



Practitioner guide

We originally developed our massagers to benefit our patients and enable us to provide better quality more effective and affordable care. With patients enjoying these benefits we shared this with colleagues so they could provide these benefits to their patients. Since then we've scoured the research so we can share with you the best evidence based uses and protocols.



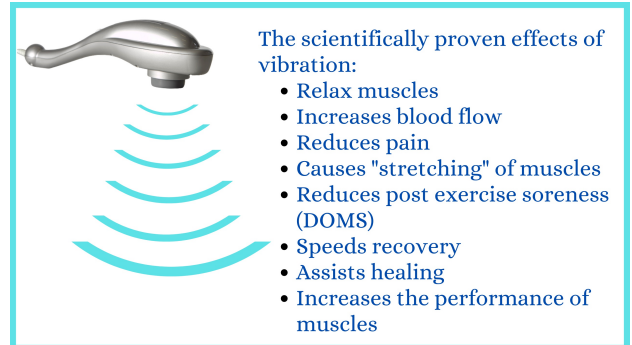
DrGraeme Massagers
331 Main St Bairnsdale (P.O. Box 914)
Bairnsdale Victoria 3875 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (Australia) (03) 51161298 (Overseas) +61351161298
Website: www.drgraeme.com
Email: graeme@drgraeme.com

CONTENTS

1. An overview of therapeutic vibration therapy (**Page 3**)
2. Major areas of benefit
 - (Myofascial) trigger points and other chronic myofascial problems (**Page 5**)
 - Sports and exercise (**Page 6**)
 - Fibromyalgia (**Page 7**)
 - Health and wellness (**Page 8**)
 - Cellulite (**Page 9**)
 - Assisting Healing (**Page 10**)
3. Our Massagers (**Page 11**)
4. Helping colleagues (**Page 12**)
5. Useful linked guides (**Page 13**)

An overview of therapeutic vibration therapy

Therapeutic vibration therapy works in a similar manner to ultrasound (vibrations at a different frequency). A vibration head or pad sits on the surface transferring vibrations which penetrate deeply and have the scientifically proven effects as shown in this diagram.



Using vibration massage is not like conventional massage

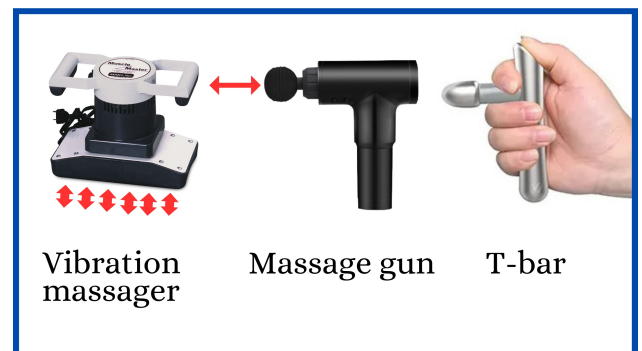
It is the vibrations that have the therapeutic effects so you need to apply the machine and let it do the work. It is not unlike when lumberjacks started to use chainsaw. They had to let the chain do the cutting rather than swing like an axe.

Vibration massage technique

Like using a chainsaw, one simply places the vibrating head/pad of a massager, then let the vibrations penetrate and have their therapeutic effect. We see many professionals who continue to use their conventional massage techniques such as pressing in and rubbing. This is a bit like swinging an axe like a chainsaw: counterproductive and potentially damaging. For more info please see our [Vibration massager usage guide](#).

Vibration massagers vs percussion massagers (massage guns)

As shown in this diagram, vibration massagers are designed to penetrate with large amounts of therapeutic vibration. The tool on the right is a t-bar which therapists use to apply pressure. The massage gun is like a t-bar with a jackhammer mechanism. Rather than therapeutic vibration devices percussion massagers are of more like mechanically assisted conventional massage. This is why we see them being used with conventional massage techniques. While marketers make huge claims, percussion massagers are not designed to deliver therapeutic vibrations and we know of no evidence they they provide significant other benefits in compensation. A [review of approximately 30 trials of vibrating massage](#) clearly showed that genuine vibration gives way superior results than percussion massage (massage guns).



RESOURCES

1. [*Your guide to vibration massage \(basic overview\)*](#)
2. [*The scientifically proven effects of vibration massage- with clinical applications*](#)
3. [*Vibration massager usage guide*](#)
4. [*The guide to evidence based percussion massage \(massage gun\) usage*](#)
5. [*What is percussion massage \(massage guns\)*](#)

(myofascial) trigger points and other chronic myofascial problems

Therapeutic vibrations penetrate deeply into muscles and have a host of desirable effects such as relaxing muscles, increasing blood flow, disrupting spasm and stimulating healing. These are ideal for treating myofascial trigger points and other chronic myofascial issues. In comparison with conventional massage therapeutic vibrations penetrate deeply without the pain and potential to do damage. In trials therapeutic vibrations have been shown to act much faster, treat a much larger area at once with the appropriate equipment, and do not require the physical effort. That makes vibration massagers ideal for clinical use.

Helping with the chronic nature of these conditions

Chronic myofascial issues develop over long periods of time, and usually only become painful in their later stages. Because of this successful elimination requires therapy over a long period of time, so most treatment just provides temporary symptomatic relief*. The use of therapeutic vibration massage helps overcome this two ways.

More efficient therapy in clinic

Genuine professional vibration massagers treat chronic myofascial issues faster and easier than using conventional massage, therefore busy clinicians can provide more effective soft tissue therapy.

Supplementary home usage

Patients are typically unwilling to make professional appointments for the optimal treatment frequency or follow through after becoming asymptomatic. Because using a vibration massager does not require any special skills self applied therapy using appropriate equipment and professional advice patients can have extra supplementary care, enabling faster symptomatic relief and continued care to eliminate the problem.

* Researchers conducting clinical trials understand this, [*so they usually just make short term \(acute\) symptom based measurements*](#). That way, even though they do not eliminate the problem they can conclude that their therapy is “effective” and “evidence based”.

RESOURCES:

- [*Trigger point therapy guide*](#)
- [*Trigger points: deactivation or elimination*](#)

Sports and exercise

Sports clubs have long used massage for benefits such as helping warm ups, recovery, injury prevention and enhancing performance. We discuss these in our guide [*The benefits of Sports massage*](#).

Self massage allows everyone who plays sports or works out to have these same benefits, and more. Massage guns (percussion massagers) are heavily marketed for this purpose, but as discussed above they do not provide anywhere near the therapeutic effect as a genuine vibration massager. Likewise foam rollers are heavily marketed, but for the reasons shown in this infographic clinical trials show that these have negotiable benefits, if any. On the other hand with a little bit of advice self usage of genuine vibration massage can provide professional quality therapy.



RESOURCES:

- [*The sports and exercise guide to vibration massage*](#)
- [*The benefits of sports massage*](#)
- [*Massage vs foam rollers vs massage guns for sports and exercise*](#)
- [*Does massage help athletic or sports performance*](#)

Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a sensitisation of the nervous system resulting in normal stimuli becoming painful plus a host of other possible symptoms. Sensitisations typically result from prolonged exposure to something. The nervous system receives a wide range of stimuli so in the case of fibromyalgia the sources of sensitisation can vary widely. However, there is very solid research showing that the major source is undiagnosed or poorly treated (myofascial) trigger points. They found that:

1. comparatively fibromyalgia sufferers were riddled with trigger points
2. stimulation of trigger points reproduced fibromyalgia symptoms
3. treatment of trigger points stops fibromyalgia symptoms.

A typical way fibromyalgia develops

Many cases of fibromyalgia develop due to the nervous system being continually bombarded by pain from undiagnosed or poorly treated trigger points until the nervous system is sensitised. Sensitising stimuli can also add together so it is not uncommon for other sources of stimuli (eg. an illness or even emotional stress) to contribute or even be the proverbial straw that broke the camels back.

Successful treatment of fibromyalgia

Typical fibromyalgia therapy is aimed at symptomatic relief or reducing the sensitised activity of the nervous system. However, the approach of the scientists who treated trigger points was to reduce or eliminate the abnormal stimuli that caused the sensitisation (eg. the trigger points). This allowed the function of the nervous system to return to more normal.

The role of massage

Some trials have found that massage helped, while others resulted in the condition being aggravated. The key issue is that while massage can help reduce the amount of myofascial pain sensitising the nervous system the therapy itself can cause pain. For example, therapies such as pressure release are painful for those non-sensitised, so could cause severe pain for someone with fibromyalgia.

A guide for successful therapy

As discussed on a previous page, the elimination of chronic myofascial issues usually takes many more sessions of therapy than patients typically get. For fibromyalgia sufferers this is compounded.

1. The underlying myofascial issues will have been there longer, so will be far more entrenched.
2. Patients will be far less tolerant to therapy.

The practical consequence of this is that for most sufferers professional therapies can only ever give temporary short term relief. However, the use of self applied vibration massage can provide a solution. Because the machine sits on the surface and is usually pleasant and comfortable it is better tolerated by fibromyalgia sufferers. Therapy can start very conservatively, and be gradually increased as the patient improves and becomes more tolerant.

For example, a patient may only be able to initially tolerate a few minutes of low intensity therapeutic vibrations, but the next day they may be able to tolerate a bit more. If they continue to improve they can continue with daily applications for as long as it takes. With effective equipment and some good advice this is very achievable with home application.

RESOURCES:

- [*Massage for fibromyalgia*](#)

Health and wellness

There are a large number of trials showing that massages have health and wellness benefits such as lowering blood pressure, improving sleep and improving psychological states. The problem with these though is that those trials used very frequent massages, typically daily or at least three times a week. Having this done by professionals on an ongoing basis is beyond the resources of most people, but is it very practical using self applied vibration massage. We also note that many companies provide massages for their employees to help improve productivity, and reduce pain and injuries. Self massage makes this a practical alternative for most people.

RESOURCES:

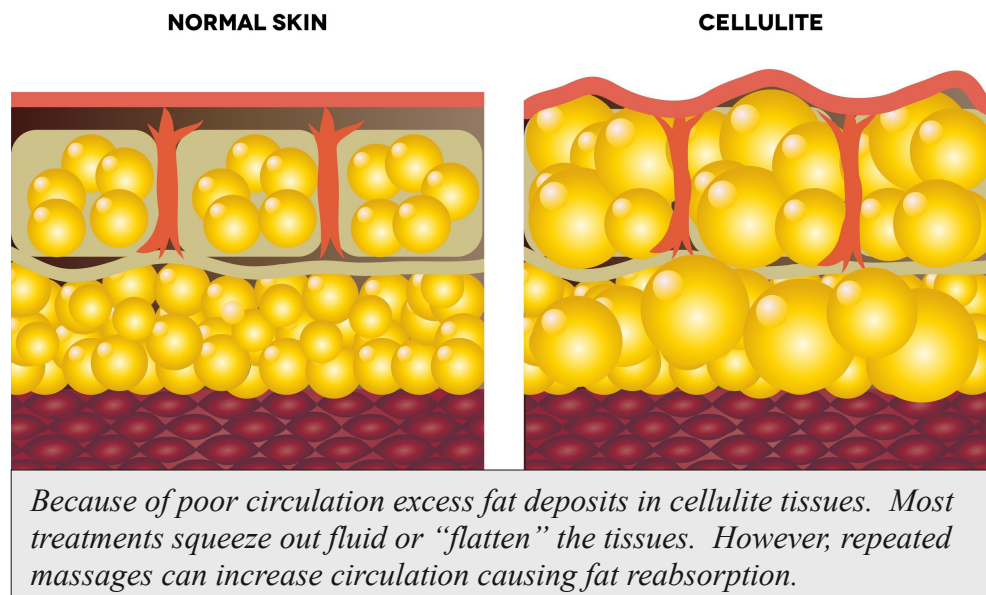
- [*The health benefits of massage*](#)

Cellulite

Most cellulite massages only give a temporary improvement in appearance at best. They typically squeeze out interstitial fluids and “flatten” the tissues. However, there is one way massage does actually help remove fat and permanently reduce the size of cellulite affected hips, thighs and buttocks. Let us look at why cellulite forms then how the appropriate massage helps.

How cellulite forms

Fat deposits in cellulite affected areas because of poor circulation. When the body needs energy fat is much more easily reabsorbed from the areas with normal circulation, so accumulates in the cellulite tissues.



How massage can help

Massage increases circulation, allowing the fat to be re-absorbed. The problem is that this increase is relatively short lived, so to get any worthwhile effect it requires regular massages over a long period of time. This is the same issue as faced with the health and wellness uses for massage discussed previously, ie. for most people is not feasible to do this using profession therapists

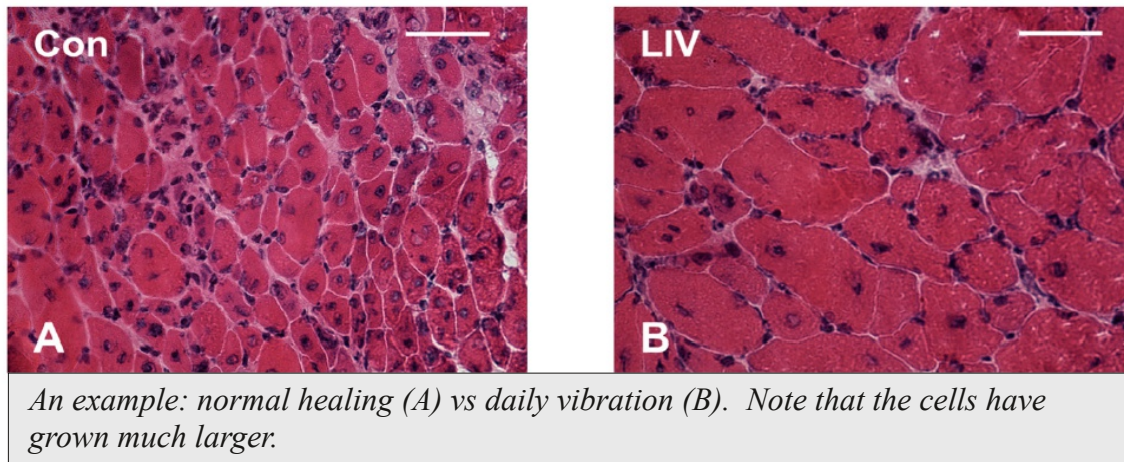
In several successful trials vibration massage was applied using either a vibration chair or direct application using one of those vibration plates people stand on. These are not optimised (eg.frequency and amplitude) to increase circulation but still gave reasonable results. Our massagers give therapeutic vibration optimised to increase circulation. Our ultimate Quad Head Massager is able to do this over a large area, so is ideal for this purpose.

RESOURCES:

- [The best massage for cellulite](#)

Assisting healing

Although not a common use for massage we had to include this because of the amazing trial results. Vibration is used to help bone fracture healing, but the results mentioned suggest that therapeutic vibrations will dramatically improve the healing of wounds and other injuries. Please check out the resource below for some amazing results and photos.



RESOURCES:

- [Does massage help healing and recovery](#)

Our massagers

Our massagers were originally conceived as something for patients to use under our advice, but we built them to have full professional effects and capabilities.

1. We could be assured that if patients followed our advice they would get great results.
2. Colleagues could use them and not have to pay for overpriced “professional machines”.
3. By using commercial quality parts the machines would be very reliable so we would not be bothered by many warranty claims and returns.

The General Purpose Massager

The General Purpose Massager is our single head personal use therapeutic vibration massager, but it is so effective it is used by a great number of professionals. They are economical, robust and very easy to use.

- [More information](#)

The DrGraeme General Purpose Massager

This is our newer more powerful machine. It is extremely easy to use and capable of a wide variety of tasks, ranging from relaxation massage through to specific deep work. For a little extra it is the perfect choice.

Ergonomic Handle

- Easy reach to all parts of your body
- Massage for a long time without getting fatigued

Speed Control

- Sliding variable speed control
- Relaxing to high penetration
- Easy to use with your thumb

Powerful Motor

- Powerful commercial grade motor custom built to run at the best speed for massage while delivering 15% more “grunt”

Strong Hammer Mechanism

- Quality bearings and screw in head ensures an extremely strong machine that is able to penetrate deeply

Three Metre Cable

- Greater length provides ease of reach
- Heavy duty - long lasting and resists twisting

Ball at Handle's End

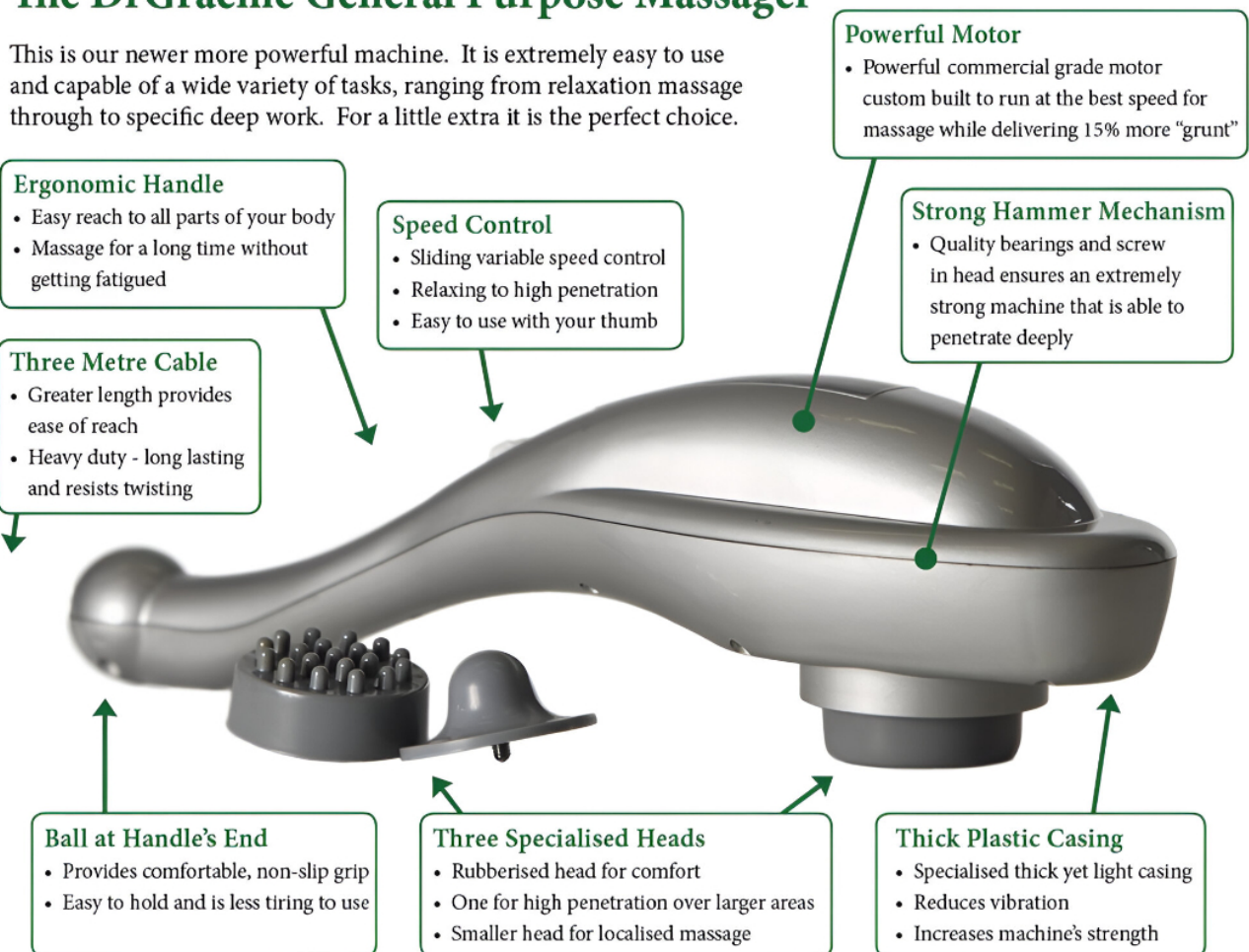
- Provides comfortable, non-slip grip
- Easy to hold and is less tiring to use

Three Specialised Heads

- Rubberised head for comfort
- One for high penetration over larger areas
- Smaller head for localised massage

Thick Plastic Casing

- Specialised thick yet light casing
- Reduces vibration
- Increases machine's strength



The Ultimate Quad Head Massager

The General Purpose Massager does an amazing job, but is limited to the muscle under its single head. Because of this we built our quad head massager. They have the same easy to use ergonomic design, but with four heads massaging you at once it is much faster.

Massagers with larger contacts or “multiple heads” are typically heavy and the machines themselves considerably. Our quad head massager has a unique and more complex mechanism that allows full and deep penetrating vibration over a large areas while the machine itself is light and hardly vibrates.

Please check out our [video of this amazing machine](#).



Watch on YouTube - <https://youtu.be/WkdvPoBaf5s>

- [More information](#)

Helping colleagues

The main purpose of our massagers is to help make it easier for colleagues to provide the maximum benefits for their patients or clients. Colleagues can use our massagers themselves, and advice patients/clients on self use. The ideal situation is where colleagues get our massagers at our professional rates and make them available for patients/clients. That way patients/colleagues get good advice and are able to use the therapy straight away without waiting for the post, while colleagues get the retail profit for providing this service.

For professional rates please email us on graeme@drgraeme.com

Useful linked guides

Sports and exercise

- How to improve reaction times in sport: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2024/08/how-to-improve-your-sports-reaction-times>
- Warmups: your practical guide to reducing injuries, increasing performance and reducing post exercise soreness: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2023/09/warm-ups-guide-to-the-best-massages-stretches-and-exercises>
- The best massage for sports recovery: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2022/05/the-best-massage-for-sports-recovery>
- The practical, science based guide to post exercise recovery: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2021/08/the-practical-science-based-guide-to-post-exercise-recovery>

Back pain

- The most important muscles to massage for back pain: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2024/02/back-pain-massage-therapists-miss-the-most-important-muscles>
- What do chiropractic adjustments do: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2022/06/what-do-chiropractic-adjustments-do>
- Trial results: massage superior to anti-inflammatory drugs: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2019/08/home-thai-massage>

Shoulder pain

- Do exercises help shoulder pain: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2023/09/do-exercises-help-shoulder-pain-1>
- Massage for shoulder pain: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2021/10/massage-and-trigger-point-therapy-for-shoulder-pain-with-self-help-options>
- Why shoulder pain keeps coming back: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2019/08/shoulder-triggerpoints>

Miscellaneous muscles

- Calf muscle massage: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2022/10/the-easy-way-to-release-trigger-points-in-your-calf-muscles>
- Hamstring muscle massage: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2022/09/the-simple-effective-way-to-massage-your-hamstring-muscles>

Tennis elbow

- Tennis elbow: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2022/05/the-real-cause-of-tennis-elbow>

Rehabilitation

- Functional rehabilitation: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2020/10/functional-rehabilitation>
- Altered muscle activation patterns- a guide to correction: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2019/08/hamstrings-maps>
- Low back sensorimotor control: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2019/08/sensorimotor>

Headaches

- Massage trial results: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2019/08/headaches>