



What To Expect From A Massage

A Guide For First-time Clients

When Should I Arrive?

For an optimal experience, plan to arrive a little early before the scheduled time of your massage. This way, if you are delayed on your way to the appointment, you won't feel rushed and won't be adding extra stress on yourself before a session aimed at relaxing the body and easing stress and its affects. Also, it is a good idea not to plan on being anywhere too soon after the massage, so you can leave the session retaining the full affect of the massage.

What do I wear?

The first thing to know if you have never had a professional massage, is that the client will be covered by a sheet, towel, or blanket at all times, except for the part of the body that the therapist is currently massaging. As to what to wear underneath the draping, the overall rule is for the client to be comfortable. Some massage techniques have a better affect, and for many people just feel better when the therapist's hands are able to make direct contact with the skin. Examples are Swedish Massage and Myoneural techniques. Other techniques, such as Craniosacral or MET, work just as well partially or fully clothed. With these techniques, if the client does remain fully clothed, it may be appropriate to not have the draping. In general, many clients prefer not to wear clothing under the sheets, some prefer to wear underwear and/or bras, and some prefer to wear swimsuits or loose shorts and a t-shirt. Be honest with your feelings about this very personal decision and your therapist will honor your decision.

A Good Massage Therapist Will...

Behave ethically.

This covers a wide range of issues, and all of the topics listed here could be included under "ethical behavior", though the issue of ethics extends beyond just the topics in this brochure. If there is anything that is not listed here, but which causes you concern, speak to your massage therapist about it, or find a new one.

Be well educated, and continue to seek more knowledge and experience.

Check with proposed therapists to see what sort of initial training and experience they have, and what continuing education they have sought.

(in Ohio, therapists must be licensed after a required amount of school, but some schools offer more than others)

Obtain a medical history / overall sense of the client.

The means for doing this vary, but whether they have you fill out a typical history form, or they fill it out with you, or whether they just dialogue with you about your history, the therapist should obtain a medical history so that they can do the most appropriate and beneficial work and also so they know what might be inappropriate for the individual.

Provide a comfortable and healing atmosphere

It is important for you to be comfortable and relaxed during the session, so that you can be as open as possible to the full benefits of the massage.

Be compassionate and understanding.

If you don't feel that your therapist is open to you and genuinely concerned for your well being, or even if you just don't feel like they are an appropriate match for you, feel free to bring this up, and/or to find a different therapist.

Have clearly stated policies and rates.

See the back, center panel of this brochure for the policies of the particular therapist that this brochure came from.

Communicate clearly.

A therapist should be able to keep you informed of what they believe are viable treatment options, and be open to, and able to answer clearly, any questions you have regarding the session and what they perceive.

Use proper draping techniques.

A well-trained therapist is aware of how to properly drape a client so that only the body part that they are currently working on is exposed and so that the client feels safe and that their privacy boundary has not been crossed.

Be responsible in regards to time.

Generally speaking, this means that the therapist should not keep clients waiting for undue reasons, or to go over time with a client unless they have ascertained if that client has extra time available for an extended session.

Other Common Concerns / Questions of First-Time Clients

Does it matter if the therapist is a male or a female?

Some clients admittedly have a preference, and if you can only be comfortable with one or the other, you should be true to your feelings. It is important to know that a good therapist will be able to work on male or female clients with equal professionalism and therapeutic intent.

What kind of lotion is used / is it hypo-allergenic?

There is a large variety of lotions and oils. If this is a concern for you, check with the therapist to see if they have hypo-allergenic and/or fragrance free oils or lotions.

What parts of the body are massaged?

In Ohio, the breast tissue and genitals are never touched, it is illegal to do so. All other body parts are open to be massaged, though clients may have particular body parts that they are uncomfortable having touched, such as the abdomen, buttocks, and chest. If you are uncomfortable having these or any other areas massaged, inform your therapist you would like that area omitted from the massage. You may make this request at any time during the session, even if you have previously given them permission to touch the area in question.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Massage Client

To be comfortable

The importance of be comfortable and relaxed has been previously mentioned. It is the client's responsibility to look after their own comfort level in regards to all of the issues addressed in this brochure, as well as any additional issues.

To be on time

Different massage therapists handle lateness and no-shows / cancellations in different ways, see the back panel for this therapist's policy regarding this. Generally speaking, being on time allows you to get the fullest amount of therapy time while allowing the therapist to keep on schedule so that subsequent appointments also get the fullest amount of therapy time. You should attempt to call ahead if you are running late, or to give at least 24 hours notice if you will be unable to make an appointment.

To be clean.

Since the massage therapist is going to come in contact with the clients skin and hair, the client should make sure that they have recently showered, and should inform the therapist of any skin conditions or sores.

To communicate clearly.

It is important to be open and direct about anything in your medical history, so that the therapist can do the most appropriate work for the individual, as well as knowing what would be inappropriate. The client should also feel free to let the therapist know if the pressure being applied is appropriate. This also includes feeling free to ask questions regarding you situation and the session.

To be accountable for their own healing.

A massage therapist's role is not to "fix" what is wrong with the client, but to treat the client's tissues in a way that promotes healing and optimum health. It is their role to assist and promote the body's natural healing capabilities. By being relaxed and open, the client can realize the full benefits of the massage.