

## *Pamper Your Back Pain*

Anyone who has suffered from recurring, unyielding back problems, knows the beast that is called back pain. While most of us have experienced back pain that comes from overexertion or muscle pulls, the effects of back pain for many can be debilitating, excruciating, and life changing. Experts say back pain accounts for \$100 billion in lost productivity and health-care costs each year and is one of the primary causes of work-related disability. Managing back pain can be a daunting and exhausting proposition. One natural avenue for finding relief is massage therapy.

Whether you've pulled a muscle in your yoga class or afternoon basketball game, or you suffer from long-term pain caused by an injury, back pain affects us all. In fact, when it comes to low back pain specifically, researchers say that 70-85% of the population will experience it at some point in their lives.

Back pain is an especially debilitating condition because every movement your body makes depends on the spine functioning optimally. When back pain shows up, your whole body knows it, and sometimes exacerbates the problem by compensating in other ways to avoid the pain. It's not unusual for sufferers to have secondary problems related to those compensation patterns.

Experts say the cause of back pain can be the result of several factors. High on the list is stress. Hunched over a keyboard, late on a deadline, bogged down in worry—many are familiar with this life. When our body is stressed, we literally begin to pull inward: the shoulders roll forward and move up to the ears, the neck disappears, and the back tightens in the new posture. This is a protective mode, and can also cause visceral problems, as well, which results in pain affecting many internal organs. Repetitive movements, ignorance on the part of employer and employee, as well as old, unresolved injuries and traumatic events seem to dictate where stress settles in the back.

Back pain sufferers know there are no easy answers for easing the pain. Physical therapy has proven effective for some sufferers, as has chiropractic and acupuncture, but massage therapy is also making a name for itself when it comes to providing relief. In fact, research has shown that massage can be a great friend to the back-pain sufferer. ***Massage therapists have long treated low back pain safely and effectively. They have done so less expensively and less invasively than is possible with other treatments.***

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*An August issue of Consumer Reports cited deep-tissue massage as one of the remedies voted most effective by readers for back pain. Other research from the University of Miami, School of Medicine and the Touch Research Institute showed that massage can decrease stress and long term pain, improve sleep and range of motion, and help lower the incidence of depression and anxiety that often accompanies back pain.*

*Another study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine found that massage significantly reduced the pain of moderately severe chronic back pain sufferers. After an hour massage, once a week for 10 weeks, clients reported that their pain had decreased by nearly 50%. Most study participants reported that the relief lasted at least a year after their last massage session.*

When it comes to back pain, there are a lot of options available. Some are more effective than others, depending on the condition for which they are being applied. Ultimately, massage, and its myriad of benefits, might be a viable answer. For back pain sufferers, massage can do wonders. It can help to relax the body, relax the psyche, and improve a client's range of motion and circulation to the affected tissues. Not only can massage help directly with the pain, but it can also make life a little easier too. Massage can tap into the parasympathetic system, and help release all of the feel good hormones that help you sleep better and help you handle stressors along the way. And that all helps in building a healthier back and a happier you.



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AND YOU CANNOT SEE A SHADOW.”  
— HELEN KELLER

### ***Pet's Corner:***

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## BAKED PARMESAN TOMATOES

### INGREDIENTS

*4 SERVINGS*

4 TOMATOES, HALVED HORIZONTALLY  
1/4 CUP FRESHLY GRATED PARMESAN CHEESE  
1 TEASPOON CHOPPED FRESH OREGANO  
1/4 TEASPOON SALT  
FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER, TO TASTE  
4 TEASPOONS EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL



### PREPARATION

PREHEAT OVEN TO 450° F.  
PLACE TOMATOES CUT-SIDE UP ON A BAKING SHEET.  
TOP WITH PARMESAN, OREGANO, SALT AND PEPPER.  
DRIZZLE WITH OIL AND BAKE UNTIL THE TOMATOES ARE  
TENDER, ABOUT 15 MINUTES.


### NUTRITION

PER SERVING: 91 CALORIES; 6 G FAT ( 2 G SAT , 4 G MONO ); 4 MG CHOLESTEROL;  
6 G CARBOHYDRATES; 3 G PROTEIN; 2 G FIBER; 375 MG SODIUM; 363 MG POTASSIUM.  
CARBOHYDRATE SERVINGS: 1/2  
EXCHANGES: 1 VEGETABLE, 1 FAT  
NUTRITION NOTE: WHAT YOU GET: VITAMINS A & C, POTASSIUM, CALCIUM.


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*Peppermint is highly regarded as a digestive stimulant, pain reliever, appetite suppressant and is an anti-inflammatory, anti-tumoral, and antibacterial essential oil. It can be used for arthritis, respiratory infections, obesity, viral infections, digestive problems, headaches, nausea and skin conditions such as psoriasis and dermatitis. It may also be beneficial when used with other oils for treating spinal conditions such as scoliosis. It is very purifying and stimulating to the conscious mind. Research has found that by inhaling Peppermint Oil, mental accuracy improved by 28%. Also, peppermint helps with digestion and aids weight loss. After meals mix 1 drop of peppermint oil in 8 oz of water and drink. <https://www.youngliving.org/jackieking5>*

  
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