



By: Dana Brandt-Tinker, Licensed Massage Therapist

No reason! Massage does not increase toxins into your bloodstream and drinking water would not help flush them from your body.

We all know that we should be drinking water more, right? Your doctor tells you to drink water instead of soda or juice. You're told to increase your water intake before and after physical activity and after a massage to flush the toxins from your body after a massage.

Hold on. Nope. Myth alert!

It turns out that a tall glass of water does **not** flush toxins from your body. That's not how any of this works. Besides, expecting a one-hour massage and drinking a couple of glasses of water to negate years of bad habits is unrealistic.

It's true that certain cleaning chemicals, when inhaled, are not suitable for us. Overeating bread or refined sugar and carbohydrates might make you bloated, and smog is terrible for the environment. But your liver and kidneys do a fantastic job of keeping you healthy, I promise.

If toxins built up to such a degree that your body could not naturally get rid of them, you would be very sick and need medical attention.

I don't know precisely how the *water flushes toxins myth* came to be, but let's look at it from a historical perspective.

Detox and Cleanse Your Body by Drinking Water

The history of detoxing dates back to the 1830s. It was widely popularized when John Harvey Kellogg (yes, the cereal guy) started the [Battle Creek Sanatorium in 1866](#). Kellogg believed that things like water enemas and vegetarian diets--including corn flakes are what made us healthy. Not unlike many of the destination health spas today.

It then gained a massive resurgence in the 1970s when Stanley Burroughs wrote the book *The Master Cleanse*. Burroughs claimed that depriving your body of food and consuming nothing but a mixture of water, lemon juice, maple syrup, and cayenne pepper would purify the body.

People believed this because they would experience increased energy, clearer thinking, and even weight loss. When in reality, what was happening is they were giving their organs a break from digesting and filtering processed foods and high amounts of sugar and fat. And the weight loss they were experiencing was dehydration and water weight that came back once they started consuming the foods they had been avoiding.

Finally, thanks to the multi-billion dollar diet industry, the natural byproducts of metabolic waste became synonymous with toxins.

Products offering us proof of toxins being pulled out of our feet while we sleep or bowel movements that resemble an anaconda are responsible for our illnesses. These are being touted by everyone, from your neighbor to big-box retailers.

Why Should I Be Drinking Water After A Massage If None of This is True?

For starters, you're thirsty.

Thirst is your body telling you it's not in homeostasis and needs some balance. Humans are the only species on the planet that need to consistently take in water since we have no way to store reserves. Small sips throughout the day are much more beneficial in allowing the body to absorb water than guzzling a whole glass or two at once.

And in case you need more, here are five other reasons you want to drink water (anytime, not just after a massage).

1. **It helps maintain normal organ function** - Drinking water is essential for proper organ function. Your brain is made up of 60-70% water, so being even mildly dehydrated can lead to fatigue, concentration issues, and even headaches. Your kidneys and liver use water to filter different minerals, nutrients, and other metabolic byproducts to either be used by the body or eliminated. Your intestines use water to help “move things along.” Not drinking enough water can cause your colon to absorb too much water and lead to constipation, and chronic constipation can lead to more severe health concerns.
2. **It can lower your blood pressure** - When you are dehydrated, your blood becomes thicker and less able to move fluidly throughout your body. Thicker blood can also decrease circulation. This can cause your heart to have to pump harder and faster, causing less blood to be circulated into the brain. This leads to fatigue issues and headaches. So next time you have a headache, try drinking a glass or two of water before reaching for the ibuprofen.
3. **It protects your skin from cuts** - An old Hollywood trick they use to make actors and actresses look more toned is to dehydrate them. Dehydrated skin sticks to muscle tissue, making it thinner because it needs to stretch to cover more surface area, making you more prone to cuts. However, I would not go trying this any time soon. Not only is this foolish, but it is dangerous. Prolonged dehydration can also lead to more severe health complications like kidney failure, seizures, coma, and death.
4. **It lubricates your joints** - Your joints have something called synovial fluid in them (think engine oil). It’s what makes them able to move properly through the full range of motion without rubbing against one another, causing friction and pain. The cartilage in your joints also contains water, so being dehydrated can lead to more joint inflammation and possibly joint damage.
5. **It helps you sleep better** - Your body needs water to produce the sleep hormone melatonin. Decreased melatonin levels can lead to a disruption in your circadian rhythm, making it more difficult to stay asleep.

You’re probably wondering, ok, if it doesn’t flush toxins, I still need to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day, right? Not exactly.

The equation for how much water one should drink is a bit complex, but we often overlook the water we get through our diet. Fruits, vegetables, and other foods we eat increase our water intake incrementally.

And we know that drinking other liquids, including coffee, tea, and other non-alcoholic beverages, can count toward our daily water intake as long as we are cautious of additives like caffeine sugar which have different side effects.

So the next time you feel the need to drink water, go ahead and know that you’re doing your body good.