



Massage Therapy: a solution to Chronic Pain



What is chronic pain ?

Pain is absolutely necessary to our own survival. It is quite simply an alarm system. Pain is said to be chronic when it extends beyond the expected period of healing – in other words, when the pain remains in spite of treating the original cause.

One person out of four – and soon one out of three as Canada's population ages – experiences what is called chronic pain. In Quebec alone, according to the *Association québécoise de la douleur chronique* (AQDC), **more than one million people are affected.**

Various conditions and pathologies can be associated with chronic pain, including:

- Fibromyalgia
- Low back syndrome (lumbodinia)
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Osteoarthritis (arthrosis)
- Duodenal ulcer
- Ankylosing spondylitis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Gout
- Cluster headache
- Tendinitis, bursitis

IMPORTANT: Precautions to be taken

- Consult your doctor before starting massage therapy;
- You must fill in a health questionnaire;
- The massage therapist must be aware of your pathologies and the scope of your pain;
- If you are going through a period of acute inflammation you must advise the therapist as some contraindications may apply.

The benefits of Massage Therapy*

Massage therapy is an effective solution for chronic pain relief because it takes into account the physiological and psychological factors in pain. It provides many benefits, such as:

- Reduced joint and muscular pain
- Better mobility
- Relief of tension points
- Better blood circulation
- Release of endorphins
- Reduced migraine frequency
- Relaxation, stress reduction
- Increased level of energy
- Better management of chronic pain attacks
- Enhanced sleep quality

There are many massage techniques that can help relieve chronic pain, including:

Swedish: This highly popular biomechanical technique using oil rehabilitates tired, atonic or inhibited muscles.

Shiatsu: This energetic massage uses accupressure with the thumbs, elbows and feet, focused on the meridians and energy points.

Masso-kinesitherapy: This approach is a combination of massage therapy and mobilization techniques applied to improve movement. For people of all ages, from children to seniors who have lost some mobility.

Dr. Vodder's manual lymph drainage: This technique is an effective treatment for inflammation and oedema. It is a very gentle form of massage that encourages the flow of the lymph fluid.

Trigger Points Massage: This technique involves applying direct, focused pressure on painful muscular points (or knots) until the constricted areas are released, thus relieving the pain.

Deep Tissue Massage: This is a traditional form of massage that uses slower firm strokes and pressure focused on the painful and tense areas.

* References: Field, T. & al. (2002): Fibromyalgia pain and substance P decrease and sleep improves after massage therapy. *J Clin Rheumatol*, 8(2):72-6 ; Daniel C. Cherkin, PhD & al. (2001): A comparison of the effects of 2 types of massage and usual care on chronic low back pain: A randomized controlled trial, *Annals of Internal Medicine* 155(1): 1-9 ; Walach, H. & al (2003): Efficacy of massage therapy in chronic pain: a pragmatic randomized trial. *J Altern Complement Med*. 9(6), 837-46 ; Suresh, S. & al. (2008) : Massage therapy in outpatient pediatric chronic pain patients: do they facilitate significant reductions in levels of distress, pain, tension, discomfort, and mood alterations, *Paediatr Anaesth*. 18(9), 884-7.