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ABOUT THE PROPRIETOR

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Photo by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels

No Pain, No Gain may be Hazardous to Your Health

By Kevin Smith

**Patient: "Doctor, it hurts when I do this."
Doctor: "Well, don't do that!"**

It's an old joke, but ironically, it is actually sound medical advice. Pain is your body's warning system, telling you something is endangering it. Sometimes, that may mean a doctor's visit is in order, but most often, I believe, it just means "Stop doing that!" – at least temporarily.

I say that because the most common situations I run into where the pain signals are ignored are in exercising and stretching. In orthopedic massage, I frequently have clients who have lost range of motion, not because the muscles are tight but because the joint capsule is blocked with an adhesion or a ligament strain and the muscles that have tightened have done so to "splint" or protect the joint, which is known as secondary muscle guarding. All stretching will do in that instance is cause more pain and fail at actually stretching – and in a worst-case scenario, it can create further

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No Pain, No Gain may be Hazardous to Your Health (cont.)

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damage to your body, including your muscles, bones, and even your nervous system.

Your body isn't supposed to hurt; and I believe neither should your therapy. Whether it's massage or another type, a painful session will increase secondary muscle guarding, upregulate your sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight), and most often end the opportunity of bringing you relief in that session – and possibly in future sessions because your subconscious mind will recognize the person and/or place as the cause of previous pain and begin secondary guarding before your session even begins.

The same is true in your exercise and stretching regimen. That's not to say there should be no discomfort; increasing your boundaries gently is a good thing. Just be mindful of when discomfort crosses the threshold into pain. I encourage you, when that happens, to heed your body's warning system and stay safe. Your body is usually pretty smart and it will tell you about its condition – if you'll listen.

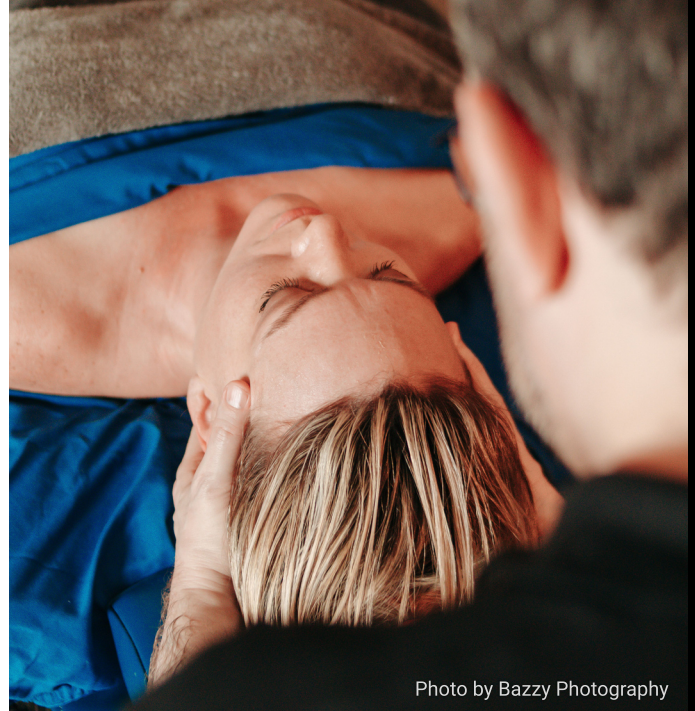


Photo by Bazy Photography



There's a New Treatment in Town Just What is Scar Release Therapy (SRT)?

Briefly, scars – both visible and those beneath the surface – disrupt your body's normal function and can cause pain, often in parts of your body not even near the scar's site. Scar Release Therapy, which helps reverse these disruptions, was developed by



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the Center for Pain & Stress Research, has been proven safe and is clinically tested.

It could be easy to mistake SRT as being the same as a traditional TENS therapy treatment, but it's not. One primary reason is that while a TENS unit uses AC current (the same as what powers your lights), the Dolphin Neurostim units use DC current, which is the same type of current your body's cells produce and are designed to handle. As a result, SRT is a more natural approach causing less stress in your body.

In fact, SRT works by painlessly sending DC micro-current through the scar tissue, a.k.a. microcurrent point stimulation, which reduces dermal trauma, adhesions, and restrictions in the fascia; all of which has a proven track record of pain relief – an impressive 73.2% – after just one session. (Documented in The Successful Treatment of Chronic Pain Using Micro-current Point Stimulation Applied to Scars article in the 2017 issue of the International Journal of Complementary and Alternative Medicine [IJCAM], an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed open access journal.)

In addition to pain relief, SRT also has been known to greatly reduce visible scars and can even reduce decades-old, childhood scar tissue.

Book your own SRT session (or starter session before your massage) online at MyEliteMassage.com and experience the benefits for yourself!



"Massage has had a positive effect on every medical condition we've looked at."

Tiffany Field, PhD

When Not to Stretch

By Kevin Smith

Stretching is a wonderful tool for keeping your body limber, and normally I encourage it as part of your daily self-care routine. However, as the saying goes, there are two sides to every coin and there are definitely times when stretching is not an appropriate tool. Here are a few examples of when it should not be used.

1) It's painful. Pain is your body's warning signal. When it activates, it's to tell you that something has been injured or is at risk of being injured. **You should never stretch into pain. Ever.**

2) The muscle is overstretched already. A common misconception we have is that a taut muscle needs stretching. That's largely because those are the ones that we notice hurting. As a general rule, extensor muscles, rhomboids as an example, are already stretched taut and further stretching may lead to worse posture, hypermobility, and injury. It's the short, not long, tight muscles, that is the opposing flexors – the pecs in the case of our example – that need the stretch.

3) The muscle's joint is hypermobile. If this joint has too much flexibility, it indicates a damaged ligament. Since you already have too great a range of motion, stability, not stretching, is needed in this case.

4) The muscle is in use. Even if it feels like you're stretching, you cannot physically stretch a muscle that's being used. For example, trying to stretch a leg muscle while you're standing on that leg is futile. Truly effective leg stretches are those done from a seated position. If you're putting any weight or force on a muscle, it's in use and any stretch you get will be minimal at best.

As I said, stretching is a wonderful tool for keeping your body limber. These tips should help you use it safely and more effectively. And if you'd like to take a deep-dive into effective stretching, especially for athletic performance, look into the work of Aaron Mattes, the creator of Active Isolated Stretching (AIS).

Massage for Old Injuries

Ancient Injuries Don't Have to Make You Feel Old

Art Riggs

Injuries such as chronic back pain, trick knees, and sticky shoulders are not necessarily something you just have to live with. Massage techniques might hold the key to unlocking this old pain.

Will Massage Help?

The benefits of massage will depend on the extent of the injury, how long ago it occurred, and on the skill of the therapist. Chronic and old injuries often require deeper and more precise treatments with less emphasis on general relaxation and working on the whole body. Massage works best for soft tissue injuries to muscles and tendons and is most effective in releasing adhesions and lengthening muscles that have shortened due to compensatory reactions to the injury. Tight and fibrous muscles not only hurt at the muscle or its tendon, but can also interfere with proper joint movement and cause pain far away from the original injury.

Therapists who perform such work often have specialized names for their work – such as orthopedic massage, neuromuscular therapy, myofascial

release, medical massage, etc., – but many massage therapists utilize an eclectic approach combining the best of the specialties.

It Works!

A recent Consumer Reports article ran the results of a survey of thousands of its readers and reported that massage was equal to chiropractic care in many areas, including back and neck pain. Massage also ranked significantly higher than some other forms of treatment, such as physical therapy or drugs.

If that nagging injury persists, consider booking a massage. Be sure to discuss the injury with your practitioner: How did you receive the injury? Have you reinjured it? And what exactly are your symptoms? Often, the body compensates in one area to protect another that has been traumatized, and this can create new problems.

Discuss the issues with your massage therapist. (Sometimes just talking about old injuries can play a significant role in the healing process.) Together, the two of you can work to determine a treatment plan.



About the Proprietor

Kevin Smith, LMT, MMP, is a former professional musician turned certified orthopedic massage therapist with over 8,000 hours of professional massage experience, hundreds of advanced continuing education hours, and who daily commits to honing his craft and increasing his repertoire of effective, pain-free techniques.

In addition to orthopedic massage, Kevin also holds certifications in the following: Cervical Release, Deep Tissue, Medical Massage for Neck, TMJ Disorder, & Headache Relief, Prenatal, Relaxation Reflexology, Neuromuscular Therapy (Trigger Point Therapy), Cupping, Scar Release Therapy, and more. As of this writing, he is working on his certifications as a Personal Trainer and in Lymphatic Drainage..