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Massage Tip of the Month

The first step

Take your shoes off!

Summer's coming. Time to go barefoot. The massage tip for this month is to go barefoot in your home. Give your toes a chance to wiggle and move freely. Give your arches a chance to expand. Give your skin a chance to breathe.

Place a mat at the door. When you come into your home, remove your shoes and place them on the mat. In the yoga tradition, this is done as a reminder to remove your worries and trials of the world. It's to help you find peace within your home.

In the art of reflexology (foot massage), the toes are reflex points for the head, neck, eyes and ears. Giving your toes freedom to move and wiggle, allows your neck, head, eyes and ears more freedom as well. Wiggle your toes. Massage your toes. Notice what happens when you do this. Next massage tip will involve some very specific massage strokes for your feet.

Let's start our first step together by removing the shoes...Have a wonderful, stressless, shoeless day!

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Massage Tip of the Month

BARE YOUR SOLE

Sitting at your computer, cross the right leg over the left and bring the right knee out to the side. Touch your left hand to the right foot. Interlace your fingers into your toes as if you are giving yourself a hand/foot shake. feel the stretch within your toes. As you hold your foot in this way, rotate the ankle. Slow rotations. Inhale slowly for one full rotation. Exhale slowly one full rotation in the opposite direction. Continue this for several breaths. As your breath lengthens, increase to two slow rotations on the inhale, and two slow rotations in the opposite direction on the exhale. After some time with this foot, release your hold, and change feet.

h your right hand to your left foot continue the same hand/foot shake and w inhales and exhales in rotation of the ankle.

Remember to breathe slowly. There is no rush. Watch if you criticize your movement or your hold in anyway. For example, if you are not able to completely interlace your hands with feet or are not able to touch your feet at all, change criticism to a loving rotation of your ankles and toes. Use slow movements and/or visualizations with your breath. Everything is possible.



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GREAT TOE SINUS RELIEF

This is the time of year when many of us suffer with allergies and congestion in our nasal passages. Nature is beautiful and in full swing now. The problem is that it sometimes swings into our sinuses in ways that are not pleasant. In reflexology (foot massage), the great (big) toes contain the reflex points for the head. Here is a simple technique to help you in working out sinus congestion through reflex points along your great toe. You can do this now as you sit at the computer.

First, remove your shoes. It's best to do this technique with your socks off, but if you must keep your socks on, so be it. One foot at a time. Let's start with the right foot. Cross the right leg over your left to have easy access to your right foot. Securely hold the great toe and gently pull it away from its joint socket. Similar to the way you crack knuckles, but cracking the knuckles is not the objective here. The objective is to give more space and freedom in your neck reflex, the base of the great toe. Sit up straight.



Take your thumb and glide it from the top of the inside of the big toe along side the nail, down to the base of the big toe. Do this several times, increasing the pressure of the stroke with each movement. This is a simple technique in reflexology to drain the sinus reflexes. Granted, many of you may think this is very strange....but if you suffer from sinus problems, you'll give it a try. And when you become amazed at how much easier you begin to breathe from the effectiveness of this simple technique, credit the ancient art and science of reflexology.

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Indian Burns to Indian Bliss

Do you remember "Indian Burns?" Well, I do. It was a childhood prank. It involved holding someone's arm and then twisting the skin in opposite directions. Ouch! There's a massage technique that's similar to this childhood prank, yet feels very good. The difference is, with the massage technique, your hands glide over the skin in opposite directions instead of holding onto the skin. Try it now with your leg.

Hold onto your ankle with both hands. Thumbs next to each other. Now, move your hands across your skin in opposite directions. Continue doing this as you glide up to the knee. This massage stroke can be done on any part of the body. It revives circulation and feels so much better than Indian Burns. See, it's not so bad growing up after all.



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Pleasant Pounding

Cup your hands over the back of your loved one. Begin gently pounding all around their back with your cupped hands. You will hear a hollow sound from the percussive effects. You will not hear a slapping sound. This percussive movement helps to open up congested particles in the chest and back. It helps to activate the immune system as well. Try this every day as preventative care. Keep the congestion of the chest open by gentle guidance from your healing hands. Let your mind be directed toward opening congestion with kindness, wisdom, and the cupping of your hands. This type of massage stroke is called, "tapotement."



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SMOOTH SAILIN'

Slide one hand down your partner's back. Slide the other hand down your partner's back. Now, interchange your hands, so that one hand replaces the other in one flowing movement as you alternate hands sliding down your partner's back. This is called "hand over hand effleurage." Exhale as you slide one hand down your partner's back. Inhale as you switch hands. If your movements are quicker, exhale for three strokes of the hands, then inhale for three strokes. As you continue to do this, a circular motion begins to develop. Life is a circle. If there is an edge that comes along, we can soften it through the wonders of massage.



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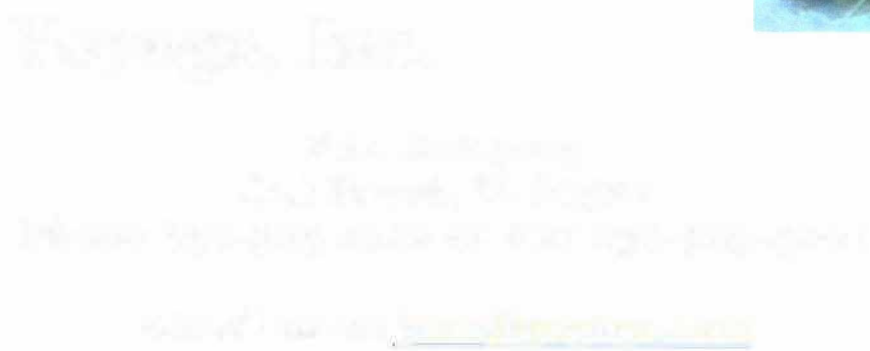


Thumb over Thumb Effleurage

Do you know how to twirl your thumbs? Now, twirl them down your partner's back! Twirl them in a counter clockwise direction as you slide up and down along the sides of the spine. Do not loose contact with the skin. One thumb simply replaces the next as you slide along. This is a very comforting massage.



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HOT ROCKS OF PEACE

Why not give someone you care about this new year a gift of massage? Have you ever had a hot rock massage? If not, why not give yourself this gift too? In these cold winter times, the additional warmth of the rocks in this massage can be particularly soothing. This type of massage involves stroking hot rocks on the body. Not burning rocks, but rocks heated enough to warm the muscles and deeply relax them. The special beauty of this massage is its effective ability to combine a natural part of nature with the therapeutic aspects of massage. Nature, massage, has the ability to nurture and heal us even rocks. So, here's wishing the new year for you and yours, REALLY rocks!

May you also find time in this new year to honor and recognize your inner beauty - the profound and truest expression of who you are. Let this deep and powerful expression be actualized through the example of your life. This core of inner beauty dwells within the lives of the midwest, the mideast, and every life in between. Within each one of us resides a profound awareness that is not directed by the confused emotions of an inflated ego. As we see and feel how the death of one person can rock the lives of many, let us also deeply realize that the life of one person, can inspire and elevate the lives of many. Let this inspired life be yours. Happy New Year. Om shanti. All peace.

Yours in peace,
Joan--



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A Friction Story

Friction massage strokes move the superficial areas of the skin over the underlying muscles. Try a friction stroke now on your arm. Using the full palm of your right hand, move the skin of your left arm back and forth. Do not slide your hand over the skin. Keep it attached to the skin. The movement happens on a deeper level. The movement is of the overlying fascia tissue over the deeper musculature. Friction warms the body on a deep level. It permits you to go deeper in your massages. It's easier to massage warm musculature than cold musculature. Warm bread dough is easier to knead than cold bread dough. Our muscles are like dough, ready to be kneaded. After all, we all are in need of the kneaded touch!--

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Elimination is illumination

The heels of your feet say a lot about the health of your body, particularly the elimination system of your body. The heels in reflexology are the intestinal reflexes. This means that if the heels are rough, it's a sign that your intestines are clogged. So polish down those rough heels. Don't do it in one scrub because that can be painful. Do it over a few days time. Be gentle yet firm. Your heels will feel better. In fact, all of you will.



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COME ON BABY, LET'S DO THE TWIST (Excerpt from, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage")

The twist-and-release compression stroke is a stroke with a twist - literally! This stroke begins like the full - hand stroke. Press your entire hand, focusing on the heel of the hand, deeply into the muscle, perpendicular to the direction of the muscle fiber. Once you're in there, though, don't let up the pressure. Give your palm a gentle twist, and then lift it away. This stroke further stimulates muscle circulation by giving the muscle fibers a little tweak. Soon, those muscles will be flushed with vital nutrients. Do this stroke to a slow song with a steady beat (think of your favorite slow blues song or spiritual, such as "Amazing Grace"). Each stroke takes a little more time, and you don't want to rush it, but you may still want to groove with the rhythm (how sweet the sound!)





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A HEADY EXPERIENCE

Are you ready for a heady experience? Here we go! Take your thumbs and place them on the back of your neck on either side of your spinal column. Push deeply along these muscles of the neck. Smoothly glide up and down the neck along the sides of the spine. These cervical spinalis muscles support the neck and often get very tight from improper posture. Their tightness can also cause headaches. After massaging these muscles, massage along the base of the skull. The occipital muscle is located here. It can also get very tight from the constant pressure of upright posture. This tight muscle can also result in headaches.



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Thumper to the rescue!

There are so many excellent massage tools on the market now. It's hard to determine which is the best and most effective. For starters, I would recommend a vibrating massage tool called, "Thumper." It was quite expensive when I was in massage school a decade ago, but now a similar tool is marketed by many affordable brands. It consists of two vibrating balls on a handle. There is space between the balls wide enough for the spine. You can vibrate these balls up and down the sides of the spine. You can use it for self massage or as a tool to massage someone else. The speeds can be altered to a fast or slow vibration. These vibrations help to relax the muscles by loosening them up and dislodging the congestion of toxic build up in the muscles. After using this tool, it's important to drink plenty of water to help move the dislodged toxins out of your system.

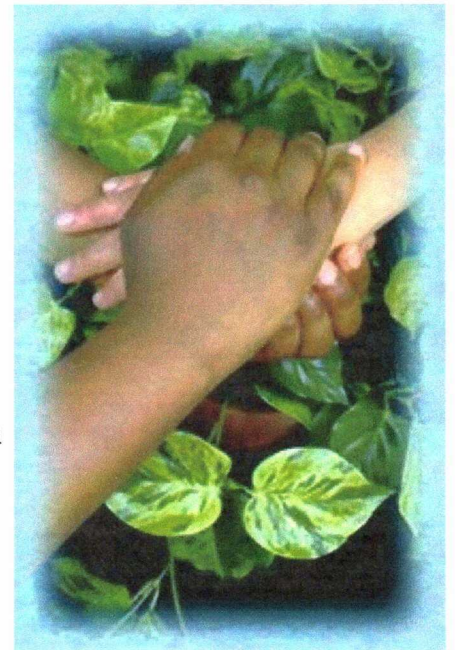




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A Beautiful Mind

Take your index fingers and place them next to each other at the center of your forehead. Slide them away from each other across your forehead. You are massaging the Frontalis Muscle of your skull. Do this several times, increasing the pressure slightly with each stroke. After several times, make circular motions with your fingers across your temples. You are massaging the Temporalis Muscles. Regularly massaging the Frontalis and Temporalis Musculature releases tensions from the musculature of your head. We carry great stress in these muscles with all the thinking we do. Take a break from your thoughts and let these muscles stretch and relax through this simple massage. Let your breath help too. Take a deep inhale, and as you exhale stroke your fingers across the Frontalis. Inhale one full circle across the Temporalis, Exhale another full circle. Keep the circles slow. Keep your breath slow.



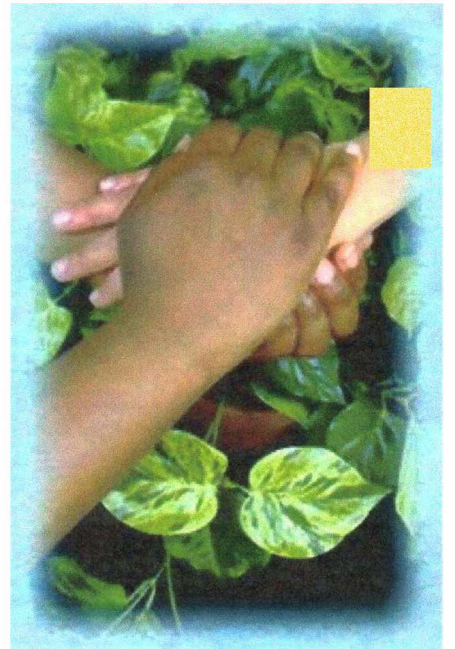
A beautiful mind deserves a beautiful massage. A beautiful massage deserves a beautiful mind.

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Rockin' Times Ahead!

Find some large hot rocks and boil them! You can not over boil them. Rocks will not turn to mush. Remove the hot rocks carefully from the water and leave them out on the kitchen counter until you can safely hold them and not get burned. Coat your hands with oil and glide the warm rocks over a willing partner's bare back. This may sound like some tantric ritual (maybe it is too!), but it's a new form of massage that's incredibly soothing for the cold autumn and winter days ahead. It's called a Hot Rock Massage!



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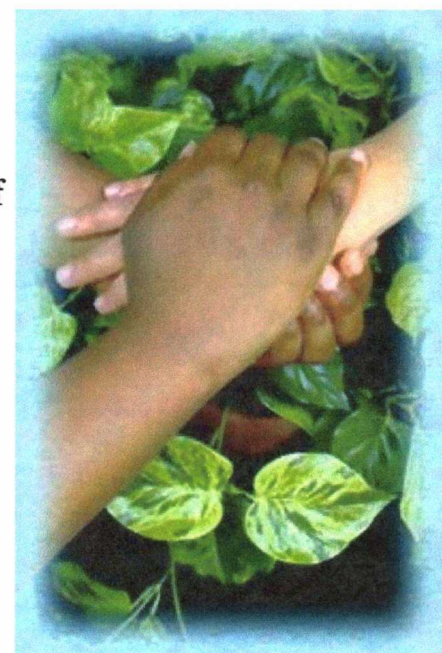
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Itsy Bitsy Spider Roll

So, you've put on a few extra pounds for the holidays...no problem! There's a wonderful massage technique that can use any extra rolls of skin in the most fabulous way. I call it a the Itsy Bitsy Spider Roll.

Let's try it out on a friend's back.

Place both hands on either side of the spine near the (expanding) waistline. Each hand takes hold of some skin of the back between the thumbs and forefingers. Keep holding the skin as you walk with the other fingers up your partner's back. Let the skin you are holding roll up the back. This may sound strange, but try it and you'll get the drift. The movement of the skin looks like a wave going up your partners back. It's a wonderful sensation for a wonderful season! Enjoy!



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We're not trapped If we begin with the Trapezius

Are you holding the weight of the world on your shoulders? Are your shoulders often tight? Do you feel as if your neck is constantly straining? There are many muscles in the shoulder area that may be overworked and under massaged. In massage we begin massaging the outer layers of the muscles and gradually work toward the deeper layers of muscles. This month we will start on the Trapezius muscle and next month we will go a layer deeper.

The Trapezius muscle forms a diamond shape over the upper back. The points of the diamond are at the neck, at the top of each shoulder, and at the center of the back. Find a partner to experiment locating this muscle on. Begin by tracing an outline across the back. Start at the neck, go across to the shoulder, come down to the center of the back, up to the other shoulder, and then back to the neck. You have just traced the Trapezius muscle.

Gently massage this area with both hands in a kneading motion. One hand gathers some of the outer layers of skin and pulls up on it, then the other hand does as if you are kneading bread from one hand to the next. Pull the musculature into your hands moving gently from one hand to the other. Move all around the Trapezius to warm this large muscle. Warming this muscle helps to loosen and relax the upper back musculature. A relaxed body permits one to go ever deeper.





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Roam around the back to the Rhomboids!

These are smaller muscles along the spine in the middle to upper part of your back (also called Rhomboideus). The muscles rest in a horizontal way. They connect the shoulder blades to the spine. Lift your shoulders to your ears. You're using your rhomboids. Round your back. You're using your rhomboids. Straighten your back.... rhomboids again. Anytime there's movement in your shoulders, there's movement in the rhomboids. With all of us carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders, is there any wonder why our rhomboids need regular massages?

Let's try cross-fiber friction on them. Take a long handled brush, and rub up and down your back alongside the spine. Rub each side of the spine. Focus from the lower neck to the upper third of the back. Since the rhomboid muscles lie horizontal to the spine, massaging them in a perpendicular way to the spine can help release some muscle tensions a bit quicker. Now, go enjoy your day, in a rhomboid way!



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Mimic me! I'll mimic you!!

An important lesson I've learned in my bodywork studies is to watch how someone moves and try to mimic these moves. This helps me intimately identify any discomfort or pain the person is feeling. It's literally learning to walk in their shoes. The incredible realization that a sour disposition may stem from a fallen arch, can sound quite simplistic, or quite profound.

In any part of life, massage or otherwise, if we want to increase our compassion for others, we must understand that the other person has different life experiences. Even identical twins have different life experiences. The longer I spend learning how someone moves, the deeper my compassion for them grows.

My massage tip for you this month is to watch listen, and then act the part. Find someone you're having a difficult time communicating with. Watch how they walk. Watch how they move. When you're not interacting with them, try and move the way they do. Notice how your body feels when you do this. Notice any emotions that come up with these new movements.

Increase your empathy by increasing your motions. Learn to move differently. Get out of your rut. Copy someone else's rut! Copy their moves with compassion.



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Thumb Wave

Do the thumb wave!

Move the top joint of your thumb. Move it as if you're waving to someone with your thumb. This is a thumb move used in reflexology - the massage of the feet and hands. Try it out.

Take the thumb of one of your hands and wave it across the skin of the palm of your other hand. It looks as if you are inching your way across the palm. The massage can slowly increase in the intensity of the pressure you apply. As your experience increases, you'll be able to detect areas of congestion and muscle strain with relative ease. You may feel a slight change in the texture of the skin where these pressure points are. As you begin to notice these areas, stay with them a bit longer. Let your thumb rest on the area and apply a little more pressure there.

Thumbs up (and down) to a long and healthy life!



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Connect with the Source!

There's something called, "referred pain" in massage. This means that the source of the painful area is different from where the pain is actually felt. For example, recently I was feeling thumb stiffness and discomfort. I considered it stemmed from my work in massage and also my playing the musical instrument of the harp. Both involve extensive use of the thumbs. To ease my discomfort, I decided to get some extensive massage to my arms and hands. While receiving this massage, I noticed trigger points in my bicep (upper top part of the arm) muscle. This means that when massaged deeply in the upper area of my arm, I could feel the discomfort traveling down into my thumb! With regular deep massage to my bicep muscle, I was able to heal much of the discomfort in my thumb.



So, where do you feel pain? Get to know your muscular system so that you can determine which muscles lead to your area of discomfort. By following the muscles you may be able to trace back to a location that is the true source of your problem. I also highly recommend fitting a regular full body massage into your schedule. By receiving this type of massage, your sensitivity heightens. Sometimes we aren't even aware of tensions we're holding onto until someone touches us. Let someone touch you in ways that can help you. Let the healing hands of a massage therapist help you to get to know yourself better.

Massage Tip for July: Book a full body massage today.

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Less is more

I remember one of my first massages. The therapist was a very petite woman with small hands. I wondered how effective the massage would be. She seemed so petite, and I, such a big polish woman. Well, that massage was one of the best I ever had! It proved to me that less is more. Great therapists come in all different sizes.

When you go for a professional massage, don't hesitate to instruct the therapist as to the amount of pressure that is comfortable for you. A good therapist will check in with you regarding this during the massage. This may come through verbal questioning or by reading your body responses to the pressure being applied. Everyone is different when it comes to pressure. You may assume that the big strong shoulders can take a lot of pressure, but I know from experience this is not always the case. Sometimes the biggest people need the gentlest touch. Don't be fooled by appearances in your therapist, or in yourself.



Massage Tip for September: Book a full body massage

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Massage for healing depression

Autumn is a beautiful time of the year. The leaves change colors, the air gets cooler, the days get shorter, and the nights grow longer, and longerrrr. Brrrrr. Did you know that countries, which have higher ratios of darkness to daylight, have also higher rates of suicide? There appears to be a connection between sunshine and our moods.

We can't control Mother Nature, but we can take constructive steps manage our moods. As the days get shorter and the nights grow longer, schedule more massages into your busy days or nights. Massage increases circulation and gets rid of sluggish inhibitors (like the blues). Massage is a way to connect to another human being without any strenuous effort or superficial talk. It's a way to learn to accept healing and kindness from another (If you are blue and you are not receiving kindness from your massage therapist, find another). Massage lets your release the tension from your jaw or from your neck that you have been holding on to for weeks, maybe even years. Massage brings you back to nature by recognizing that your body actually does have the capacity to heal itself.



Massage Tip for October: Book weekly full body massages.

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Give a touching gift

Are you looking for the perfect holiday gift? A gift that your loved one will remember for a long time? A gift that will relax the body and bring a sense of peace to the soul? If you are thinking of a trip to the Bahamas, you're on the right track, but I have a suggestion that doesn't involve much travel. It's a simple gift that is sure to warm a cold winter day or night. Give the precious gift of massage.

There are numerous day spas or salons in the area offering holiday specials. That's one sure way to make someone's holiday special, but there are other ways as well. You can be the person to give the massage! Many audio and video tapes are on the market now to help you learn how to do this. Once you've finessed some moves by experimenting on a few willing sore necks or backs, create your own gift certificates that read: "15 minute neck and shoulder massage," "20 minute back rub," "30 minute foot massage," or for that extra special someone, "One hour Swedish Massage." If you are not Swedish, you can fill in the blank and make it what you want it to be. The point is, you don't necessarily have to travel to the Bahamas to feel like you've just been to the beach. Put on some calming ocean music, dim the lights, and bring some peace into this holiday season on a personal basis. One breath at a time. One person at a time. There's no rush. Take your time and enjoy the holidays!



Wishing each and every one of you a very special holiday season.

Yours in peace,

Joan



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Reiki Wisdom

Just as yoga is so diversified in styles and types, so is massage. Although when you go to receive a professional massage, you usually receive a Swedish massage. This type of massage consists of long fluid strokes to the body. It is very good for circulation and stress reduction. It contributes to the good care of your general health. However, there are more types of massage out there, and they are growing in number by the day. Soon, it may not be all that simple to determine the type of massage you want. In the next few issues of *yoyoga*, I will give an overview of some of the popular types of massage currently being offered in spas and health clubs. The list is quite expansive, but I will focus on the most popular.



Swedish massage takes the cake in popularity. In fact, in the book I wrote with Eve, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage," we focused on learning this type of massage through its specific strokes and nuances. However, not all massage is physically based. Reiki massage is a type of massage that is energetically based.

Reiki massage involves a "laying on of the hands," although some practitioners may not even directly touch your skin. The energetic principles in Reiki involve the chakra energy centers of the spine. The practitioner will focus on these energy centers and rest their hands either directly on your body at these center points, or a few inches over the body without actually physically touching your body. While they are resting their hands at these chakra points, they are focusing on meditative principles and meditation symbols to work as a channel to heal these energy centers.

Some people receiving this type of Reiki massage are amazed at the degree of warmth they feel in these energy centers after a Reiki session. This warmth is a beginning to the healing process. The more adept your practitioner is, the deeper this work can become. Certainly, this is the case in any type of massage, but because Reiki specifically works with the subtle aspects of energy, it is important that you work with a practitioner who is not only knowledgeable, but is also agreeable to your energy field. By this I mean, someone who you feel a connection to, and they to you, so that

you're combined energy fields are receptive to the experience. Many people have reported a deep degree of healing from this type of massage. Perhaps you will soon be experiencing the wonders of Reiki too!

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The music of massage

Let your breath guide your movements. When you give someone a massage, pay close attention to his or her breathing. Watch as they breathe. Let your breath synchronize with theirs. Become closer to the person you are touching by breathing in time with their breath. Then, let your movements do the same.

For example, as you slide your hand across their back, synchronize this movement with their exhale. Let the flow of your movement glide along as the exhalation does. Slow down your movement ever so slightly to help your partner slow his or her breath down ever so slightly. Yet, do not force your breathing pattern upon them. Become ever more sensitive to your partner's breathing pattern.

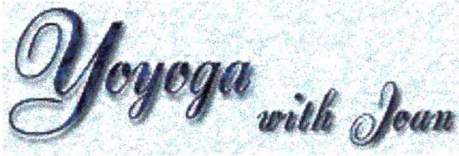


Listen closely. If it is impossible, or not healthy to breathe in the way your partner is breathing, harmonize your breath with theirs. See your relationship as a musical one. You are joining with them in this beautiful journey of massage. Let it be a time of new discoveries for both of you, of new and expanding melodies.

As massage becomes more and more clinically defined in the media and in schools, never forget that massage is an art. Learn the art of massage and keep your mind open as an artist does in ever evolving creations and abilities to open new visions of health and wonder.

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Thai Yoga/Massage

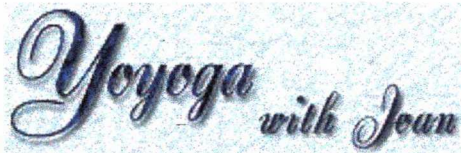
If you have never experienced this, and you love yoga and massage, just imagine combining the two! In Thai Massage, the massage therapist takes your body through various supported yoga poses. There is no effort on your part. The practitioner will hold your body in a comfortable way so that you can fully relax into poses. This type of massage, which is also referred to simply as Thai Yoga was first developed as a type of partner yoga in India and then was further expanded upon by Buddhist Monks. If you would like to read more, check out this website: www.thaiyogabodytherapy.com/ by Yosel Tarnofsky. He travels around the country teaching classes in this type of massage and can connect you to a practitioner in your area too.



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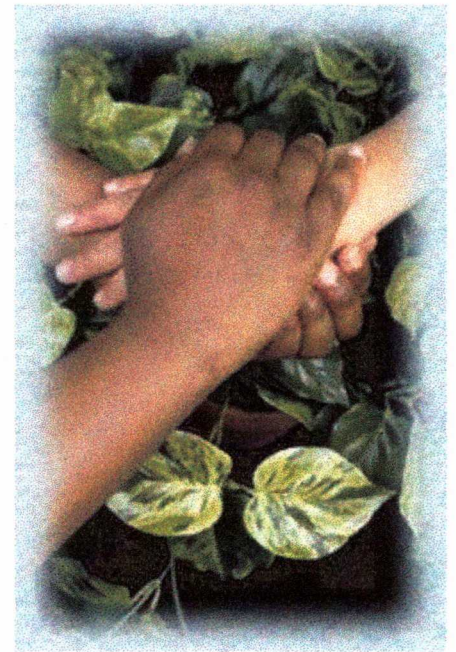
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SPORTS Massage, Go TEAM!

With summer here, sports are everywhere, so let's bring out Sports Massage!!! What is different about sports massage from other types of massage, you may ask? Well, first of all, it can easily be done without removing any clothes. The massage focuses on compression and range of motion movements. Range of Motion (or ROM) is where a joint is rotated to increase or open its ROM. In Sports massage, the longer muscles attaching to the joints are simultaneously compressed while doing ROM. For example, the person receiving the massage is lying face down and their knee is bent. The massage therapist takes the lower leg and slowly moves it around to loosen the muscles around the hip joint while simultaneously compressing the hamstring muscles (back of the thighs). It's an absolutely wonderful form of massage, and something all of us can learn to do for each other. Try it on the arm of a friend. Move their lower arm around with one of your hands and compress your other hand up and down their bicep (upper arm) muscles.



I volunteered as a massage therapist for a 10k race a few years ago. It was a lot of fun. Basically, people would plop onto my massage table and I'd move their joints all around while I compressed their muscles. The key is to not get carried away with the range of motion. Go slowly. The music was very loud at the sporting event I volunteered at. It was very easy to start moving the range of motion at a pace that might over extend the muscles for the person getting the massage. I had to constantly remind myself to slow down even though every one around me was running around hyped up! Although everyone around me was yelling, GO! GO! GO!, I had to say, "Breathe!" Sports massage is not necessarily meant to relax the person receiving the massage, it is meant to energize and increase the performance of the muscles.

Have a fun summer everyone! And, don't forget to get (and give) massages during it!



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How to move forward in massage

The stomach is the energetic area of action. As a population, the United States has larger stomachs than most of the world. This does not necessarily mean we are more active, it means we have more energy built up that is NOT being activated. Imagine what could be possible if we put all these extra large stomachs to use! Amazing possibilities! Do not let this energy in you go stagnant and build in toxins. Instead, the magnificent energy forming and building in you could be utilized to good use.

When you receive a massage, be sure to inform the therapist to not forget your stomach. Many therapists overlook the stomach, considering it an extra sensitive area. Yes, it is! And one that needs to be revved up! You can do this yourself too. Lie on your back and with the palm of your hand use round circular movements in a clockwise directions around your abdominal area. Gradually increase the pressure of this circular massage. Get this mass energy moving. Get up! We need your good energy activated!

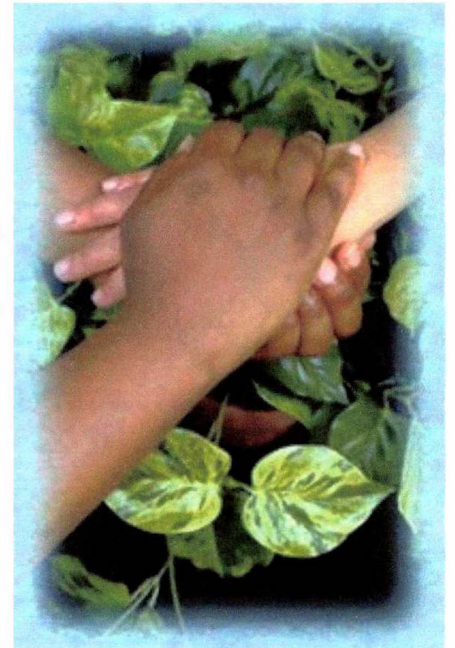


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Let's Roll into 2006, on our backs!

Find a willing partner and try this skin roll down their back. Start near their shoulder and using both your hands pull up some skin between your thumbs and forefingers. This should not hurt them. You are just pulling up on the soft tissues of their back. Keep your thumbs firmly planted at the base of their skin that is lifted and then walk your fingers down the back, rolling the skin along after your fingers. It's like a skin wave going down their back. It will feel great to them, and it is a fun massage technique to do too!



HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!

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Open your sinuses for the new year.

As this is the season for colds, try this simple pressure point technique to release sinus congestion. Lie on your back and place your index fingers on the outside of your nostrils, near your cheek bones. Hold here and apply pressure. Watch as the sinuses drain.

A Neti Pot is also a useful tool for those of us with nasal congestion. You can buy a neti pot in most health food stores. It is a pot with a long spout that is applied to one nostril at a time. The pot is filled with warm saline solution. Leaning over a sink, the saline solution is poured into one nostril and the water comes out the other nostril. The head needs to be tilted just right to assure that the water comes out, otherwise the water will just stop. Don't worry, it won't go into your brain! If it does not come out the other nostril, you will not be able to empty the pot. Using a Neti Pot is a refreshing way to clear the path for clear breathing.



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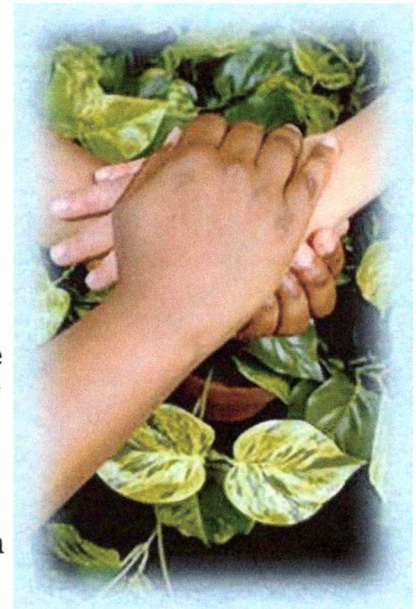
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Pregnancy Massage.

If you're looking for a gift to give a pregnant woman, I think a wonderful gift is a prenatal massage. As I write this tip, I am four days away from my due date. Throughout my pregnancy I've received regular massages. They need not be long. Mine were often 30 minutes in length. The nurturing movements of massage are helpful for baby and mom. They sure have helped me! What makes prenatal massage different from a standard Swedish massage is the positioning of the mother. The massage is given to the mother lying on her side. Pillows are strategically placed alongside the mother to make her position as comfortable as possible. As the baby grows, more pillows are often needed. An experienced prenatal massage therapist will help you determine the right amount of pillows to use. Although this side-lying pillow technique is quite helpful for a pregnant woman, it can also be quite helpful to those suffering from sciatica or other painful conditions.



An experienced massage therapist also knows the areas of the body where a pregnant woman tends to particularly ache - the upper and lower back, the lower legs and feet, and the sciatica. For me, every week I've brought to the table a different requested area of focus. As my baby moved, so did my aches! Although there is tremendous joy in carrying a new life, a massage is certainly worth every penny in making upcoming mom and baby more relaxed.

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