

## **Introduction to Massage Therapy**

### **Benefits of MT-**

Helps relax the body and the nervous system,

- Touch helps in the release of happy hormones- dopamine and serotonin,
  - o Dopamine is associated with pleasurable responses and happiness
  - o Serotonin is associated with relaxation and promotion of sleep
  
- Reduces or slows down activity of the Autonomic Nervous System (Sympathetic Branch) and facilitates the reduction of stress and anxiety
  
- Massage helps relieve stress in the neck
  
- **Reduces spasms, reduces tonicity, promotes relaxation**
  - o Activity of Gamma Motor Neuron systems are responsible for increasing muscle tonicity
  - o Adhesions can be broken down with different massage techniques, e.g.- Cross fiber frictions
  
- **Effect of massage therapy on respiratory system**
  - o Helps clear out/ loosen up excess buildup of secretions and mucus in the lungs, increase extensibility of the lungs, it helps increase or regain lung capacity which was previously lost.
  - o Techniques such as tapotement, cupping, vibrations, coarse vibrations along with postural techniques help clear out secretions from the lungs of affected patients
  
- **Effects of massage therapy on circulation**
  - o Promotes vasodilation- increases diameter of blood vessels (opens them up/widens blood vessels), and decreases blood pressure.
  - o Massage techniques focus on constriction and relaxation- so massage techniques help in managing low blood pressure as well, as blood flow can be constricted as well, to an extent however, not completely
  
- **Effects of massage therapy on lymphatic system**
  - o Accelerates movement of lymph towards the heart
  - o Techniques such as effleurage and MLT help in the movement of lymph from the capillaries to the heart
  - o Helps reduce edema and improve lymphatic drainage

- **Effects of massage therapy on immune system**

- Massage therapy reduces stress and tension and this helps support immune system function.
- Stress and anxiety impair the activity of the immune system which makes individuals susceptible to disease, massage therapy alleviates these conditions by promoting relaxation which in turn helps the immune system function smoothly.