

[IMAGE]

High-Tech Massage: Good for the Body & Soul

By Dr. Michael Nathanson

Man sitting in massage chair on zen sand garden. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *A single massage may be a soothing and delightful experience, but it's the cumulative effects of regular massage that offer the most benefit. Owning your own robotic massage chair is a convenient and cost-effective way to experience the lifelong health benefits of daily massage.*

Anyone who's ever received a massage will tell you its curative, restorative powers are a balm to both body and soul. By easing the rigors of daily stress, improving circulation and releasing endorphins and enkephalins, both of which occur naturally in the brain and produce pain-relieving effects similar to opiates, massage is a physical remedy that provides instant relief to people of all ages.

A number of studies have shown that massage therapy is an ideal non-invasive, drug-free method of encouraging the body's natural ability to heal itself while relieving many symptoms of a variety of health conditions. In fact, massage therapy has proven beneficial for many chronic conditions, including lower back pain, joint pain, arthritis, stress and tension, muscle atrophy and spinal cord disorders. Here are a few statistics regarding the popularity and effectiveness of massage:

- 39 million Americans received a massage in 2006 - that's more than one of every six people.
- 75 percent of the U.S. general population experiences stress on a daily basis; 37 percent experiences high stress.
- An estimated 75 percent to 90 percent of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress-related problems.
- During periods of stress, the effectiveness of the body's immune system is reduced; massage boosts the body's overall immunity.
- Massage can help increase blood circulation, lower blood pressure, reduce fatigue, increase sleep restfulness, boost one's sense of well-being and elevate mood.
- Massage therapy enhances worker morale and productivity, and decreases sick time.
- 30 percent of adult Americans prefer to receive a massage at home.

More than ever, medical professionals are encouraging their patients to seek massage therapy to help manage certain medical conditions and to maintain good health. Seventy percent of massage therapists regularly receive referrals from health care professionals, at an average of two referrals per month. Data from the most recent American Massage Therapy Association Consumer Survey shows that 9 million more people discussed massage therapy with their doctor or health care provider in 2006 than they did five years ago. Among those patients who discussed massage with their provider, 59 percent said their physician recommended they seek massage therapy. Forty-seven percent of physical therapists and 48 percent of chiropractors also recommended massage when patients inquired.

Of course, a mechanical substitute can never reproduce the *exact* feeling of human touch, but current technology comes very close. Over time, designers have more closely approximated the necessary factors in a massage chair to provide its user with some measure of relief from back pain and neck pain. This breakthrough technology is called **robotic massage** and can be found in many products available for you to buy and use in the privacy of your own home. I find it much easier to adjust a patient who has been relaxing in a robotic massage chair on a regular basis.

Woman receiving massage. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark While current technology can't reproduce the exact feeling of human touch, it comes very close and can be enjoyed in the comfort of your own home. As a practicing chiropractor for 35 years, I have often recommended that my patients invest in a robotic massage chair for their home or office. Robotic chairs look similar to basic home recliners, but carry advanced internal motors that simulate human touch to provide a rewarding and beneficial massage each time you use them. The technology today is much more advanced than it was in the days of rollers and vibration. Today's chairs are engineered and sophisticated. Regular (even daily) massage can strengthen and tone the entire body, helping to prevent unnecessary strains and injuries that might otherwise occur due to excess tension. A single massage may be a soothing and delightful experience, but it's the cumulative effects of regular massage that offer the most benefit. Owning your own robotic massage chair is a convenient and cost-effective way to experience the lifelong health benefits of daily massage.

When looking to purchase a robotic massage chair, you want to spend time in the marketplace testing the chair you want to buy. Personally sit in the chair and test it. Any good back care or technology store will have many different styles of robotic massage chairs for you to test on the showroom floor. Obviously the more bells and whistles a chair offers to you in robotic massage features, the higher the retail price point. However, I believe the usage rate per massage in a robotic massage chair will greatly outweigh the costs of

a personal masseuse in the long term. Experience regular robotic massage and see for yourself how this exciting technology can benefit both your body and your soul.

SIX Essential Components of a Great Massage Chair

If you're interested in purchasing a robotic massage chair for your home or office, make sure it can perform the following massage functions:

Woman receiving lower back massage. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **1 ROLLING**

Feels like the gentle hands of a massage therapist pressing firmly first on one side of your spine, and then the other. It relieves tension and loosens the muscles to prepare your back for deeper massage.

Woman receiving lower back massage. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **2 KNEADING**

Feels like thumbs pressing firmly in a circular motion on both sides of the spine. This therapeutic motion goes deeper, lifting and stretching muscles to improve circulation.

Woman receiving lower back massage. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **3 COMPRESSION**

Feels like the heels of a professional therapist's hands firmly pushing on muscles alongside your spine and inward, toward the spine itself. This mode aids in improving mobility and posture.

Woman receiving percussion massage. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **4 PERCUSSION**

Feels like fists or the edge of hands rapidly tapping on your back muscles. This flexes spinal joints, relieves pressure and invigorates your entire back.

Man receiving a massage. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **5 EFFLEURAGE**

Feels like long, soothing strokes; designed to flush the muscle belly and help lymphatic drainage.

Woman receiving lumbar traction. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **6 LUMBAR TRACTION**

Feels like the back muscles are being gently flexed and then extended (stretched).

Michael Nathanson, DC, a 1972 graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa, currently practices in Lake Worth, Fla., specializing in manipulative medicine, physical therapy, rehabilitation and massage.

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