

## **Therapeutic Massage and Palliative Cancer Therapy**

Jack Bleeker  
August 7, 2009

In recent years the role of [alternative therapies](#) in cancer care has transformed the way many patients cope with illness and related side effects. Older paradigms suggest that cancer can only be effectively treated with traditional treatments such as surgical resection, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy. Those who refuse this notion seek alternative therapies outside of their treatment regimen to experience relaxation as well as an ease in side-effects associated with traditional treatment regimens, including those caused by chemotherapy drugs.

Today, not only patients but also the medical establishment recognizes the importance of alternative therapies, and particularly the importance of massage therapy in comprehensive cancer care. Massage, like most alternative cancer therapies, is most effective when used in conjunction with traditional treatments.

Therapeutic massage is unique in that it remedies the feeling of isolation which is experienced by many people who battle a difficult disease. The human contact that massage therapy soothes the psychological stresses that cancer patients endure such as feelings of being overwhelmed by the nature of their diagnosis, family implications, and other difficulties associated with cancer treatments.

Often, the most valuable treatments to patients battling a difficult diagnosis are those that allow the patient to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible. Patients battling aggressive cancers, such as [mesothelioma](#), often forgo traditional treatments which will put their body through a great deal of stress and discomfort in favor of those such as massage, which provide peace of mind and comfort. Patients undergoing traditional treatments such as chemotherapy often find that therapies that are able to relax their mind and body, will dramatically lessen side effects like nausea, restlessness, and fever.

As with any treatment, the benefits of massage therapy are to be determined on a case by case circumstance. However, given the positive experience many patients have experienced, it is certainly worth exploring. Maximizing your cancer therapies with cooperation between patient, family, and physician will encourage patients to live healthy and comfortably, which is the goal of all comprehensive therapies.