

Massage Self-Care Corner

Self Care Is Critical

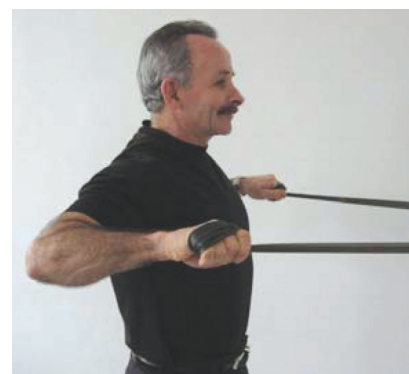
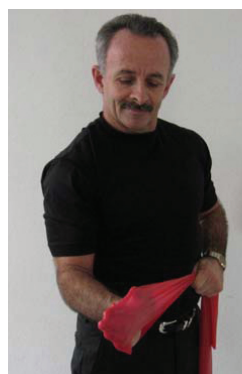
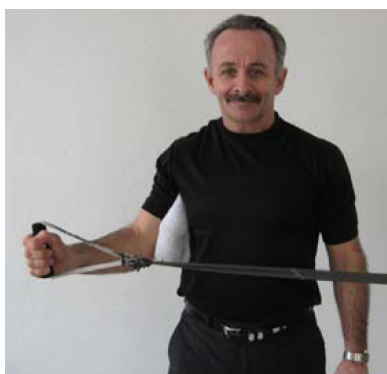


James Waslaski

In teaching orthopedic massage seminars throughout the world, I have always emphasized the critical role of therapist self care as a vital part of treatment follow-up in order to live a pain-free life. I recommend all therapists stretch tight muscle groups and strengthen weak muscle groups to maintain the resting lengths of opposing muscle groups throughout the body. That is the only way to maintain the results of therapy.

It was about three years ago when I learned the value of self care firsthand. I had thoracic outlet so bad I couldn't even pick up a pencil in my right hand without dropping it. I could not hold a fork in my hand, and I had to teach my seminars using mostly my left hand and the back of my right wrist. I believe the thoracic outlet came on over time due to poor postures and repetitive movements in doing massage without understanding the importance of taking care of myself.

Following therapy that included chiropractic, myoskeletal alignment, orthopedic massage, lymphatic drainage and isolated stretching to muscle groups like my sternocleidomastoids, scalenes, pectoralis minor and wrist flexors, function was restored to my arm, wrist and hand. After a month of therapy, I was able to avoid having a fusion done to the bones in my neck. My chiropractor aligned the area of the C7/T1 to move a bone spur off the nerve roots in that area. It was then that I had to take responsibility for keeping muscle groups in that area in balance to prevent tightening, which would allow the bones to move out of alignment again.




A critical missing link in living pain free with no numbness or tingling in my arm came when I started to strengthen weak and inhibited muscle groups such as my rhomboids, middle trapezius, and posterior rotator-cuff muscles, along with my wrist extensors.

This involved self care using active isolated stretching to stretch tight muscle groups of the anterior neck and shoulder, and the use of resistance bands to strengthen weak muscles in the posterior neck and shoulder. This total

daily therapy lasted only five minutes. It's obvious that tight muscle groups pulled bones onto nerves and blood vessels, leading to the symptoms I was experiencing. The key to being pain free and 100 percent functional came when I committed five minutes each day to stretch tight muscle groups and then strengthen the weak and inhibited antagonists.

I continue to do self care daily. I spend a minimum of five minutes (and up to 30 minutes) per day because I know what it takes to live the rest of my life

pain free and hope to inspire others to do the same. 

James Waslaski is an author and international lecturer. He can be reached at (800) 643-5543.

The Self-Care Wellness Authors



Barry Antoniow



Bruce Baltz



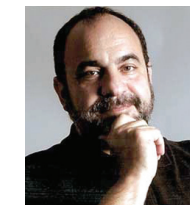
Erik Dalton



Judith DeLany



David Kent



George Kousaleos



Aaron Mattes



Teresa Matthews



Mike McGillicuddy



Sharon Puzsko



Benny Vaughn



James Waslaski