

December 2005



January 2006

A SOLOMON MASSAGE NEWSLETTER

How to Reach Me

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Hours of Operation

Monday & Tuesday

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

3:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Wednesday

3:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Thursday

4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Friday

9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Saturday

3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Massage Menu

Swedish massage

Thai Massage

Myofascial Release

Lymphatic Drainage

Triggerpoint Therapy

Insurance receipts

Gift Certificates

Visa & MC welcome

Compassion

Collaboration

Commitment



MUSCLE FACTS & FYI

If someone said “think of a cell”, chances are you would envision a microscopic circular blob with a nucleus and other mystical working components. Skeletal muscle cells are different. Each cell (or fiber) is long and cylindrical with several nuclei, their diameter is up to ten times that of an average body cell, and their length can be as long as 12 inches! It is separately bound bundles of these muscle cell fibers that comprise a whole muscle – and there are over 600 skeletal muscles in the body (no, I don’t know all of them!)

All muscles generate heat as they contract (includes smooth and cardiac muscle), but since skeletal muscle accounts for at least 40% of our body mass, it is these that are most responsible and important in maintaining our normal body temperature. Women’s skeletal muscles make up approximately 36% of their body mass, and for men it’s about 42%.

Muscles can only actively pull/contract/shorten, but they also have the passive ability to stretch and resume normal length after having been stretched. In addition, there are built-in receptors in muscles, tendons, and joints which respond to tension, stretch and pressure and these act reflexively to prevent injury. Muscles are arranged in opposing groups across body joints so that one group can reverse the action of the other. When you hear the term “muscle imbalance”, it is not the chemical balance we therapists are referring to, but rather, the negative effect that a stronger group is having on an opposing weaker group.

POSTURE (the good, the bad, and the ... ugly?)

Did mother have a valid point when she nagged us to “*sit up straight!*”? If you already have a good and natural posture, do everything you can to maintain it with stretching, strengthening, and good ergonomic sense. Problem posture can have many causes ... stress, pain, muscle weakness, poor breathing pattern or self image, work position or style, and being overweight. With so many people today working at desks and computers and/or sitting in their cars, over time and with the help of gravity, our bodies start to adapt and form to these positions. Repetitive strain syndromes have been prevalent in recent times, but I’ve found that sustained postures create problems just as relevant! People use their hand & wrist to mouse with and poke their head forward to see the screen for 8 hours a day five days a week ... but don’t always realize the effect this has on their shoulder, neck and back. Did you know the average

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head weighs about 12 lbs.? When we sit erect in a neutral position, this 12 lbs of force is exerted correctly down through the spine. This creates a minimum of stress on spinal joints, discs and muscles. When we slump and thrust our head forward, we are in essence, creating a lever with a heavy weight on one end. Our 12 lb head now translates to 36 lbs of force due to the amount of torque created at the base of the neck – no wonder our upper back and neck gets tired and sore!! In my work I often treat head forward posture, shoulders curled forward, upper backs hunched over, shortened hamstrings (thigh muscles), short and tight forearm muscles (mousing), and all are accompanied usually by pain, sometimes tingling or numbness, or headaches.

"I try hard to maintain good posture, but it's really difficult!" True, if your body muscles are already tight, short, full of triggerpoints, and your posture is altered – it is **impossible** to consciously (and constantly) keep your shoulders back, chin tucked in, and head nice and tall! You cannot "will" your body to be properly aligned, and you're actually a prime candidate for injury especially if you engage in sports that require bursts of explosive power.

HOW I CAN HELP

Massage is absolutely necessary to:

- Increase the blood flow to the muscles...this is vital for cellular nutrition/lubrication
- Release triggerpoints and manually smooth out all those knots in the muscle fibers!
- Allow receptors to be reset and for stretching to happen
- Assisted and sustained stretching of the muscles to a new resting length
- Reduce adhesions and connective tissue fibers that have locked muscles/joints down
- Decrease pain

These components usually will have been addressed over several sessions, but for the best long term benefits, it is up to the client to implement change in their lifestyle, whether it's learning new breathing patterns, reducing emotional or mechanical stress, or improving the ergonomics of their workstation. As an RMT, it's my responsibility to give exercises to target a problem area, but this does not replace proper full body conditioning. Regular exercise with stretching and strengthening of the correct areas is required, and I **highly** recommend the book "Core Performance" by Mark Verstegen. Mark trains world class athletes, but this book is written for regular folks like us!

Happy Hannukah, Feliz Navidad, Joyeux Noel, Milad Majid, Zalig Kerstfeast, Buone Feste Natalizie, Srozhdestvom Kristovym, Naya Saal Mubarak Ho. Merry Christmas and love to all!