massage can be toward strengthening your immune system? This issue focuses on how you can help your body defend itself against potential illness.

If you have been wanting to introduce someone to the many benefits of massage, keep in mind that a gift certificate is a great way to get them started. Also, massage gift certificates make ideal presents for nearly any occasion.

Have a wonderful and rewarding year filled with health and happiness.

See you soon!

Building a Strong Immune System

This is the season that we are the most susceptible to an illness such as the flu or a nagging cold. What better time to strengthen your immune system? And what better way than with massage? First, take a closer look at what an amazing and vital job your immune system does for you.

Your immune system truly has a daunting assignment—to defend and protect your body from an environment laden with threatening forms of bacteria, viruses, etc., as well as dangers like cancer. These various health threats are seeking any weakness in your defenses that will allow them to set up house and raise a large family, at the expense of your health.

Understanding the basic functions of your immune system might help you appreciate what a remarkable job it performs. Virtually every cell in your body has specific molecules on its surface that identifies itself as being part of “you.” This enables your immune system to differentiate between you and foreign organisms and to send its defensive team after any hostile invaders.

When a health threat has been identified, your body produces various substances to combat it. For instance, certain proteins (antibodies) will be deployed to attach themselves to the attackers to mark them for destruction. Various cells are present to devour certain infected cells, kill parasites, destroy cancer cells, and cope

with allergens, while other immune responses occur that help to heal or defend the body.

Your immune system consists of an elaborate and complex network of trillions of white blood cells. Concentrations of these cells are found in your lymph nodes, tonsils, spleen, thymus, and bone marrow—on call to defend you 24 hours a day. You may be surprised to learn that the largest immunological organ in your body is your intestine, with 70%-80% of all antibody-producing cells located in your digestive system.



A properly functioning immune system produces just enough response to handle the problem, then drops back to alert status. Just as you can have too little response (as from a weakened immune system), it is possible for your immune system to overreact. An overactive system may lead to conditions such as allergies or autoimmune conditions (like arthritis, lupus, insulin-dependent diabetes, psoriasis, fibromyalgia, or multiple sclerosis). These occur when the immune system confuses the body's own cells with invader cells and attacks its own tissues. So not only do you need a strong immune system, you need one that is well-balanced.

Building a Strong Immune System

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Your immune system is tied to and affected by your emotional state—whether you are elated, angry, fatigued, or stressed. Stress actually decreases natural defenses resulting in less efficient and slower healing, and a greater susceptibility to infection.

So how does massage help your immune system?

“ ‘In one study after another, research is suggesting that massage therapy has a positive impact on immune function,’ said Diane Zeitlin, research associate at the Center for Research in Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Kessler Medical Rehabilitation and Education Corporation, West Orange, N.J.

“ ‘An increase in white blood cells and natural killer-cell activity better prepares the body to fight off possible invading cells,’ said Zeitlin. ‘These cellular changes suggest the immune system benefited from the massages, and these findings fall in line with previous research.’ ”

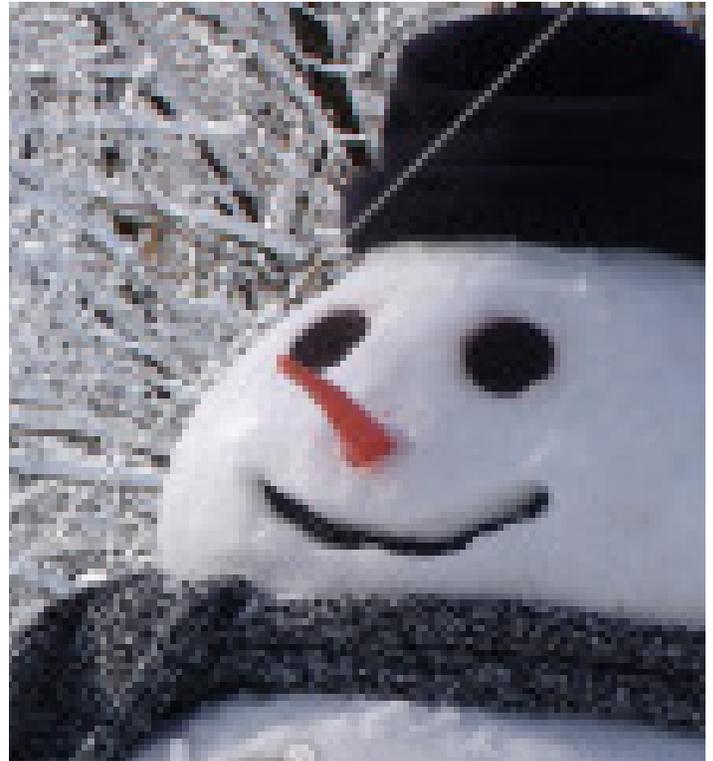
In a study conducted by the Touch Research Institute (TRI) at the University of Miami on women who had been diagnosed with breast cancer, the women received regular massage therapy (three times a week for five weeks), with 80 percent showing improved immune function.

“ ‘These are the first studies that show an effect of massage therapy on an immune function test, which can support the use of massage therapy to alleviate stress, relax muscles and now possibly serve as an alternative

medical practice,’ said Michael Ruff, Ph.D., research associate professor at Georgetown University Medical School.” 1

So give your immune system some help this season with regular massage sessions! Call today to schedule your next appointment.

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