



# “Massage or Stretch... Which is Better?”

EZen Blog by Mary Watrous, BA, L.M.T.

Massage and stretching are both really helpful ways to keep your muscles relaxed, reduce tension and of course help recovery after an injury. Stretching helps to get the blood flowing to your muscles, which is great if you've injured yourself, or if your muscles are stiff because they've contracted due to inactivity.

Giving your muscles a really good stretch can stop your muscles from going into painful spasms or cramps, and stop the knots forming in them that take so much work to get rid of when you have a massage!

Regular massage on the other hand improves your flexibility and range of motion, keeping your joints more fluid and making them less injury prone in the first place.

What are the differences between massage and stretches - and how do they work together to promote muscle and joint health?

## Massage

What is a massage? Well, stripped right down, massage is simply a word that's used to describe the manipulation of muscles, ligaments and connective tissue. Of course there are lots of different types of massage, and techniques that are suitable for different things, but when you go for a massage, this is what your therapist will be doing.

### What's massage good for?

We love a massage for general wellbeing, but medically massage is recognized for more than just making you feel good.

#### Massage can:

- Help strained muscles to heal faster
- Reduce swelling and scar tissue if you're injured
- Relieve stiffness and tension in your muscles
- Reduce feelings of stress, anxiety and fatigue

## Stretching

Stretching does have a lot of similarities to massage, but its main benefit is to relieve the tightness and tension that's built up in your muscles when you've used (and over-used) them.

Having a really good, effective stretch can increase the blood flow to your muscles, and this leads to a better range of motion that helps your joints to stay in alignment.

### What's stretching good for?

Stretching properly can:

- Improve your circulation
- Boost your nerve health - a contracted muscle around a nerve can create pressure that can constrict the blood supply to the nerve.
- Make movement easier
- Improve flexibility



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## **How can massage and a stretching routine work together?**

Daily stretching – to a point where you can just feel it pulling on your muscles – can really help to increase your flexibility, and you can feel the effects in a matter of a few weeks.

Enjoying a regular massage helps to keep your body relaxed and flexible. Massage can release trigger points and muscles in spasm, making your stretching routine even more effective.

You could even opt for a Thai massage which uses stretches and massage all in one session to give your muscles and tendons a really thorough workout. You can also ask your massage therapist for advice if you have any injuries or are experiencing stiffness in your muscles.

Mary Watrous, L.M.T. uses an integrative approach to her massage therapy sessions. While she enjoys offering many different types of massage, her greatest passion lies in massage therapy for those with specific fitness goals as well as athletes. She enjoys helping people enhance their overall fitness performance by offering massage therapy to assist in their recovery. Mary is available by appointments at Everything Zen. To contact Mary, you can reach her at 860-861-8978 or by email [watrousmary@gmail.com](mailto:watrousmary@gmail.com)



860-556-2914

Located at 495 Gold Star Highway, Ste. 320, Groton, CT  
[www.everythingzenmassage.com](http://www.everythingzenmassage.com)

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