

What To Expect

What to expect when getting a massage!

New to receiving massages? Not sure what to expect? Do you want to feel more comfortable and know how to relax on the table? Read on...

Before a massage:

A massage therapist may or may not ask you to fill out a health history form. Ask if you need to arrive early to do this. Also, inform your therapist now of any allergies that you may have. Many massage oils contain nut oils. Some contain unnatural perfumes. I choose to use only essential oils. Some people may even be allergic to some essential oils.

Before your massage, try to limit the amount of caffeine and sugar intake that day. Both of these chemicals cause your muscles to be "alert and on-guard", not a conducive state for relaxing. Drinking water before a massage is good, just be sure that you stop drinking water about an hour before. You don't want to have to hold a full bladder while you're on the table, nor do you want to use your precious time running to the bathroom!

Wear comfortable clothing that you won't mind getting stained. Most therapists work with some kind of oil. Prolonged exposure to oils on clothing will eventually show up as a stain. Not to mention, that oils collected in fabric hold more dirt. (Tip: Don't use fabric softeners on your clothing, they also leave an oily residue that collects and holds more dirt!) If it is a hot day, your body's natural oils will be at a higher concentration. This, along with sweat, will cause the oils to stick more to your clothing. (Tip: If you get a drop of oil on your clothing, whether from a spill or at the kitchen stove, take off the clothes immediately and scrape white blackboard chalk into a powder over the spots. Do not rub it in! Just leave it over night then wash the next day. This is the only remedy that works, I've tried everything else.)

At the massage:

If you haven't filled out a health history form, let your therapist know of any health conditions that may contraindicate massage. Any cancer, recent operations, acute injuries, colds and flu, fever, varicose veins, skin conditions, circulatory disease, undiagnosed lumps, nervous or psychotic conditions and anything being treated by a physician should all be disclosed to a Massage Therapist before treatment. Any concerns you may have should be addressed at this time.

Undress to your level of comfort. This is your choice and your privacy should always be respected. A professional Massage Therapist is trained to properly drape their clients with sheeting to respect their privacy and comfort. If you choose to undress completely, your therapist can and should work on your hips or gluteal region. These muscles are large and play an important role in walking, standing and even sitting. If you have any pain in your lower back, this region should be massaged. You can also choose to wear your underwear and then pull them down under the sheets during the massage or instruct your therapist to work through the sheet.

You control the massage! You are the paying client and should feel you have the right to ask for any changes needed in regards to massage pressure, room temperature, choice of music, scents or oils used, areas you'd prefer not to have massaged, small-talk during the massage or anything that can be controlled by the therapist. The therapist also has rights and may choose to end the massage if uncomfortable in regards to sexual conduct from the client or any misconduct.

Most massages are performed on a massage table. These tables are made to withstand hundreds of pounds of weight. Most have fully adjustable headrests. Unless you are told to keep your clothing on, sheets will be

provided to cover your entire body. Some therapists ask you to start facing up on the table, some ask you to lie face down. Whichever way is preferred, make sure that you position yourself so that you are lying with equal space on either side of you, legs slightly apart for stability. When you are lying face-down, this is extremely important so that your spine is aligned correctly. I prefer to have the client lie face-down first, this gives a therapist ample time to work on the back and neck, the areas that usually hold the most stress. Most people's nasal passages get stuffed up when lying on their face. Being able to roll over at the end of the massage allows you time to clear the passages before leaving the treatment room.

Relax! You should not have to move a muscle unless the therapist asks you to. A therapist can lift any part of your body without your help. Sometimes, helping only gets in the way. Also, please let your therapist know before you move your body for an adjustment or need to scratch your nose. Many times, the therapists fingers or thumbs are in a vulnerable position and the force of a contracting muscle will put a strain on the therapist.

Breathe! Deep breathing will release endorphins, relax your muscles, deliver oxygen to your muscles and sometimes, align your spine.

After the massage:

Drink plenty of water! Water is needed to help you flush the wastes just released by massage into your bloodstream.

Walk or stretch, but don't overdo it! You can help take your massage to the next healing level by walking, which can reset your muscles or stretching, which can help release muscles that didn't relax all the way and keep them pliable. Working out or playing hard can cause your muscles to lock up again. This is your day of rest!

Epsom salts in a bath can draw out even more toxins and help your muscles relax. Read the instructions on the package and warnings. Epsom salts may be contraindicated in the case of diabetes. If you read the difference in the amounts it says to put in a bath versus a foot soak, you may feel the need to increase the dosage for a bath. I have used up to 2 quarts in a full bath tub!

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