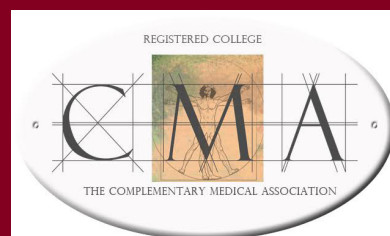


Abhyanga - Deep Relaxation Massage *Training Manual*



Registered with the Complementary Medical Association



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgments are due to my fantastic teacher Sunita Passi of **www.tri-dosha.co.uk** whose Ayurvedic Massage Therapy course I attended in 2013 and whose help and advice I sought in the development of this training course.

As well as running Ayurvedic massage training courses and developing her own line of Ayurvedic massage oils, Sunita finds time to host her own radio show about Ayurveda, be a judge at the National Massage Championships, as well as doing a TED talk on Ayurveda. As an advocate for Ayurveda she is an inspiration and I am eternally grateful for her support over the years.

Thanks are also due to: Clara Gomez and Gerry Hagemeyer for letting me use them as a models for this manual.

THE COMPLEMENTARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Thai-vedic Massage School has been recognised as a Centre of Excellence by The Complementary Medical Association (The CMA). This means that we hold full Training School Membership of The CMA which demonstrates our commitment to the very highest standards of excellence.

When you successfully complete this course, you will be eligible to apply for Full Membership of The CMA - the world's largest and most highly respected professional membership association.

The CMA ensures that the public has access to a Professional Register of elite practitioners and outstanding training schools, that doctors and other healthcare professionals know that they can safely refer their patients to.

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NOTES:

1) INTRODUCTION

ABHYANGA - DEEP RELAXATION MASSAGE

Originating from India, Abhyanga massage is a relaxing and stress relieving massage. Hot organic coconut oil is applied to the back. The therapist uses fast, rhythmic massage strokes, with their palms, thumbs and forearms along the erector spinae, rhomboids and trapezius muscles of the back and shoulders. After massaging each side of the back its then the turn of your arms to get some attention.



Beginning with circular massage strokes with the therapists fingers; then wringing motions with both hands; and long squeezing strokes from the wrist to the shoulder and back. With the arm then raised above the head the therapist continues with sweeping palm strokes from the wrist to the lower back, followed by strong strokes down the erector spinae muscle with the forearm.

After massaging both sides of the back and both arms, exfoliating calamus powder is applied to the back and arms. Sweeping strokes up the back and down the arms, are followed by a vigorous back scrub, then deeply relaxing figure of eight strokes. The back massage is completed with the application of a hot wet towel to the back and shoulders. Thai massage palming and squeezing techniques of the erector spinae muscles are used through the hot towel, as well as rhythmic manipulation of the spine.

Another hot towel is used to cleanse the feet before more hot oil is applied to the legs. Circular strokes with the therapists knuckles, as well as wringing and squeezing techniques are used on the IT band, quadriceps, hamstrings and calf muscles of both legs. Thai style yogic stretches of the ankle, knee and hip joints help to loosen up any stiffness in your joints.

The massage continues with a stomach and chest massage (men only for chest massag), and ends with a face, head, neck and shoulder massage using scented oils.

Benefits of deep tissue massage for the receiver

- Relieves muscular pains and stiffness in the joints
- Good for breaking down knots in the muscles
- Stimulates blood and lymph circulation
- Relieves stress
- Brings the receiver into a state of deep relaxation

Contra-indications

- **Cancer:** clients undergoing chemotherapy should not receive massages
- **Muscular inflammation,** or tendinitis. Avoid the affected areas
- **Pregnancy:** after 3 weeks deep tissue massage is not suitable, except on the legs and arms. After the third trimester clients should receive only pregnancy massages
- For any of the following conditions, avoid the whole **stomach** area or go very softly: gastritis (inflammation of the stomach lining), stomach ulcer, stomach or intestinal cancer, hepatitis (inflammation of the liver caused by viral infection), pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas), appendicitis, or diarrhoea.
- **Skeletal disorders.** Osteomyelitis (infection of the bone leading to painful, weak and damaged tissue). Avoid massaging clients with this condition. Osteomalacia (loss of calcium and phosphorous due to lack of vitamin D causing weak bones) and Osteoporosis (brittle bone disease) use caution and work carefully on and around joints.
- **Infectious diseases:** including the common cold. Avoid massing the person until they are fully recovered. *If you catch their cold you could have to take several days off work!*
- **Bacterial or fungal infections.** Avoid the infected area.
- **Heart related disorders.** Massage only with their doctor's consent.
- **Recent surgery** (within the last 12 months). Avoid the area of surgery.

Before your client arrives

Make sure you have:

- prepared **iced water, flavoured with fruit**
- wet your **hand towels**, with hot water, and placed them in the towel warmer
- placed a **clean sheet** and **face cradle cover** on your table and cradle, (and in autumn, winter and spring, turned on your electric blanket)
- placed your **towel** to warm on the radiator, or folded your **sarong**
- topped up your bowls with **sesame oil** and scented **oil for the face massage**
- lit your **essential oil burner, incense** and **candles**.

Questions to ask your client

Some massage schools will advise you to give clients a long questionnaire with questions about your clients illnesses, injuries, medications they are taking etc. However this can take up valuable time and most clients arrive stressed or tired and just want to get on with the massage as soon as possible... they have come to you to relax not to fill out forms! The questions /requests below should be enough to prompt them to tell you anything important and ensure that you are not disturbed during the massage.

- **Would you like some water?** Have some iced water infused with fresh fruit (e.g. lemon, lime, strawberry) ready for them when they arrive
- **Do you have any particular aches or pains you would like me to work on today?** Usually clients will mention one or two areas that they would like you to focus on (more often than not their shoulders or lower back). This information allows you to tailor the massage to their needs by spending more time on those areas.
- **Do you have any illness or injuries I should be aware of?** If there are any contra-indications, either advise against the massage or observe caution as appropriate
- **Do you need to use the bathroom before we start?**

- **Would you like me to avoid getting oil in your hair today?** I mainly ask this question to female clients, but use your judgement: men can have long hair or may use styling products they don't want disturbed.
- **Please turn off your mobile phone or put it on silent.** Most people are happy to do this, but sometimes a doctor on call or a young mother who has told her babysitter to call in case of emergency, will ask to leave it turned on. Don't forget to put your phone on 'Do Not Disturb' mode (if you are playing music from it) or turn it off, too.
- **Please remove any jewelry** (e.g. bracelets, necklaces, dangly ear-rings or watches)

2) PRACTITIONER STANCES, POSTURE AND SELF CARE

To avoid developing painful lower back or shoulder pains, its extremely important to ensure your stance and posture while giving the massage is correct.

Common mistakes for massage practitioners

- **Bending the back.** This can result in a sore back for the practitioner. To get lower down when working on a client, try to bend your knees, so that you are in a lunge or squat position.
- **Bending the arms.** This results in overuse of the arm muscles. Instead you should always lock the elbow when applying downward pressure, so that you are using your bodyweight rather than your muscles.
- **Tilting the head downwards.** It natural to want to look at what you are doing, but once you have learned the massage techniques you should be able to massage and perform stretches without having to look down which can result in neck pains.

The height of your table is important so make sure that it is just the right height to be able to work on the receiver's back with your arms straight. Clients come in all shapes and sizes so dont be afraid to lower your table if a very large client arrives as you could injure yourself if you try to massage them and dont have enough space to be able to apply the deep pressure the massage requires... and they wont get a satisfactory massage either!

Self care

Strategies you can employ to minimise strain on your shoulders and lower back while giving the massage include:

- Place the arm you are not using behind your back. This will help you to avoid hunching foward and straining your shoulders.
- Take every opportunity to stretch: if you are massaging the neck with one hand only, stretch into a back bend with the other arm.

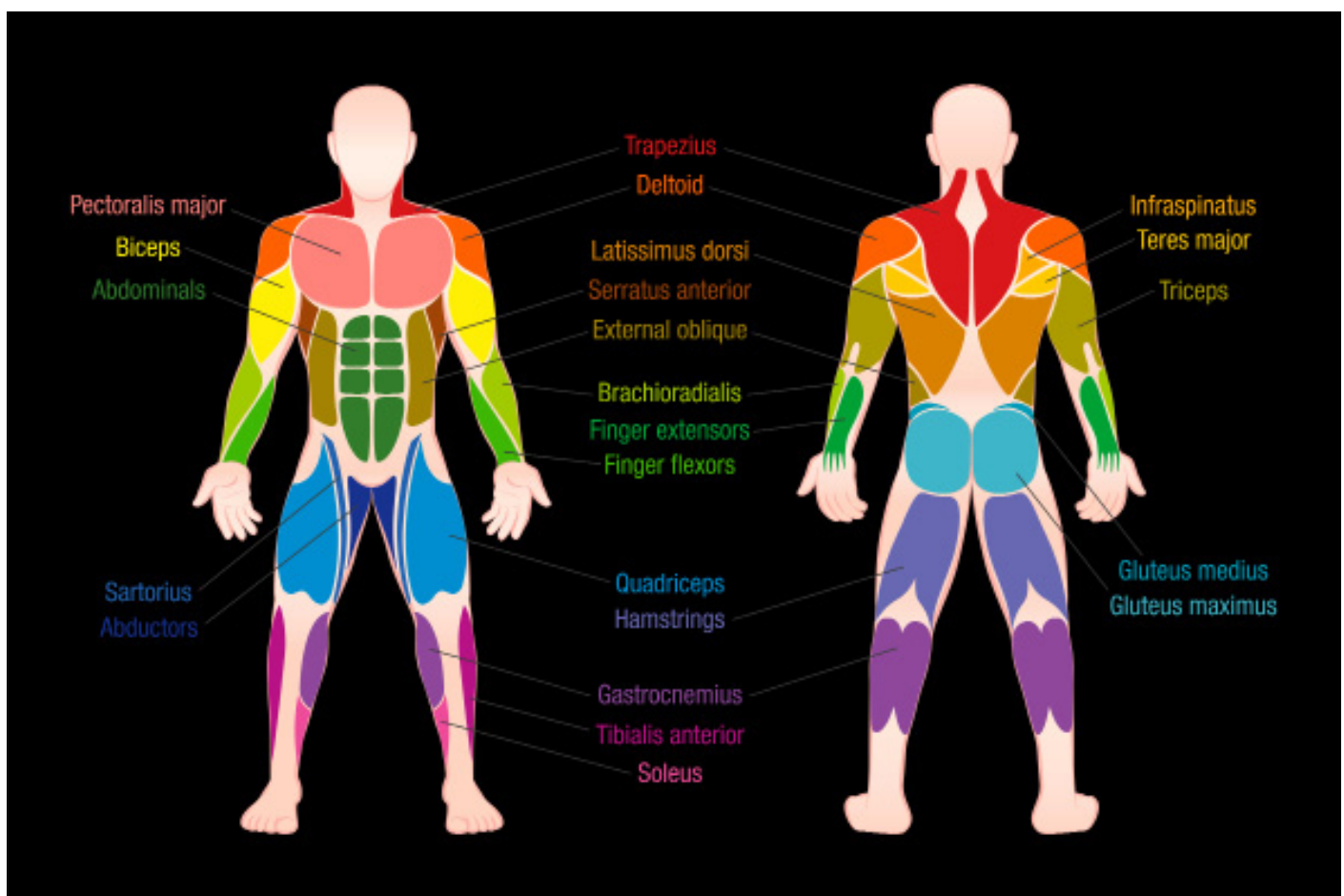
Yoga, Qi Gong, Pilates..

It's important to find a way of looking after your body to compensate for the strain put on your back and shoulders while giving massages. You may prefer yoga, qi gong or pilates.

Many of your clients will be interested in or already practicing yoga and may expect you to be knowledgeable about yoga too. You might want to try out your local yoga classes so you can recommend one to your clients.

Once you have learned some stretches or self massage techniques, be sure to use the time while you are waiting for your client to get dressed to stretch your muscles after you have completed each massage.

You can also advise clients to use the same stretches or some self massage techniques to help with their own aches and pains.



3) PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

1. Over the sarong or towel: place hands on upper and lower back. Ask client to take 3 deep breaths, pressing down with each breath



Notes:

2. Apply oil, the slide hand across lower back x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

3. Palm strokes up to and including shoulder, slide back down x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

4. Thumb strokes up back, on contralateral side



Notes:

Muscles worked?

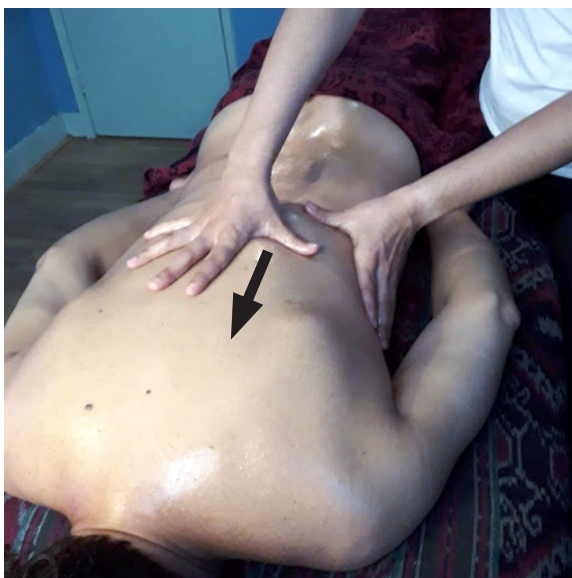
5. Thumb strokes on traps, repeat 4. & 5. x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

6. Thumb strokes up back on ipsilateral side

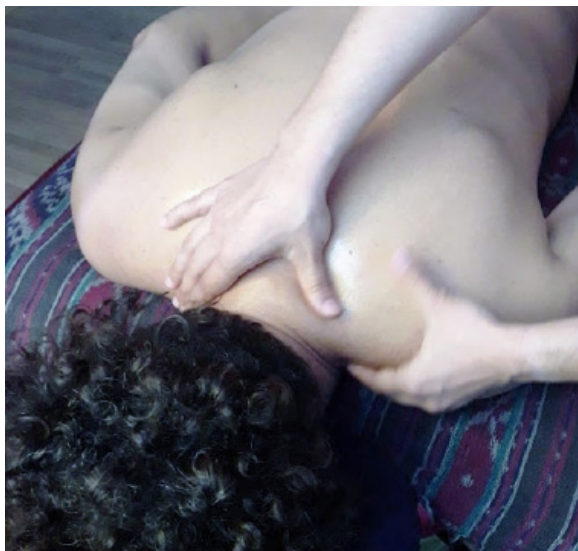


Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

7. Thumb strokes on ipsilateral traps.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

8. Massage neck x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

9. Head massage x6. Then slide down back. Repeat (6. 7. 8. & 9.) x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

10. Palm circles up back, contralateral side



Notes:

Muscles worked?

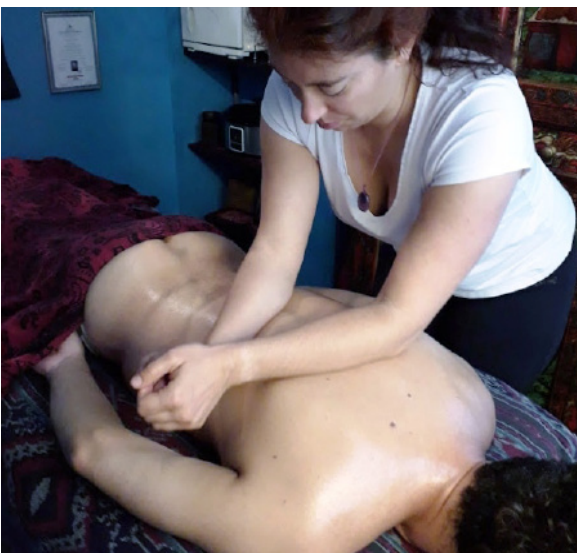
11. Pull traps upwards. Then palm circles back down to the glutes. Repeat 10. & 11 x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

12. Forearm circles up and down contralateral side of back. Repeat x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

13. Forearm circles up and down ipsilateral side of back. Repeat x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

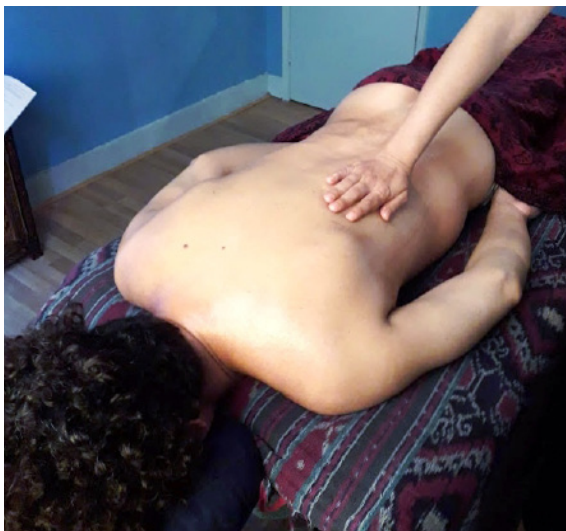
14. Slide forearms apart from centre, ipsilateral side. Repeat x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

15. Looping single palm stroke, ipsilateral side. Repeat x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

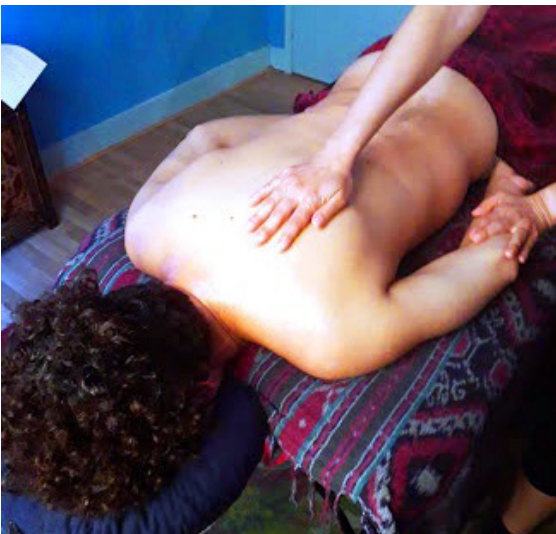
16. [Apply oil to arm and left side of back]. Looping single palm slide up back, down arm, and back. Repeat x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

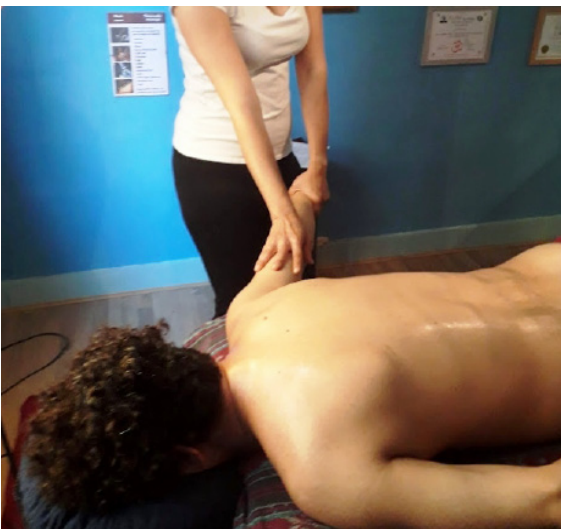
17. Alternate palm strokes up back and down arm. Repeat x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

18. Hold arm out to the side and spread oil with looping effleurage x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

19. Finger circles on outer arm, traps and neck. Then more circles back down outer arm, then up and down inner arm x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

20. Wring arm with both hands, wrist to shoulder and back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

21. Squeeze arm between thumb and fingers from wrist to shoulder and back x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

22. Resting clients arm on your forearm, with their hand grasping your inner elbow, slide your palm down the arm to the lower back and back up the side of the body x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

23. Forearm slides down to the lower back, palm stroke up side x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

24. Palm presses on upper arm and forearm,



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

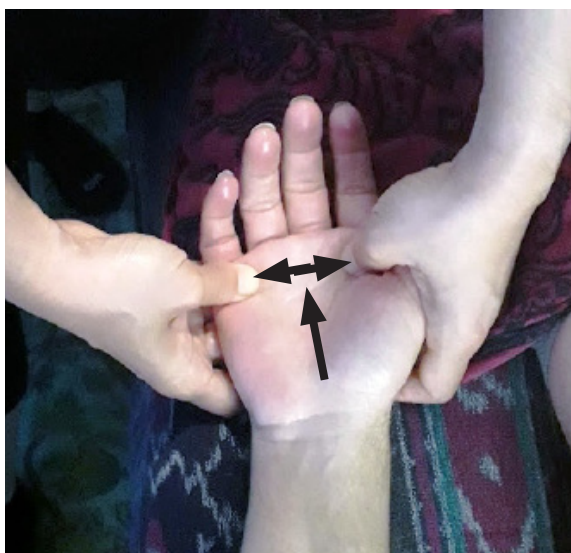
25. Windscreen wiper thumb strokes at top of palm x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

26. T shaped thumb strokes on palm x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

27. Thumb circles on palm x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

28. Finger massage x6 on each finger



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Apply more oil and repeat 2-28 from the other side of the body

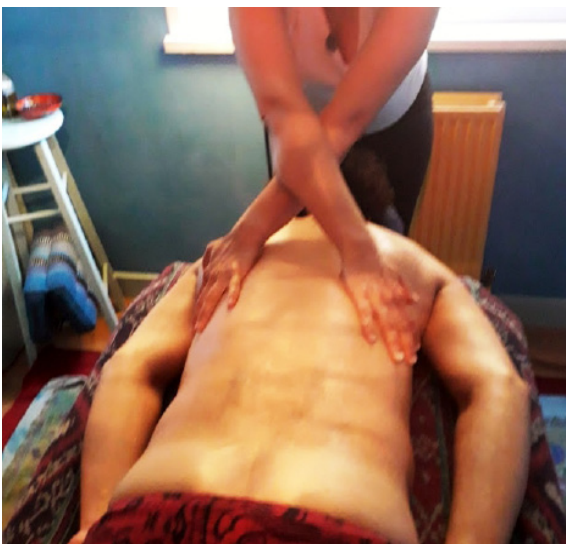
29. Apply more oil & powder. Stand at head, effleurage back & arms



Notes:

Muscles worked?

30. Wring back standing above the head



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

31. Wring whole back, standing at side: bottom to top and back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

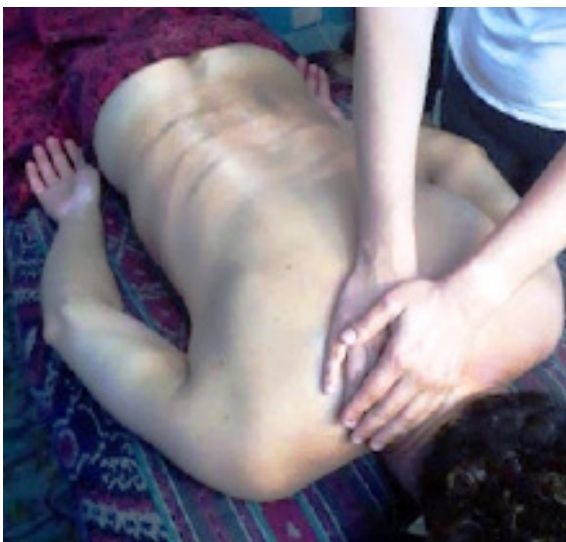
32. Standing at side swim over left iliac crest x9



Notes:

Muscles worked?

33. Figure of 8 diagonals from hip to opposite shoulder x6 each, both sides



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

34. Whole back figure of 8 strokes x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

35. Contralateral side of back: figure of 8 strokes x6. Then repeat figure of 8 strokes on ipsilateral side x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

36. Figure of 8 strokes around shoulders from ipsilateral side x9



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

37. Figure of 8 strokes around shoulders from above head x9. Then move around to other side and repeat figure of 8 shoulder strokes x9

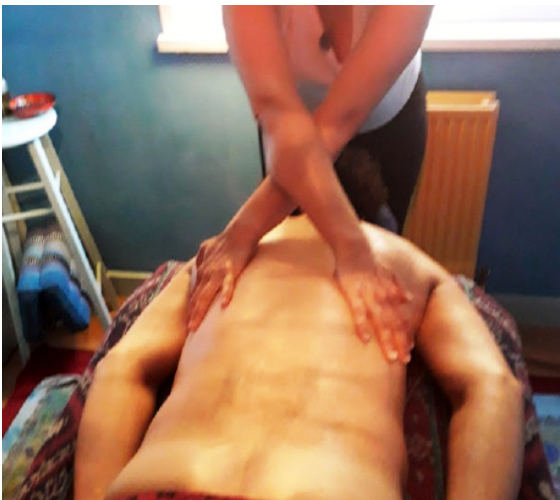


Notes:

Muscles worked?

Repeat 33 then 32 from the side you are now on, the contralateral side

38. Wring back standing above the head x1 then effleurage x2



Notes:

Muscles worked?

39. Massage shoulders, erector muscles & upper glutes with fingers



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

40. Massage shoulders, erector muscles & upper glutes with thumbs.
(For a 90/120 minute massage add muscle twanging and scapula circles)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

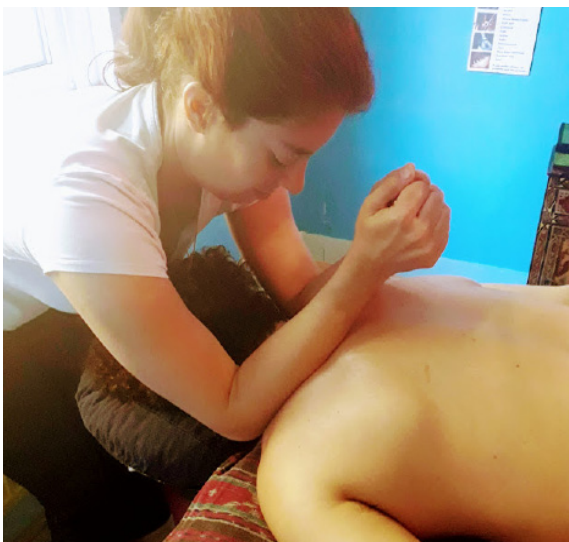
41. Massage shoulders, erector muscles & upper glutes with knuckles



Notes:

Muscles worked?

42. Massage shoulders, erector muscles & upper glutes with forearms



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

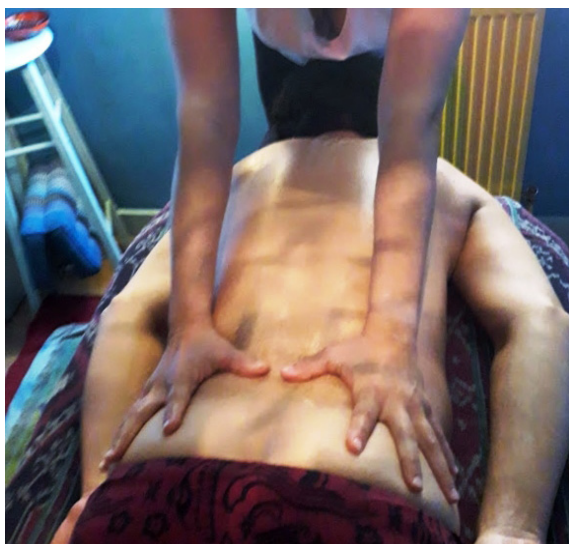
43. Massage traps and rhomboids with elbows x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

44. Effleurage x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

45. Effleurage from the other direction x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

46. Back slapping x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

47. Feather whole back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

48. Apply hot towel, massage neck & shoulders through the towel



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK, SHOULDERS AND ARMS

49. Palming, pinching back through the towel (Thai techniques)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

50. Manipulate the spine (Thai techniques - "The Snake")



Notes:

Muscles worked?

51. Walk up the back (Thai techniques - "The Catwalk"). Then remove towel slowly dragging it upwards towards the head



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Cover back with sarong, or towel. Feather whole body, top to toes.

4) CLIENT COMFORT AND HYGIENE

It's tempting when you start your massage business to buy less expensive equipment and products. However this is a false economy: cheap massage tables break, inexpensive massage oils aren't as aromatic, cheap towels will need replacing sooner. Remember all your equipment and products are a tax deductible expense, so while you might save money, you may end up having to pay the money you save to the taxman!

And if you use good quality towels and oils, your clients will notice that no expense has been spared and the experience will feel more comfortable and luxurious.. And they will keep coming back!

Equipment and products needed

- **Massage table.** Invest in a good quality massage table with metal legs (my first massage table's wooden legs buckled under the weight of a particularly heavy client!). Ensure there is space at both ends to sit with your knees under the table, for when you are massaging the head (or if you train in foot massage, the feet). If you are planning on offering pregnancy massage consider getting a table with an adjustable back rest so that you can offer leg and foot massages to pregnant clients who find it difficult to lie on their back.



- **Massage oils.** Traditionally this massage is performed using unrefined, pungent, cold pressed sesame oil: this is difficult to find in the UK. Most sesame oil you can find will be fragrance free. For the authentic experience you can find certified organic cold pressed sesame seed oil, with its fabulous fragrance intact, at www.bayhousearomatics.com.

Alternatively you can use a fragrant organic coconut oil, You can use a scented oil for massaging the face and neck.

My favourites are Neal's Yard's Neroli and Mandarin 'Mother's Massage Oil' (www.nealsyardremedies.com) and iMantara's Jasmine massage oils (www.thaisquarespa.com/imantara).



- **Oil Warmer.** There are various methods for heating your oil: I use a metal turkish coffee pot, with a wooden handle over a tealight in a metal food warmer.
- **Sarongs.** As long as the room is adequately heated (to around 24 degrees C) you can use sarongs, instead of towels to cover your clients. This will save you £££ in laundry bills, as sarongs are much easier to launder, You can use cotton patterned sarongs (www.etsy.com is good place to find these). To make the sarongs feel extra cosy you can put them on the radiator before your clients arrive so that they are warm when your clients get under them. You will still need some large bath towels, to cover them over the sarong in case a client is cold, .
- As well as bath towels you'll need some small **hand towels** to use as: hot towels on the back and feet; to cover your clients eyes while in supine position; and to wrap their feet, to keep them warm.
- **Sheets.** You can use whatever sheets you like but if you want to create an Indian ambience, you can use Indian pattered bedsheets (available on www.amazon.co.uk or www.etsy.com)
- **Face cradle covers** available from the same sites.
- **Cushions and bolster.** You'll need some square cushions to; put under your client's head when they are in supine position; and occasionally clients with breast implants will need a cushion under their stomach. A bolster is useful to place under clients ankles in prone position and under their knees in supine position if they are uncomfortable lying with their legs flat on the table.

- **Towel warmer.** A towel warming cabinet for heating the small, wet hand towels with which to wash the feet and use on the back.
- **Small bowls** for your massage oil. Polished coconut shells work well for this purpose.



- **Rose water and cotton eyepads** to place on your clients eyes in supine position. You can also use Orangeflower or Jasmine water.
- **A folding chair or stool** to sit on while giving the head/face massage. A chair is also necessary if you plan to offer Indian Head massages.
- **An electric blanket** for your massage table to keep your

clients toasty and warm during the cold winter months.

- **An electric room heater** to heat your massage room quickly if your heating hasn't heated the room quickly enough in winter.
- **Hand warmers.** Another nice touch if you notice that your clients hands are cold (however warm your room is, they often come in from the cold with ice cold hands).
- Its a good idea to get a **digital thermometer** so you can monitor the temperature and humidity of your room - I try to keep mine above 24 degrees.
- **An electric fan** for the few weeks of the year when the temperature rises above 25 degrees
- **A box of tissues** for when clients need to blow their nose, or wipe away excess massage oil.
- **Glasses** for proving your clients with a drink of iced, fruit infused water on arrival.
- **A card machine** so that you can take card payments. I use Sum Up who charge 1.85% per transaction, but cheaper deals may be available.

NOTES:

5) PRACTICAL: BACK OF THE LEGS AND FEET

52. Apply hot towel to feet. Massage with palms, knuckles & thumbs



Notes:

Muscles worked?

53. Apply oil. Palm circles on foot x6 (repeat x3 between each of the following techniques)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

54. Effleurage whole leg x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK OF THE LEGS AND FEET

55. Knuckle circles - slide up, circles down outside leg



Notes:

Muscles worked?

56. Knuckle circles - slide up, circles down back of leg



Notes:

Muscles worked?

57. Knuckle circles - slide up, circles down inside leg



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK OF THE LEGS AND FEET

58. Wringing leg - from ankle to buttock and back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

59. Squeezing leg - from ankle to buttock and back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

60. Shake leg - from ankle to buttock and back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK OF THE LEGS AND FEET

Ask client to take some deep breaths, then:

61. Yogic stretches – flex knee - heel to buttock



Notes:

Muscles worked?

62. Yogic stretches – flex knee - heel to palm



Notes:

Muscles worked?

63. Yogic stretches - quad stretch: lift knee.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: BACK OF THE LEGS AND FEET

64. Thumb circles down calf x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

65. Effleurage, lower leg x3, thigh x3, whole leg x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

66. Feather lower leg x3, upper leg x3, whole leg x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Repeat 53-66 on other leg

67. Full body sweeps:

- *Fold upper and lower thirds of the sarong over buttocks then roll up into tube*
- **X shaped sweeps:**
 - *Start at the ipsilateral foot with palm circles on the sole*
 - *Sweep up leg with both palms*
 - *Sweep diagonally across the back to the contralateral shoulder*
 - *Palm down arm to the hand & back, repeat on ipsilateral arm*
 - *Sweep diagonally across the back to the contralateral hip*
 - *Sweep down leg with both palms, then palm circles on the sole*
 - *Repeat sequence in reverse*
- **Horse shoe sweeps**
 - *Start at the ipsilateral foot with palm circles on the sole*
 - *Sweep from ipsilateral foot to upper back, across shoulders and down to contralateral foot, then palm circles on the sole*
 - *Repeat in reverse*
 - *Repeat sequence, sweeping across the mid back*
 - *Repeat sequence, sweeping across the lower back*
- **Full body feathering**
 - *Feather arms*
 - *Feather back and both legs*
- **Unroll the sarong and cover the client**
- **Prepare Rosewater eyepads and roll up hand towel**
- **Say to the client** *"OK Jane, I'm going to lift the towel & look away, if you could turn over, and move down the table, so that your head is on the table please"*
- **Hold sarong up so they can see that you can't see. After they have turned over replace the sarong.**
- **Put pads & towel on their eyes and a cushion under their head**

6) STARTING A MASSAGE BUSINESS

Of all the - sixteen - massage courses I've attended, not one has spent more than a few minutes on the topic of how to run a massage business. So in this course I want to give us sufficient time to discuss what goes into setting up and running a successful massage business. What follows is not meant to be a comprehensive 'how to' guide, nor the only way to do it, but more of a starting point for our discussions on the course.

Marketing

- **Website.** A good website should list your treatments and prices on the homepage, have an online booking system, your contact details, headshot, opening hours and details of your cancellation policy visible at the top of the page. Treatments should be briefly described so that clients can see which massage is good for relaxation, and which are more therapeutic treatments. If you have any special offers there should be a brief description of the offers on the homepage with a link to a page with more details. There should be an online contact form, and maybe 'subscribe to our newsletter' and 'read our latest newsletter' links. It should be colourful and illustrated with photos of the treatments you offer. Text should be concise - no one wants to read long, dense paragraphs of text when they are just trying to book a massage.
- Other pages can: describe your treatments in more detail; list your terms and conditions; give directions and a map. You can have: a page with biographical details about yourself and how you got interested in massage; a page with your recent reviews; and another with details of how your clients can purchase gift vouchers
- Unless you are a web designer by trade, don't attempt to make your own website. For a few hundred pounds you can pay a company to make you a professional website. I used **www.therapywebgenie.uk** who have a range of designs to choose from, or you can do as I did and ask them to copy the design of a particular website that you like.
- **Booking system.** There are several booking systems out there. I use **www.treatwell.co.uk** which offers a booking widget that can be added to your website, and you will also have a listing on their website. If they bring you new clients through their website they will charge you

a 35% commission for bringing you the new client, which seems high but after that they only charge a 2% commission for repeat bookings. Bookings made via the booking widget on your website or bookings you take on the phone or by email are not subject to commission. You can easily view all your appointments in their app, and create and your own treatment menu for clients to view on your website & Treatwell's. They even send your clients automated emails prompting them to re-book!

- **Leaflets.** One of the best ways to advertise your business is to design and distribute leaflets to local cafes, shops or door to door. Like your website homepage they should be colourful and eye-catching, with all the information you have on your website homepage, with your special offers prominent. If you have some graphic design skills you can design them yourself, if not pay a professional (remember their fee will be tax deductible). There are many printing companies available but I have found **www.saxoprint.co.uk** to be reasonably prices and reliable.



- **Sandwich board.** If your massage practice is near a busy high street (and if it isn't you should consider moving close to one) a sandwich board is an excellent way of increasing your visibility. I have found a sandwich board with an A1 sized poster that can be removed and replaced when you increase your prices (which you should do annually), with a leaflet dispenser attached, will get you far more new customers

than facebook and twitter combined. You can find sandwich boards at **www.ukpos.com**. Make sure you buy a sturdy one, not the cheapest flimsiest one. You'll need a cable lock to lock it to a signpost, and don't forget to bring it inside every evening to prevent it being damaged by high winds, heavy rain or vandals.

- **Newsletter.** After you've been up and running for a few months you should have collected enough email addresses (if you use Treatwell, they are all stored online for you) to be able to send an email newsletter to your clients. Don't beat yourself up about doing this every month or every two months. Only do it when you have something interesting to say: perhaps you have a new special offer, a new therapy you have trained in and are ready to offer to your clients, or you want to promote your gift vouchers ahead of Christmas or Valentines Day. There is a great website that you can store your clients' email addresses and easily design and send email newsletters called **www.mailchimp.com**
- **Google Maps listing.** Its important to ensure your Google Maps listing is accurate so that clients can find you easily. Clients can also leave reviews here, and the more reviews you have the more likely it is that people finding you on Google Maps will contact you. Make sure your listing has plenty of photos. You should also consider paying Google to do a 360 degree tour of your practice so that prospective clients can look around inside your massage room(s).
- **Facebook groups, Instagram and Twitter** are useful for sharing your newsletter, but I've found other marketing methods to be more effective.
- **Local community websites** are another way to reach your target local audience. You can usually post for free on this kind of website, which will have a section for local business to advertise their services

Finance

Tax returns. Yes everybody hates doing it but unfortunately, like laundry, its a big, time-consuming part of the job. For your tax return you will need to keep all your receipts (paper and emailed) and then record them on an Excel spreadsheet. Its best to try to do this once a month otherwise you will end up with a huge pile of receipts at the end of the financial year and you'll have to take a few days off just to do your accounts.



If you use a booking system such as Treatwell, all your income will be recorded in the invoices they send you, and in online sales reports. But to work out your net income (your gross income minus your expenses) you'll need to have an accurate record of everything you spend. Don't forget to include things like council tax, electricity, gas, telephone and internet bills (or a reasonable percentage of these if you are working from home) and the commission Treatwell (or other booking system) charges for bringing you new or repeat clients.

You can include costs of training courses, and travel, accommodation and meals eaten while you are attending training courses: so this is your chance to travel the world and learn different modalities available in other countries. Clients love that you have 'gone to the source' for your training. I chose to specialise in Thai and Ayurvedic massages, but have also been to Bali to learn Balinese Bamboo massage and Hot Stone massage. You may wish to travel to Hawaii to learn Lomi Lomi or Japan to learn Shiatsu. The world is your oyster!

You can also claim massages you receive for yourself, as it counts as self-care or self maintenance. As do any yoga, pilates, tai-chi or qi gong classes you might attend to keep yourself in shape. Knowing what is and isn't allowable as a business expense is a bit of a minefield. You can find various lists of what's allowable online, but I've found it's best to use your common sense and only include things that you can defend if challenged (which is extremely unlikely anyway).

Insurance. You'll need public liability insurance to protect yourself in case a client accuses you of injuring them, and your local council may require you to have it to operate as a business.

If you have already completed a 100 hours course in massage therapy you can join **the-cma.co.uk** and get insurance from their partner Balens Insurance. Contact Balens by email: **info@balens.co.uk** and ask for information on the CMA insurance scheme.

If you haven't completed a 100 hours course, you can still get insurance, after completing this course, from **www.salongold.co.uk/ayurveda-insurance**, who will ask on their online application if you are a member of a professional association (you'll need to join the CMA, CThA or the FHT) and whether you have completed a training course that has been recognised by a relevant professional association.

Licences. Whether you need a licence or not will depend on whether your council requires it. If they do you still might not need one if your professional association has negotiated an exemption on your behalf. In practice, licences are only necessary if they are enforced. In theory you need a licence for sandwich boards too, but I discovered that the licence in Southwark is £70 and the fine for not having one... is £70. Needless to say I have never been asked for a licence - either to operate as a therapist or for my sandwich board - by anyone. But it may be wise to check with other therapists in your area, and with local shopkeepers about your sandwich board, as some councils may be better at enforcing licences than mine.

Dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour

Unfortunately, if you are going to be running a massage business, you are going to have to come up with a way of dealing with requests for 'extra services'. Some of the red flags to look out for, either when they call to book an appointment or during the massage, are:

- **If they call late at night.** I make it a rule to not answer my phone after 9pm at night. Even if you are desperate to fill some empty appointments the next day, its better to reply by text message, if at all.

If they ask if you have a female therapist. The gender of the therapist shouldn't matter and if it's a man asking this question its usually because he wants something extra. If its a woman asking, it may be because her religion prevents her from being massaged by a man or just that she feels uncomfortable being massaged by a man.

- **If they ask if you provide extra services.** I usually just reply '*No we dont, I think you have the wrong place*' and put the phone down.
- **If they say they are not wearing any underwear,** when you ask them to undress down to their pants. Have some disposable underwear to give them in case they try this. It may be completely innocent, but it may not. I've had some clients say they are used to receiving massages in Asia where they were asked to strip off completely... but to be safe I prefer clients to keep their underwear on!
- **If they start adjusting themselves periodically under the sheet/towel.** This doesnt happen often, but if you are massaging near their groin, move somewhere else!
- **If they start touching themselves inappropriately.** Thankfully this has never happened to me, but I gather it happens much more regularly for female therapists. If it does happen its good to be prepared with something professional to say to them. For example you could say *"I'm afraid that what you are doing is not permitted here, so I'm going to have to end the massage now. I'll leave you to get dressed"*.

7) PRACTICAL: FRONT OF THE LEGS

68. Palm circles on foot x6 (repeat between each technique)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

69. Effleurage whole leg x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

70. Knuckle circles - outer, top of and inner leg. *On top of the leg: circle knee with palm clockwise x3 & anti-clockwise x3, palm shin x3*



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: FRONT OF THE LEGS

71. Wringing front of leg - from ankle to groin and back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

72. Squeezing leg - from ankle to groin and back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

73. Shake leg - from ankle to groin and back x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: FRONT OF THE LEGS

74. Hold ankle and shake from side to side to rotate the hip joint



Notes:

Muscles worked?

75. Press knee to chest (ensuring decorum), to stretch glutes



Notes:

Muscles worked?

76. Lift foot to stretch hamstrings and massage with forearm x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: FRONT OF THE LEGS

Place foot on the table, outside contralateral knee

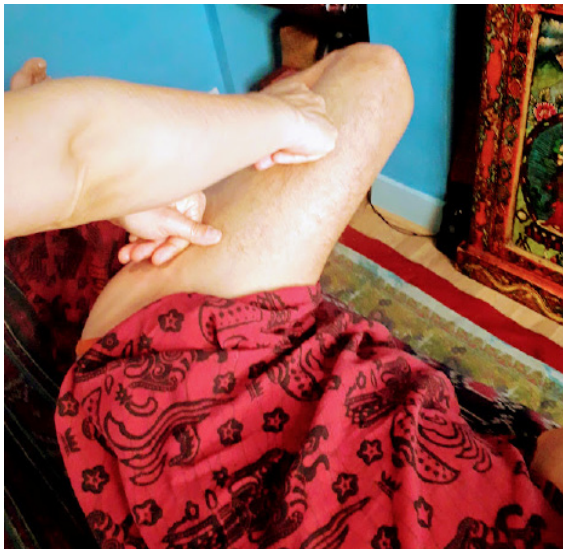
77. Long strokes on IT band with alternate palms



Notes:

Muscles worked?

78. Massage IT band with alternate fists, then with forearms



Notes:

Muscles worked?

79. Press downwards below knee & on shoulder for spinal twist



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: FRONT OF THE LEGS

80. Effleurage lower leg x3 thigh x3 whole leg x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

81. Massage ankles with finger tips



Notes:

Muscles worked?

82. Massage between metatarsals, with thumbs x3 each



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: FRONT OF THE LEGS

83. Pull toes



Notes:

Muscles worked?

84. Feather leg, groin to toes x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Replace sarong the repeat 68-84 on other leg.

8) MASSAGE ROOM AMBIENCE



Want your clients to keep coming back? If you're going to be successful, it's not enough to be brilliant at delivering a consistently fantastic, therapeutic and relaxing massage. You also have to create a welcoming and luxurious ambience to make your clients feel instantly relaxed as soon as they walk through the door. That's not just about making your entrance hall and massage room *look* good, it also has to *smell* amazing and *sound* relaxing. You want to give your clients a multi-sensory experience that will allow them to escape their problems and leave their stress outside the door.

- **Incense and essential oil burner.** Burning your favourite incense (my favourites are Tulasi brand Frangipani or Sandalwood incense, available on www.amazon.co.uk) is not only a great way to make your entrance hall smell fabulous. If you work from home like I do, incense is also essential for covering up unavoidable cooking smells. In the massage room itself I prefer to use an essential oil burner. There are so many scents available: ones I like to use include frangipani, lemongrass, cinnamon and clove to add an exotic eastern fragrance to your room. I use Freshskin essential oils www.freshskin.co.uk

- **Decor and furniture.** Personally I find going for a massage where the walls are white and the decor is minimal to be way too cold and clinical. Instead I have tried to make my decor colourful but relaxing. My walls are Tibetan blue (inspired by the colour of Tibetan temples I visited in Ladakh, India) and my massage room and entrance hall are decorated with textiles, prayer flags, masks and wall hangings that I picked up on my travels to India, Thailand and Bali. Similarly with furniture, if you are going to buy a new cupboard to store your towels in, or a table to put your leaflets and client's water on, why not buy furniture that fits with the theme of your decor - whether that be Asian inspired or whatever theme you have chosen for your practice.

- **Lighting.** Soft dimmable lighting is essential in your massage room, but also in your entrance hall. I've used Moroccan coloured glass or perforated metal lightshades that cast coloured and/or intricately patterned shadows onto the wall. I also have small candle holders that cast similar shadows.



- **Music.** Its a nice touch to offer your clients a choice of music to listen to while they are having their massage. To that end I created 15 different playlists of mellow, down tempo music on Spotify and display the options as a 'music menu' on the wall of my massage room. The playlists (African, Arabic, Blues, Bossa Nova/Latin, Chill out, Classical, Folk, Indian, Indie, Instrumental, Jazz, New Age/Spiritual, Random mix & Soul) are available on Spotify and clients often ask me to send them the links to the playlists so they can listen at home. They are also available on my website homepage at www.thai-vedicmassage.co.uk. Very occasionally you will get a client that asks for silence. I hate it when that happens as I will often massage in time to the music (to add to the multi-sensory experience!)
- **Training certificates.** Clients like to know that you are well trained, so its a good idea to display your training certificates on the wall of your massage room, so they can see what you have trained in and where.

9) PRACTICAL: ARMS, STOMACH AND CHEST

For female clients, cover breasts with a folded hand towel

85. Finger circles around the navel x4, 1, 2, 3 then 4 fingers



Notes:

Muscles worked?

86. Palm circles around the navel



Notes:

Muscles worked?

87. Sun and moon strokes with both palms



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: ARMS, STOMACH AND CHEST

88. Wring stomach with both hands



Notes:

Muscles worked?

89. Press stomach pressure points with thumbs (4 points)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

90. Figure of 8 strokes around chest (men only)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: ARMS, STOMACH AND CHEST

91. Massage upper pecs with thumbs (*men and women*)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

92. Effleurage chest, stomach and arms (*men only*)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Replace sarong. For female clients remove hand towel.

10) CLIENT AFTER CARE ADVICE

If a client visits you with a painful neck, lower back or knots in their trapezius muscles for example, you might give them an excellent massage and help relieve the pain temporarily. But its good practice to show them 2 or 3 yoga or qi gong stretches or self massage techniques they can do at home to relieve the pain, if it comes back. The following stretches and techniques focus on the two most common problems - neck and shoulder pain and lower back pain - but if you are practising yoga, qi gong or pilates yourself, you will probably know many others for these and other parts of the body.

Neck and shoulder stretches and self massage techniques

The following exercises can be done in a seated or standing position:

- **Rotate the head** slowly to the front side and back, stretching the neck to its limit in each direction. Rotate both clockwise and anti-clockwise.
- **Stretch the neck** to the left and right by pulling the head gently downwards with your hand.
- **Rotate the shoulder** by making a fist with your hand, bending your elbow and punching forward (without straightening your arm) and rotating your shoulder. Rotate in both directions then repeat on other shoulder.
- **Pummel and squeeze your traps.** Pulling your right elbow towards your chest with your left hand, make a fist with your right hand and pummel your left trapezius muscle. Then open your right hand and squeeze the muscle between your finger and palm. Change sides and repeat.

Lower back stretches and self massage techniques

- **Elephant shakes its trunk.** From a standing position with your feet hip width apart, bend forward and let your arms hang loose. Then gently move form side to side like an elephant shaking its trunk.
- **Lower back rotations.** From a standing position with your feet hip

width apart, put the index fingers and thumbs together to form an inverted heart shape in front of your chest. Slowly start circling your hands in a clockwise direction. Gradually make the circles bigger and bigger until you are bending as far back as you can when your hands are at the top of the circle and as far forward as you can at the bottom of the circle. When you have reached the limit of your circle (you should be brushing the floor by this point) change directions so you are going anti clockwise, and gradually make the circles smaller and smaller until you are back where you started.

- **Sideways stretches.** With your feet spread wide apart, toes facing forward, let your right hand rest on your thigh and bring your left arm over your head. Bend to the right sliding your right hand down your thigh and stretching your left arm over your head. Add in a lunge to the right for a stronger stretch. Repeat on other side
- **Lower back pummelling** From a standing position with your feet hip width apart, make fists with both hands, place them behind your lower back and start pummelling!
- **Lower back self massage** From a standing position with your feet hip width apart, massage your lower back either with the fingers of both hands (small circles on the muscles on either side of the spine) or thumbs (press hard into the muscles and move your thumbs upwards and downwards. These can be done through clothes or with a little massage oil on the skin.

As well as showing your clients some stretches and self massage techniques, you might also recommend a good local yoga, qi gong or pilates class.

And then the most important after care question: ask them if they would like to book another massage!

11) PRACTICAL: HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS

93. Remove pillow. Hold head to one side. Massage side of head with finger circles (2 techniques) & straight strokes x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

94. Massage occiput x3 in 3 places



Notes:

Muscles worked?

95. Outward strokes on neck and trapezius x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS

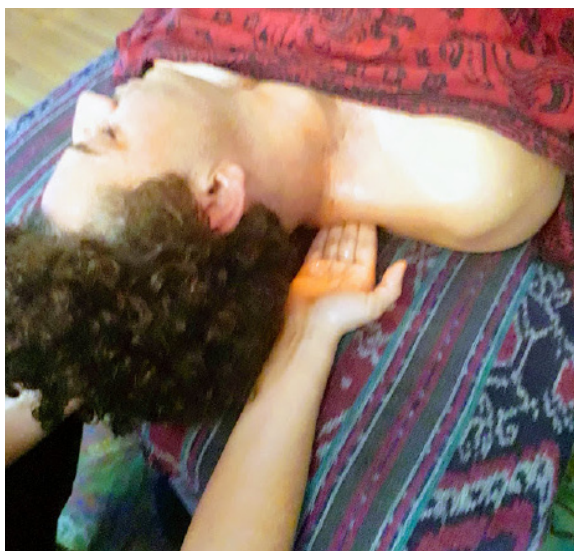
96. Neck and shoulder muscle squeezes x6 each



Notes:

Muscles worked?

97. Finger circles on trapezius x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

98. Finger circles on neck muscles x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS

99. Long inward strokes pulling up from deltoids to neck x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

100. Finger circles on trapezius x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

101. Finger circles on neck muscles x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS

102. Straight stokes on scalp with finger tips from hairline x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

103. Finger circles on sides of head - together x6 alternating x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

104. Shiatsu neck rotations - rotate neck from side to side x9



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS

105. Neck stretches - to each side and to the middle



Notes:

Muscles worked?

106. Massage lines on - chin, upper lip, cheek and forehead x 3 each



Notes:

Muscles worked?

107. Ear massage: a. squeeze ears between fingers and palms; b. thumb circles on ear lobes; c. pinch ear lobes between fingers and thumbs; d. fold ears inwards; d. close ear tabs



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS

108. Loop around chest with both hands ending at occiput x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

109. Knuckle shoulders x6 neck x6 then shoulders x6 again



Notes:

Muscles worked?

110. Straight strokes up neck muscles alternate index fingers x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS

111. Pull neck upwards with fingertips x6.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

111. Saw neck with index finger x6. Repeat on other side x6



Notes:

Muscles worked?

113. Loop around chest with both hands ending at occiput x3



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS

113. Finish by pressing forehead (for extra pressure rest your forehead on your hands).



Notes:

Muscles worked?

114. Then press forehead and belly x3, asking client to take 3 deep breaths.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

- **Turn light back up slowly, not too bright. Say to client "Take your time coming round. Dont forget there's some water on the table if you're thirsty. And just open the door when you're ready".**
- **After you have taken payment, remember to ask them if they would like to rebook. You can say something like "Would you like to book in again for a month's time, say?"**
- **Remember to give them a copy of your leaflet, and when you are starting out, you can also ask them if they would be willing to write you a review on Treatwell, Google Maps, Facebook or wherever they found you**

NOTES:



Visit us: 72 Crawthrew Grove, East Dulwich, London, SE22 9AB

Contact us: stephen@thai-vedicmassage.co.uk/ 07950933150

www.thai-vedicmassageschool.co.uk