

Include a massage in your spring cleaning routine

You've cleaned the office, freshened up the bedroom and organized the garage. What's next?

How about a good spring cleaning for your body?

You will need to eat well, stay hydrated and get enough exercise. A massage is another great way to clean and restore the body.

The soft music, candlelight and a quiet space might make a spa massage seem like nothing but a luxurious treat.

But regular massages can alleviate muscle pain, improve range of motion in tight areas of the body as well as reduce the effects of depression, anxiety and stress. A massage also helps lymph — the clear, cleansing liquid produced by lymph nodes — circulate through the body removing impurities, fighting infection and bolstering the immune system.

Put all that together and suddenly something that sounds like an extravagance



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Fitness

becomes much more practical.

The biggest benefit to a massage may be stress reduction. As a person gets stressed, muscles automatically tighten. This wouldn't be much of an issue if a stressful event came and went. But today, our stress often just builds and builds without a break.

That continued tension can lead to illness, poor posture, headaches and other ailments. Releasing that stress can do wonders for your health.

For athletes or anyone who exercises on a regular basis, massages are often a permanent fixture in a

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training plan.

Soreness is caused when small muscle fibers are torn, then rebuilt better and stronger. A massage can alleviate some of the tenderness and encourage circulation that speeds recovery.

For athletes, experts often recommended massages every couple of weeks, or more frequently, depending upon the sport's demands.

Before you call for an appointment, determine what kind of massage fits your needs. The Swedish massage therapy is the most common approach but can be supplemented by specific types of

massage including deep tissue, acupressure, sports massage and more.

Make sure your therapist has a license and ask him or her a few questions before you commit, said Choice Kinchen, the owner of Your First Choice Massage.

Find out how long the person has been practicing; what type of massage is his or her specialty; and ask for references. A good massage therapist will get to know you and your needs, making your sessions more worthwhile.

“They have to like what they do,” Kinchen said. “It's important that you both like each other.”

If you do decide to get that massage, remember to hydrate properly afterward to keep the body moving well and help it stay invigorated!

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