

Therapeutic Massage for Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs)

Therapeutic massage has been found to be effective for the prevention and treatment of repetitive strain injuries (RSIs). One of the greatest causes of occupational health problems in the United States, RSI's may take the form of muscle spasms, strains, inflammation of joints and various soft tissues, loss of motion, and chronic pain.

RSIs are musculo-skeletal injuries that result from the repetitive motion involved in many jobs, as well as leisure pursuits like golf, tennis, weaving, or playing a musical instrument. Other names for RSI's include cumulative trauma disorders (CTD), repetitive motion injuries, repetitive stress syndrome, occupational overuse syndrome, and overuse injuries.

Therapeutic massage can help relieve the cumulative strain on the body caused by repetitive motion and so aid in the prevention of overuse injuries. Massage is also used in the treatment of RSIs such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, rotator cuff tendinitis, and other common soft tissue injuries.

Causes of RSIs

Activities that involve monotonous repetition of movement produce stress on the related muscles and joints. This often leads to overuse injuries. Factors that contribute to RSIs are fast paced motion, awkward or fixed posture, exerting a lot of force (lifting, pulling, pushing), repeated pressure on a particular joint, vibration, cold temperatures, and inadequate rest breaks. RSIs develop over time and are the result of an accumulation of stresses and strain.

Those vulnerable to RSI's include assembly line workers, machine operators, checkout scanners, postal sorters, warehouse workers, and professional athletes and musicians. Computers have produced a whole new generation

of RSI's suffered with a treatment approach and better workplace design during the 1980s. However, these workers' symptoms have diminished and so will the job risk.



Symptoms and Treatment

RSIs develop over time. The symptoms are usually pain, numbness, tingling, and weakness. The pain is usually in the hands, wrists, and forearms. The numbness and tingling are usually in the fingers and hands. The weakness is usually in the hands and wrists.

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