MASSAGE Etiquette, Protocol, Benefits, & Contraindications

- Never wear **scented body products** to your massage. If you do have scented products on, you will be given a washcloth to remove them.
- **Wash your hair** and **exfoliate your skin just before your massage**
- For our therapist's protection against cuts and bacterial infections, he/she will avoid your feet if you have not cut and filed any sharp edges off your **toenails.**
- **Cigarette or marijuana smokers** may not be able to be seen for massage with certain therapists due to the therapist's own asthma and allergies. Please be kind and disclose this when making your first appointment.
- Please inform the therapist if you have a **SPRAY TAN** or body makeup on so that we can use non-staining sheets during your treatment.
- It is never okay to bring your **children or pets** to a massage while you are mentally and physically unavailable on the massage table to give them proper supervision. Our office is not child or pet-proof. Therapeutic-assistance animals are the exception.
- Please do not bring **additional people into your massage**. Interpreters are the exception.
- Please do not use these **terms:** "masseuse" for a Massage Therapist, "Bed" for the massage table, or "Rub"/ "Stroke" for a massage technique. These are terms intentionally used by sexual deviants ("Johns") in the U.S. to communicate with prostitutes, not legitimate Licensed Massage Therapists.
- It is not important to **shave before a massage**. Your therapist doesn't care or even notice. The only exception to this rule is if you are receiving Kinesio Taping; in that case, you must shave 24 hours in advance to avoid skin irritation. If less than 24 hours, use clippers only.
- It is essential to disclose any **new medications and treatments** you are currently taking that differ from those listed in your original intake form, before receiving any massage appointment.
- You must cover all **open skin** (cuts, warts, etc) with a bandaid and bring it to the therapist's attention before your massage.
- Remove all **makeup and jewelry** before lying down on the massage table.
- We ask that you turn your **cell phone** off during your massage for your peace of mind. If you need to leave it on for an emergency, that's fine.....just let the therapist know.
- Do not **consume alcoholic** beverages, narcotic painkillers, or relaxants prior to your massage. This creates an ethical dilemma for your therapist and exposes him/her to liability.
- Never make **jokes or comments** of a sexual nature to your therapist. His/her sense of decorum may be dramatically different than yours, and misunderstandings after incidents of this nature can be challenging to resolve.

Before Your Massage

- Select a massage from our menu. If you need help with your selection or have a question that would be best answered directly by a therapist, we offer free consultations via phone.
- You can request an appointment online or via phone. If you are booking online, please select your massage type and "New Client Intake Consultation". Please do not request appointments via social media or text message.
- To ensure your requested appointment is officially accepted and recorded on our books, you must receive a confirmation via text or email from us (Square) stating that your appointment is confirmed.
- This confirmation will also contain helpful information, such as your intake forms and rules of etiquette.
- Please complete your intake online or arrive 20 minutes early to complete it in our office.

During Your Massage

- Your massage therapist will go over your intake forms with you in private. You and your therapist will determine precisely what you are expecting from your massage. The therapist will then either agree to the treatment or explain why they need to alter the treatment and why.
- Your therapist will provide you with instructions on how to position yourself on the table and drape yourself appropriately. The therapist will leave the room while you undress.
- Your therapist will knock before reentering the room to ensure that you are on the table and covered. They will then adjust the headrest and use bolsters where needed. Full lighting is used for MediCupping™ treatments, and soft lighting is used for all other massages. Verbal feedback from clients is required in Target Area massages and MediCupping™ treatments.

After Your Massage

- Once your massage is complete, the therapist will discuss any concerns they may have found during the massage and provide you with after-care instructions.

- You will receive instructions on how to exit the table and meet your therapist in the lobby to pay.
- Your therapist will take and store thorough notes about your session.
- You are encouraged to follow up with us via email in a few days and to let us know how successful the massage was or was not.
- We do occasionally send out promotional emails. You may unsubscribe at any time. We never share your personal information.

Benefits of Massage

Listed is a very brief explanation of some of the benefits and effects of massage. These effects do not occur during every massage session. The massage techniques used, along with the qualities of movement (rhythm, pacing, pressure, direction, and duration), help determine which effects are likely to occur. The physical, mental, and emotional condition of recipients, as well as their openness to massage, may also have an impact on the effects that occur.

Integumentary System (skin): Stimulates sensory receptors in skin, increases superficial circulation, removes dead skin, adds moisture with oil and lotions, and increases sebaceous gland excretions

Connective Tissue (fascia): Improves pliability of fascia, separates tissues

Circulatory System: Increases local circulation, enhances venous return, reduces blood pressure, and heart rate with regular relaxation massage

Muscular System: "Milks" metabolic wastes into venous and lymph flow, relaxes muscles (general and specific), relieves myofascial trigger points

Skeletal System: Increases joint mobility and flexibility

Nervous System: Stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system (relaxation), increases body awareness

Endocrine System: Releases endorphins

Immune System: Increases lymphatic flow

Digestive System: Moves contents of the large intestines. Relaxation improves digestion

Mental: Increases mental clarity.

Emotional: Reduces anxiety and promotes a general feeling of well-being, releasing unexpressed emotions.

Contraindication To Massage

Contraindications are health conditions that you may have now or in the past that require (legally/ethically) that your massage therapist use specific cautions or not perform massage on you. Certain medications may also create physiological conditions that make massage unsafe. If you fully disclose all medical information asked of you by your therapist and keep us updated to any changes in your health, we can know with a high certainty that we are adhering to the standard contraindications for massage therapy; which are there for your safety. Clients who intentionally mislead or leave out medical information will be putting themselves at risk, as well as the attending therapist and will be asked to find services elsewhere. Common situations include…

- Clients on **antibiotics** - must finish full course before we can treat you. We could spread the infection and reduce the effectiveness of your antibiotic.
- Clients on **blood thinners** - blood clots can be moved with serious consequences
- Clients having had **recent surgery** - no massage can be performed without a doctor's release for 8 weeks post-surgical or 6 weeks with a doctor's note. This note must be on their letterhead, signed by them, and dated.

Relaxation Response

The relaxation response is a physiologic phenomenon activated by the parasympathetic nervous system. Inducing the relaxation response counters the damaging effects of a chronic stress response by bringing balance to the systems (hormones, heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, etc). Specific health benefits include…

- Decreased oxygen consumption and metabolic rate, thus less strain on the body's energy resources
- Increased intensity and frequency of ALPHA brain waves are associated with deep relaxation.
- Reduced blood lactates, blood substances related to anxiety
- Significantly decreased blood pressure in hypertensive individuals
- Reduced heart rate and slower respiration rate
- Decreased muscle tension
- Increased blood flow to arms and legs
- Decreased anxiety, fears, phobias, and increased positive mental health, improved quality of sleep

During the relaxation response, a person feels relaxed and is in a pleasant semi-awake state of consciousness. A general full-body massage consisting predominantly of effleurage and petrissage, with fewer specific techniques that cause discomfort, is most likely to evoke the relaxation response. The qualities of such a session are light, smooth, and flowing. Certain kinds of music, soft lighting, warm room temperatures, and minimal conversation may enhance the relaxing effects of this type of session.