

Summer 08 - Appointments Available On-line!

July 08

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

At the Top of Your Game

Sports Massage a Must for Athletic Performance

Cathy Ulrich

"It was my first marathon and I'd been fighting a 20 mile-an-hour headwind for most of the race. When I finished, my upper back and hamstrings were so tight I couldn't stretch them myself," says Colorado athlete Camie Larson. "My husband, Jamie, found me and led me to the massage line. When I got to the massage therapist, she quickly assessed my condition. She worked on my hamstrings, softening and gently stretching them until they were loose enough so I could stretch them myself the rest of the day. She also worked on my back and shoulders, which were tight from battling the headwind. I'm convinced I would have been in big trouble had I not gotten the massage."

Professional athletes have known about the benefits of regular massage for some time, but amateur athletes and even weekend warriors find that massage is important for them, too. Most trainers and coaches advise their clients to get regular massage to enhance workouts, recover from competition, and rehabilitate injuries.

Muscles and Massage

Our muscles are designed to adapt to the demand of strenuous exercise. Athletic training and competition, or even exertion from heavy physical work, tears down the muscles involved. When muscles are allowed to recover following a workout, they increase their number



Regular massages while training for an event help athletes avoid injury and reduce fatigue.

Larson is just one example of a triathlete and runner who includes massage in her regular training routine. She commits to a massage every other week during the heaviest part of her training season and says, "If I get too busy and don't get a massage, I really notice the difference. My legs and shoulders are tighter and it's much harder to recover from training sessions."

of fibers to respond to the demand. This adaptation process builds strength in muscles and in the structural support of the surrounding soft tissues. It also affects their ability to relax.

Regular massage reduces the risk of injury by maintaining flexibility and

Continued on page 2

*Forget not that
the earth
delights to feel
your bare feet
and the winds
long to play
with your hair.*

- Kahlil Gibran

Office Hours and Contact

BLISS European Hands MASSAGE
Eva Templeton
Main:(704) 371-3288 Cell:(704) 578-7899
Monday through Friday 9am-7pm
Saturdays 10am-3pm
www.BlissofCharlotte.com

In this Issue

**At the Top of Your Game
Are Your Candles Safe?
Hot or Cold for Injuries?**

Continued from page 1

range of motion. By helping the body eliminate the metabolic by-products of a workout, massage shortens recovery time and reduces soreness. In addition, massage improves circulation, which enhances athletic performance by increasing the oxygen and nutrient supply to the muscles.

Triathletes and runners aren't the only athletes who benefit. Cyclists and winter sports fanatics are taking to massage as well. A massage therapist can help assess each athlete's problem areas and target these specifically.

When to Get Massage

Depending on the athlete's specific sport and physical demands, massage can be targeted to different aspects of the athlete's needs. Massage is most effective when integrated throughout an individual's training program.

TRAINING

By getting regular massages during the training period prior to an event, an athlete can avoid injury, maintain flexibility and range of motion, recover more quickly from workouts, and reduce fatigue. Depending on how strenuous the training, it may be important to see your massage therapist weekly or even more often, especially during the heaviest part of your training. Your massage therapist can work with you to establish a schedule for your needs.

PRE-EVENT MESSAGE

Many formal athletic events, including running races, triathlons, and tennis tournaments, provide onsite massage. Pre-event massages are usually short (10-15 minutes), and are designed to increase circulation, relax muscle tension, and calm pre-event jitters. A short massage can enhance performance so the athlete stays relaxed and on his/her game plan. For pre-event massage, talk to the therapist about your massage history. Bodies used to massage will react differently than those unaccustomed to bodywork.

POST-EVENT MESSAGE

Recovery is the primary purpose of post-event massage. Athletes push themselves harder during an event than while training. For example, during a marathon most athletes run a greater distance during the event than they've

ever run during their training. A massage afterwards is key. In Camie Larson's case, her massage therapist was able to relax her muscle tone, improve her circulation, and restore her flexibility. This allowed for a quicker recovery and return to training without the stiffness and soreness she would have had otherwise. Post-event massage can be that first assessment for potential injuries, and more serious medical conditions (heat exhaustion or hypothermia) may be identified early and treated promptly.

REHABILITATION

Muscle strains, bruises from contact sports, and chronic soreness need special attention. Whether encountered during training or during an event, massage is a key component in assisting an athlete to return to their sport sooner. Massage therapists can work closely with doctors and athletic trainers

to establish a schedule for therapy. Specific manual techniques reduce scar tissue and muscle spasm, and the enhanced circulation achieved from massage is crucial to healing.

"I'd pay more for an event to have massage available," Larson says. "When I compete in events where there's no massage, I definitely notice a difference the next day. When I'm training, my massage therapist works out the kinks, which allows me to train a little harder. It's the difference between having fun and being a hurting unit."

Whether its professional marathon training or weekend warrior sports, getting a massage can ease muscle soreness, help your body recover more quickly, and get you ready to go again. And, of course, massage helps you deeply relax--an important key to overall wellness.



Getting a massage after a strenuous workout or event helps minimize soreness.

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.

Hot or Cold for Injuries?

How to Know Which is Best for You

Art Riggs

We all know that treating an injury immediately after it happens can help minimize the pain and damage as well as facilitate recovery. But after rolling your ankle in a soccer game, or hurting your back when lifting your toddler, or tweaking your knee when stepping out of your car, what's best? Should you ice it to try to control inflammation, or would heat be better to promote circulation?

While it's difficult to establish a fail-safe rule for when to apply ice or heat, the general directive is to use ice for the first forty-eight to seventy-two hours after an acute injury and then switch to heat.

It Depends

The reality is that many conditions are not necessarily the result of a specific

injury. I call these conditions "recurrent acute" and find them by far the most common: sciatica that occurs when you drive a car; a back that flare up every time you garden; or tennis elbow from intense computer work. In these cases, consistent and frequent applications of ice may prove very helpful over long periods of time, particularly immediately after experiencing the event that causes problems.

Conversely, back or other muscle spasms caused by overexertion rather than injury may benefit greatly from heat immediately upon the onset of symptoms or immediately after exercise in order to relax the muscles and increase circulation. Also, muscle belly pain not resulting from acute and

serious trauma generally responds well to heat, which can break the spasms and release the strain. On the other hand, nerve and tendon pain--regardless of the duration of symptoms, even if you've been experience them for months--benefit from ice.

What Works for You

The bottom line: different individuals will constitutionally vary greatly in their reactions. Some people are more prone to the types of inflammation exacerbated by heat, while others find their bodies contracting and tightening at the mere mention of ice. Try each option and pay close attention to how your body and mind respond, and let your gut be your guide. Ultimately, what works best for you is, well, what's best for you.

He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.

- Albert Einstein

Artichoke Leaf Extract Lowers Cholesterol

ScienceDaily (July 7, 2008) — Researchers at the University of Reading have found that an over-the-counter Artichoke Leaf Extract (ALE) from the globe artichoke plant can lower cholesterol in otherwise healthy individuals with moderately raised levels. Cardiovascular diseases are the chief causes of death in the UK, and are associated with raised circulating levels of total cholesterol in the plasma.

Once plasma cholesterol reaches a certain level, drugs such as statins are often prescribed to help reduce it. Intervention before concentrations reaches these levels may help reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases without the need for drugs. This new piece of research has shown that otherwise healthy people with moderately raised plasma cholesterol may be able to lower their levels by taking this herbal supplement.

During the trial, 75 volunteers were given 1280mg (4 capsules) of an ALE, or placebo, each day for 12 weeks. ALE consumption resulted in a modest but favorable statistically significant reduction in total plasma cholesterol after the intervention period.

For more information check: <http://www.sciencedaily.com>

BLiSS European Hands MASSAGE

1101 South Blvd, Suite 102
Charlotte, NC 28203



Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals