

# Body Bliss Notes For A Better You

Spring 2009

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

## Check Out Chair Massage

### You Deserve a Break in Your Busy Day

Cathy Ulrich

Ever been curious about the chair massage area at the mall? Or wondered why your company offers massages in the conference room on certain days? Does it seem strange people want to get massages in an odd-looking chair during a busy workday? Well, maybe they're on to something. In fact, a small investment in a chair massage session can lead to a significant pay-off.

Chair massage--also called seated or on-site massage--provides a host of benefits, including reducing stress, improving mental clarity, and enhancing work performance. And the time investment is minimal: short five-, ten- or fifteen-minute sessions can often do the trick.

### During the Work Day

In short, this study shows what chair massage enthusiasts have known for some time: even a short massage can help relax tight muscles and remind the body to breathe. Although full-body massages are optimal, taking time out for one in the middle of the workday can lull you to sleep, and it can be difficult to schedule it into your day. On the other hand, a chair massage during an afternoon break may be a better alternative, particularly when you need to be energized, so you can better focus for late-day meetings or evening responsibilities. Besides, the short massage session time--often the same as your coffee break--keeps you from



Productivity increase and stress reduction are both benefits of chair massage in the office.

In a study done at the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami, researchers found that when participants got a fifteen-minute chair massage just twice a week, their anxiety levels were lower, their brain waves proved they were more relaxed and alert, and their stress levels were measurably reduced. The study also showed improved speed and accuracy on math computations.

stressing about being away from work too long.

You don't have to undress, you don't need the privacy of a table massage, and you're ready to get back to work feeling refreshed.

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*Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.*

-John Wooden

#### Office Hours and Contact

**Body Bliss Massage**  
**Shanell Swick L.M.T. 12651**  
**541-206-1936**  
**Monday Through Saturday**  
**By Your Personalized Appointment**

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Chair massage can also be a great introduction into the world of bodywork. If you've always wondered why some people are adamant about getting massages, or if you've been trying to explain to a friend or coworker why bodywork is so wonderful, chair massage is an excellent way to get a sampling.

## The Massage Chair

The key to comfort for on-site massages is the specially tailored chair. It's important you feel fully supported and at ease so you can relax for your session. With pads to support your face, chest, arms, pelvis, and knees, a massage chair is surprisingly comfortable. And the chair's design puts you in a position that relieves tension even before the therapist starts working.

Massage chairs are fully adjustable so your practitioner can tailor the chair specifically to your body with just the release of a few levers. The unique design allows your therapist to easily access areas on your body--such as the neck, shoulders, and back--that may be the tightest.

## Is It Effective?

You may wonder how a massage can be effective when the practitioner works through your clothes and without oils.

Chair massage has its roots in a centuries-old Japanese massage technique called amma. A predecessor to the better-known shiatsu, amma is done while seated, and therapists are trained to work specifically on the body's pressure points. Pressure point work, especially on the areas made accessible by the position of the massage chair, can free muscles and relieve stress and tight tissues without working directly on the skin. Therapists are skilled at palpating and working through clothes. In minutes, you feel relaxed, alert, and comfortable as your tension melts away. And, since no oils or lotions are used for chair massage, you can go right back to your day without feeling like you need to shower.

## Your Trouble Spots

Once you decide how long you want your chair massage session to last, your therapist will adjust the routine for maximum effectiveness. These sessions can be very beneficial in treating

work-related issues, such as repetitive stress conditions and muscle tightness caused from sitting in front of a computer.

Be sure to tell your massage therapist of specific concerns you have, such as carpal tunnel syndrome or shoulder or neck stiffness. Your practitioner may suggest a longer session for your next visit to fully address your needs.

## What's the Cost?

Chair massage is an economical bodywork option because the sessions are relatively short.

Typically, a therapist charges about a dollar a minute. While tipping is common practice, practitioners do not automatically expect it. Chair massage enthusiasts will tell you \$15 is an excellent investment in your health--and it feels great.

## Talk To Your Employer

More and more companies are offering chair massages for their employees. Increased productivity and employee appreciation are just a couple of the benefits acknowledged by management. Some companies pay for the services, while others provide space for chair massage and employees pick up their own tabs.

If your company doesn't already offer chair massage, ask your human resources director if it's possible to bring this service into the office. Whether your employer pays for it or you do, you win, because you're able to make it through a stressful week a little more relaxed.

If you encounter a chair massage opportunity at work, at a local fair, or grocery store, do yourself a favor and sign up. You'll be happy you did.



The specially designed massage chair allows practitioners to access chronically tense areas.

# Steer Clear of the Gym

## Take it Easy After Your Massage

Ray Bishop

When booking a massage, consider your schedule, and try to avoid any strenuous physical exertion for at least 24 hours following your bodywork session. Exercising after a session can both increase muscle soreness and compromise the value of the soft-tissue work you've just received. "Strenuous exercise" includes activities such as running, weight lifting, high intensity aerobics, or power yoga classes.

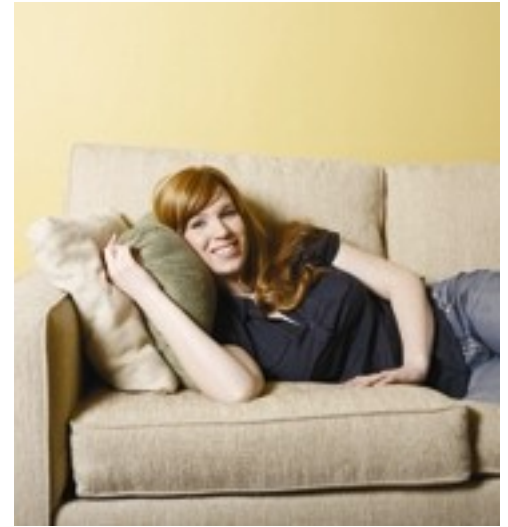
Light exercise such as moderate walking, gentle stretching, or swimming laps at an easy pace is okay for healthy individuals. One widely accepted view in favor of this twenty-four-hour recovery period is that sustained pressure on connective tissue makes it more gel-like. The technical term for this change is thixotropic effect. This state of increased softness lasts about twenty-four hours, so high-intensity exercise may pull or move the tissue back to old patterns or even induce new strain patterns.

Experts usually suggest taking it easy that

evening and the following day. To further reduce any bodywork-related soreness, drink at least two liters of water in the next twenty-four hours to hydrate and flush your system. Take a hot Epsom salt bath and drink gently calming teas such as chamomile or passionflower to facilitate sleep and reduce stress that is so commonly seen as a contributing factor in chronic muscle tension and soreness. If you're dealing with an injury, the guidelines should be adjusted, but these basic suggestions seem to work well for most people.

It does appear that healthy people who exercise vigorously five to six days a week sometimes find even these modest recommendations quite challenging. If you're one of these people, consider working out before your session and then take it easy afterward.

To get the most out of your massage, hold off on the workout. When you do hit the gym again, you'll likely discover your body is more fit than ever, thanks to the healing power of bodywork.



Take it easy and let your massage soak in.

# Shea Butter

## For Your Complexion and More

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Shea butter comes from the nut of the shea tree (pronounced shay) found in the tropics of Africa, primarily West Africa. It offers many benefits as a topical moisturizer for skin and hair, and improves other skin problems and appearance.

As well as providing relief from minor dermatological conditions like eczema, lesser burns, and acne, shea butter can be used as a natural sunscreen and for stretch-mark prevention during pregnancy. Other benefits include the evening out of skin tone, reducing blemishes, and restoring skin elasticity.

Shea butter easily penetrates the skin, allowing skin to breathe without clogging pores. It contains high

concentrations of linoleic acid, which provide skin protection at a cellular level, as well as vitamins A, E, and F, which protect against premature wrinkles. Vitamin F in shea butter also soothes rough, dry, or chapped skin.

Healing though it may be, shea butter undergoes a rigorous path in its journey from overseas to the faces and bodies of your clients. The fruit from the shea tree is cultivated, cracked, grilled, pounded, and boiled. The shea butter is then scooped out of the nut and left to cool.

Properties of shea butter include unsaponifiables--substances that cannot decompose into acids, salts, or alcohol. For that reason, shea butter is extremely

absorbable, even more so than soybean and avocado oils.

There are three types of shea butter extraction and just two of the three end products of these extractions should be used. Unrefined shea butter in its pure form is yellow. Refined shea butter is processed but still contains many of its natural components. Either is fine to use. Highly refined shea butter may well have lost its healing properties and can include such solvents as hexane, which may cause nerve damage. It is pure white and should be avoided. Another note of caution: shea butter is not recommended for people with nut and latex allergies, and some experts also discourage its use by people with chocolate allergies.

*Tough times  
don't last, tough  
people do!*

-Anonymous

It is Spring!

EVERY time you come in for a massage appointment in the month of April, you will be able to draw out of the basket and receive \$5, \$10 or \$15 off, or possibly a FREE massage for that appointment! This does not not apply to Birthday Discounts, however may be used towards the purchase of a Gift Certificate rather than your appointment if you wish. "Eggscellent" savings!!

#### Corporate Chair Massage

If your employer is interested in having a day of chair massage for their employees at your workplace, please contact me. Having 15 minute massages for each employee can help relieve tension, alleviate headaches, boost productivity for each employee, as well as help protect their immune system which can minimize sick days! These are just a few benefits for a short time of bodywork. Please call me to make arrangements and customize a package tailored to your specific companies needs!

## Body Bliss Massage

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THANK YOU!!!

Thank you so very much for your referrals. I consider them one of the highest compliments you can give me for my skills and care. I appreciate you and look forward to continuing working with you and those you care about to keep you healthy and relaxed!



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