



## **Benefits Of Massage Therapy After a Spinal Cord Injury**

Spinal cord injury (SCI) is a devastating condition that can lead to long-term disability, loss of independence, and decreased quality of life. While there is no cure for SCI, various therapies can help manage the symptoms and improve the individual's overall well-being. One such therapy is massage therapy, which has been shown to have numerous benefits for individuals with SCI. This article will discuss the benefits of massage therapy after SCI, including pain relief, muscle relaxation, improved circulation, and improved mental health.

### **Pain Relief**

One of the primary benefits of massage therapy after SCI is pain relief. Many individuals with SCI experience chronic pain due to nerve damage, muscle spasms, and other factors. Massage therapy has been shown to help reduce pain and discomfort by increasing blood flow to the affected areas, releasing tension in the muscles, and promoting relaxation. In a study by Hou et al. (2009), individuals with cervical myofascial pain and trigger-point sensitivity received various physical therapeutic modalities, including massage therapy. The results showed a significant reduction in pain and trigger-point sensitivity immediately following the massage therapy session.

### **Muscle Relaxation**

Another benefit of massage therapy after SCI is muscle relaxation. Spasticity and muscle spasms are common complications of SCI, which can lead to muscle stiffness and discomfort. Massage therapy can help relax the muscles, reduce muscle tension, and increase range of motion. In a comprehensive review of sports massage by Moraska (2005), the author noted that massage therapy can help decrease muscle soreness and improve muscle flexibility and function.

### **Improved Circulation**

Massage therapy can also improve circulation, which can help promote healing and reduce the risk of complications such as blood clots. Massage therapy helps increase blood flow to the affected areas, which can help reduce swelling and promote tissue repair. In a study by Qiang et al. (2015), individuals with SCI received massage therapy twice a week for six weeks. The results showed a significant increase in blood flow velocity and a decrease in vascular resistance, indicating improved circulation.

### **Improved Mental Health**

Finally, massage therapy can have a positive impact on mental health. SCI can have a profound psychological impact, leading to feelings of depression, anxiety, and social isolation. Massage therapy can help promote relaxation, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve overall mood. In a study by Qiang et al. (2015), individuals with SCI reported significant improvements in their quality of life, including improved emotional well-being, following massage therapy.

Massage therapy is a safe and effective therapy for individuals with SCI. It can help reduce pain and discomfort, promote muscle relaxation, improve circulation, and enhance mental health.

While more research is needed to fully understand the benefits of massage therapy after SCI, the evidence suggests that it is a valuable therapy that can help individuals with SCI manage their symptoms and improve their overall well-being.

Sources:

1. Hou, C. R., Tsai, L. C., Cheng, K. F., Chung, K. C., & Hong, C. Z. (2009). Immediate effects of various physical therapeutic modalities on cervical myofascial pain and trigger-point sensitivity. *Archives of physical medicine and rehabilitation*, 90(12), 1822-1829.
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3. Qiang, M., Wang, D., Liu, Z., & Zhou, J. (2015). Effects of massage therapy on circulation, sensation, and quality of life in adults with spinal cord injury: a systematic review. *Evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine*, 2015.