

THE KNEADED TOUCH

THERAPEUTIC AND MEDICAL MASSAGE

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CENTERING EXERCISE

This exercise is intended to encourage stress management through centering the mind. Touch is one of the seven basic procedures of Massage Therapy. Light touch to points on the forehead will induce the physical response in the body known as "rest and digest", the opposite effect of fight or flight. A stress response, or "fight or flight", starts with a trigger, an act, or event, that starts a physical reaction in the body systems. The mind goes on high alert for danger. Blood is diverted, hormones are released, adrenalin is released, non required body parts are shut down, and digestion is stopped. We go into the "fight or flight" mode in response when we feel danger, real or imagined. This danger may include self, loved ones, or events around you. It may include TV, or internet, or things you hear on the radio. It is a very crucial system for human survival. When a caveman saw a tiger, he ran away, or he was lunch. We do not have large feline predators to watch for, we have modern day life, with politics, traffic, basic human need and so forth. The problem with the hurried pace of life and the challenges which reoccur, is going into the fight or flight response and not relaxing, into rest and digest. Staying on high alert eventually can drain your adrenal glands, and imbalance your Endocrine System. This leads to imbalances in the body, which can include negative effects on the muscles.

1) sit in an upright position(may be done standing), back straight, head centered, shoulders relaxed, not forward, (center of shoulder at mid ear). Feet flat on floor (remove shoes if possible). Hands on thighs, palm up, arms relaxed.

2) Breath in through nose, slowly, direct air into abdomen, in front of spine at belly button level, let abdomen expand, slow, methodical, until you have all the air you want, hold just for 2-3 seconds, feel expansion in abdomen, slowly exhale through mouth. Must let abdomen relax, do not "hold in", let it expand.

3) With inhale place tongue on roof of mouth, behind front teeth, with exhale let tongue lay behind, not touching lower teeth.

4) Continue breathing this way, slowly feel relaxation with exhale, can start at toes, flex and let relax, soon body will begin to relax when you breath this way.

5) Mind needs to relax also, not asleep, aware of your surroundings, but focused on breath and nothing else. If thoughts come to mind, release them with exhale, and continue to breath. Start at five minutes, slowly increase your time, to gain further relaxation, and then your focus and concentration will increase also. I suggest seeking a stretching program and Tai Chi.

Presented by by Mark Hasseman LMT, MMP

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