

Michael James, LMBT #11371
Phone: 919-972-1898
Email: TriangleHomeMassage@yahoo.com

Recent research has shown that regular massage therapy can help patients suffering from Parkinson's disease improve in their daily functions, sleeping abilities, self-confidence, walking, and well-being, as well as decrease their overall stress levels. Symptoms of Parkinson's disease (rigidity, depression, fatigue, tremor, etc.) are conditions that massage therapy has been proven to relieve. Because Parkinson's disease typically causes muscle stiffness and rigidity, massage's ability to alleviate joint and muscle stiffness makes it a logical choice. Parkinson's disease is a CNS dysfunction, and will not be completely resolved with bodywork alone. Work should be done in cooperation with a client's primary physician, as massage may impact the need for antidepressants and other medication.

According to a 2002 study conducted by the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami, along with staff from the university's neurology department and Duke University, Parkinson's disease symptoms are reduced by massage therapy. In this study, the group of adults with Parkinson's disease who received two massages a week for five weeks experienced improved daily functioning, increased quality of sleep and decreased stress-hormone levels. The massage consisted of 15 minutes in the prone position, focusing on the back, buttocks, thighs, calves and feet; and 15 minutes in the supine position, focusing on the thighs, lower legs, feet, hands, forearms, upper arms, neck, and head. The study's authors reported, "These findings suggest that massage therapy enhances functioning in progressive or degenerative central nervous system disorders or conditions." Participants reported improvement in function, from the reduction of rigidity and muscle spasm, to the reduction of tremor and decrease in depression. Massage therapy can also benefit Parkinson's patients by improving blood circulation which helps to calm the nervous system. The ability of massage therapy to reduce tremors and decrease muscle tension in turn, also improves sleep patterns and allows patients to sleep for longer amounts of time. This is often a challenge for Parkinson's patients.

To persons in the Parkinson's community,

It is my pleasure to introduce to you a man by the name of Michael James who I have had the privilege to work with and personally benefit from his services for the past year. Seven and a half years ago, I was diagnosed with young onset PD at the age of 39. Two years ago, I began working at the Parkinson Support Center of Kentuckiana where I currently serve as Director of Outreach, Training and Support. We serve hundreds of families trying to maneuver the changing terrain when living with PD. My job allows me to interact with many people in the medical and complimentary therapy fields. Being rather protective for lack of a better word, I am extremely careful of the persons I partner with through the PSCKY and give access to our families via support group meetings, training programs and a myriad of unique and specialized program offerings.

The Louisville School of Massage approached the PSCKY with the thought of having one of their students come and donate 25 hours to persons with PD in exchange for that person completing their community outreach portion of the curriculum. We were fortunate beyond words to have Michael be this student volunteer. Michael contacted me immediately, arranged for a time for us to meet and talk about ways to best use his time. Then we arranged for 6 persons with varying stages of PD and varying symptom patterns to receive a 1-hour massage with Michael for 15 weeks. As the math would clearly indicate, this put him well over the 25 hour school requirement. It did not end there however. By the end of summer when Michael was preparing to move back to the Carolinas, he had donated through PSCKY over 280 massage hours and earned the gratitude and respect of many persons whose lives he touched.

Not one to take the time to participate in our program offerings, Michael and other PSCKY staff encouraged me to be one of the initial 6 persons to get a weekly massage and track its aftermath on symptoms, mood, and general well-being. To the delight of each of us participating in the weekly massages, a significant improvement, albeit temporary, was reported in elevated mood, lower anxiety levels, less stiffness and cramping and even short term tremor reduction. For me personally, my main motor symptoms are pain, tremor on the left side, falling and now the immergence of significant dystonia throughout both sides of my body. It had been a considerable amount of time since my last massage but my first massage with Michael was different than I had ever had before. He spent quite a bit of time talking with me about areas I wanted to address during the session then served as a wonderful teacher throughout the session as he explained why he was doing each technique based on its need and purpose. The next day, I was extremely sore and called Michael who was patient and very kind in explaining the reasoning behind this not so uncommon occurrence. Every massage from that point forward left me feeling much less anxious, more relaxed, lessened my left side tremor for up to 24 hours after the massage and significantly helped with the tightness and cramping I experience every day which also assisted in pain control.

Michael not only is someone I professionally respect and give the highest recommendation I can offer, he has also become a close friend to me as well as my entire family. It was with great sadness that we said goodbye to Michael when he moved back to the Raleigh area, however, our loss is your gain. Michael prefers to stay out of the spotlight and is much more comfortable working with the gift of massage he has been given. I strongly encourage you to go outside the traditional medicine only approach to living with PD, and instead allow yourself

to try the healing benefits of massage therapy by someone with extensive working knowledge of working with persons living with this destructive disease.

Please do not hesitate to call me with any questions or to talk further about my personal experience with massage. My cell number is 502-548-6578 and my email address is kacook@insightbb.com.

Most sincerely,

Adina Cook

Michael,

The following is my review of how the 15 weeks of massage affected by PD symptoms.

My overall experience with Michael James and the 15 weeks of massage was excellent. A recipient of many massages over the past ten years, Michael had a unique and therapeutic manner of finding the tight areas or areas that were not performing at their peak efficiency making each of these 15 massages, the best I have ever had. After a sore first few days, I came to look forward to the relief the massages gave to the tightness, tremor and stress that is often relentless in my upper body. Michael's gift of putting people at ease made it a joy to offer this program to myself and 5 others. I will try to continue massage therapy but on a less frequent basis now and will highly recommend the Louisville School of massage and the cost effective massages performed by caring students such as Michael.

Thank you so much for making this opportunity available to the people we serve at the PSCKY. I hope to continue this relationship into the future.

Most sincerely,

Adina Cook

--

Adina Cook
Director of Outreach & Training
Parkinson Support Center of Kentuckiana
315 Townepark Circle, Suite 100
Louisville, KY 40243
Phone: 502-254-3388
Cell: 502-548-6578
FAX: 502-254-3188
Email: training@pscky.org
Website: www.pscky.org

One more rave review.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Richard Czerwonka <richard.czerwonka@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, May 26, 2011 at 11:20 PM
Subject: Re: massage feedback
To: Adina Cook <training@pscky.org>

Adina - We have not been able to access our computer until today. I just opened this email and see you need the into today. I would give the overall massage experience the highest rating possible. It helped tremendously with my stress level and my pain level in my legs and feet. This was really a luxury and a blessing. I probably will not be able to continue the massage elsewhere due to the cost factor. However, I definitely would recommend massage to anyone who has it available to them. I certainly appreciate Michael's efforts and wish him the best in his pursuit. I also want to thank PSKY for making this possible. You go a great service to the Parkinson's community. Thanks again, Rick

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jay Miller <jalmostperfect@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 25, 2011 at 7:13 PM
Subject: Re: message feedback
To: Adina Cook <training@pscky.org>

everything is better, tremor, stiffness, stress. can't afford massage weekly, but will get them more than in the past. definitely would recommend.

Mike was not only a great massage therapist but a great individual and you can tell he enjoys his work. would be happy to recommend him in the future

Jay

One more!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sharon Hitch <shitch@bellsouth.net>
Date: Wed, May 25, 2011 at 2:47 PM
Subject: Massage Questions answered by R. Hitch
To: Cook Adina <training@pscky.org>

1. Overall experience – outstanding
2. Tremors – none
3. Stress levels both before & after – good
4. Stiffness – better
5. Pain – diminished
6. Continuing massage – would like to; \$\$\$ an issue
7. Recommend massage to others – yes.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: J Baumann <johnbaumannesq@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, May 25, 2011 at 9:25 AM
Subject: Re: message feedback
To: Adina Cook <training@pscky.org>

1. How would you rate your overall massage experience? Good
2. How would you rate your tremor both before and after the 15 weeks and immediately after a massage? Same for both

3. How would you rate your stress level both before and after the 15 weeks and immediately after a massage? Same for after 15 weeks. More relaxed just after.
4. How would you rate your stiffness and rigidity both before and after the 15 weeks and immediately after a massage? Same for after 15 weeks. More relaxed just after.
5. How would you rate your pain level both before and after the 15 weeks and immediately after a massage? Same for after 15 weeks. More relaxed just after.
6. Will you try to continue massage therapy on your own now that the study is over?
Absolutely.
7. Would you recommend massage to others with PD? Absolutely.

Michael,
Here is your first response. You're a hit!!!
Have a wonderful day.
Adina

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sonny Prentice <harry.prentice@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 25, 2011 at 9:12 AM
Subject: Re: massage feedback
To: Adina Cook <training@pscky.org>

1. Rate overall massage experience 10 on a 0-10scale
 2. Tremor: not applicable, I do not have tremor as one of my symptoms of PD
 3. Stress: immediately after massage #10 (0-10 scale), after 15 weeks #8
 4. Stiffness: immediately after massage #9, after 15 weeks #7
 5. Pain: immediately after #10, after 15 weeks #7
 6. Definitely continue massage therapy
 7. Definitely recommend massage therapy to those with PD
 8. I am very grateful for Michael's massage work, his knowledge he shared about how the body & muscles & nerves operate, his sense of humor & professionalism. While symptom relief is usually temporary it is so helpful to know that during a massage I can be relatively symptom free & feel better afterwards Thank you, thank you.
- Sincerely, Sonny Prentice