

Remedial Massage, an Effective Treatment for Back & Neck Pain

*Written by Clare O'Connell, our leading Remedial Massage
Therapist who practices at our St Georges Terrace Clinic*

There are many causes for back and neck pain - injury, general wear and tear, poor posture, postural misalignment or more commonly, sitting for long periods in front of a computer.

Unfortunately for many of us, it seems to be unavoidable and most of us will suffer from some kind of back and/or neck pain in our lives. So, what to do about it? Identifying the source of the problem is the key to a successful treatment. A good remedial massage therapist should consider factors such as workplace setup, sleeping positions, posture, exercise and stretch regimes and stress.

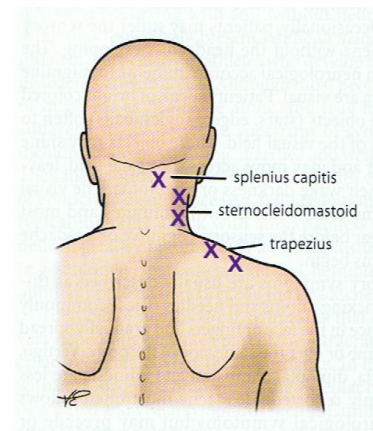


Once the therapist has identified and understands the nature of the client's presenting problem they must determine the most effective way of treating the problem. Massage is an effective way of combating tension and helps to assist in the repair of already damaged muscle fibres.

Remedial massage will help to speed up and support the body's repair mechanism by stimulating blood supply, calming the nervous system, and relaxing muscles. Remedial massage therapists use a variety of techniques including trigger point release, deep tissue, myofascial release and treating postural instabilities and misalignments within the body to minimise reoccurrences of common aches and pains.

Often patients present with "knots" in their muscles. Commonly these develop in the mid, upper back and shoulder region, due to computer based lifestyles. These "knots" in the muscles are called adhesions, bands of painful, rigid tissue. Adhesions can block circulation, cause pain, limit movement and cause inflammation. Applying remedial massage techniques enables these adhesions to be broken down to relieve pain and restore normal movement.

Commonly, headaches may be caused by active trigger points in specific areas in the neck. Headaches felt in the front of the head are associated with trigger points in the sub occipital muscles (those muscles at the base of the skull where neck meets head), whereas pain felt through the temples is often associated with trigger points in the upper trapezius, splenius capitis and cervicis and also the sternocleidomastoid muscles (see diagram on right)



If you are a sufferer of muscular pain you will know that your whole body and mind can feel tense and stressed, not just the affected area. Therefore it is important to have these issues controlled and if you know flare-ups are inevitable because of the type of work or sports you are involved in, routine maintenance to relieve the pain and dysfunction is highly recommended.

Our bodies are no strangers to routine and habit, therefore it can take some time before the body adjusts to changes that have been made and maintain these positive changes. Massage helps to re-train the body into doing just this.

Regular exercise or strength programs are also useful tools to aid in the maintenance and repair of some of these common aches and pains. In addition to this, the treatment program designed by a remedial massage therapist will include postural retraining and identifying sources of stress and ways in which to reduce this stress.