

Children with asthma have improved pulmonary functions after massage therapy.

Field T, Hentleff T, Hernandez-Reif M, Martinez E, Mavunda K, Kuhn C, Schanberg S. Touch Research Institute, University of Miami School of Medicine, Florida 33101, USA.

J Pediatr **1998 May**;132(5):854-8 [Related Articles](#), [Books](#), [LinkOut](#)

Thirty-two children with asthma (16 4- to 8-year-olds and 16 9- to 14-year-olds) were randomly assigned to receive either massage therapy or relaxation therapy. The children's parents were taught to provide one therapy or the other for 20 minutes before bedtime each night for 30 days. The younger children who received massage therapy showed an immediate decrease in behavioral anxiety and cortisol levels after assage. Also, their attitude toward asthma and their peak air flow and other pulmonary functions improved over the course of the study. The older children who received massage therapy reported lower anxiety after the massage. Their attitude toward asthma also improved over the study, but only one measure of pulmonary function (forced expiratory flow 25% to 75%) improved. The reason for the smaller therapeutic benefit in the older children is unknown; however, it appears that daily massage improves airway caliber and control of asthma.