

## **MASSAGE THERAPY - STRESS**

### **Introduction**

Mrs M is 49 years old; she runs her own chiropody business. She is happily married and has 2 grown up children. In her spare time she enjoys walking, gardening and looking after an array of animals from pheasants, dogs and ferrets.

### **Presenting problem**

For the past few months Mrs M has been suffering from stress, her chiropody business is very busy, she can sometimes treat up to 15 clients a day. Home visits are her most popular request. Her main signs and symptoms of stress, have been a feeling of being overwhelmed, not being able to sleep at night or to switch off when finished for the day, being 'crabby' with her family and a she has noticed a loss in her appetite. Her menopausal problems have also been a contributing problem i.e. headaches and hot flushes.

### **Consultation**

After a consultation was performed and a note of her medical history, it was established that Mrs M also suffers from back, neck and shoulder pain from bending over treating her clients. Also if she over uses her wrists her (mild) arthritis in her hands and fingers will flare up, and the muscles in her forearms are also affected. She has an allergic reaction to aspirin and she is not taking any medication.

### **Treatment plan**

The goals of my treatment were to:

- Ease any muscle spasm in the areas causing her pain i.e. back, neck, shoulders and arms
- Enable Mrs M to relax
- Allow Mrs M take some time out for herself
- Reduce the number of headaches she had been getting
- Allow her to get a good night's sleep
- Encourage mobility in hands and fingers

### **First visit**

We agreed that the primary complaint this time was her aching back and neck.

I recommended a back, neck and shoulder massage for the first treatment, which is relaxing as well as easing those muscles, which were in spasm.

After the first treatment Mrs M remarked how she felt a load had been lifted off her shoulders and she found her range of movement in her neck had improved and her neck felt much easier.

I advised Mrs M to get a regular massage to really benefit. For her to get some relaxation time for herself this would be an additional bonus to the reduction of muscle spasm in her back, neck and shoulders. Feeling more aware and relaxed would have knock-on-effects.

Other relaxation techniques were advised e.g. listening to relaxation tapes and breathing exercises. Also discussed was the importance of her posture when working and warming up her wrists and fingers before starting work. I suggested exercises to improve general circulation and stretches between clients. I also advised Mrs M to drink at least a litre of water during one of her busy days.

### **Second visit - one week later**

Mrs M had a busy week with her regular clients, so she reported that her back, neck and shoulders had begun to ache again. However, she had felt better, slept better, felt more refreshed but was becoming more agitated again.

Another back, neck and shoulder massage was done, areas of tight muscles were found mainly on her right side and also around her scapula. Again her neck muscles on both sides were tight and quite painful. During the treatment I played some relaxing music and suggested Mrs M try to imagine she was in her favourite place.

Mrs M enjoyed her massage, and although had felt some muscles were sensitive at first upon massaging. She really felt the benefit of the massage, also re-energised and felt a lot of her tension had disappeared.

### **Third visit - two weeks later**

Mrs M commented that her back, neck and shoulders had not been as tense as normal, her husband also commented to her that he had found her not so 'crabby' and was more enjoyable to be around.

For this treatment I recommended a full body massage as Mrs M had again been busy and was feeling tense and tired. It also gave me a chance to do some work on her arms, wrists and hands. I found her arms to be very congested and as her arthritis in her hands had flared up, I did some gentle active and resisted exercises.

I advised Mrs M to come back and get some more massage done to her arms, as I did not have enough time to work on them during a full body massage. After doing her massage Mrs M felt pampered and hadn't felt so relaxed in ages and left floating on air!

#### **Fourth visit - one week later**

Mrs M commented on a decrease in the number of headaches she'd been having and that she slept very well that night. But she was still experiencing some pain in her wrists and in her forearms

I massaged Mrs M arms for half an hour to get rid of the congestion, improve drainage and ease any muscle spasm. It was also beneficial for her hands and fingers too in that it helped improve her joint mobility.

#### **Outcome**

Mrs M found she was more able to cope with her stress, had more energy and was able to cope better with her workload. Her tension and aching muscles disappeared with regular massage as did her headaches. She now also had the knowledge of the benefits of Massage Therapy and that if her signs and symptoms of stress returned all she had to do was make another appointment, but would also still come once a month for a MOT session. We agreed that this would help all aspects of her life. Also massage boosts the immune system.

Scottish Massage Therapists' Organisation (SMTO)  
70 Lochside Road  
Denmore Park  
Bridge of Don  
Aberdeen  
AB23 8QW  
Tel: 01224 822 956  
Email: [info@scotmass.co.uk](mailto:info@scotmass.co.uk)

For Further information visit the website [www.scotmass.co.uk](http://www.scotmass.co.uk)