Therapeutic Massage involves the manipulation of the body’s soft tissue (skin, muscles, tendons, and ligaments), using a series of techniques and flowing movements. The overall purpose is to promote good health, relaxation and wellbeing. It is generally believed that the word *massage* derives from the Arabic ‘mass’ or ‘Mas’h’, meaning to press softly.

Therapeutic touch is also a natural human response to ease pain. When we feel discomfort or hurt ourselves, we instinctively hold or rub the area we have hurt. With others, we offer or have the need for a hug or a reassuring rub on the shoulder.

Massage is one of the oldest forms of healthcare and has been used around the world from as far back as 3000 B.C. – long before the birth of modern western medicine.

Swedish massage is one of the most common forms of massage in the UK and Europe. However, there are many other forms of massage such as aromatherapy, huna (lomi lomi) Hawaiian massage, Indonesian, ayurvedic (Indian), Tuina (Chinese), No hands, Shiatsu (Japanese), hot stone, manual lymphatic drainage etc. Each has their own techniques, products and routines for carrying out the massage.

For the purpose of this guide, Swedish massage will be discussed.

**The effects of massage:**

- Improves skin & muscle tone
- Aids circulation of the blood and lymph around the body
- Eliminates toxins and impurities from the blood and lymph
- Improves mental clarity
- Calms and uplifts the emotions
- Sedates the nerve endings
- Helps in the release of suppressed emotions
- Makes you feel loved and nurtured
- Increases intimacy and bonding in relationships
- Releases tension, knots & spasms in the muscles
- Improves sleep patterns
- Helps to distribute oxygen & vital nutrients to the organs and tissues of the body
- Boosts the immune system
- Provides pain relief
- Increases flexibility in the muscles, ligaments, tendons and joints
- Reduces stress and stress related symptoms e.g. anxiety, aggression/irritability, mental confusion, stomach complaints, insomnia, fatigue
- Relaxes the body
- Stimulates our inner natural healing mechanisms – physical and emotional
- Improves energy levels
- Releases tension

Some people may also experience increased confidence and self esteem as a result of having regular nurturing, therapeutic massages.
Oils and Lotions for your massage

You can use a carrier oil e.g. sweet almond, grapeseed, sunflower, olive oil many of which are available from your local supermarket for between £1 and £4 per bottle. Please check for allergies e.g. nut or wheat when choosing your oil. If you prefer, you can use a lotion, again choose according to your skin type, sensitivity or allergies.

If you would like to add essential oils (natural plant and flower extracts such as Lavender, Chamomile) for a pleasant aroma and additional therapeutic effect, please ensure that you administer them in the correct dose and that you follow all the health and safety precautions.

Essential oils can be bought from local health food shops and Holland & Barratt, from around £2.50 per bottle and £10.00 plus for more expensive oils. There are also a wide range of aromatherapy suppliers on Ebay the online auction site, see www.ebay.co.uk. They can also be bought from wholesalers, some of whom have low minimum order quantities e.g £35 which could split with a friend or family member. Some examples of wholesale suppliers with low minimum orders are:

- Essential Oils Direct: 0161 633 3952 www.essentialoilsdirect.co.uk
- Aura – www.aurawholesale.co.uk (no telephone number supplied)

Health and Safety Essentials

In some cases, you will not be able to receive massage therapy, this is called TOTAL CONTRAINDICATION.

In other cases, you will need GP permission first, this is called MEDICAL CONTRAINDICATION.

Finally, there is LOCAL CONTRAINDICATION – this means that the treatment may need to be modified e.g. if the receiver had athletes foot or sunburn on their back, you would avoid that area completely. In the case of allergies, you would just need to use products which are suitable for your client. Here is a list of the conditions which are contraindicated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Contraindications</th>
<th>Medical Contraindications</th>
<th>Local Contraindications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do not carry out treatment</td>
<td>Obtain GP/Specialist’s permission prior to treatment</td>
<td>Avoid area during treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contagious or infectious conditions inc colds, flu, athletes foot, impetigo etc</td>
<td>- Cardio vascular conditions (Hypotension, Phlebitis, Hypertension, Hypotension, Thrombosis, Embolisms, Heart Conditions e.g. angina, pacemaker)</td>
<td>- Scar tissue – 6 months for minor surgery &amp; 2 yrs for major surgery</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Skin diseases</td>
<td>- Diabetes</td>
<td>- Varicose veins</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol</td>
<td>- Gynaecological infections</td>
<td>- Sunburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fever/temperature</td>
<td>- Medical oedema (fluid retention)</td>
<td>- Cuts, bruises, boils, warts, open wounds, abrasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recent surgery/operations</td>
<td>- Arthritis</td>
<td>- Undiagnosed pain, lumps, bumps &amp; swelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Internal bleeding</td>
<td>- Acute rheumatism</td>
<td>- Pregnancy – after first 12 wks, but still avoid abdomen &amp; very light effleurage strokes only</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Recent inoculation (wait 48 hrs)</td>
<td>- Osteoporosis</td>
<td>- Inflammation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Seizures</td>
<td>- Asthma</td>
<td>- Recent heavy meal – avoid abdomen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cancer (unless palliative care &amp; then with GP’s permission)</td>
<td>- Psoriasis/Eczema</td>
<td>- Fractures/broken bones</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pregnancy (first 12 wks)</td>
<td>- Trapped, pinched, inflamed nerves (neuritis)</td>
<td>- Sprains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Skin hypersensitivity</td>
<td>- High risk pregnancies</td>
<td>- Menstruation – avoid abdomen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nervous/psychotic conditions</td>
<td>- Allergies to essential oils, base oils, talcum powder, creams/lotions used in therapy – use alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Palliative care for the terminally ill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Health and Safety: - for the person carrying out the massage

Wash and sanitise your hands — Superdrug and £ shops now sell the small gel sanitiser
Tie long hair back
Remove jewelry
Use a clean towel
Cover any small cuts with a plaster — for yourself or the person you are massaging
Check that you do not have any contraindications for carrying out the massage

Equipment

Towel (try not to use white, the oils will stain them)
Carrier Oil – 10-20ml depending on body size and skin type, dry skin is thirstier!
Essential oils if required (check you are using the correct quantity)
Paper towel (to wipe off excess oils at the end of the massage)

Before you begin, ask the person to take 3 deep breaths and to imagine that they are in their most favourite place of relaxation, peace and safety – it could be home, on a beach etc etc

Basic Massage Routine

During a professional Swedish massage, your therapist would carry out five different types of massage strokes. For the purpose of this guide, two basic strokes are used:

Stroking (effleurage): long firm, flowing, gliding movements in an upward direction (towards the heart) and light downward movements. This helps to relax and warm up the muscles and is ideal for all parts of the body.

This is the only stroke which should be used for pregnant women (after the 12 week mark and only if there are no complications) and the abdomen should always be avoided.

Kneading (petrissage): is carried out on fleshy areas of the body (never over bone) such as the back and front of the thighs, outer arms, shoulder and back muscles. It is useful for promoting the elimination of toxins, releasing knots, spasms and tension in the muscles.

Pick up the flesh in the palm of your hand and, gently squeeze it, while allowing your thumb to slide over this section of flesh. Immediately place your other hand ready to perform the same movement just slightly along the muscle where your first hand left off, allowing the flesh to pass from one palm into the next and so on. Be careful not to pinch or hurt the person you are massaging

If you have access to the internet, www.youtube.com has some video demonstrations- just type in Swedish massage and see what is available.

During your massage, always check the pressure is ok with the other person and have a blanket spare in case they start to feel cold. It is common for body temperature to drop during a treatment as the body is starting to cleanse itself of toxins and impurities.

Only uncover each part of the body you are massaging, recover with the towel once you have finished.

Part 1 - BACK OF THE BODY

1) Back – never massage the spine i.e. the bony bit
Place towel over the lower body area.
Pour a little of the massage oil onto your hands, rub together to warm up
Place hands at the base of the spine, one on each side
Use upward stroking movements – firm going up and light coming down x 6 times
This should be one continuous movement

2) If you feel any knots or tension in particular areas – knead those areas
3) Circling movements – using your fingertips, apply small circular movements from the base of the spine up to the skull. It is best to do one side at a time and work in strips to cover the whole back area (excluding the spine).
4) Carry out 6 effleurage strokes over the whole back area
5) Knead the shoulder muscles and back of the neck, taking care not to pinch the other person. Repeat around 3 times or until you feel that some tension has released.
6) Cover the back with the towel

Leg – massage very lightly over the back of the knee area – a gland is situated there.

1) Effleurage the whole leg x 6 – go about 3-cms below the top of the inner thigh with one hand and straight up into the hip bone with the other hand.
2) Knead the calf muscle – for around 1-2 mins or until you feel the muscle start to soften
3) Knead the thigh area – as above 2)
4) End with effleurage x 6 to the whole leg

Repeat on the other leg

Part 2 - FRONT OF THE BODY

Ask the person to turn over
A way of protecting their modesty is to hold the towel out and (horizontally) up above your eye level, so you cannot see them as they turn.

Leg (avoid kneading on the shin bone area – effleurage only)

1) Effleurage x 6 (go very lightly over the knee area)
2) Bend the knee (as long as mobility is OK) and press firmly down towards the groin x 1
3) Apply very gentle circular movements to the kneecap with your fingertips
4) Knead the thigh area
5) Sandwich each foot between your hands – stroke the foot x 3
6) Gently wiggle and stroke each toe
Repeat on the other leg

Chest and Neck

1) Effleurage the chest and back of the neck area in one continuous stroke – starting at the breast bone point, come down 1” – (it is like doing the breast stroke over the whole area), come up the outside of the chest and then around the shoulders to reach the back of the neck. Continuous stroke.
   • Start again by going back down the chest, up around the outside, over the shoulders to the neck. You will find that you have to turn your hands as you do so.
   • Work upwards in sections – it should take about 3-4 strokes depending on the size of the person
2) Apply gentle circular movements to the whole chest, shoulder muscle and neck area – repeat 2-3 times
3) Apply gentle upward strokes to the front and back of the neck (hold the head with one hand to stabilize it)
4) Repeat effleurage to the whole chest and neck area

Scalp

1) Gently apply “hair washing” movements to the scalp
2) Apply gentle thumb pressures to the centre of the head, starting at the forehead to the base of the skull
3) Repeat on either side of the centre line – i.e. right and left side
4) Gently stroke the head

Ending
Gently press each shoulder (one hand on each) for around 3 seconds
This is a way of signaling to the body and person that the massage is complete
Offer a glass of water and allow the person to rest for 5-10 mins

Self Massage
Please apply the same contraindications and safety precautions to yourself

Scalp, Neck and Shoulders
• Take a few deep breaths
• Massage your scalp as though you are washing your hair
• Hold the back of your neck with one hand, gently squeeze and release
• Repeat on each shoulder – squeeze and release. Follow with firm circular movements with your fingertips – this helps to soften the muscle, releasing knots and tension.

Chest and Arms
• Effleurage – firm going up, light coming down

Stomach
• Gentle circular movements over the stomach (avoid at all stages of pregnancy)

Legs
• Effleurage your upper leg
• Knead the front of each thigh
• Effleurage the lower leg
• Apply circular movements with your fingertips to the calves
• Position your leg so you can massage your foot – massage slowly and firmly, including the sole

Aftercare
Following a massage it is normal to experience a detoxifying process, on both a physical and emotional level. Some of the symptoms may include: increased need to urinate, tiredness, nausea, headache, breakout of spots/pimples, crying, heightened emotional states etc. These reactions are all normal and healthy, a sign that your system is releasing built up physical toxins and emotional tensions.

In order to support you through this process, it is helpful to follow the after care advice for up to 48 hrs:
• Increase your water intake
• Eat light foods, preferably no meat
• Eliminate alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine from your diet
• As much rest, sleep and relaxation as possible

If you have any prolonged symptoms, please contact your GP.

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