Hand pain is reduced by massage therapy plus Biofreeze® Topical Analgesic

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Objective: This study was conducted to determine whether there are any added effects of applying Biofreeze® after massage therapy for reducing hand pain.

Background: Massage therapy has been noted to reduce hand pain and increase grip strength. Because Biofreeze also reduces pain, applying Biofreeze after massage therapy was expected to further reduce hand pain.

Methods: 20 healthy adults who were experiencing hand pain were randomly assigned to a massage therapy or a massage therapy plus Biofreeze application group. Both groups received a weekly 10-minute massage from a massage therapist and were taught the same massage to be done by each participant once daily over a 4 week period. The participants in the massage plus Biofreeze group were given a week’s supply of Biofreeze 5 gram gel packets so they could apply the gel at the end of each of their self-massage sessions. Each participant was also given a DVD of the massage therapy protocol.

Results: Based on repeated measures ANOVAs and post hoc Bonferroni t-tests, the massage plus Biofreeze group had significantly greater improvement (all p’s < .05) in grip strength as measured by a Maxi Aids Digital Hand Exerciser following the first session and by the end of the 4 week period. That group also had a greater increase in perceived grip strength and a greater decrease in hand pain over the 4-week period. Other problems that often result from pain including depressed mood and sleep disturbances also decreased.

Conclusion: Adding Biofreeze to a massage therapy protocol results in a greater decrease in hand pain and a greater increase in grip strength than massage therapy alone. These findings demonstrate the added value of using Biofreeze following massage therapy for individuals with hand pain.