

Stress Relief Through Massage: Evaluating Mental Health Benefits Across Different Work Environment

International Massage Therapy Research Conference

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a standardized 30-minute protocol for anti-stress massage, integrating physiotherapeutic techniques with aromatherapy using ylang-ylang essential oil. The massage sequence includes cephalic and caudal stroking, friction, kneading, and forearm pressure applied rhythmically along the back, neck, and scalp to induce relaxation. The protocol emphasizes the importance of environmental settings—optimal room temperature, humidity control, and calming Zen music—for maximizing therapeutic effects. Ylang-ylang oil was chosen for its evidence-based sedative, anxiolytic, and cardiovascular benefits. The massage concludes with scalp stimulation, enhancing stress relief and overall well-being. This structured approach may serve as a practical guide for physiotherapists delivering holistic stress-reduction therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Prolonged computer use and sedentary behavior among office workers increase the risk of developing musculoskeletal pain, especially in the upper body and neck. These issues are often caused by poor posture, repetitive movements and lack of regular physical activity, causing decreased productivity, discomfort and long-term health complications. Massage therapy has shown potential as a non-invasive intervention for reducing such pain and improving general musculoskeletal health. This study aims to assess the effects of massage therapy on upper body and neck pain in office workers with musculoskeletal predispositions caused by extended computer use. Introduction - Objective - The objective of this study is to evaluate the effects of massage therapy in reducing pain, improving musculoskeletal function and improving well-being in 150 office workers who experience upper body and neck discomfort due to prolonged computer use. Methods - This prospective study will involve 150 participants aged 25 to 55 years who work in office settings for at least six hours per day. Participants will be randomly assigned to two groups: the intervention group, which will receive massage therapy, and the control group, which will not receive any intervention. The intervention group will undergo 30-minute massage therapy sessions twice a week for 10 months, focusing on the neck, shoulders, and upper back. Pain levels will be measured using the Visual Analog Scale and musculoskeletal health will be assessed using the Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire at three intervals: baseline, mid- intervention, and post-intervention. Additionally, posture analysis and participant-reported outcomes, including perceived relaxation, stress levels, and quality of life, will be collected through structured questionnaires. We will measure muscle testing and goniometry in each participant.

RESULTS

It is anticipated that participants in the massage therapy group will report reductions in neck and upper body pain levels, improved musculoskeletal health, better posture and decreased stress compared to the control group. Secondary benefits like improved focus, productivity and sleep quality are also expected to be observed in the intervention group.

CONCLUSION

This study is expected to provide robust evidence supporting massage therapy as an effective and accessible intervention for managing musculoskeletal discomfort in office workers. The findings will highlight the importance of incorporating massage therapy into workplace wellness programs and occupational health strategies to improve employee well-being, reduce pain and prevent long-term health complications associated with sedentary lifestyles and prolonged computer use.

30-Minute Anti-Stress massage protocol



The oil used for the anti-stress massage is a neutral oil with the addition of ylang-ylang essential oil. First, the physiotherapist began with stroking movements directed in the cephalic direction - performing 5 to 10 stroking techniques to familiarize the body, allow the patient to accept the physiotherapist's hands, and improve relaxation.



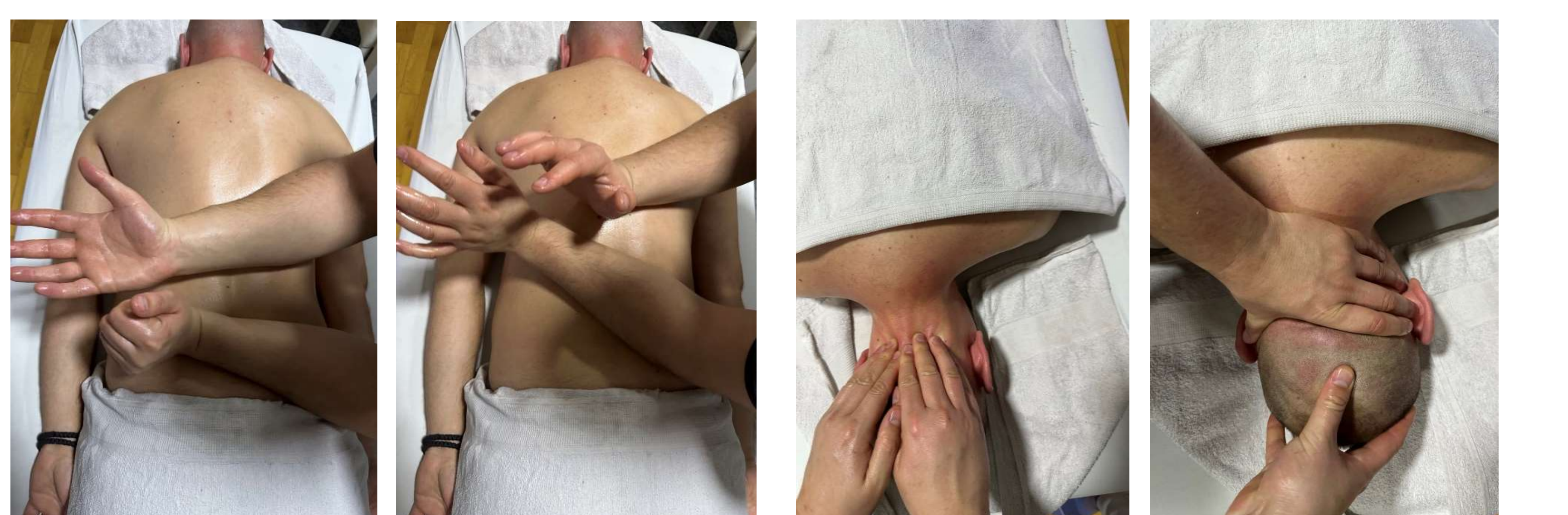
The masseur was in a side position, which, after this technique, went to the front part of the massage table, performing stroking in the caudal direction. Later, the client's arm was lowered off the table, and stroking was performed from the upper arm to the end of the scapula, with a gradual and slow rhythmic pressure as it reached the scapula's end. The same procedure was performed on the other side.



The masseur applies pressure with both thumbs next to every third vertebral process (close to the vertebrae) for approximately 5 seconds, followed by circular movements. Then, the hands were positioned to hang from the upper side of the table, allowing the masseur to begin semicircular movements, starting from the occipital region, moving down the neck, around the ascending part of the trapezius muscle, and toward the shoulder. The pressure was increased the most in the neck area, specifically on the scalene muscles, where circular pressure was applied for no more than 3 seconds.



This procedure was repeated five times. It is important to note that the pressure in this area should not be too strong, as clients receiving an anti-stress massage should not experience any pain during the session. one hand, specifically the area between the thumb and index finger, to perform stroking on the neck in a cephalic-caudal direction, combined with friction using the thumbs.



The masseur, grasping the neck with both hands, performs semicircular movements on the neck, finishing with the fingers on the occipital bone, holding for a few seconds. In the case of anti-stress massage, the application of oil on the scalp is recommended.

