

The Rubdown

Tips for Identifying Suspicious Moles

While melanoma makes up only 4 percent of skin cancer cases, it is the most lethal type, accounting for approximately 8,000 deaths annually. The AAD recommends taking photographs of suspicious areas to determine a baseline so that you can effectively monitor any changes. The "ABCD" approach can then be applied:

- **Appearance:** Has a mole developed suddenly on previously clear skin, or has an existing mole changed its appearance?
- **Border:** Is the border of the mole asymmetric or jagged?
- **Color:** Is the mole uniform in color, or is it flecked with darker black and/or red areas? Has it changed color or become darker?
- **Diameter:** Has the mole grown in size or become raised? Is it larger than the size of a pencil's eraser?

While answering "yes" to any of these questions may raise a red flag, it certainly does not confirm melanoma. But it is wise to have the mole checked out immediately by a dermatologist. Higher risk groups include those with a family history of melanoma, those who have suffered multiple sunburns and/or extended unprotected exposure to harmful UV rays, including tanning beds, those with fair complexions, and those with a large number of moles and/or unusual moles.

Once melanoma has spread to distant organs, the survival rate is only 12 percent. But when caught early before invading the deep layers of the skin, melanoma is nearly 100 percent curable.



Muscular Flexibility

Overhead

Straighten the arms toward the ceiling with hands together and palms outward. Once you feel tautness in these areas, hold the pose for 10 seconds.

Shoulders to Ears

Most people centralize stress in their shoulders and upper back. Next time you feel increased tension in this area, take a moment to raise your shoulders slowly toward your ears until you feel your neck tighten, then hold this pose for five seconds. Repeat twice.

Tricep

Pull your right elbow behind your head using your left hand. Do so until you feel the muscles elongate, not until you feel pain. Hold for 10 seconds, and you'll stretch your right shoulder and triceps. Switch arms and repeat the motion.

Hamstring

If you're like most Americans, you spend much of your workday behind the desk, which can wreak havoc on the lower back. While sitting in a chair, grab and hold your right leg just behind the knee. Holding the pose for 10 seconds, you should feel tension in your hamstrings and lower back. Switch legs and repeat the motion.

Inner Thigh

While standing, spread your legs shoulder-length apart and place your hands on your hips. Without moving your feet, slightly bend your right knee. Hold for 10 seconds. This stretch is beneficial for the inner thighs and groin. Switch positions and now bend the left knee and hold for 10 seconds.



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"Never hesitate to hold out your hand; never hesitate to accept the outstretched hand of another"



Maintaining flexibility is the ability to perform everyday activities. Regular stretching is important to stay limber and prevent atrophy. These can be performed anywhere, anytime, and can be done separately or in combination with one another. Stretch slowly and gently and don't allow yourself to bounce.



Avoid patella tendinitis. Check your local bike store for knee warmers just for this purpose.

Five Tips for Cyclist

1. Drink Plenty of Water

You should be consuming one to two 12 oz. bottles per hour, depending on the day's temperature and your exertion level. Think in terms of drinking for tomorrow's ride.

2. Keep Knees Warm

Avoid patella tendinitis. Check your local bike store for knee warmers just for this purpose.

3. Stay Out of the Hot Tub

As good as it may sound, this is the worst thing you can do. Microtrauma to muscle fibers causes the inflammatory response, so it is imperative to reduce swelling and soreness associated with it. Therefore, cold water is the choice here. You can wrap towels around your thighs and pour cold water over them for 15-20 minutes. More exhilarating is to find a stream and submerge your legs. Sit in the water for 20 minutes. You will be amazed at how good your legs feel the next day.

4. Elevate

By elevating your legs, you will let gravity help in the removal of toxins and the replacement of oxygen and nutrients. Lay on your back with legs up against a wall, tree, car, etc. With knees slightly bent, relax and breathe deeply from the diaphragm. Use visualization to breathe air into each calf/lower leg and relax that part of your body as you visualize it happening, taking 5-6 minutes, or until your feet begin to tingle. Finish by spinning around and lying flat for 30-60 seconds, allowing blood to return to the legs. Elevate again and repeat this procedure four to six times. Throughout each elevation, point and flex your feet, ankles, hamstrings and quads to work the muscle pump, thereby assisting lymphatic drainage from the legs.

5. Stretch, Stretch, Stretch

Stretching should be relaxing and feel good when done properly. Muscles that are warmed will respond better to stretching. Stretch slowly and in a controlled manner. If you feel a cramp coming on, come out of the stretch and contract the opposing muscle group for 8-10 seconds and move into the stretch again.



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Massage lately?

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appointment today,
you'll be happy you did!



"Happiness is available; please help yourself"
Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh

Back Surgery May Be Worse Than No Surgery

Are you considering surgery for your back pain? Before you do, consider this: Research shows that many patients who undergo surgery for lower back pain often have subsequent surgeries for the same condition due to the failure of the initial procedure, which can contribute to further patient disability.

Researchers sought to examine whether LBP surgery patients had poorer general health than those with no history of spine surgery. The study examined more than 18,000 patients with back pain enrolled at first visit in the National Spine Network (NSN) database from January 1998 – April 2000. Of those patients, 3,632 had a history of low back surgery. Data were derived from a first-visit questionnaire and the Short Form Health Survey (SF-36), both of which were completed by all patients when first evaluated for back pain.

Results showed that patients with a history of lumbar spine surgery fared significantly worse on areas such as physical functioning, general health and mental health compared to those patients with no prior history of spine surgery. "Previous back surgery is associated with significantly worse general health status than those without surgery among patients with low back pain..." the researchers wrote, further noting that "active rehabilitation intervention strategies designed to improve physical and mental well-being should be promoted, as they could have an impact on enhancing positive health outcomes."

If you suffer from low back pain -- or any kind of pain, for that matter -- think twice before considering surgery. Instead, consider less invasive means for managing your pain, such as massage therapy and bodywork. Previous studies have shown that massage therapy is extremely effective at reducing back pain. See HT, Whitecloud III TS, Myers L. The effect of previous low back surgery on general health status. *Spine*, Sept. 1, 2004;29(17):1931-7.

Desk Stretches to Avoid Repetitive Stress Injury

Chest Stretch

Sitting in an office chair, especially when working with computers, can cause chest muscles to collapse on themselves. Lock your fingers behind your head. While forcing the elbows back, squeeze your shoulder blades together until you feel tension throughout the upper back. Release and repeat 3-5 times.

Torso Stretch

While keeping your hips still, clasp your hands together and raise your arms parallel to the floor. Twist your upper body to the left, hold for 5 seconds and twist to the right, holding for 5 seconds. Repeat each side 3-5 times.

Back Stretch

Without overstraining, stretch your right hand behind your right shoulder, while bringing your left hand up from below in back to meet it. Try to touch your hands as close together as is comfortably possible. Hold a few seconds and reverse arms. Stretch 3-5 times on each side.

Neck Stretch

Tuck your chin slowly into your neck, careful not to strain. Hold for 2 seconds and release. Repeat 3-5 times.

Leg Stretch

Sit straight in your chair, extending both legs straight out, perpendicular to your

body. Hold several seconds. Release and repeat 3-5 times.

Finger Stretch

Place your hands flat on your desk and extend your fingers wide to their limit. Hold the stretch for 3-5 seconds. Relax and slowly bend the fingers before repeating 3-5 times.

Arm Massage

With your arm in front of you and palm flat on your desk, apply gentle massage-like pressure with the fingertips of your opposite hand. Move up the muscles of the forearm. Press firmly and hold for a few seconds at each spot before moving to the next. Repeat up the arm 3-5 times.



Plain and simple, the effects of stress on the body can be extremely detrimental. When a muscle is stressed, circulation is reduced and both oxygen and

nutrients are blocked. Massage is a terrific way to loosen up the muscles, increase the circulation and bring oxygen and nutrients back to the area. It may

also release stored toxins, so it's important to flush out your system by drinking water after a session.



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Swimming strengthens the body and heart, soothes the mind, regulates breathing, and stimulates the circulation~all without putting stress on the joints. And the regular movements of swimming give it a calming quality. Try to build swimming into your weekly routine!

Hi Everyone~

My name is Patti Shaffer and I am a Licensed Massage Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapist in Watertown, NY. I specialize in Cancer Massage and I am proficient in Deep Tissue Work as well as Traditional Swedish Massage.

My mission is to educate and share the many benefits of Massage Therapy as a natural approach to maintaining good health.

If you have any questions about Massage and/or would like information on certain aspects of Massage please e-mail me at patti@massageworks.cc Or visit my website at www.massageworks.cc

I am taking new clients, so if a friend or family member is in need of bodywork, I appreciate your passing on my name.

**Warm Regards,
Patti**

Massage Works

223 JB Wise Place
Empsall Plaza Suite 1

Phone: 315-727-7402
E-mail: patti@massageworks.cc
www.Massageworks.cc

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Massage Reduces Cancer Symptoms

Massage therapy significantly improved cancer patients' symptoms, such as pain, anxiety, nausea, fatigue and depression, according to a recent study. "Massage Therapy for Symptom Control: Outcome Study at a Major Cancer Center" was conducted by staff of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in New York City. Three types of massage are available to patients at MSKCC: Swedish, light-touch and foot massage. Each massage lasts 20 minutes for inpatients and one hour for outpatients. Patients may request the massage themselves, or be referred by a health professional or family member. As a "routine part of clinical management," patients rate pain, fatigue, anxiety, nausea and depression before and 5-15 minutes after each massage. For this study, the symptom with the highest score was deemed the presenting symptom. The study's authors analyzed before-and-after data from the initial massage session of 1,290 cancer patients at MSKCC during a three-year period. Swedish and foot massage were the most common interventions, with some patients receiving a combination of both. Anxiety was the most common presenting symptom of the cancer patients, followed by pain and fatigue. Data analysis revealed a 54-percent mean reduction of the presenting symptom following massage therapy. Specifically, anxiety was the symptom eased the most by massage therapy (60-percent reduction), and fatigue was the symptom eased the least (43 percent). Outpatients showed a 10-percent greater improvement in symptoms when compared to inpatients, perhaps due to the longer massage sessions the outpatients received. "[I]t is clear that massage therapy achieves major reductions in cancer patients' pain, fatigue, nausea, anxiety and depression," state the study's authors. Additional follow-up, beyond immediate post-session scores, involved 74 outpatients and 237 inpatients. Both inpatients and outpatients were assessed two-to-five hours after the massage. Outpatients were again assessed 24 hours and 48 hours after the massage. Results of this extended follow-up showed that inpatients' symptoms scores were about a half-point higher within hours of the massage. "This suggests that inpatient severity scores returned to baseline within a day or so," state the study's authors. For outpatients, there was no regression toward baseline symptom scores throughout the follow-up period.

"Massage therapy appears to be an uncommonly non-invasive and inexpensive means of symptom control for patients with serious chronic illness," state the study's authors. "It is non-invasive, inexpensive, comforting, free of side effects and greatly appreciated by recipients.

- **Source:** Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center's Integrative Medicine Service and Biostatistics Service, New York City. Authors: Barrie R. Cassileth, Ph.D.; and Andrew J. Vickers, Ph.D. Originally published in *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, September 2004, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 244-249