

Benefits of Massage on Parkinson's Disease Clients

There are many positive effects massage therapy have on people with Parkinson's Disease (PD).

Massage when the therapist is acting as part of a health care team can be a valuable tool not only to maintain flexibility and range of motion but also to reduce anxiety and depression.¹

There is a lot about PD that is not generally talked about online and in texts books that is important to acknowledge when talking about massage therapy as part of a treatment plan. PD is a direct result of the body not being able to get enough dopamine. Dopamine is responsible for small muscle movements, which is why PD patients suffer from the following symptoms:

Tremors or Shaking Bradykinesia or slowness due to the lack ability to hold muscles still and therefore be able to keep balance Impaired walking Hypominia which is reduced facial expression Micrographia or small cramped handwriting

Dopamine is also responsible for a lot of emotional responses. It has been linked to feelings of reward, self accomplishment, motivation, and sleep patterns. Some side effects to PD medications effect these emotions. Compulsion, insomnia, and depression are all common in PD patients.

Massage therapy increases circulation in the body. This is a great thing as it can help PD patients feel both emotionally and physically better after a massage therapy appointment. It is important, however, that any medication changes, even in the dosage, be shared with massage therapist prior to the

appointment. Certain methods of massage are important to avoid when these chemical transitions take place in the body.