

Body Restoration

by Mary Lou Quinlan

What makes massage therapy special? Is it the training of the staff? The ambience? The attention to detail that goes into each client's massage? Is it the ability to ease stress, pain and anxiety? Is it the capacity to start or aid healing? How do you make sure you are getting all of these things when you go to get your massage?

Christine St. Andre's massage boutique, *Body Restoration*, in business in Hopkinton, MA since 2003, is a local treasure. If you ask her clients what makes her business special, they will tell you the difference is Christine herself. A sociology major graduate of Framingham State, Christine knew as a teenager that she wanted to learn massage. She benefited from the therapy when healing from an athletic injury and the idea of being able to help others feel better was hugely appealing to her. For that reason, Christine also graduated from the Bancroft School of Massage Therapy in 2003.

Christine, in addition to offering hours of extremely skilled massage therapy to clients, has made it her business to provide a peaceful atmosphere that is welcoming and relaxing. *Body Restoration* is decorated in warm, muted tones. It houses fresh flowers, soothing scented candles, comfortable, heated massage tables and tranquil music. Christine has hired staff, Rachael Linnehan and Cheryl Doucette, who specialize in maternal massage and orthopedic massage respectively to assist her in providing massage therapy. All three of them are certified massage therapists. They use their massage training and their collective seventeen years of experience in taking care of clients to provide exceptional results. They all share the opinion that they are the ones who are healed by being able to use their skills to help heal others.

Christine is warm and caring. Her stated goal for *Body Restoration* is: "to help people recognize the power of healing touch. Properly applied healing touch is one of the most amazing gifts a person can experience." She does this by ensuring that she and her staff are dedicated to "providing exquisite service, attention to detail, the little things that make a difference like complete comfort and convenience; offering a wide range of hours of operation to suit everyone's needs." Christine says that "we are learning all the time about the difference massage therapy makes for countless people who deal with a range of conditions such as stress, anxiety, chronic pain, pain management, fibromyalgia, cancer, diabetes, and migraines. It can even improve sports performance."

Recent medical research into massage therapy supports Christine's statements by showing, among other things, that:

- Women with Stage 1 and 2 breast cancer may benefit from thrice-weekly massage therapy for reducing depressed mood, anxiety, and anger and for enhancing dopamine, serotonin, and NK cell number and lymphocytes.¹

- Massage therapy seems to be efficacious in the treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee.²
- Neuromuscular therapy can improve motor and select nonmotor symptoms in Parkinson's Disease patients.³
- Conventional care for patients with cancer can safely incorporate massage therapy. The strongest evidence for benefits of massage is for stress and anxiety reduction, although research for pain control and management of other symptoms common to patients with cancer, including pain, is promising.⁴

But you don't have to look to research to understand how massage at Body Restoration can be therapeutic. Just talk to some of the long-term clients from the business.

According to Jennifer Lobao, a *Body Restoration* client for three years, "The therapists at Body Restoration invest in getting to know each client and their specific needs. The way each massage is tailored to these needs at the time of visit makes Body Restoration unique and exceptional. Each therapist listens and responds to what the client is looking for specifically which is critical in order to provide optimal therapeutic massage. During pregnancy, massage therapy was a large part of my healthcare regime. As my body expanded and was forced to carry extra weight, my entire muscular system was out of whack. For me, the reduction of pain and the increased ability of my body to function similar to pre-pregnancy is the most important benefit of massage therapy during pregnancy. Massage therapy during pregnancy is not a luxury but rather a necessity. Quality of life is increased as the toll pregnancy takes on the body is decreased."

Keiron Tumbleton, a semi-professional marathon runner and a *Body Restoration* client for the past five years, states it this way: "For want of a better analogy, Christine is a trusted car mechanic. She knows the year and make well and understands keenly what needs to be done specific to the issues going on. If I hurt or am tight on a muscular level, Christine restores the status quo (and so her massage therapy provides) one principal benefit - it maintains and/or restores my ability to run."

As for me, who has consistently benefited from Christine's healing touch for five years as a client of *Body Restoration*; massage therapy has been nothing short of life-changing. I live with MS (multiple sclerosis) and consequently have chronically tight muscles and a bucket load of stress. Christine does an absolutely amazing job of reducing the tightness of the muscles with her targeted deep tissue massage. Further, the relaxation and stress decompression I experience with her massages has done wonders to help improve mood and increase my life functionality. The therapy I have with her has become an integral part of staying well with MS. I have also seen Rachael and been much impressed with her knowledge and massage style. It is different from Christine's (each massage therapist is her own person and has her own touch) and also extremely effective.

Because Christine believes so wholeheartedly in the power of healing touch, *Body Restoration* also offers both reflexology and reiki services. These treatments both have their roots in Asian healing methods. Reflexology has a history dating back thousands of years in Chinese medicine and reiki originated in early 20th century Japan.

The Reflexology Association of America states that reflexology is “a non-invasive complementary modality involving the use of alternating pressure applied to the reflexes within the reflex maps of the body located on the feet, hands and outer ears.” Christine McEvoy has been offering reflexology at Body Restoration since 2004. She has always been interested in working with clients in pursuing their emotional and physical balance. Christine is nationally certified in reflexology and is continually furthering her reflexology education to offer her clients the latest techniques. She most recently completed courses on hand and ear reflexology, the use of reflexology in managing chronic pain and in dealing with stress and anxiety.

Reiki, according to the International Center for Reiki Training, is “a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. It is administered by ‘laying on hands’ and is based on the idea that an unseen ‘life force energy’ flows through us and is what causes us to be alive. If one’s ‘life force energy’ is low, then we are more likely to get sick or feel stress, and if it is high, we are more capable of being happy and healthy.” At *Body Restoration*, reiki is provided by Margie Wiggin, a former chiropractic assistant who has a master’s degree in education and who has studied energy medicine since 2000, achieving Reiki Master Practitioner level status in 2005.

Going to *Body Restoration* is a unique experience. Whether you need massage, reflexology, reiki or all three for your personal journey, you may well find the essence of tranquility on the massage therapy table. Christine St. Andre makes it her business to supply her clients with a soothing, warm, healing experience when they spend time with her and her associates in Hopkinton. You can find more information about *Body Restoration*, including how to purchase gift certificates, online at www.body-restoration.com.

¹ M.Hernandez-Reif, G.Ironson, T.Field, J.Hurley, G.Katz, M.Diego, S.Weiss, M.Fletcher, S.Schanberg, C.Kuhn
Breast cancer patients have improved immune and neuroendocrine functions following massage therapy
Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 2004, Volume 57, Issue 1, Pages 45-52

² Adam I. Perlman, MD, MPH, Alyse Sabina, MD, Anna-Leila Williams, PA-C, MPH, Valentine Yanchou Njike, MD, David L. Katz, MD, MPH

Massage Therapy for Osteoarthritis of the Knee: A Randomized Controlled Trial
Arch Intern Med, Dec. 2006, Vol 166, Pages 2533-2538

³ Lauren H. Craig, MS, Anna Svircev, CMT, MPH, Michael Haber, PhD, Jorge L. Juncos, MD
Controlled pilot study of the effects of neuromuscular therapy in patients with Parkinson’s disease
Movement Disorder, Oct. 16. 2006, Volume 21, Issue 12, Pages 2127-2133

⁴ Lisa Corbin, MD
Safety and Efficacy of Massage Therapy for Patients With Cancer
Cancer Control, July 2005, Vol. 12, No. 3, Pages 158-164