



Relaxation & Retreat Massages
of York, LLC
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*Located at the intersection
of Richland Avenue and
Country Club Road*

Understanding Muscle Pain

By Kevin Bruck

Everyday, I have the opportunity to work on 15-20 different clients suffering from all sorts of muscular pain issues. For some, the pain or discomfort may have started very recently making it what we call “acute” pain. For others, the pain may have been ongoing for weeks, months, or even years. This is what we refer to as “chronic” pain.

When treating acute pain, I often have very little trouble searching around and locating the source of the problem. With the proper massage strokes and stretching techniques, the situation is quickly corrected. Often times, the client will feel tremendous relief that same day or total relief if the problem has been completely resolved.

The advantage of working with acute muscle pain is the high probability that only a limited number of muscles are involved. Muscle damage is usually minimal and no “muscle memory” has been established. Once released, the involved muscles usually return to their original tonic state without much coaxing.

This is the primary reason why clients who sustain some type of muscle injury or start feeling any acute muscle pain should schedule to get in for a massage as quickly as possible. This nips the problem in the bud and helps avoid further complications.

Chronic pain, however, is the opposite side of the coin. Chronic pain is pain that has persisted for an extended period of time. When it started out as an acute pain, it probably involved only a few muscles but, as time passed, more and more muscle groups got included in the body’s struggle to protect the injured area. The longer the injury remains untreated, the more the body tightens down the muscular structure that surround the pain’s original point of origin. Often times, the increased tightening causes both additional injury and additional pain. Before long, the body begins to produce a collagenous substance to help reinforce and stabilize the damaged area. We call that collagenous substance “scar tissue.”

Once scar tissue develops, the massage therapist’s task becomes a whole lot harder. A tight

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muscle that becomes entangled in a web of scar tissue can no longer relax, even if it wants too. It is literally trapped within a confined space and has no opportunity to stretch and move. A good example would be the immobility we experience when we have an arm or leg placed in a cast. For those individuals fortunate enough to never have had a broken bone, just try to imagine doing jumping jacks inside a sleeping bag. These muscles, even if massaged, still remain rigid and tight until the scar tissue envelope that surrounds them is removed.

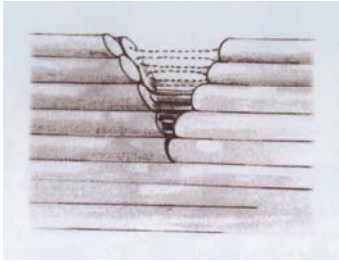
Therefore, when a chronic pain client comes in for treatment, he or she must understand that the condition did not develop overnight, nor can it be resolved with just one or two sessions.

The therapist must literally run time in reverse. In other words, those muscles that were the most recent to tighten up are going to be the ones that will be loosened back up first. It is like peeling the layers off of an onion. As each layer is peeled off, scar tissue needs to be broken down, fascia needs to be released, and muscles need to be relaxed. It sounds simple enough, but it isn’t.

Muscles that have remained shortened and tight for a long period of time build up “muscle memory.” Even if the muscle is released from the scar tissue and is massaged into a relaxed state, it has remained tight for so long that it thinks that is what is supposed to do. Consequently, it shortens back up to its “natural” state of being tight. It may take a therapist several sessions before he or she can get the muscle to loosen up and stay that way.

As the therapist peels away the layers and gets closer and closer to the original injury site, the scar

tissue becomes thicker and thicker, and harder to break down. In addition, the muscles closest to the original injury may now have become atrophied and sustained injuries themselves. When a muscle becomes atrophied, it means it has lost muscle tone and endurance. Even if released and relaxed, the muscle may resist returning to its proper form and function. The muscle may also have sustained micro-tears from having been tight and under stress for so long. Once released, it may take a while for



the body to repair those micro-tears and restore the muscle to full health.

Eventually, the therapist gets to the root cause of the chronic pain. The cause could have been something as simple

as over-strained muscles or a deep bruise ... to more complicated issues such as a muscle tear, a deteriorating disc, an impinged nerve, or a whiplash injury. Therefore, depending on the original injury, the massage therapist still may not be able to get rid of the pain entirely. Other doctors or surgeons may have to get involved at that point. In some rare cases, the closer the massage therapist gets to the original source, the more the chronic pain may increase; depending on how much damage has been done and how well the client's brain has learned how to mask the intensity of their pain.

I wish I could say that massage therapy can cure every pain, but it can't. We can do miraculous things with the body's muscle structure and we can reduce or eliminate a lot of pain and suffering. We can even prevent future pain and potential injury through massage....but we can't fix everything.

Diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, and Fibromyalgia and conditions like stroke, arthritis and osteoporosis further hamper our effectiveness and our ability to reduce our client's pain. Fortunately, there are only a limited few who receive little or no benefit from massage. The majority, however, are living much better lives thanks to massage. Some have been able to come off of pain meds. Others have been able to avoid surgery. Still others have been able to increase their mobility and improve their physical activity level. But, most of all, they all have less or no pain compared to when they first arrived at R&R Massages.

If you received this newsletter and have either an acute or chronic muscle pain, give us a call. Let's see what we can do for you! Our client testimonials (see our website at www.rrmassagesyork.com) are just a few examples of the clients who have found relief from their pain. You may be next!

THE TRAVELER'S GIFT

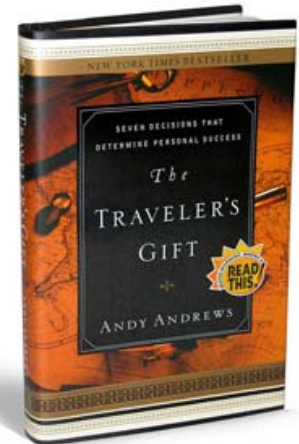
(A Book Review)

As many of you may know, I try to read educational books and materials in my spare time. Much of it relates to the latest changes and innovations in massage or advancements in the medical field that directly relate to medical massage.

On occasion, I also take the opportunity to read books which help to further define my character or help improve my communication skills with others. Over this past Labor Day weekend, I sat down with a book entitled, "The Traveler's Gift," written by the well-known author and lecturer, Andy Andrews. The book is subtitled "Seven Decisions for Personal Success." The storyline was fantastic.

I have read numerous books from authors like Anthony Robbins, Stephen Covey, John Maxwell, etc., regarding ways to improve one's character and achieve personal success. Each author started from his own point-of-view but eventually said roughly the same thing. It is all good advice but still caught somewhere between the metaphysical/philosophical plane and the checkpoint we like to call reality.

Andrews, on the other hand, has taken a story narrative, woven in historical characters from the past, and uniquely introduced seven simple, character altering, decisions that can help anyone improve their chances for personal success.



Some of the decisions introduced I already employed though the reminder helped to re-focus my attention to it and how consistent I am in implementing those decisions.

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Women's Show

Come visit our Booth at the 2007

Women's Show at the York Expo Center
Oct 6th 9am – 5pm and Oct. 7th 11am – 5pm

[Free Tickets](#) available at our office while supplies last



Meet our New Therapist ...Laura Laws

Laura Laws has completed her massage training at the Computer Learning Network in Altoona, PA, graduating in the top ten percent of her class. After graduation, she began working at a physician's office in charge of a new pain management clinic. While there, she specialized in trigger point therapy and deep tissue massage. Since leaving the office, Laura worked in a private massage practice with an emphasis on therapeutic massage and relaxation. Laura is now presently working towards her medical massage certification under the guidance and mentorship of Kevin. She is continuing to take advanced training classes in order to broaden her scope of practice.

A Letter From Laura

Massage has become an important part of the new athletic regimen from sports medicine clinics, to college training rooms, to professional locker rooms to Olympic training. Growing number of trainers believe that massage can provide an extra edge to the athletes who participate in high performance sports. Massage has become a necessary ingredient for a complete workout. More and more people are realizing that a complete workout routine includes not only the exercise itself, but also caring for the wear-and-tear and minor injuries that naturally occur with strenuous movement. The physiological and psychological benefits of massage make it an ideal complement to a total conditioning program.

Anyone who routinely stretches their physical limits through movement such as running, cycling, hiking, swimming, dancing, tennis and other racquet sports, strength training and aerobics can benefit from a massage. There are others who do strenuous activities in a day that is not normally classified as exercise. Examples are mothers with small children, gardeners, and others who use their bodies strenuously in their work.

Regular exercise increases vigor and promotes a general sense of well-being. If done in moderation, it can help relieve the effects of stress, and has been linked to decrease in psychological depression.

Regular exercise produces positive physical results like increased muscular strength and endurance, more efficient heart and respiratory functioning, and greater flexibility.

These positive physical changes occur as the body gradually adapts to the greater demands put on it by regular exercise. The body improves its functioning to meet the challenges placed on it.

Incorporating massage in your conditioning program has many benefits. It helps you get into good shape faster, and with less stiffness and soreness. It helps you recover faster from heavy workouts, and relieves conditions which may cause injury.

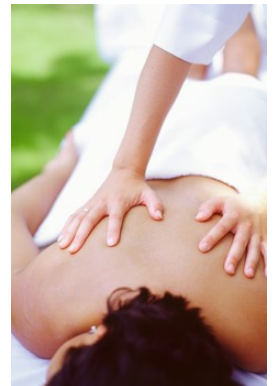
Traditional western (e.g. Swedish) massage is currently the most common approach used for

conditioning programs. It is frequently supplemented by other massage therapy approaches including deep tissue, trigger point work, and acupressure.

Therapeutic massage helps the body recover from the stresses of strenuous exercise, and facilitates the rebuilding phase of conditioning. The physiological benefits of massage include improved blood and lymph circulation, muscle relaxation, and general relaxation. These, in turn, lead to removal of waste products and better cell nutrition, normalization and greater elasticity of tissues, deactivation of trigger points, and faster healing of injuries. It all adds up to relief from soreness and stiffness, better flexibility, and less potential for future injury.

In addition to general recovery, massage may also focus on specific muscles used in a sport or fitness activity. For example, areas of greater stress for runners and dancers are in the legs, for swimmers in the upper body, for tennis players in the arms. These areas are more likely to be tight, lose flexibility, and develop trigger points.

You may also have your own unique trouble spots, perhaps from past injuries. A massage therapist can pay special attention to these areas, monitor them for developing problems, and help keep them in good condition. An experienced massage therapist can also compliment treatment received from other health care professionals for various injuries.



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Even with preventive maintenance, muscles cramp, tear, bruise, and ache. Sports massage can speed healing and reduce discomfort during the rehabilitation process.

Laura presently works Monday – Wednesday but will be expanding her schedule once she locates a home here in the York area. She currently drives here from Altoona.

Client Testimonial

Don M. from York says.....

I was recently diagnosed with Fibromyalgia. I found that I was becoming more and more fatigued and I was experiencing a lot of tightness in my leg, and having difficulties with my knees. Standing and walking was becoming more and more difficult. My granddaughter is a patient of Kevin Bruck, and my wife suggested that I consider massage therapy. I really wasn't very confident in the idea, but I decided it was worth trying. I can easily say that after my second visit I couldn't believe the results. My legs had loosened up tremendously, I am walking much more, and pretty much pain free. I honestly feel years younger. It has made a tremendous difference in my lifestyle.

THE TRAVELER'S GIFT

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The remaining decisions, though simple enough, were ones I had thought of and even implemented at times, but never consistently. I was shocked when I realized the implications of those simple concepts I had been overlooking on a daily basis. Needless-to-say, once I picked this book up, I was hard-pressed to put it back down again.

In a nutshell, the storyline basically goes like this....David Ponder, the main character, has several strokes of bad luck, thus leaving him very down and depressed about his future prospects. During yet another tragedy, David suddenly finds himself transported to a different time and place. Through a series of seven additional transports, David finds himself talking face to face with historical figures from the past. As he talks with each of these individuals, a personal choice is introduced that, when implemented, will help guide one towards personal success.

I don't want to give away to many details and spoil it for you. Let it suffice to say that Andrews did a superb job in writing the book.

One final note, a friend of mine whom originally introduced "The Traveler's Gift" book to me stated that he has ALL of his new employees listen to a CD produced by Andy Andrews where he shares the seven decisions in a presentation format. My friend said that he has seen a tremendous change in attitude among his employees. I have to admit, as soon as I walked into my office the Tuesday after Labor Day, I immediately mentioned the book to MY staff and recommended that they read it as well.

If you do decide to read it, I purchased my softbound copy at Borders for \$12.99 plus tax. I would love to hear your feedback on the book. You can email your comments to KevinB@RRMassagesYork.com.

Enjoy your reading!



Meet our New TherapistKim LeSage-Mercier

Kim LeSage-Mercier graduated from the Baltimore School of Massage in York in 2005, is a certified massage therapist, and a member of AMTA. She's also a graduate of Temple University and retired after 27 years in 2004 as a Registered Dental Hygienist to pursue a career in massage therapy. She enjoys working with people recovering from illness and injury, or just helping them to relax and distress thru Swedish massage, deep tissue or Myofascial Release techniques. Kim is a York county native with an easy going personality and is looking forward to meeting the needs of her clients.

Kim presently works part-time with R&R Massages while maintaining a full-time position at another location. Kim is an excellent therapist and we hope to utilize her services as often as possible. Hopefully, we can get to the point where she can say that R&R is her full-time job and the other location is her part-time job.

QUOTE: *If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves!*
- Thomas A. Edison