

Q&A with Sherry Sledge, LMT

# Massage for Pain Relief

*Socrates. Plato. Hippocrates. Mary Queen of Scots. Chinese Medicine  
3000 B.C. Massage dates back to some of the earliest recorded  
civilizations. For those in pain, this hands-on healing can help calm nerves  
and muscles, increase circulation and revitalize your "chi" or energy.*



by Margy Squires

**QA** **How does massage offer pain relief?**  
*Sherry:* Massage assists the body in the removal of waste from muscles, while increasing blood and nutrient flow. This results in a greater availability of oxygen to cells. In addition, massage impacts various systems of the body. The central nervous system responds by relaxing. This aids the endocrine system in the body by decreasing *cortisol* (a stress hormone) and increasing *serotonin*, a neural hormone which directly affects pain sensitivity. And, massage activates the flow of endorphins, opiate like substances than reduce pain and make us feel good.

**QA** **What about fibromyalgia?**  
*Sherry:* Fibromyalgia (FM) is a distinct condition that is self perpetuating. Disrupted sleep leads to fatigue; muscles become sensitive to pain which inhibits exercise or other activities; pain disrupts sleep, and so on. Massage therapy (MT) improves sleep patterns and positively influences serotonin levels to decrease pain and fatigue.

**QA** **Does MT help joint pain?**  
*Sherry:* Absolutely. Arthritis is a term used for many different degenerative joint diseases. For example, cartilage destruction in osteoarthritis impairs mobility which in turn affects the suppleness of surrounding tissue and muscles supporting that joint. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) joint damage is caused by inflammation and swelling, possibly secondary to a breakdown in the auto-immune response. MT, specifically Swedish Massage, works on muscles that support affected joints. Plus, MT is seen as an "artificial exercise" in that it increases blood flow, range of motion and suppleness of soft tissue, which can benefit anyone with joint limitations, including those post surgery and post trauma.

**QA** **How is stress a factor?**  
*Sherry:* Studies show that stress negatively affects immune response, causes tension in muscles which can decrease circulation and increase pain, and if prolonged, weakens the adrenals and other organs which are overworked. In Oriental medicine, *chi* or energy travels along meridian lines throughout the body. Stress can restrict *chi* by blocking meridians. MT releases tension through relaxation, thus opening the meridians and restoring *chi* and subsequent system balance.

**QA** **What is myofascial release?**  
*Sherry:* Myofascial Pain Syndrome (MPS) is characterized by knotty bands of muscles which are twisted in spasm, especially in the shoulder to mid-back areas which are difficult for most people to self-treat. Myofascial release uses skin rolling and sustained mild pressure to release nerve fibers that are entrapped within the thick layers of connective tissue and skin. The result is increased blood flow and range of motion.

**QA** **Explain detoxification.**  
*Sherry:* If circulation and mobility are restricted, the body is compromised in its ability to eliminate harmful metabolic waste commonly referred to as toxins. Toxins are normally neutralized in the liver and released through elimination or the skin, the major organ in the body. Accumulated toxins obstruct the flow of energy and nutrients, which leads to illness and symptoms of bad breath, body odor, generalized aching and fatigue, indigestion, constipation and so on. MT loosens toxins, enhances your lymphatic and immune system, and improves overall health. Following your massage session with a 20 minute bath of Epsom salts promotes additional toxin release through the skin.

**QA** **Any other benefits of MT?**  
*Sherry:* Our office also performs neuromuscular therapy for TMJ, cellular rejuvenation for improved skin tone, MT combined with steam detoxification and other specialty techniques. MT can be intensified with aromatherapy, the use of all natural, essential oils. Lavender relaxes, neroli calms irritable bowel, peppermint energizes, and sandalwood soothes the emotions. I believe that massage offers the ultimate in the mind-body connection to facilitate pain relief on your way to perfect health.

*Sherry Sledge is a licensed massage therapist (LMT) in Fountain Hills specializing in chronic pain and detoxification. She and her staff at Bodyworks Center for Perfect Health teach classes on massage, Reiki and other healing arts.*

©TyH Publications (M. Squires)

*For informational purposes only and not intended diagnose, cure, treat or prevent any medical condition.*

Originally published in *Health Points*. Request our free monthly ezine! Email [customerservice@e-tyh.com](mailto:customerservice@e-tyh.com).  
For more information on TyH products, visit TyH Online at [www.e-tyh.com](http://www.e-tyh.com) or call 800-801-1406.