

# THE CENTER for CLINICAL MASSAGE

Ken Laymon

## Massage in Autumn

Warm up, release stress, come into balance

As the leaves change color and fall to the ground, this is a good time of year to reflect on what parts of your body and mind are transitioning from the outward ways of summer. Autumn is a time of harvest, a time of gathering up in preparation for winter. It is the beginning of turning inward for reflection.

### *Seasonal stress*

Although seasonal transitions are natural and normal in nature and in our bodies, these changes have their own demands. Modern ways of living also place their stresses on us in the fall. We strive to keep up our yards as the winds blow down the leaves and branches. Kids and adults alike are back to school. We often make up for summer vacation by putting in more hours at work.

These demands can catch up with you, at the same time we become exposed to illnesses that require a vigorous immune system. All of this makes fall a very good time to renew your commitment to self-care. Along with eating well and exercising, remember to schedule your massage.

### *Ask for what you need*

When you come in for your appointment, check in with yourself. Are you a little chilly? Ask for an extra blanket or for the table warmer to be turned up to a toasty temperature. Schedule extra services such as hot stones or warm foot soaks in your sessions. Do essential oils sound appealing? Lemon can boost the immune system, eucalyptus soothes a scratchy throat and rosemary relieves achy muscles.

This fall, enlist the healing qualities of massage as an ally to help you let go of physical and mental strain, and come back into balance in this breezy, changeable season.



*Staying extra warm or using essential oils can ensure your massage meets your body's seasonal needs.*



*Pumpkins and other orange-colored vegetables contain chemicals that protect the body from toxins, bacteria and viruses.*

## Foods for Fall

Protect yourself with pumpkin pie

Orange-colored vegetables such as sweet potatoes, winter squash, pumpkins, carrots, and red and orange peppers echo the colors of changing leaves. They contain an important chemical called beta-carotene. Our intestines turn beta-carotene into vitamin A, which along with vitamins E and C, is a powerful antioxidant.

### *A nutritional rainbow*

Other deeply-colored vegetables like broccoli, beets and spinach add to a nutritional rainbow that acts as a storehouse of these protective chemicals. Antioxidants are important because they apparently counteract molecules that damage body tissues, known as "free radicals." Free radicals are produced naturally by the body, but increase when we are

exposed to pollution, certain foods and emotional stress.

### *Eat for protection*

The most richly-colored fruits and vegetables are famous for containing many nutrients that protect against free radicals as well as bacteria, viruses, and toxins. So when choosing fresh foods this fall, look for those that are brightly colored.

# Back to School Back Pain

## Ergonomics for children and grown-ups, too

Pediatricians, physical therapists, and massage therapists are seeing more young patients complaining of back and neck pain. The culprit is often overloaded backpacks.

### *Backpack weight*

According to the American Chiropractic Association, backpack weight is contributing to pain earlier than in previous generations. By 4th or 5th grades, children are packing textbooks and instruments as well as cell phones, iPods and even lap tops.

### *Backpack guidelines*

You can help your child strategize about how to prevent or recover from injury and pain from carrying too much weight.

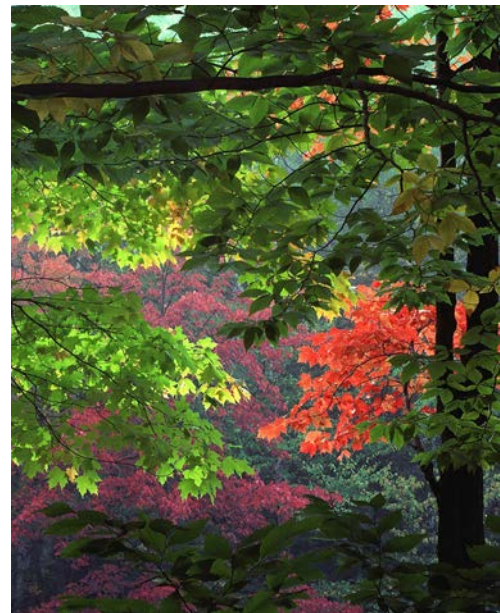


1. Limit backpack weight to 15% of your child's weight. If your child weighs 75 pounds, the maximum backpack weight should be 10 pounds. If 125 pounds, your child should carry 18 pounds or less.
2. Use a backpack with wide straps, and wear it on both shoulders.
3. Only pack what is necessary. Maybe they don't need to carry all their books every day.
4. If they have a locker, they can leave the books they aren't using until needed. If they don't have one, could they get a second copy of textbooks to leave at home?
5. Some children use a pack on wheels.

### *Adults, too*

Grown-ups, you may also be busily moving around — from home to work to school or gym with a backpack, laptop case or messenger bag slung over your shoulder.

Use the guidelines above to prevent injury and pain as you go about your daily activities this fall.



*Delicious Autumn!  
My very soul is wedded to it.*  
—George Elliot