

# Myofascial Therapy and Wellness Massage: What You Need to Know

By: Cortney Price, CMT



## Myofas...I what?

You may have heard myofascial therapy called by many different names: massage therapy, bodywork, manual therapy, touch therapy, etc. Regardless of the title, the common thread is therapy that addresses muscle tissue to achieve a

desired effect ranging from pain alleviation to relaxation. "Myofascia" broken down into "myo" and "fascia" simply means muscle tissue.

One aspect of myofascial therapy is to encourage the release of trigger points. A myofascial trigger point (TrP) is a site of exaggerated contraction that is extremely tender within a tightly drawn band of muscle. It feels like a lump or as you may commonly hear it call "a knot." Trigger points in muscles have the ability to create a variety of feelings ranging from a dull ache to sharp pain- constant or occasional- in parts of the body that may appear to be far from or totally unrelated to the source of the pain, therefore called referred pain. An excellent example is that TrPs in muscles of the shoulder and neck are known to cause headaches or earaches. These trigger points can also cause symptoms such as back pain, limb pain, numbness, tingling, dizziness, burning, or even nausea. Trigger point pain can even manifest as tennis elbow, carpal tunnel syndrome, rotator cuff syndrome and many other common problems. Because these sensations can occur far from the source, diagnosis of the true cause can become complicated if TrPs are overlooked.

Many of the problems for which people seek medical attention are multi-layered and mechanical in nature. Often, these issues involve joint dysfunction, and/or neurological dysfunction in addition to the myofascial component. If each one of these aspects a

re not addressed specifically, the overall condition will continue. The biggest surprise to most individuals is that mechanical dysfunction cannot be specifically addressed with chemicals! Mechanical problems require mechanical solution in order to achieve long-lasting correction not just temporary symptomatic relief.

## "Wellness" Massage

While release of trigger points can reduce pain, Swedish massage, also known as wellness or relaxation massage, has several significant benefits. Wellness massage helps to improve circulation, which can aid the immune system and boost concentration. During a relaxation massage, chemicals in the blood that cause depression and anxiety and those that are present during stressful times decrease. Holding tension due to stress in muscles can later lead to trigger points.

A combination of trigger point therapy and wellness massage can be extremely beneficial to those who have fibromyalgia or chronic myofascial pain. It is critical to address adhesions in the fascia and circulate fluids that carry essential nutrients and oxygen to the tissues and carry away the toxins and cellular waste products. Freeing the layers of fascia can create proper function by allowing messages to flow freely to the brain and spinal cord.



*Cortney Price, CMT received her training in deep tissue and Swedish massage techniques at the Potomac Massage Training Institute (PMTI) in Washington, DC. She is certified by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) and the Virginia Department of Health Professions. She is also a member of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA). Currently she practices at Barnes Chiropractic Health & Fitness in Centreville, VA. Call (703) 803-8966 for an appointment today!*

\* References available at [www.barneschiro.com](http://www.barneschiro.com) or by request.