Potent potassium

Increasing your intake of potassium—under the supervision of a health practitioner—can help decrease your blood pressure. It may also provide a protective benefit against kidney damage and strokes. Potassium helps maintain the pH balance of the body’s fluids as well as nerve function.

People with high blood pressure are often given diuretics, causing them to excrete excess fluids and sodium. Unfortunately, this tends to flush out essential minerals like potassium as well. While potassium supplements should be used with caution because of the health risks of taking too much, potassium-rich foods are tasty and safe alternatives. These foods include apricots, whole grains, bananas, potatoes, and fish. Spinach or avocados are good choices too, as they’re rich in magnesium, which allows the body to store potassium.

Healing the mind with massage

The Touch Institute of the University of Miami [miami.edu/touch-research] has carried out numerous studies on the efficacy of massage therapy in treating a wide array of ailments. Many of them suggest that massage is helpful in recovering from or managing conditions ranging from carpal tunnel syndrome to diabetes.

Massage is also good for your mental health. In one study, teens diagnosed with attention deficit disorders exhibited reduced levels of both depression and anxiety after undergoing massage therapy. In another study, adults suffering from back pain reported experiencing less depression, anxiety, and stress after massage.

It appears that massage therapy may improve mental state by lowering cortisol levels (a stress hormone) and increasing serotonin levels (a mood-regulating hormone). Now you know why that rub-down leaves you feeling so happy.