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| **ADVANTAGES OF A MASSAGE**Massage therapy has been used as a therapeutic measure for generations, and across cultures around the world. Although different types of massage techniques are designed to target specific areas, dysfunctions, and promote natural healing processes, there are some distinctive benefits that can be received from regular massage. Physical benefits range from improved circulation, lower stress levels, and increased flexibility in tense muscles. Mental benefits include a calm mind, increased awareness, better focus and concentration, and increased alertness. Here are the top ten physical and mental health benefits of massage.**1. Promotes deeper breathing** -deep breathing is vital to ensure that oxygen circulates easily throughout your body, and encourages healing and growth in the process. Decreased oxygen circulation results in headaches, tension aches, and random muscle pain that can accumulate into a significant problem over time. By enhancing your oxygen intake, you will naturally promote the release of toxins and negative energy within the body.**2. Improves posture** -although massage should never be used as a replacement for a chiropractic diagnosis, posture can slowly and naturally improve as the spine and muscles around the spine become more flexible and supple. Improved posture also aids in breathing and less tension throughout the body.**3. Improves circulation** -an improvement in both blood and lymph circulation helps your body gain strength and maximizes your energy level. Especially during the winter months when circulation and metabolisms may be slower, massage can help in removing toxins in the blood and encouraging fresh energy to circulate easily. Efficient circulation also helps in muscle recovery, growth, and promotes the natural healing process.**4. Enhances skin tone and skin health** -when using high-quality oils and creams, massage therapists can significantly improve the tone and health of your skin after just a few massage sessions. Skin cells are revitalized, moisturized, and replenished naturally. Choose Vitamin E and natural grapeseed oil bases for maximum benefits.**5. Increases and promotes joint flexibility** -repetitive stress or overused joints can stunt growth and create problems later. Massage helps to relieve stored tension and encourages flexibility of the joints after rest. Any soreness experienced after a massage can be indication that these are tension spots for you, and focusing on these areas on your next massage will increase joint recovery. There are even some special oil formulations to target joints, so do check with your massage therapist beforehand to discuss options.**6. Enhances a calm mind** -encouraging a calm mind creates an avenue for creativity; it is during these times that our minds are most conducive to creative thinking, developing plans, organizing thoughts, and reducing stressful thoughts. Massage can encourage this state of mind by relaxing the entire body.**7. Reduces anxiety** -as a natural deep relaxant, a successful massage can significantly reduce anxiety. Usually, anxiety is stored in some key areas of the body; the lower back, shoulders, abdomen, and neck. By relieving these areas of tension, the mind can 'let go' of anxiety and experience a light, almost freeing sensation.**8. Increases self-awareness** -the mind-body connection is often overlooked in today's fast-paced society. From the minute you wake up, to the moment you go to bed, it is easy to slip into 'mind-only' mode. When you re-establish the connection with your body, you will experience greater ease of movement, a more centered feeling, and an enhanced feeling of well-being.**9. Promotes mental alertness** -although a massage can bring you into a state of deep relaxation, this is also a state of heightened mental alertness. Your mind is relaxed and calm, but acutely aware and in this state, capable of solving even the toughest problems!**10. Increases peace of mind** -with your ability to feel relaxed and naturally aware, peace of mind becomes a necessary result. Peace of mind can be defined as a sense of calm well-being and just feeling good naturally.**11. Satisfies need for human touch** -as human beings, we all need to feel the touch of another human being. This can range from a simple hug, handshake, or a nurturing touch. A massage encourages this type of connection and increases your appreciation for this human need.These are just the top ten benefits of regular massage. Check with your local spa or individual massage therapist to define what you need, and what your body will most benefit from. During different times, or stages of your life, you may need a specific treatment or an individual recommendation. Try various approaches and see what works best for you. Alternative bodywork sessions may also include Reiki, an energy-focused consultation; Chakra-balancing massage, an Eastern approach to energy balance and release of anxiety; or a 'traditional' deep therapeutic massage targeting a specific area. |

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