

# INSOMNIA MASSAGE

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MASSAGE FOR INSOMNIA?

### Massage Therapy for Insomnia

Sometimes, a good night's sleep seems impossible to attain. Whether that's because of specific or general stress, hormonal or schedule changes, short-term or chronic pain, there's nothing quite so frustrating as watching the clock count off the hours while you lie wide awake -- knowing you'll have to start the coming day without nearly enough sleep.

Feeling sluggish or less than energetic during the day is bad enough, but insomnia can also reduce cognitive functions while increasing depression, anxiety and problems with memory. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have declared that insufficient sleep is a public health epidemic. "Sleep insufficiency [is] linked to motor vehicle crashes, industrial disasters, and medical and other occupational errors."

### Natural Treatment for Insomnia

Everyone has seen ads for pills that promise a good night's sleep, but not everyone wants to rely on prescription medication. Over-the-counter remedies aren't always effective, and alcohol and nicotine create problems of their own. It's easy to see why some people seek refuge in less-than-ideal treatments to make themselves fall asleep. But when you're looking for how to treat insomnia naturally, massage therapy can make a significant difference.

### How Massage Works

When you tell your professional therapist about your sleep difficulties, you'll receive a massage designed to address the problem. Research has shown that regular insomnia massage therapy not only reduces pain and anxiety but also increases relaxation, which can help restore your sleep pattern.

"When you are deprived of deep sleep, certain kinds of pain chemicals are released," explains Dr. Tiffany Field, director of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine. But that changes with any kind of massage, whether for insomnia or increased flexibility or greater relaxation. "There is a release of serotonin, which is the body's natural production of anti-pain chemicals. Massage is very effective at increasing deep sleep."

### Additional Benefits

Along with promoting deep sleep, which is where the restorative process occurs, a therapeutic massage can pay off in other ways as well. The Touch Research Institute has found that arthritis patients report improved grip strength and greater range of motion after as little as one month of massage therapy. Other benefits of massage include improved posture, lower blood pressure, relaxed muscles, better circulation, a stronger immune system, relief of headaches, and stress reduction. So the natural treatment for insomnia comes with additional reasons to make massage therapy a regular part of living a healthier life.

### Adding Lavender

It may sound like an old wives' tale, but University of Maryland Medical Center researchers found that while massage is known to encourage relaxation for better sleep, aromatherapy massage can be even more effective. Clinical studies of patients receiving a massage with and without essential oils found that those whose massage included lavender showed a more positive reaction including improved sleep, less anxiety and stronger mental capacity. Ask your therapist about adding essential oils to your massage.