

By Jody Marquez Wood

Catalyst Therapeutics

For successful business owners and managers, finding ways to increase employee productivity and decrease absenteeism and worker's compensation claims is at the top of their agenda. Some firms institute team-building programs, while others bring in motivational speakers. But the answer to finding the "feel good" factor may be as simple as incorporating a practice that ... well, feels good.

Companies across the country are becoming increasingly cognizant to the stress employees face in these competitive times. For this reason, many are offering their staff seated massage services, like that provided by the Huntington Beach-based Catalyst Therapeutics, to make work literally less of a "pain in the neck" for their employees.

Slouching in front of the computer or lifting improperly for prolonged periods of time often results in stiff shoulders and lower back pain. Repetitive motion injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, are becoming an all too common complaint among office workers. One solution to these issues is a five to 10-minute "stress-buster" massage designed relieve tension in the neck, back, shoulder and arm muscles.

"Studies show that from a physiological standpoint, a 10-minute chair massage is a stimulating event, rather than a relaxing one, which is contrary to popular belief," says Jeff Lane, owner of Catalyst Therapeutics. "As such, the full benefit includes increased circulation, directs blood to the muscles, increases awareness, reduces irritability and stress. All of which can positively affect your company's bottom line by resulting in increased productivity in the workplace."



Jeff Lane

Comfort and convenience

Because chair massage is performed at the workplace and can be set up in any office or break room, there's no discernable downtime to incorporate this practice into a company's operation once a month, on a weekly basis or as frequently as its owners and operators prefer.

"Employees take turns seated upright on a special massage chair and remain fully clothed for the duration of the session, which typically utilizes acupressure and Swedish massage techniques to relieve tension and restore mental clarity," says Lane, a licensed, insured, nationally certified massage therapist with extensive experience in various therapeutic settings.

Disposable face cradle covers are used for each employee and hand sanitizer is used between each session. The employees'



comfort will be monitored throughout the session to make them feel completely at ease.

"From the employee's perspective, benefits include the relief of pain associated with chronic tension, reduction of stress and anxiety, lower heart rate and blood pressure and increased energy and alertness," says Lane, who also serves as an instructor at the Southern California-based Western Institute of Neuromuscular Therapy. "From the employer's standpoint, incorporating chair massage as a benefit to their employees involves is no capital investment or start-up costs and has been shown to reduce health costs due to stress related and repetitive injuries, reduces absenteeism due to work-related illnesses and boosts company morale."

Lane, who has worked extensively in the holistic health industry since graduating from the American Institute of Massage Therapy in 1997, credits knowledge, experience and passion for the profession with his success in the field to date.

An educator for the past six years, Lane offers a complimentary initial consultation to determine the needs of each corporate client, then develops a "Custom Wellness Program" designed to best benefit the specific company's proactive approach toward preventive health care. **HB**