

## The Benefits of Post-Mastectomy Massage

The benefits of Post-Mastectomy massage are numerous, and impact the many dimensions of a woman's overall well-being. Post-mastectomy massage can accelerate healing for the breast cancer survivor by being able to reconnect both physically and emotionally with their own body. It can provide a very personal healing and recovery that works closely with one's medical treatment.

Massage therapy can put a patient at ease when it is tailored to her physical and emotional needs. With massage, one is not just treating the physical ramifications of cancer to the assaulted breast but also caring for the woman, and how she has been affected both emotionally and psychologically. Mastectomy massage comprises of a series of gentle techniques designed to create a state of relaxation for the woman. Light massage strokes, myofascial softening and stretch-

ing, acupressure and trigger point, polarity, lymph drainage, skin rolling, and cross-fiber friction can and may be part of the individual treatment sessions. It all depends on the woman's needs and pain tolerance.

A study conducted by the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami's School of Medicine found that massage therapy provides benefits to the breast cancer patient. Following a course of treatment, 3 times per week for 5 weeks, a decrease in depression, anxiety, and pain from the first application to the last was shown. The study group reported feeling less depressed and angry with increased energy. Dopamine levels, the immune system's natural killer cells and lymphocytes increased.

Post-mastectomy massage can provide relief of pain, and restore sensation and feeling in the nerve endings in the area of the amputated breast. Most im-

portantly, it allows the woman to reconnect with her body, to feel whole again. It improves her own self-image, which empowers her in her healing process.

Massage therapy increases circulation through the breast area, which promotes faster healing and helps to minimize scar tissue and achieve the best appearance, optimum circulation and mobility of the shoulder and neck.

Radiation can make the skin fibrotic and tough, leading to the formation of adhesions. Massage therapy can help the irradiated tissue to become more pliable by bringing more nutrients and oxygen to the area and removing the waste products. It also enhances immune system response and increases mobility after surgery.

Massage therapy helps the woman to feel comfortable and accepting of herself. It teaches her, also, how to be touched lovingly by her partner again.

### The Balancing Touch

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*The Balancing Touch is owned and operated by Ruth Jurkoshbek-Stair, BS, LMT. She has been offering her professional services to the Akron area since 1986, conveniently located five minutes from downtown Akron in Historic North Hill.*

*Ruth is a graduate from Kent State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Community Health Education. She is a Licensed Massage Therapist and is certified in Deep Tissue Therapy and Polarity Therapy, graduating from the Atlanta School of Massage. She has extensive study in Craniosacral Therapy, Myofascial Release, Earth and Amanohuna Energy Therapies.*

## Aging Well by Eating Well

By Kathy G. Wise,  
RD, LD, LWC

By the year 2020, half of all Americans will be over age 55. But this generation of "Baby Boomers" will not take the golden years lying down. In fact many will try to deny and defy the affects of aging by seeking out the latest pills, potions, and lotions. But instead of looking for miracle solutions why not take advantage of the natural youth potions? Health experts have suspected for years and now research supports that a combination of certain foods and daily exercise keeps you looking and feeling young.

### Brain Boosting Foods

To keep the brain functioning at full power make sure you get a daily dose of folate – a B vitamin important for nerve function. Some research suggests that people with Alzheimer's disease may have low serum levels of folate.

Other studies found that other B vitamins (B6 and B12) and antioxidants (selenium, vitamins A, C, and E) can help preserve cognitive function and memory. Other findings propose that the "normal" mental decline of old age might be tempered by eating foods rich in selenium, vitamins A, C, and E, vitamins B6 and B12 and folate.

Good sources of brain boosters include: oranges, grapefruits, lemons, and other citrus foods, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and other berries, carrots, mangos, bananas, fortified cereals, red meat, chicken, turkey, fish and other seafood, eggs, spinach, kale, collards and other leafy green vegetables, peanuts, kidney, chic and other beans. Choose a variety and make sure you enjoy at least five or more half-cup servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

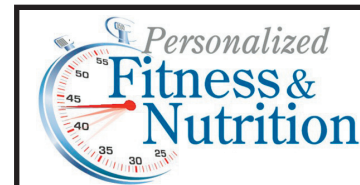
### Anti-wrinkle Skin from Within

Antioxidants such as vitamin

E, A and Co-enzyme Q10 are being added to moisturizers and other cosmetics as anti-wrinkle agents, but did you know they work even better when you get a daily dose on the inside too. Super skin-saving foods to add your daily diet are kiwi fruit, apricots, tangerines, oranges, avocados, broccoli, carrots, nuts, wheat germ, whole grains and olive oil. These foods are rich in antioxidants that can help prevent skin damage, particularly from the sun's radiation. Vitamin C, rich in citrus fruits, is needed for building collagen that supports skin, keeping it elastic and young looking. Vitamin A plays an integral roll in cell regeneration and vitamin E helps keep the surface of cells healthy.

### Visions of the Golden Years

Unfortunately the golden years often means loss of vision due to cataracts and macular degeneration. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of



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blindness in American over the age of 60. Research indicates that antioxidants in certain foods can protect against vision loss due to aging. Some foods to add to your diet include leafy green vegetables such as spinach, mustard greens, broccoli, and kale. Melons, carrots, red and green peppers, mangoes and red grapes are also admirable choices.

### Bone up on Calcium

Calcium rich foods are vital to prevent and possibly reverse osteoporosis, temper blood pressure and protect against colon cancer. Some new studies indicate that calcium can also help

reverse osteoporosis after it's begun. To bone up on calcium, eat at least 4 to 5 half-cup servings daily of leafy green vegetables, low fat dairy products, calcium fortified soymilk, beans, grains and nuts.

**For more information or questions, contact Kathy at [kwise@pwcworks.com](mailto:kwise@pwcworks.com).  
Personalized Wellness Center:  
[www.pwcworks.com](http://www.pwcworks.com)**

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