

The benefits of massage are recognized by many people with Parkinson's disease. No longer found only in exotic spas and upscale health clubs, massage is available in a variety of settings, including at your local mall!

Specific benefits may include:

- reduction in rigidity and tremor
- improvement in sleep
- increase in daily stamina
- reduction in anxiety
- increased feeling of relaxation

How do I find a massage therapist?

In finding a massage therapist, it is important to find someone trained by an accredited school of massage therapy. Tell your medical team, family, or friends that you are considering getting a massage. They may be able to provide you with a referral. You can also find a massage therapist by calling toll free: 1-888-843-2682 or by searching for one on the American Massage Therapy Association website:

<http://www.amtamassage.org/findamassage/index.html>

What type of massage therapy is best for you?

There are several different types of massage. Before your appointment, speak with the massage therapist about the different types of massage he or she offers.

What are the most common types of massage therapy offered?

The most common massages are called chair, Swedish, deep tissue, and sports.

- Chair massages are usually available in open spaces like the mall or a grocery store. Clients sit facing forward in a specially-designed chair. Clients remain fully clothed and no oils are used. The therapist massages the upper body. Chair massages usually last 15-30 minutes.
- The Swedish massage is a full body massage (usually the back, legs, arms, and neck) and was developed by a Swedish physiologist. Because the therapist may use oil, lotion, or powder to reduce friction, the client usually lies semi-clothed or nude under a sheet. The therapist is careful to only expose the part of the body being massaged. It is a great "beginner massage."
- Deep tissue is another common massage technique. The pressure is firmer and more intense than the pressure used in the Swedish massage technique.
- A sports massage usually focuses on one problem area. It is often helpful for people with chronic pain and/or a limited range of motion.

What to expect during a massage

- Your massage therapist will ask you a few questions. They will want to know about your personal health and what benefits you hope to receive from your massage.
- Depending on the type of massage and/or the part of the body being massaged, you may be asked to remove certain clothing. Your therapist will give you privacy and provide a robe or a towel to cover yourself. If removing your clothing is not comfortable for you, consider a chair massage.
- You will be asked to lie down. Communicate any special needs or concerns you have in getting on or off the massage table. Let the massage therapist know if you experience balance instability, freezing, slowness of movement, or orthostatic hypotension (low blood pressure).
- Music, nature sounds or other relaxing sounds may be played in the background. Ask the massage therapist to adjust the music volume, temperature of the room, lighting, etc. if you feel the environment is distracting or uncomfortable.
- Oils or lotions may be used on your skin. Communicate any allergies or concerns to your therapist.
- Massage should not be painful. You may experience momentary discomfort in a particular spot in a muscle that feels like a knot. But if it becomes painful, speak up. Let your massage therapist know if you experience pain or are uncomfortable during your session.
- After the massage, do not get off the table too quickly. If you feel light headed or dizzy, communicate this to your massage therapist.
- It is very important to drink extra water after your massage.