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Giving Us The Cold Shoulder?

By Kevin Bruck

Now that late Fall and the Winter season is upon us, our phones here at the office will soon begin ringing with cries for help. The most common plea we will hear is relief from tight, sore, and aching backs, especially after any snow storms. Usually, these conditions are the direct result of over-worked muscles or muscles that have locked down to protect themselves from future strain and injury. The good news is, in most cases, a simple massage can get in there and release those aggravated muscles and bring you immediate relief. For a few of you, it may take a second or third session to completely eliminate of the pain. (Now is a good time to mention to everyone that you can go to our website at www.rrmessagesyork.com, click on Newsletters, and then click on the *January/February 2007* issue, to re-read the article on page 4 called "Shovel Sauve" to refresh your memories on ways to avoid those aching backs when shoveling snow.) The second most common complaint we hear in the winter is "Frozen Shoulder."

If you have never had "Frozen Shoulder," than you might mistakenly believe that the "frozen" part has something to do with the cold weather outside. It doesn't! Frozen shoulder can happen any time throughout the year. It just happens that winter weather condition cause us to do activities (such as shoveling) that will aggravate other shoulder conditions with then lead to the frozen shoulder condition.

Let me begin this article with the physical or mechanical components for frozen shoulders. The physiology in a frozen shoulder, often diagnosed as "adhesive capsulitis," is when the client is unable to move the shoulder through full pain free range of motion, especially into the positions of flexion,

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abduction, and external rotation. Sometimes this occurs following a minor injury such as a rotator cuff injury, or bursitis, or bicipital tendinitis. Sometimes the client just wakes up with a frozen shoulder without any specific physical trauma. There is almost a super gluing inside the ball and socket joint of the shoulder and there is an abrupt bone on bone end feel from adhesions inside the joint.

Medical massage can balance out the muscle groups around the shoulder, reduce the scar tissue in the injured areas, eliminate trigger points and correct the soft tissue component. This is done using disciplines including functional assessment, myofascial release, neuromuscular therapy, frictioning to areas of scar tissue, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (P.N.F.) stretching, etc. The application of heat also helps to gently melt the adhesions gluing the humerus (upper arm bone) to the scapula (shoulder bone). The work must be very systematic, applied pain free, and focused on structural integration.

If our schedule permits, we try to get the client in several times within a short period of time to help keep the muscles loose and encourage healing. In most cases, we are able to restore full range of motion within 3-4 sessions. If the shoulder has been frozen for a while, it will take longer to reverse and correct the condition.

Unfortunately, we can't ALWAYS be miracle workers and surgery may be required. Surgical intervention involves putting the patient to

Battling Depression

By Laura Laws

Touch can have a powerful positive emotional effect on a person. We touch each other to console, to show affection and to establish rapport—touch has been a vital part of communicating with others throughout human history. For someone suffering from a depressive disorder, this connection can be a wonderful first step toward the restoration of emotional balance and health.



A depressive disorder is a syndrome (group of symptoms) that reflects a sad mood exceeding normal sadness or grief. More specifically, the sadness of depression is characterized by a greater intensity and duration and by more severe symptoms and functional disabilities than is normal.

Depression symptoms are characterized not only by negative thoughts, moods, and behaviors, but also by specific changes in bodily functions (for example, irregular eating, sleeping, crying spells, and decreased libido). The functional changes of clinical depression are often called neurovegetative signs. This means that the nervous system changes within the brain cause many physical changes that may result in diminished activity and participation.

Unfortunately, it is not fully known what exactly causes clinical depression. There are numerous theories about causes such as biological and genetic factors, environmental influences, and childhood or developmental events. However, it is generally believed that clinical depression is most often caused by the influence of more than just one or two factors. For instance, a person whose mother had recurrent major depression may have inherited a vulnerability to developing clinical depression (genetic influence). This combined with how the person thinks about him- or herself (psychological influence) in response to the stress of going through a divorce (environmental influence), may put him or

her at a greater risk for developing depression than someone else who does not have such influences.

Some people experience a serious mood change when the seasons change. Many of us notice tiredness, a bit of weight gain, difficulty getting out of bed and bouts of "the blues" as fall turns to winter. However some people experience an exaggerated form of these symptoms. Their depression and lack of energy become debilitating. Work and relationships suffer. This condition, known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) may affect over 10 million Americans while the milder, "Winter Blues" may affect a larger number of individuals.

There are various estimates, but it seems to be fair to say that about one in five women and one in ten men will fall prey to major, paralyzing depression at some time in their life. Symptoms vary from one patient to another and frequently include sadness, sexual dysfunction, major changes in weight, appetite, energy level or sleep schedule. A depressed person may harbor recurring thoughts of suicide or death and feel worthless, hopeless, empty and inexplicably guilty. Depressed persons often turn to drugs or alcohol in an attempt to alleviate these symptoms.

Many treatments are currently available for the depressed individual. In addition to prescribed medicines (such as Prozac, Zoloft, or Wellbutin), psychological and behavioral therapies, massage has many positive effects on depressed patients. A great deal of research is being conducted to determine to what extent massage may be used in order to attenuate some of the worst symptoms of depression.



Much of the mainstream medical community has traditionally rejected massage as a treatment for depression, but that attitude is changing. A growing body of medical research is beginning to lead to the conclusion that massage can have a powerful effect in reducing the symptoms of depression. The jury is still out as to how large a role massage can have in helping the depressed patient, but many

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Client Testimonial

George A. from York says.....

I was a victim of a physical assault last year. From the time of the incident up to my first visit to R&R Massages of York I experienced a great deal of aching discomfort in my right shoulder and neck area. I self treated using alternating hot and cold applications, O.T.C. [over the counter] pain medications and anti-inflammatory ointments, gels, and trying remedies, recommended by others. Each time I tried a new treatment I was anxiously awaiting relief but to no avail.

As time progressed, the stiffness in my neck and aching in my shoulder hindered me from turning my head from side to side while driving or parking my car. I would turn my upper body in an attempt to Parallel Park. My neck would make a crunching sound when I would attempt to turn my head. My ability to lift my right arm above my head required the assistance of my left arm pushing my right arm to accomplish the lifting action. Bedtime offered no relief- just more negotiation with the villain. I was unable to lay on my right side as this would only aggravate the problem.

“My neck made a crunching sound when I would attempt to turn my head.”

The April speaker at our Diabetes Support Group was Mr. Kevin Bruck speaking on massage therapy. Up to this point in my life I never considered massage therapy as a legitimate form of treatment for the common man. In my mind this activity was for the rich and famous or for those Olympian heroes! Neither of which I am, I might say! But, I listened to Kevin’s presentation and it made me rethink the possible value to my neck and shoulder pain.

I scheduled my first appointment and was somewhat intimidated by the thought of having a stranger touching me and will this really help, kept surfacing in my mind.

At the end of the first hour of treatment, I was hooked! Kevin had worked wonders.....my stiffness had lessened, the over all discomfort had also improved. I have returned on a regular basis and am presently able to turn my head side to side effortlessly. I can raise my arm without any assistance and I can once again fall asleep lying on my right side.

In conclusion, I am very grateful for Kevin’s patience, his professional manner, and of course his massage skills. I would be amiss if I would not say, “Thank you” for my new pain free life.

Cold Shoulder

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sleep under anesthesia, and then working to pry the shoulder capsule free. The disadvantage of surgery is muscles often get cut or torn in the prying process. Though they are surgically repaired, the healing process is long and intense, and rarely leads to complete restoration. Even if full range of motion is restored, the shoulder never regains the strength and stability it once had.

There is also a huge nutritional aspect I feel may contribute to adhesive capsulitis in diabetics. Severe diabetics are often prescribed increased calcium supplements as part of their regiment of pills and insulin. I believe the increased calcium combined with the more sedentary lifestyle characteristic of severe diabetics may actually increase the adhesions in the joints. This would explain why they are much more prone to frozen hips and shoulders than is the general population.

DEPRESSION

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physicians and psychologists are seeing massage as a useful tool to help the depressed patient. Andrew Vickers, a researcher formerly with the Research Council for Complementary Medicine who carried out research into the value of complementary medicines in psychological health problems, said it's far too simplistic to say massage can cure depression or other diseases, but it can help us to cope better and improve the quality of life.

People have believed in the healing power of touch for ages. In many traditional societies, laying on of hands is a vital part of the healing process. The skin and muscle tissues are densely packed with nerves which feed directly into the central nervous system (in fact, they develop from the same set of cells in fetal life). Many researchers feel that this intimate link between skin and brain gives a clue about the origin of the "power of touch".

The most obvious way in which massage can aid with symptoms of depression is that massage feels wonderful and, as previously stated, touch often has an uplifting effect on a person's mood. Very few people deny that there are important psychological factors at work in depression, working side-by-side with physiological and environmental elements to create and maintain the condition of depression. Since the overwhelming majority of clients find massage to be a soothing, relaxing and calming experience, regular massage therapy sessions may



assist in slowing or even reversing the progress of depression.

Depression is frequently linked to physical discomfort—seemingly as cause **and** effect (this vicious cycle may begin with muscular pains triggering a depressive episode or, the seemingly more typical case, with depression exacerbating physical pain). Massage can help to break this pain-depression chain, both by promoting the production of mood-enhancing biochemicals and also by improving circulation, loosening muscles and easing tightness in tense areas.

A fair number of other aids are available to those suffering from depression—exercise, aromatherapy, yoga, meditation and certain herbs (such as Saint John's Wort) have all been shown to be of some use to many depression sufferers. Of course, these treatments alone are not usually enough; professional

medical assistance is almost always needed in cases of depression.

If you (or someone you know) seem to be exhibiting symptoms of depression, it is a good idea to seek the advice of a qualified medical practitioner immediately. There are several excellent websites also available for help. Two that come highly recommended are www.depression.com and www.depression-screening.com. It is important to note that these websites are not intended to replace the care of a physician or psychiatrist, rather intended as an information source.



To put a little more sparkle in your holiday, we are sponsoring a seasonal giveaway. For every massage you receive from November 19, 2007 through December 21, 2007, your name will be entered into a drawing for a holiday gift basket. The basket includes wine, chocolates, and other decorative items. Call today to schedule your next appointment and your chance to win this beautiful prize.

2008 Pocket Calendars

Relaxation & Retreat Massages of York, LLC is happy to announce that our 2008 pocket calendars will be arriving shortly. It was nice seeing so many of you using your 2007 calendars whenever you pulled them out to schedule your next appointment. We did notice, however, many of you digging around to find a pen. Therefore, this year's calendar has a pen built right into the front cover. Finally, for those of you who stick notes, receipts, and other slips of paper into your calendar or checkbook, our 2008 calendar will have a closure tab on them to keep those papers from falling out. Calendars will be located on our front desk and will be available on a first come, first serve basis while supplies last. Please feel free to stop by our office and pick one up as a small thank you for your continued business.



Thanksgiving Day in America is a time to offer thanks, of family gatherings and holiday meals. A time of turkeys, stuffing, and pumpkin pie. A time for Indian corn, holiday parades and giant balloons. As we gather with our families to celebrate, our staff would like to take a minute to express our thanks to all our clients for their support in the past year.



Veterans Day is largely intended to thank *living* veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to United States national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served - not only those who died - have sacrificed and done their duty. We would like to take a moment to honor all of our veterans and thank them for their service to our country. Whether you served in wartime or peace, your sacrifice for all of us is greatly appreciated.

Quote: *“All that we need to make us really happy is something to be enthusiastic about.”*

- Charles Kingsley