

## Six Massage Questions You're Afraid to Ask

### Get the Inside Scoop

Robert Chute

Considering massage but have a few concerns? Get your answers here!

I'M A BIT UNCOMFORTABLE TAKING ALL MY CLOTHES OFF WHEN I GO FOR MASSAGE. DO I HAVE TO BE COMPLETELY NAKED TO RECEIVE MASSAGE?

Some people go under the sheets without a stitch on, others wear underwear, and some people prefer to wear shorts, sweatpants, or even their regular street clothes. No, you don't have to take off more clothes than you are comfortable with to receive massage. Talk to your therapist and he or she will adapt to your needs. Be aware that wearing more clothes can interfere with the use of certain techniques, but there's no reason you can't enjoy receiving

For some, it creates a psychological boundary that allows them to more fully relax during the massage, and that's okay, too. Rest assured, massage therapists work with all kinds of bodies, from the very young to the very old and all shapes and sizes in between. Massage therapists are a very caring and giving group. To be successful at what they do, they have to be. Your therapist strives to strike a balance between engaging with you as the complex individual you are, as well as seeing your body and all its unique qualities from a clinical perspective. Bodywork is about the careful application of techniques to muscles, ligaments, and connective tissue as a means to enhance your whole being; it's not about judgment.



Make sure all of your questions are answered so you can fully relax and enjoy your massage.

massage in casual clothes. Therapists won't be able to use lotion and may be unable to work as deeply, but they can adapt to your comfort level and still deliver a satisfying massage experience.

People who are self-conscious about their bodies might get massage more often, and with less apprehension, if they had the added underwear barrier.

I'D LIKE GET MESSAGES MORE OFTEN, BUT I CAN'T AFFORD IT. DO I TALK TO MY MASSAGE THERAPIST ABOUT THIS?

Yes, talk to your massage therapist. Your practitioner may have a client loyalty or frequent-buyer program in place to bring down the total cost of massage, or a time-pay option to spread out the cost.

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*Whoever is happy will make others happy too.*

-Mark Twain

#### Office Hours and Contact

**Tranquil Touch Therapeutic Massage For Women**

**734-751-3475**

**Mon-Wed, Fri 9:30AM-3:00PM**

**Select Mon, Fri Evenings**

**Saturday 10AM-5PM**

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Many therapists take credit cards, and some will take postdated checks or a series of postdated checks to work out a payment plan. Some therapists have a sliding scale of fees depending on annual income and financial hardship, or they may accept coupons from bartering networks.

If you have some flexibility with your schedule, ask your therapist if she/he does a standby list. Your therapist might consider a discount fee if you can pop in for a last-minute appointment and fill a late cancellation.

You may also want to check with your employer or insurance carrier to see if you might be covered for massage therapy.

If you love massage and communicate to your therapist how much you value it, you might be able to work out an arrangement that's fair to all parties.

### I'M NEVER SURE ABOUT GRATUITIES FOR MASSAGE SERVICES. WHAT SHOULD I TIP?

Massage therapists working in spas don't usually receive the full fee charged for their services. They work on a percentage split with the spa owner or receive a salary. If you are visiting a spa, tipping is common (15-20 percent) and therapists may depend on tips for their income, just as restaurant servers do.

Your solo practitioner will likely appreciate tips as well, although not all massage settings accept tips (a doctor's office with a practitioner who offers massage, for example). Bottom line is, if you feel like tipping, offer. If you don't feel tipping is appropriate, don't.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I FEEL TICKLISH ON THE MASSAGE TABLE?

Some people are sensitive to particular techniques, which make them feel uncomfortable and want to giggle. If that happens, your therapist may use a broader stroke or deeper pressure so it doesn't tickle. In the unlikely event you're still way too ticklish with those variations, the therapist can skip that part of the body and concentrate on less sensitive areas. It's your massage, so you can dictate what works and what doesn't. Be sure to tell your therapist beforehand about any sensitive or particularly ticklish areas of your body so he or she can accommodate you more effectively.

### ISN'T IT TRUE THAT MASSAGE HAS TO HURT TO DO ANY GOOD?

Massage does not have to hurt to help. You can gain therapeutic benefits from a relaxing massage, which doesn't hurt a bit, or you can seek out more aggressive treatment options, which can cause some discomfort. Trigger point therapy and friction are examples of techniques, which are briefly uncomfortable, but very helpful for many conditions. If you don't want heavy pressure, say so. Massage therapists want to help you. If you're wincing under the pressure and tightening up, that will work against the goals of massage, which is to invite your body to relax, reduce pain, increase well-being, and have long, supple muscles. Massage therapists aren't in the torture business. Let your therapist know what feels good and what doesn't. Recognize that your needs and pain threshold might change with each visit.

### FROM THE MALE CLIENT: WHAT IF I GET AN ERECTION DURING A MASSAGE?

It rarely occurs, but if it does, don't panic. Sometimes as a result of your nervous system going into relaxation mode (or because of certain medications) erections happen. Therapists know that this is a physiological reaction and will treat the situation accordingly. Usually your therapist will try to redirect your attention with a shift in the focus of his or her work, maybe by altering pressure or moving to a different area of your body. Your unintended erection, and any embarrassment, will soon pass.

Any more unspoken questions for your therapist? Ask. Your honesty will strengthen your therapeutic bond with your caregiver and let you deepen your relaxation time and feeling of healing. And that's what it's all about: You.



**A deeply relaxing experience, massage contributes to your overall health and wellness.**

# What to Expect When Expecting

## How Massage Benefits the Expectant Mother

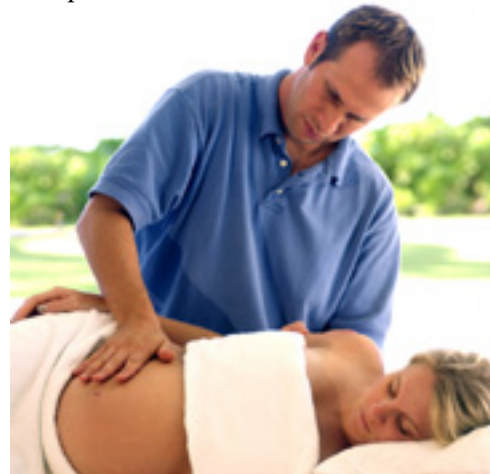
From fatigue to back pain, pregnancy places many demands on a woman's body. Massage is one way the expectant mother can help ease the symptoms and have a more stress-free pregnancy. During the first trimester, a primary goal of massage is to provide relaxation and increase flow of the circulation systems. Stimulating the blood system pumps more energy-giving oxygen and nutrients into your cells and increases blood flow to the placenta. Muscle tension can slow down lymph flow, leaving you fatigued. By stimulating this system, massage can boost your immunity and energy level.

In the second trimester, "the mother starts going through more changes," says Lynne Daize with the National Association of Pregnancy Massage Therapy, "so massage is used to relieve muscle spasms and ease structural changes." The therapist works to loosen joints and soften the connective tissues, thereby relieving backaches and leg cramps.

As pregnancy progresses, special positioning is required during massage. Up to the 24th week of pregnancy it is acceptable, according to Daize, for moms to be on their back with the right hip tilted up, taking pressure off the nerves and arteries. Pressure on the arteries in the back, she notes, will diminish blood flow and oxygen to the fetus. Another position that decreases stress on the back is side-lying, with the belly supported by a small wedge pillow.

During the final trimester, the baby begins to gain weight more rapidly, discomfort increases, and the impending due date can cause added stress and anxiety. At this stage, Daize says, the therapist focuses on trigger points to relieve pain while continuing to elicit relaxation throughout the body. Generally, during the last two weeks before mom's due date, the therapist concentrates her techniques on preparing the mother's body for delivery.

Before initiating massage, consult your obstetrician. While massage is a safe treatment, certain conditions require your physician's approval and careful monitoring by the therapist. Notify your therapist of any changes in your physical health, and consult your obstetrician about continuing the treatments should complications arise.



**Consult your obstetrician before receiving massage.**

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## MT Straight Talk

### What Your Massage Therapist Needs to Know

*Angela England*

Most massage therapists guide first-time clients through an intake process that includes discussing health histories and other medical concerns. But talking with your therapist about these things should not end with your first massage. Before each session, take a minute to speak with your therapist about any new medical conditions or injuries, lasting aches and pains, or any other changes in your life. Here are some of the issues your massage therapist should know about.

#### Medical Changes

It's a good idea to regularly update your medical record with your therapist, especially if you've been diagnosed with an illness or medical condition--such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, a chronic autoimmune disease, or skin allergies--or are taking any new medications. Certain medical concerns

preclude you from receiving massage. Other conditions, such as pregnancy, simply change the way your practitioner approaches the session.

#### A New or Acute Injury

Maybe you spent hours driving to a destination getaway and your shoulders ache, or you stepped off the porch wrong and sprained your ankle. Any time you have a new ache, pain, sprain, twist, or pulled muscle, mention it to your therapist. Depending on the location and extent of your injury, the session may need to be postponed or the injury site avoided until more healing has occurred.

#### Personal Preferences

This category is less obvious, but equally important. Everyone has unique

preferences and sometimes there may be something you would like to change for your next massage. Whether you want to bring your own music, have the temperature adjusted, or be draped in an extra blanket, your therapist can easily adapt as long as you communicate your preferences.

Help your practitioner help you. Take a moment to check in with him or her before your next session.

*Angela England enjoys doing massage, gardening, writing, and spending time with her three young children.*

*Sometimes the  
cure for  
restlessness is  
rest.*

-Colleen Wainwright

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Touch Points. I hope that you found some helpful tips and encourage you to share this newsletter with anyone you know who would also enjoy it.

I am thrilled to be in my 11th year of serving the amazing women in our community, and appreciate your continued loyalty and trust.

So, whether you are seeking relaxation, relief from pain, support during pregnancy, or information about how to prepare to have an empowering birth experience, you will find it here at Tranquil Touch Therapeutic Massage For Women!

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