

# Bodywork For Wellness

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## Spring 2012 Newsletter

**Softening into Pain:** My recent newsletters have focused on increasing body awareness and understanding the purpose of pain in our bodies. When we feel pain it is a signal from our tissues to communicate that something needs addressing. So then what does one do about it? Tightening and tensing up are a natural protective response to pain. This often leads to the pain-spasm-pain cycle. This means that when pain occurs our muscles will tighten up to a degree that can include spasming. This spasm or tightness will decrease blood flow and drainage to the area, which limits the amount of oxygen delivered to the tissues. When tissue has less than optimal amounts of oxygen, which is known as hypoxia, pain is the tissues' response. This pain is the signal to the body we don't have enough oxygen at the tissue level and there is damage occurring to our tissues. This pain is interpreted by your brain and a response is created. The body gets the message that more oxygen is needed and tries to respond so the tissue can begin to repair. If we are tightening in response to the feeling of pain this creates more muscle tightness and spasms, we have less blood flow, the tissue remain hypoxic, which causes more pain and the pain-spasm-pain cycle continues.

Softening into pain may seem counter-intuitive, however it is often the best thing we can do. When pain occurs if we consciously or unconsciously tighten we perpetuate the pain-spasm-pain cycle. If instead we purposefully soften our bodies and do some deep breathing we can help to reduce that cycle. By softening the best we can more blood can be delivered to the tissues because there is less resistance to the blood flow. Deep breathing helps to keep the oxygen coming into the lungs and blood stream. Both of these factors allows more oxygen to get to and remain in our tissues. This minimizes hypoxia, and the body's response to it, which will reduce our pain. Deep breathing is also known to help promote relaxation and calming to the mind and body which is helpful in breaking the pain cycle.

So the next time you feel pain try to bring some softening to your whole body and to that painful area specifically, and take some deep breaths. This can go a long way to helping you get thru the pain and will help your body at the tissue level move towards faster healing.

### **Wellness Tip:** Healthy Management of Allergies

With the spring approaching we will have a variety of pollens in the air. This can lead to a lot of congestion, post nasal drip and runny noses. Some helpful hints for dealing with allergies are:

1. Change air filters in your home and use an air purifier especially in your bedroom
2. Look into a netty pot. This is a nasal rinse tool that flushes allergens out of your sinuses
3. Ask your therapist about self treatment to decrease congestion and drainage

If you have a comment or question, or to learn more about Bodywork for Wellness please call or email:

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