

Escape...Renew...Restore your Balance

Summer 2009

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

Helping Children Find Focus

Massage Calms ADHD Kids

Cathy Ulrich

Imagine lying on a massage table. As your massage therapist sets to work, you feel your body relax. Your muscles soften, your nervous system calms. Now, imagine how you feel when the massage is over--relaxed, alert, calm, and content.

Anyone who has gotten a massage understands the many benefits that it offers. Massage is usually reserved for adults--or sometimes infants--but what about massage for kids and adolescents? If massage helps calm the body and improve alertness, how might it help kids with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)? Can children and teenagers who can't sit still benefit from massage?

the rate of diagnosis for girls has been rising as well, and girls who are diagnosed have the same level of impairment as boys.

Kids with ADHD show difficulty holding attention and display impulsive behaviors and overactivity levels beyond what might be expected for their age group. They typically show poorer academic performance, have difficulty in social settings, and can't adapt as well emotionally as kids without ADHD. Studies show that a diagnosis of ADHD puts kids at higher risk for delinquent behaviors and substance abuse. Other diagnoses such as learning disabilities, mood disorders, and anxiety disorders are often seen in the same children.



Many kids with ADHD who receive massage say they are happier and more confident.

Understanding ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, is rapidly rising as the most common psychiatric diagnostic label for children. Anywhere from 3-7 percent of all school-age children and adolescents may have it, and it is one of the primary causes of behavioral problems in general pediatric settings. Nine boys are diagnosed with ADHD for every girl, but

Medical Treatments

Now a household name, the drug Ritalin is the most common medication prescribed for children diagnosed with ADHD. In fact, it's the most common drug prescribed for any childhood disorder. It's been estimated that more

Continued on page 2

*Way Out Wax
all natural Soy
Candles here
in Wilton.
Made with
pure essential
oils.*

-a great gift idea

Office Hours and Contact

Jill M. Russell
Licensed Massage Therapist
603-620-2825
By appointment, days & eves
Gift Certificates
Credit Cards accepted

In this Issue

Helping Children Find Focus
Are Your Candles Safe?
Massage for Old Injuries

Continued from page 1

than five million school-age children take Ritalin annually.

Known to stimulate areas of the brain associated with attention, arousal, and inhibition, Ritalin seems to help improve ADHD symptoms in about 75 percent of cases, but its effects last only as long as it's taken, and it does produce side-effects. Nervousness, headaches, sleeplessness, and rapid heart rate are sometimes seen with its use, and overdose can produce severe effects such as agitation, hallucinations, high blood pressure, seizures, heart arrhythmias, and psychosis. In addition, studies are only now being conducted on long-term effects.

Ritalin, as well as other psychostimulant drugs, can be effective in improving attention span and modifying behaviors associated with ADHD, but kids need to be monitored carefully for side effects and appropriate dosage.

Massage for ADHD

Two recent studies conducted by the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami reported that regular massage therapy can be an effective treatment for kids with ADHD. One study found adolescent boys who received ten 15-minute daily massages were observed by their teachers to be more focused in their schoolwork, and they fidgeted less. In addition, the children rated themselves as happier than those who participated in a relaxation therapy program.

Another study involved kids aged 7-18, 20 percent of whom were girls. Each subject received a 20-minute massage twice a week. They showed immediate improvement in their moods and longer-term behavioral improvement in the classroom. They also reported feeling happier and their teachers found them to be more attentive.

In adult studies, massage has been shown to reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol, helping to mitigate the active fight-or-flight response. Massage also helps improve math computation performance and raises alertness levels, as measured on electroencephalograms (EEGs). Finally, massage decreases depression and increases mental focus. The same effects are seen in children and teenagers with ADHD.

The Details

Incorporating professional massage into your child's routine may help him to develop an age-appropriate ability to focus, a calmer disposition, and even increased confidence. Studies report that two 20-minute massages a week are enough to show significant improvement in ADHD children. Because these kids have trouble staying still for prolonged periods, they better tolerate shorter, more frequent massages.

For massage on children with ADHD, a practitioner generally uses simple, moderate-pressure strokes to the child's head/neck, arms, torso, legs, and back. Dividing time between these areas--say four minutes each--will address the full body and is enough to get the desired effect. Most kids do fine fully clothed.

A comfortable bed, chair, or table in a quiet room is best. For parents seeking

skilled bodywork for their kids, chair massage is a great choice, done with the child fully clothed and for about 20-30 minutes at a time.

In addition, supplementing with home massages between professional sessions can also be useful. Talk to your massage therapist about private massage lessons for you. She can teach you simple, effective techniques to use on your child when frequent visits to the massage therapist may not be practical.

By adding massage to your child's routine, you're giving him much needed physical contact and helping to calm his nervous system, which will pay dividends in his ability to do school work, interact with peers and teachers, and be happier in general. And if you're massaging your child yourself, you'll create the opportunity for a stronger emotional bond between the two of you.



Bodywork helps children with ADHD succeed in the classroom, boosting self-esteem.

Are Your Candles Safe?

How to Choose Toxin-free Flames

Glynnis Osher

There is nothing like the inviting glow of a candle to make us feel relaxed, guide us into a meditative state, or harmonize the ambiance of a room. With all these life-enhancing attributes, it is troubling to think that many candles are toxic and doing more harm than good--but that may be the case.

The Problem

Most candles today are made from paraffin wax, a petroleum by-product that emits toxic fumes and soot into the air. There are up to eleven known carcinogenic compounds in paraffin candles that are considered toxic air agents by the state of California. Burning these candles can cause harm to the heart, lungs, circulatory, and nervous systems, especially a concern for young children, the elderly, and those with asthma or other already established respiratory problems. In addition, the burning of the fragrant oils in scented candles can create significant air pollution, as well.

Another possible hazard: wicks. While

U.S. candle makers voluntarily agreed 25 years ago to prohibit lead wicks, some imported candles may still contain lead. Ensure you're burning cotton wicks only.

The Solution

The good news is, you can still enjoy burning candles because there are safe and healthy alternatives. Conscious candle choices include beeswax and the increasingly popular soy wax. Unlike petroleum, soy is a sustainable and renewable resource. Soy wax is a vegetable by-product that is biodegradable and nontoxic. Many candle enthusiasts prefer soy candles because they burn clean and release very little or no soot into the air. Also, because soy wax is water soluble, clean up is easy and containers can be easily washed and reused. Another benefit of soy wax is the cooler burning temperature, making for a much longer burning candle.

For more information visit the website www.themysticmasala.com.



Candles are for relaxation, not toxification.

Massage for Old Injuries

Ancient Injuries Don't Have to Make You Feel Old

Art Riggs

Injuries such as chronic back pain, trick knees, and sticky shoulders are not necessarily something you just have to live with. Massage techniques might hold the key to unlocking this old pain.

Will Massage Help?

The benefits of massage will depend on the extent of the injury, how long ago it occurred, and on the skill of the therapist. Chronic and old injuries often require deeper and more precise treatments with less emphasis on general relaxation and working on the whole body. Massage works best for soft tissue injuries to muscles and tendons and is most effective in releasing adhesions and lengthening muscles that have shortened due to compensatory reactions to the injury. Tight and fibrous muscles not

only hurt at the muscle or its tendon, but can also interfere with proper joint movement and cause pain far away from the original injury.

Therapists who perform such work often have specialized names for their work--such as orthopedic massage, neuromuscular therapy, myofascial release, medical massage, etc.--but many massage therapists utilize an eclectic approach combining the best of the specialties.

It Works!

A recent Consumer Reports article ran the results of a survey of thousands of its readers and reported that massage was equal to chiropractic care in many areas, including back and neck pain. Massage

also ranked significantly higher than some other forms of treatment, such as physical therapy or drugs.

If that nagging injury persists, consider booking a massage. Be sure to discuss the injury with your practitioner: How did you receive the injury? Have you reinjured it? And what exactly are your symptoms? Often, the body compensates in one area to protect another that has been traumatized, and this can create new problems.

Discuss the issues with your massage therapist. (Sometimes just talking about old injuries can play a significant role in the healing process.) Together, the two of you can work to determine a treatment plan.

*Welcome a new
season with a
Thai Herbal Hot
Stone Massage.
A mini vacation
right here on
Main Street!*

MASSAGE PACKAGES and

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

Buy Four Massage Treatments, take 15% OFF your total purchase.

(4) 60 minute massages....\$240. regular, now \$204

(4) 90 minute massages....\$360. regular, now \$306

Call 603-620-2825 to book your appointment or order a gift certificate...a perfect idea for everyone on your list.

For Pain Relief or Relaxation....Massage Works!!

Now Online at:

JillRussellLMT.com

Jill M Russell, LMT

43 Main Street PO Box 74
Wilton, NH 03086



Member, **Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals**