

# Your Very First Massage

## ~ What to Expect

*Trying something for the very first time is always a little nerve-wracking & massage is no exception! It's human nature to be wary and unsure of the unknown, but the unknown can be taken out of your first massage experience if you are armed with a few pieces of information.*

Here we give you a sneak preview of what will happen when you turn up for that first session of this modality that will provide you with another avenue of Healthcare. Equipped with a little information, you should be assured you will thoroughly enjoy the benefits of your massage and start reaping rewards even after that very first hour (or hour and a half).

### THE SETTING

You can receive a massage in a range of settings. These include in the massage practitioner's clinic; in the massage practitioner's home (many practitioners work from home – as we do - and have room/s set up specifically for massage); in a hospital or care facility or in your own home (many practitioners now come to you as a result of the availability of high quality portable massage tables).

Whatever the setting, *the massage practitioner will work to create a sense of quiet harmony prior to the massage session.* This is because massage is aimed not only at kneading & rubbing away the sore spots, but also helping you reach a state of peace & relaxation, something that can only be achieved in a certain environment. This mood can be set simply by the massage practitioner playing relaxation music in the background or using scented oils during the massage; or by the practitioner gently establishing a connection with you in some way at the beginning of the session such as breathing with you for a few moments prior to beginning the first strokes.



## MEDICAL HISTORY FIRST

Before the start of the massage session, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about your health. Information you will be asked to provide includes any major health problems you have; medications you taking; allergies; whether you are pregnant; and if you have had any recent accidents or injuries. Some other questions you may be asked are your reasons for getting a massage; your lifestyle & stress level; and any areas of pain you are experiencing.



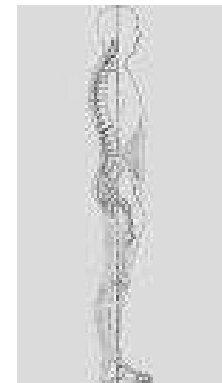
This information is used to help plan the session and to ensure your safety. It is vital that you tell the massage practitioner if you are under a doctor's care because there are some rare situations where a massage is not appropriate.

Always inform your massage practitioner about changes in your health as they occur, even minor ones. In some situations the massage practitioner may ask permission to contact your physician for more information prior to giving the massage. Once the 'all-clear' has been given by your physician (if necessary) and you are ready to start, feel free to communicate your needs to the massage practitioner before the massage commences.



Tell your massage practitioner why you are getting a massage because sessions can vary considerably to meet your individual needs & preferences. For example, you may want relief for sore feet or tight shoulders, or you may just want to relax. Sometimes focused attention on a particular troublesome spot will provide the greatest benefit.

After taking a case history, the practitioner may also assess your posture, range of motion & muscle strength.



## READY TO START

As we have said before, your relaxation and comfort are crucial to the success of the massage. In most cases at the start of the massage you will be asked to undress in private, get on the massage table, and drape yourself with a sheet or towel provided. Underwear can be left on. Only the part of the body being worked on will be uncovered and your modesty will be respected at all times.

Remember that there are many massage techniques available where you can remain partially or totally clothed, so if you don't feel comfortable with removing your clothes, discuss this with the massage practitioner prior to the start of the massage. The massage practitioner will be happy to find a style that makes you comfortable.



## THE MASSAGE !

It is important to remember that you as the client are in control of the massage session. You control the direction and pace and if anything does not feel comfortable, it is your right & responsibility to tell the practitioner so that your personal space is respected.

Throughout the massage, the massage practitioner will normally briefly explain to you where they are about to massage and the purpose for treating this area. This is their way of giving you the chance to provide feedback and let them know if there is anything they are doing with which you don't feel comfortable

In general, talking during the massage is optional. Some people prefer silence, especially during a massage for general relaxation, while others like more social interaction.

Once the massage is completed, the practitioner will leave the room to allow you to take some time to reorient yourself from a state of deep relaxation before getting up from the table and dressing in private.



## HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN ?



The length of your session will depend on your general health and your reason for the massage. For your first massage a half-hour or less may be enough. With experience, you and your massage practitioner can determine the best length for each visit.

How often you receive a massage is usually more important than the length of each massage. With regular sessions you may begin to notice positive changes in how you feel between massages, and how many aches & pains you do (or don't) experience. Your massage practitioner will help you set an appropriate schedule.