

One of the most common reasons people come to see a **massage therapist** is because they are **suffering from neck and back pain**. The **main causes of this pain** and tension in clients that I see is from **poor desk-related posture** and/or **increased stress levels**. The following are some **tips on how to deal with stress** and ways that we can all decrease the effects it has on our bodies. In the next newsletter I'll look at ways to improve your posture while at work in front of the computer.



We all are exposed to some sort of stress over the course of our week and this can be a good thing as it helps to give us energy and motivate us. If our stress levels become too high over a prolonged period, than it can have a negative effect on our body. Some of these effects include **weight gain, anxiety, poor sleep, poor concentration and of course an increase in back and neck pain**.

There are lots of things we can do to actively decrease our stress levels and control the negative effects of stress. Here are some easy and enjoyable things that you can do to lower your stress levels.

- o Do some form of **exercise** – choose something that you find fun like swimming, squash, running or even just a walk around your local park
  - o Enjoy a **nice cup of tea** on your porch step while watching the sunset. Teas like chamomile and lavender are great for relaxation.
  - o Spend 10 minutes focusing on your **breathing**. See if you can progressively lengthen each in and out breath.
  - o **Stretch**. Stretching helps to release tension out of the body. If you spend long periods sitting down then break up your day with a few mini stretching sessions.



- o **Get more sleep**. Also try to avoid using a computer just before you go to bed.
- o Sit down with your favourite book and place a warm lavender **wheatbag** over your shoulders to ease away muscle tension.
- o And my personal favourite – look after your body with **regular massage!** Massage has lots of benefits including **reducing anxiety, lowering blood pressure, stimulating the nervous system** to promote relaxation, **increasing circulation, decreasing muscle tension**, enhancing concentration and **promoting emotional well-being** and to top it all off it feels great!



Of course you should choose something that you find enjoyable. You might love meditation but can't stand the idea of running or vice versa so do what works for you.

If you practise just **one relaxation technique** a day even if its for five minutes you'll really notice the difference in how you feel and your ability to then cope with the challenges of the day.

There are heaps of resources out there for tips on stress relief so if you want to learn more check out these helpful articles.

[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress\\_management\\_relief\\_coping.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_coping.htm)

[http://www.essortment.com/all/stressreliefte\\_psh.htm](http://www.essortment.com/all/stressreliefte_psh.htm)

To book your next massage call (03) 9379 4151

Stay tuned for the next newsletter when I'll give you tips on improving your posture to help break the back tension cycle.

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