

Rejuvenate mind, body with massage therapy

BY DEBI HOFF
Staff Reporter

Leah Halldorothy was suffering from neck pains, tight muscles and an incredibly stressful schedule. She tried different ways to cure her ailments, but finally found relief in the hands of a massage therapist at the Campus Recreation Center. According to a rec center pamphlet, massage therapy relieves mental and physical stress and leaves one relaxed and rejuvenated by:

- reducing muscle tension and pain.
- calming the nervous system by increasing circulation, which boosts one's energy and alertness.
- helping one to identify and relieve tension on his or her own.
- providing one with a change of pace so that the body and mind can relax and revitalize.

"Massage therapy is definitely a noninvasive way to break away from your daily schedule," said Amy Lohrberg Patt, Massage Therapy Coordinator at the University Recreation Center.

Halldorothy, a graduate student in educational leadership, has been scheduling massage appointments monthly.

"I usually just pick a really stressful week, or one that is scheduled to be busy, and make my appointment," Halldorothy said. "It just makes my body feel good and gets it ready to go again."

The massage clinic at the rec center recently expanded its schedule to meet the demands of students and faculty.

"Return appointments are evident," Patt said. "Due to the popularity, we revised our schedule to offer twice as many appointment

times."

Megan Armbruster, a senior community health education major, is fairly new to the massage scene, but said she plans on continuing.

"Massage is extremely relaxing," Armbruster said. "It gives me time to think about absolutely nothing and totally relax."

Like many businesses, the clinic hits a busy period, Patt said.

"The time around finals seems to justify the need for a massage," Patt said. "There is also a larger thrust around the holidays."

Armbruster recommends massage as a way to relax especially during finals.

"It really helps you to relax when you are stressed," Armbruster said. "It's definitely something that helps you find your focus again."

Halldorothy agrees. "It gives you back a positive attitude so you can get back into your homework," Halldorothy said.

The clinic offers massage times of 25, 45 and 60 minutes. It also offer a new sea clay body masque.

The rec center also will be sponsoring five-minute sample massages costing \$1 during Massage Therapy Awareness Week, Monday through Oct. 24.

Halldorothy and Armbruster agree that the prices offered at the rec center are reasonable.

Halldorothy said the actual massage may seem brief, but compared to prices at other Lincoln massage services, the rec center is less expensive.

"The prices at the rec center can't be touched," Halldorothy said. "Twenty-five minutes may seem like a short time, but it's enough to make you feel relaxed."

Appointments can now be made at the Campus Recreation Center

The cost ...

UNL Campus Recreation Center:

Members (students and faculty):

- 25 minutes: \$15
- 45 minutes: \$25
- 60 minutes: \$30
- Masque: \$30

- Non-members:
- 25 minutes: \$25
- 45 minutes: \$35
- 60 minutes: \$40
- Masque: \$40

A Body Massage Center, 2775 E St., 477-0138

Offered on hourly basis only: \$40

Lincoln Massage Center, Suite 200 3230 S. 13th St., 421-3230

- 30 minutes: \$25
- 45 minutes: \$35
- 60 minutes: \$40
- 90 minutes: \$55

Tranquility Massage Therapy Associates, Suite 201, 1550 70th St., 484-7878

- 15 minutes: \$10
- 30 minutes: \$25
- 60 minutes: \$40
- 90 minutes: \$60

Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At the East Campus Recreation Center, appointments are available Monday through Friday from noon to 2 p.m.

Call 472-3467 to make an appointment at City Campus or 472-2479 for East Campus.

Comfort food may make tension more palatable

■ Ice cream, chicken soup, chocolate are a few solutions to many students' stressors.

BY AMANDA SCHINDLER
Staff Reporter

Chicken soup for the flu, ice cream after a bad day, chocolate after a breakup — these common foods play a large role for some people managing stressful lives.

Called comfort foods, or foods eaten to relieve stress, they work by producing certain sensations usually related to past memories, said Shirley Davidson, a psychiatric mental health nurse at the University Health Center.

Heath center dietitian Karen Miller said she believes culture plays a large role in causing this behavior.

"We are a society that uses food for everything: celebrations, funerals, weddings, etc.," she said. "It's a conditioned response (to stress)."

This conditioning occurs when a person associates a particular food with pleasant feelings experienced in the past, and therefore eats to reproduce those sensations. The phenomenon may start as early as infancy. If babies are fed every time they cry, Miller said, they can learn to use food as a solution every time they feel uncomfortable.

The relationship between eating and stress varies from person to person. In "Women, Food, and Mood," an article in "Topics in Nutrition" by Mindy S. Kurzer, a study of college students found that a large percentage of both men and women had experienced food cravings. Among men, 68 percent had cravings; but 97 percent of women did.

Kurzer, a professor in the Department of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Minnesota, found that women most often craved chocolate, while men chose both chocolate and pizza as their favorites. Such cravings can be a product of food deprivation, Kurzer stated, but biological factors may be part of the food-and-mood relationship.

For example, chocolate and carbohydrates like pizza may contain certain compounds that influence mood, she stated, but these are not well-founded theories. If it were true, foods that contain the same compounds, like cheddar cheese, pickled herring and salami, would be just as appealing.

More likely, cravings are influenced by cultural and psychological ideas about the food, Kurzer stated.

Although personal preference plays a large role in comfort eating, a few area food stores noticed an increase in sales during finals week — a stressful time for students. Kent Knudson, an owner of daVinci's Italian

Eatery, reported increased business during that time among college students. Ruth Wenzl, four-year employee at JP Chocolates and Candies in Gateway Mall, said that although business did not change during finals time, people frequently walked in wanting "a chocolate fix."

Some students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have experienced comfort eating themselves.

For Jill Hallgren, a freshman news-editorial major, ice cream is the answer to stress. "It's just so soothing," she said.

Tiffany Runnels, a sophomore education major, said M&M's have helped her through stressful times, such as the beginning of a new semester.

However, Matt Harre, freshman mechanical engineering major, said he usually doesn't eat to relieve stress.

"I don't change my habits a lot when I get stressed," he said. "I usually don't eat anything (for comfort)."

This contrast could be a matter of personal preference, but Kurzer's study suggests that gender is a factor. Women, especially those who suffer from premenstrual syndrome, consume more energy, protein, carbohydrate and fat right before menstruation than at any other time, she wrote.

Along with producing relaxing sensations, food also can be used as a substitute for other needs, such as rest or exercise, therapist Davidson said.

"We have to ask ourselves what we really need to alleviate stress instead of food," she said. The consequences of too much comfort eating can be potentially dangerous too, she said. Such consequences include obesity and eating disorders.

Completely forbidding certain foods from one's diet, though, is not the answer, she said.

"If you keep yourself from eating the things that you like, you're more likely to be unsatisfied and thus overeat," Davidson said.

The difference between normal and harmful comfort eating is unclear. "It depends on the person and how it's interfering in their life," Miller said. "Are they spending more than 10-15 percent of their day thinking about food? Are their activities wrapped around food?"

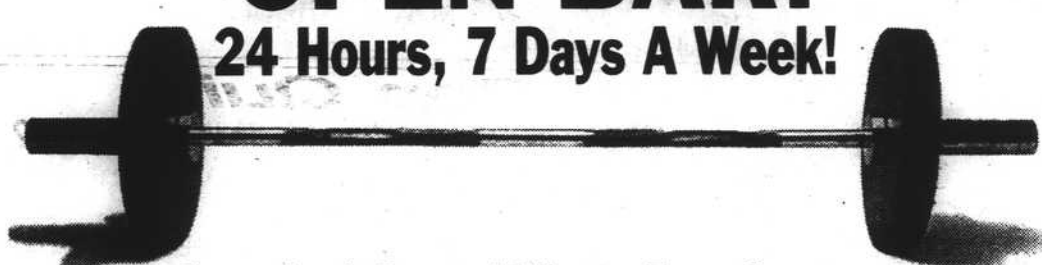
No matter how comforting eating can be, it has actually been proven to increase tension and guilt in some women, according to Kurzer. There is no hard evidence suggesting that it makes people happier, either.

"I think we'd have a lot more happy people if that were true," Miller said.

Miller said the best defense against stress is a combination of a healthy diet and daily exercise program.

"It's all about lifestyle," she said.

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