Can Massage Help in the Management of Diabetes?

by DR. DONNA

Diabetes and Massage: Can Massage Help?

Did you know that massage has been recommended for diabetes for over a century? Intuitively, we all know that massage is good because it makes us feel better, decreases anxiety and helps us throw away the cares of the world we carry on our shoulders.

Physiological Effects of Massage on Diabetics

But did you know that there are actual physiological effects you can expect to occur in the body after getting a massage? Here's a list of some of them:

1. **Boosts immunity.** This is a great benefit for diabetics, as the disease itself interferes with immunity.
2. **Lowers blood pressure.** Many diabetics also have high blood pressure, but with regular massage, you may discover you are a lot less reactive to stressors in your life—those things that make one's blood boil. After a massage, it's very difficult to get angry about anything.
3. **Reduces pain in the body.** The added circulation to joints and muscles that may have been deprived is part of the reason why pain disappears.
4. **Increases flexibility and joint range of motion.** Greater flexibility seems to also have a psychological effect, allowing you to feel freer mentally. Increased flexibility physically means you move around easier and may want to exercise more.
5. **Improves posture.** Having better posture changes your mental state of mind immediately and others perceive you are strong, not beat down by life's challenges.

There haven't been any studies yet on the effects of massage on reducing blood sugar levels in diabetics, but these general physiological effects are enough to want to get started with a massage today!

What Type of Massage Can Help Diabetics?

How will you find a massage therapist? The answer is to first know the different types of massage you can get.

Swedish Massage

Many people are already familiar with Swedish massage, the most common form of massage in America. This type of massage utilizes long sweeping movements along with kneading movements and leaves you feeling super relaxed.

Thai Massage

If you are stiff just about everywhere in your body, you won't be after a Thai massage. In this type of massage, you'll be in different positions – sitting, lying down on your back, and lying face down too. The massage therapist

will gently press on your arms and legs as if they were levers with the final result of you having newfound range of motion.

Reflexology

If you've never had a massage in your life and are a bit shy at stripping down to your skivvies, know that only the body part being worked on will be exposed at any one time. If you're still a bit shy, try a Reflexology massage on your feet. You'll be amazed at how massaging something so forgotten – your feet – can absolutely rejuvenate you in 30 minutes and make you feel 10 pounds lighter.

Next Steps

Once you know the type of massage therapy you would like, call the American Massage Therapy Association (www.amtamassage.org) or visit their site to locate massage therapists in your area. Then call the referrals and ask them about the top two types of massage you might want to receive. If they offer them and you like the sound of their voice and feel a connection with them, schedule an appointment. You'll be in for a treat!