

Study shows frequent massage sessions boost biological benefits

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(Medical Xpress) -- Massage is purported to have an array of benefits, including alleviating symptoms of depression, anxiety, back pain, asthma, fatigue, and even HIV. A new study shows there are sustained, cumulative beneficial effects of repeated massage therapy. The effects persist for several days to a week, and differ depending on the frequency of sessions. Results of the study were reported on line in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

Study researchers, led by Mark Hyman Rapaport, MD, examined the [biological effects](#) of repeated Swedish [Massage Therapy](#) and light touch intervention. In a prior study, the researchers found that healthy people who undergo a single session of Swedish Massage experience measureable changes in their body's immune and endocrine response.

"We expanded the study to show the effects of repeated massage because we believed the frequency of massage, or the interval between massages, may have different biological and psychological effects than a single session," explains Rapaport, chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Emory University School of Medicine.

The study was conducted over a five-week period of time, assessing neuroendocrine and immune parameters. Study volunteers were randomized into four intervention groups to receive a concurrent five weeks of Swedish Massage once a week or twice a week, or a light touch control once a week or twice a week.

"We believe that understanding of the mechanisms of action underlying the effects of massage and light touch in healthy individuals - including the effect of different frequency regimens on different biological systems - will help to guide the design of studies aimed at specific therapeutic effects for targeted populations."

More information: [online.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfp...
0.1089/acm.2011.0071](https://online.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfp...0.1089/acm.2011.0071)

Provided by Emory University

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