Helping You Breathe Easier With Massage

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Massage for Asthma

When you have asthma, you may feel as if you are walking through life on eggshells. You might be able to exercise sometimes but at other times, exercise causes an asthma attack. Or you might eat certain foods and end up with a serious asthma attack. And you might have allergies to unknown things and suffer from an attack when you least expect it.

Asking Your Massage Therapist the Right Questions

When you have asthma, you end up asking a lot of questions in an attempt to prevent future asthma attacks. It's totally understandable. But the longer it goes on, the longer these ways of coping with asthma end up becoming part of your personality. The good news is that if you're considering the idea of getting a massage, reflexology or acupressure, you might want to review these questions first – and save yourself some time of determining them yourself.

1. Ask the massage therapist if they have ever worked on people who have had asthma. This is important in the event that you have a reaction. If they say no, find another one.
2. Ask the massage therapist if they will be using oil or lotion on the skin. Then ask for the ingredients. If you are sensitive to any ingredients, ask if they can make the massage oil themselves without that ingredient.
3. Ask the massage therapist if they will be using any specific types of essential oils during the session. If you are allergic to any plants, flowers, herbs, or foods, now is the time to tell them. Your skin will absorb the essential oils or you will breathe in the aromas and if so, the last thing you want is an asthma attack.

The Studies Show Results with Massage for Asthma

Here's an interesting study that was performed at the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine in Florida. They tested 32 children with asthma who were between the ages of 4 and 14 years old. The children were divided into two groups, one group that received massage and another group that received relaxation therapy. The parents were actually taught how to give the massage and how to work with their child to relax. The goal was that each night before bed, the parents would either give their asthmatic child a massage or the relaxation therapy. The treatment lasted 20 minutes.

Ready for the results? The kids who were 4 to 8 years old that got massages before bed had decreased cortisol levels and less anxiety after their massage. Results were immediate. As time went on, their lung functioning improved.

The kids who were 9 to 14 reported lower levels of anxiety after their massage. Both groups had better attitudes about their asthma, too. However, the older children only showed better lung function in the area of forced expiratory flow (amount of air that can be forcefully blown out of the lungs), not the other lung functions. Overall lung improvement went from 25% to 75%.

The researchers concluded that daily massage for asthma but not relaxation improves the diameter of the airways and can control asthma.