

MESSAGE: WHEN TO GET ONE

I've been leading you all astray! I'm so sorry. Let me explain. Yesterday I got a call from a Fast Tracks member wanting a massage for a brand new injury, unfortunately just days before a major running event. I realized then that my injury of the month articles all suggest the benefits of massage for injury. Well, that's true. But the best time to get a massage is before the injury happens to prevent it, or at that very first twinge that you don't even want to acknowledge.

A competitive athlete trains on the edge. How hard can s/he push her/himself without injury intervening? How many times have you heard a runner say, "I was in the best running shape of my life and then I got hurt"? Massage will help you stay on top of that edge, whatever your edge may be. If you're no longer in your forgiving twenties, that edge leans a little more heavily toward injury. If you have a chronic problem (cranky knee, tight hamstrings, ongoing plantar fasciitis, etc.), your edge is even more slippery.

When is the best time for massage? To fight injury is a great time for massage. To prevent injury is the best time. If you're training heavily, for instance participating in weekly track workouts and/or running long runs each weekend and/or upping your mileage and/or racing, a weekly or bi-weekly massage will help you stay injury-free in several ways. For one thing, as your massage therapist goes over each muscle group, both you and s/he will find sore and tight muscles that you might not have been aware were potential injury sights. At the same time that the therapist feels these micro-tears and adhesions, s/he begins to smooth out the slightly damaged tissue and realign the fibers, stopping the injury process. Your therapist will also stretch your running muscles, again looking for and resolving adhesions. Your therapist can then suggest strengthening or stretching or self massage for the muscle in jeopardy.

If you are not currently "in training", as in the above example, but your injury scoreboard has its share of entries, I would recommend monthly massage to keep you off the sidelines. For those lucky souls thanking their folks for incredible genes that keep them from injury, birthdays are a great time to "give back" to that body that's been serving you so well. Besides feeling great, the endorphin rush lasts all day.

BTW-Therapeutic Massage (that's what I call my practice) always offers \$5 off to running club members. Take advantage of the 4 massages for \$195 special continuing through the end of September. Once bought, the massages can be scheduled anytime, even beyond September.

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