

Massage therapy for acute surgical pain

Acute surgical pain

Twelve high quality and four low quality studies were included in a systematic review with meta-analysis. Massage techniques primarily consisted of massage therapy, back massage, M technique massage, foot and hand massage, foot massage, light pressure effleurage massage, and therapeutic Swedish massage. Results indicate massage therapy is effective for treating pain and anxiety compared to active comparators in **surgical pain** populations.

Boyd C, Crawford C, Paat CF, Price A, Xenakis L, Zhang W. The Impact of Massage Therapy on Function in Pain Populations--A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials: Part III, Surgical Pain Populations. *Pain Med.* 2016;17(9):1757-1772.

Impact on pain and anxiety was studied in a trial of 156 primiparous women having elective **cesarean section**; Subjects were randomized to either hand and foot massage, foot massage, or a control group. Measures before, immediately after and 90 minutes after massage found significant reductions in pain and anxiety immediately and 90 minutes after massage, with significant increase in frequency of breastfeeding.

Saatsaz S, Rezaei R, Alipour A, Beheshti Z. Massage as adjuvant therapy in the management of post-cesarean pain and anxiety: A randomized clinical trial. *Complement Ther Clin Pract.* 2016;24:92-98.

Elective **cardiac surgery** patients (n= 152) were randomized to either massage therapy or equivalent rest time after cardiac surgery. Massage therapy significantly reduced the pain, anxiety, and muscular tension and improved relaxation and satisfaction after cardiac surgery.

Braun LA, Stanguts C, Casanelia L, et al. Massage therapy for cardiac surgery patients--a randomized trial. *J Thorac Cardiovasc Surg.* 2012;144(6):1453-1459, 1459.e1451.

Massage therapy reduced pain scores in 160 **post-thoracic surgery** patients in this observation study. Massage technique combinations were tailored to the patient and included Swedish, craniosacral, myofascial release, reflexology, and diaphragmatic breathing. Patients and staff were highly satisfied with having massage therapy available.

Dion L, Rodgers N, Cutshall SM, et al. Effect of massage on pain management for thoracic surgery patients. *Int J Ther Massage Bodywork.* 2011;4(2):2-6.

Hospital patients (n = 53) from **medical, surgical, and obstetrics units** participated in the current research by each receiving one or more massage therapy sessions averaging 30 minutes each, with number of sessions dependent on length of stay. Treatments included gentle Swedish effleurage or petrissage, acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, or cross-fiber myotherapy with light-pressure effleurage and pressure points being the most commonly used

modalities. The study demonstrated not only significant reduction in pain levels, but also the interrelatedness of pain, relaxation, sleep, emotions, recovery, and finally, the healing process.

Adams R, White B, Beckett C. The effects of massage therapy on pain management in the acute care setting. *Int J Ther Massage Bodywork.* 2010;3(1):4-11.

In a randomized trial, 605 veterans undergoing **major surgery** were assigned to either routine care, individualized attention from a massage therapist or effleurage back massage by a massage therapist each evening for up to 5 postoperative days. Compared with the control group, patients in the massage group experienced short-term (preintervention vs postintervention) decreases in pain intensity, pain unpleasantness, and anxiety. In addition, patients in the massage group experienced a faster rate of decrease in pain intensity and unpleasantness during the first 4 postoperative days compared with the control group. Authors concluded massage was effective and safe adjuvant therapy for the relief of acute postoperative pain in patients undergoing major operations.

Mitchinson AR, Kim HM, Rosenberg JM, et al. Acute postoperative pain management using massage as an adjuvant therapy: a randomized trial. *Arch Surg.* 2007;142(12):1158-1167

Two hundred and two patients were randomized to usual care, focused attention or effleurage massage 24 hours after **surgery** through post op day 7. Massage reduced the unpleasantness of postoperative pain in men.

Piotrowski MM, Paterson C, Mitchinson A, Kim HM, Kirsh M, Hinshaw DB. Massage as adjuvant therapy in the management of acute postoperative pain: a preliminary study in men. *Journal of the American College of Surgeons.* 2003;197(6):1037-46.