

Massage for Older People: The Benefits of Touch

Most of us enjoy a massage to help us ease our tension and soothe away aches and pains. Elderly people can really benefit from regular massage, as it's such an enjoyable and relaxing, non-invasive way to help manage the inevitable symptoms that go hand in hand with getting older.

There's no doubt that a regular massage has the potential to help improve your quality of life, and this applies to elderly people too.

The Effects of Massage on Older People

The positive effects of massage on the health of elderly people are well documented by research. It's been proven that the gentlest of massages can benefit the circulation and nervous system, so if a gentle touch is required for more frail customers, it will still work just as well as a powerful sports massage would for an athlete.

Geriatric gentle massage is known to help stimulate the circulation naturally and without causing any discomfort, so many older people are

happy to give themselves over to the hands of an expert massage therapist when they are feeling tense and in need of healing touch.

One important benefit of massage is that it doesn't have any side effects and won't interact with medicines that the elderly person is taking for conditions that often affect them (diabetes, depression, Parkinson's, dementia and other common conditions.) In some cases, physicians have been able to reduce regular medications because of regular massage sessions.

Helping Counteract the Signs of Old Age

Elderly people often suffer from symptoms caused by conditions like arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. This can often leave them with limited mobility and poor circulation. On top of this, many elderly people can report feeling depressed or even lonely.

Geriatric massage can help boost their physical health, but also relieve the depression that sometimes goes with it. It also gives older people access to comforting touch. There is even evidence that degenerative conditions like Parkinson's have responded to regular half hour massages.

Massage in Elderly People Can:

- Help boost quality of life and self-esteem.
- Improve sleep quality
- Relieve stress, depression and even loneliness
- Provide relief for headaches and other aches and pains
- Restore some lost mobility due to Parkinson's disease, arthritis and other limiting conditions.

How Is a Geriatric Massage Different?

Geriatric massage uses some of the same techniques you'll find in general massage, but tailored to the specific needs of elderly people.

- A geriatric massage is likely to last for less time than a standard massage session, as a long treatment can be too much for an older person. Most elderly massage sessions don't last more than half an hour.
- We use extra gentle techniques; gentle movements are used that are designed to be soothing at the same time as improving circulation. This can be especially helpful if someone has a diabetic foot condition or has a build-up of muscle tension.
- Gentle hands and feet massage to sooth swollen joints, and relieve stiffness.

- Stronger movements, friction and pressure can be used with care to help improve flexibility in larger areas like shoulders.

Massage is a lovely therapy that can be enjoyed by people of all ages – if you know someone who would benefit from massage, but thinks it's not for them because they are 'too old' – treat them to a session and see if you can put the smile back on their face.