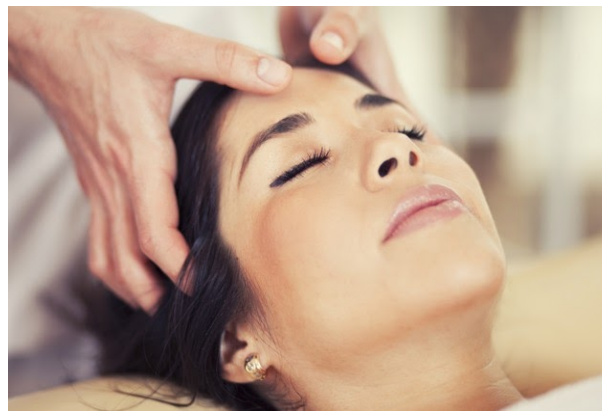


Massage For Mental Wellbeing - September 20

We all have times when life is a bit too much. We get wound up and reactive. Sometimes this can lead to us experiencing anxiety, depression, or other forms of mental illness. Research indicates that massage is a useful complementary treatment for this. This year for mental health awareness week, the staff and students of the Otago Polytechnic Massage Therapy course are offering free massage for anyone who is finding life challenging.

How does massage support positive mental health?

Massage unwinds the muscular tension that all so often comes from nervous tension. After getting a relaxing massage, we feel less “wound-up” both physically & emotionally. Relieving neuromuscular tension can also help with **pain** and **headaches**.



Research indicates that massage increases the “**happiness** hormones” oxytocin and serotonin levels and decreases “**stress** hormones” norepinephrine and cortisol. Serotonin not only helps increase your mood but also aids digestion, memory and sleep. Oxytocin helps us to feel less stressed, empathetic and helps to support **healthy relationships**. Norepinephrine and cortisol are what our body produces when we are working hard or are psychologically wound up. Elevated levels of stress hormones have been linked to **anxiety**, **depression**, chronic pain, high blood pressure, digestive trouble, immunosuppression and autoimmune conditions. While massage can't be considered a treatment for most of these conditions, regular massage can reduce our stress levels, so could be considered a preventative measure.

There is not really enough research on massage and mental health to draw any firm conclusions yet, but there are some promising signs. An [early meta-analysis](#) concluded that the effects of regular massage on anxiety and depression was similar to the effects of psychotherapy on these conditions. Most more recent research has been supportive of massage in this area ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)), although not everything has been ([6](#)). As stated before it is too early to draw any firm conclusions, but massage therapy is certainly shaping up as a promising therapy for mental health support.

The effects of massage on stress, anxiety & depression increase with more regular massage, so have a think about whether you should be taking some time out to look after yourself on a regular basis, especially during stressful times of the year. If professional

massage is out of your price range, perhaps the [Otago Polytechnic student massage clinic](#) might be worth considering.

Never had a massage before?

We aim to provide the best experience for you. When you come into the student clinic you will be greeted and asked to fill in a medical screening form so that we can treat you safely.

You will then be interviewed in a private room about what kind of massage you would like. The massage therapist will leave the room for you to get undressed to the level you're comfortable with. During the massage you will always be appropriately draped and covered.



We always aim to provide a massage experience that is comfortable for you and focussed on your goals.

Booking your massage

We have a limited number of free appointment times in the student massage clinic on Wednesday September 20. Email david.mcquillan@op.ac.nz to book your appointment.

In your email please state the times you are available, your name, cell phone, and reason for wanting to receive a massage for mental health. This information will be strictly confidential.

Please also let us know the times within the range of 930am - 5pm that you are available.

David will send you a confirmation of your appointment time to your cellphone by the end of Tuesday (Sep 20). You can contact him on 021 2800 if needed..

Sorry to anyone who misses out. There are only so many of us!