

Thai Yoga Massage

Training Manual



Registered with the Complementary Medical Association

**ThaiVedic
massage**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgments are due to my fantastic teachers: Ralf Marzen at **www.muditathaiyoga.com** in London; Kam Thye Chow (who is sadly no longer with us) and Suriyan Punyafoo at **www.sunshine-massage-school.com** in Chiang Mai; and the teachers at the Thai Massage School of Chiang Mai (**www.tmc.school.com**) where I began my Thai massage journey in 2011.

Acknowledgements are also due to Sunita Passi of **www.tri-dosha.co.uk** in the UK, whose Ayurvedic Massage Therapy course I attended in October 2013 and whose help and advice I sought in the development of this training course.

Thanks are also due to: Renata Boruch who took the photographs for this manual; Gerry Hagemeyer for letting us use him as a model and Clara Gomez for helping with the anatomy elements of this course.

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 parts 1 and 2 of 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 and that doctors and other health care professionals know that they can safely refer their patients to.

Membership has huge benefits, including support with your practice development, through CMA President, Jayney Goddard's regular online Master Classes and access to CMA Member's low-cost insurance. Visit www.the-CMA.org.uk for more information.

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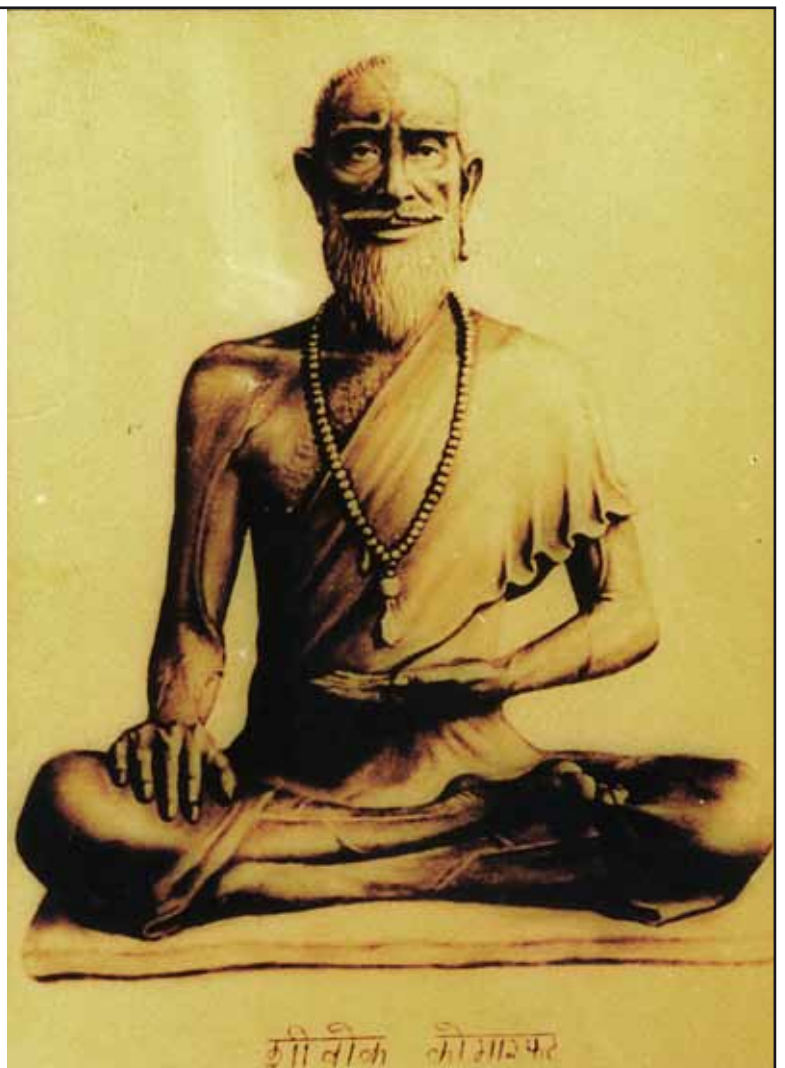
1) INTRODUCTION

Thai Yoga Massage is performed on the floor in loose and comfortable clothing. Receiving Thai Yoga Massage is like doing a yoga workout - but without any effort. This is why it is sometimes referred to as assisted yoga or **yoga for lazy people!** A Thai Yoga Massage also incorporates rhythmic rocking, palming and thumbing along energy lines, compression techniques, gentle stretching and breath work, creating a slow flowing 'dance' around and with the recipient's body. The practitioner uses their hands, feet, arms and legs to gently guide the recipient into various yoga postures. The more skilful and fluid the practitioner the more the recipient is able to relax.

Because Thai people, in the past at least, spent most of their time working in the fields doing manual labour, their massages focus 75 percent on the lower body and legs. In contrast Westerners spend more time at their desks and computers. Consequently the massage routine you will this course focuses equal attention to the lower and upper body.

History of Thai Yoga Massage

The origins of traditional Thai massage can be traced back 2500 years to India and the spread of Buddhism. The founding father of Thai massage, Jivaka Kumarbhachha, was a celebrated doctor in the ancient Indian healing tradition of Ayurveda. Of all the people Jivaka attended to the most distinguished was purportedly the Buddha himself. Traditional Thai massage developed over centuries within the environment of the Buddhist temples. The most famous institution for traditional Thai massage is the Wat Po in Bangkok, still today



the leading centre of research and practice for the art of Thai massage. If you would like to read more about the History and development of Thai massage you can read chapter 1 of **“Thai Massage the Thai Way: Healing Body and Mind”** by the Thai Massage School of Chiang Mai (available online as a pdf) which describes in detail the origins and development of traditional Thai massage.

Benefits of Thai Yoga massage for the receiver

In Thai massage, energy lines known as Sen lines are connected to pressure points (marmas). Massaging the Sen lines promotes the free flow of energy, it is through stretching and massaging this network of energy lines that Thai Yoga Massage releases tension, making the entire body more limber. Encouraging the flow of energy through the body helps alleviate common problems such as lower back pain, arthritis, headaches, digestive or menstrual problems and stress related conditions. Thai Yoga Massage also generates a feeling of deep relaxation and centredness for both the client and the practitioner.

- **Improves joint mobility**

By stretching through various postures, Thai Yoga massage relieves stress on the skeletal system, including the spine. Stretching increases the space between the vertebrae, allowing the lymph, synovial and cerebrospinal to actively circulate, effectively ‘greasing’ and improving joint mobility. It can correct skeletal problems and even reverse the process of spinal degeneration diseases such as kyphosis, scoliosis and lordosis



- **Improves blood circulation**

The compression techniques of palming and thumbing used, and postures that raise the legs higher than the head, act as an assistant pump to the heart increasing the rate of blood flow without causing any strain to the heart. The sooner the blood returns to the heart the sooner it can deliver oxygen and nutrients to the body cells and remove waste materials through the venous and lymphatic systems.

- **Increases muscle elasticity**

The improved blood circulation increases muscles relaxation and elasticity and reduces the effects of adhesions (scar tissue in the muscles)

Contra-indications

- **Aneurysm.** An aneurysm is a localised blood filled dilation of a blood vessel caused by disease of weakening of the vessel wall. If a client has an abdominal aortic aneurysm, do not press on their abdomen. In the case of brain aneurysm, avoid any inverted postures that increase blood pressure to the brain.
- **Bacterial or fungal infections.** Avoid the infected area.
- **Bowel disorders.** For constipation, a clockwise massage to the abdomen is good for stimulating bowel movements. In cases of diarrhoea or acute stomach ache, avoid the abdomen.
- **Cancer.** If the cancer has affected the bones they become fragile and can easily break. Avoid brisk movements and applying too much direct pressure. Clients receiving chemotherapy should not receive massages. Make sure the client has checked with their doctor that it is OK for them to receive a massage.
- **Cervical spine problems:** such as cervical hernia, arthrosis, osteoporosis and cancer. Avoid postures that induce spinal movement. A massage with palming and thumbing can be applied in this case.
- **Dislocation.** A dislocation is usually brought on by an abrupt movement or by overextending or over stretching. Avoid the area. Don't overstretch an area of previous dislocation as this may cause a relapse.
- **Fracture.** Do not work on or move a fractured bone as this could cause a displacement of the broken pieces thereby damaging surrounding tissue and delaying the healing process.
- **Haemophilia:** Never work on a client with haemophilia, as massage could cause external or internal bleeding.
- **Heart related disorders.** Massage only with their doctor's consent.
- **Hernia.** In the case of spinal disc hernia avoid all postures that flex or extend the spine. In the case of abdominal wall hernia, avoid any flexion or extension of the abdomen or hips.
- **High blood pressure.** Do not perform inverted postures such as the Plough. Stick to gentle, calming massage techniques.

- **Infectious diseases:** including the common cold. Avoid massaging the person until they are fully recovered. *If you catch their cold you could have to take several days off work!*
- **Joint problems:** such as gouty arthritis, meniscus tears, knee or ankle sprains. Go easy on the affected joint. Never put pressure on the problem area.
- **Menstruation.** Thai Yoga Massage can be helpful in relieving cramps during menstruation. However do not perform inverted postures during menstruation and avoid pressure on the lower abdomen.
- **Muscular inflammation,** or tendinitis. Avoid the affected areas.
- **Open wounds and cuts.** Make sure all wounds are properly covered before beginning. Do not stretch the area around the wound as this may case a reopening of the wound.
- **Osteoporosis:** (brittle bone disease), use caution and work carefully on and around joints, especially the cervical spine and chest.
- **Phlebitis** or deep-vein thrombosis. Avoid the affected area.
- **Pregnancy.** A gentle form of Thai Yoga Massage can help reduce cramps and labour pains. From the second trimester, a pregnant woman should avoid lying on her back for too long. Perform the massage in seated side lying positions only.
- **Skeletal disorders.** Osteomyelitis (infection of the bone leading to painful, weak and damaged tissue). Avoid massage clients with this condition. Osteomalacia (loss of calcium and phosphorous due to lack of vitamin D causing weak bones). Observe caution.
- **Rheumatoid arthritis.** If the practitioner is not careful they could dislocate a joint, or bruise or tear the arteries or nerves. Never work on a client with rheumatoid arthritis unless you have their doctor's approval.
- **Recent surgery** (within the last 12 months). Avoid the area of surgery.
- **Varicose veins.** Do not apply direct pressure to varicose veins. Massaging surrounding tissues can improve local circulation.

Before your client arrives

Make sure you have:

- prepared **iced water, flavoured with fruit**
- placed a **clean sheet and pillow cases** on your futon and pillows
- topped up your bowl with **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 or get some relief from their aches and pains, not to fill out forms! The questions and requests below should 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?**
- **Please turn off your mobile phone or put it on silent.** 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.
- **Please remove any jewellery** (e.g. bracelets, necklaces or watches).

2) POSTURE AND SELF CARE

The key to the difference between a good massage and a bad massage is the movement of the practitioner's body. When you use the weight of their body rather than brute strength - which can cause discomfort for the recipient and fatigue for you - recipients have the benefit of consistent, rhythmic pressure that is deeply relaxing. Poor posture can cause back or shoulder pain, tendinitis, stiff neck or knee pains.

The main movement in Thai Yoga massage is the rhythmic rocking dance: a swaying or rocking motion that creates a natural and even pressure on the recipient's body. With straight arms and a straight spine, you can learn how to use the least amount of effort to achieve maximum results. If you know how to use your body correctly you can prevent the development of chronic stress symptoms in your back, hands, arms and shoulders; and perform a sufficient number of massages in any given day without getting exhausted.

It is therefore extremely important that you use your body well, moving with effortless graceful transitions between yoga stretches and massage techniques.

Common mistakes for Thai Yoga massage practitioners

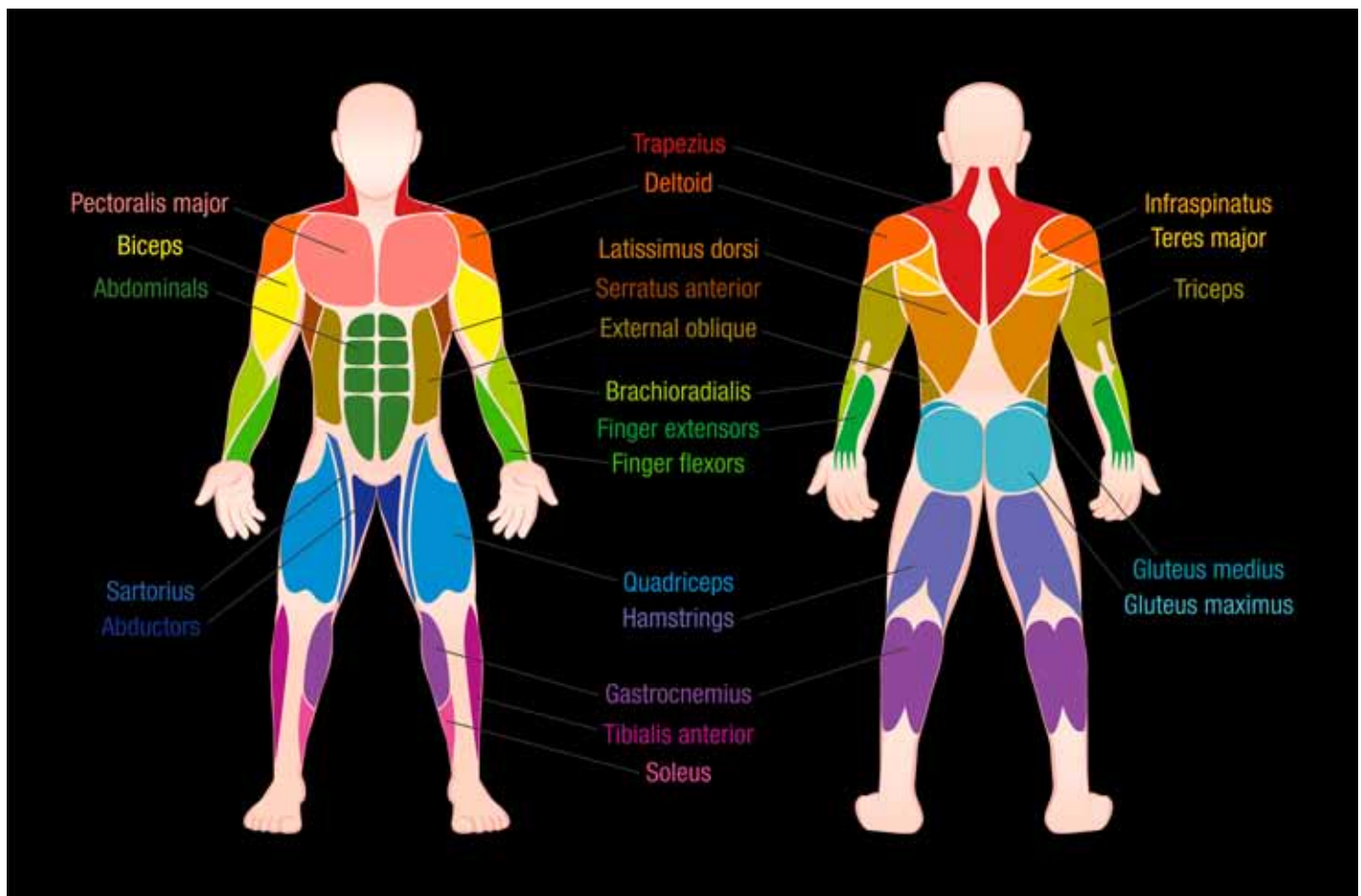
- **Hunching the back and bending the spine.** This results in overuse of the shoulder muscles rather than using your body weight to apply the pressure required, and can result in a sore back for the practitioner and a less-than-effective massage for your client.
- **Bending the arms.** This results in overuse of the arm muscles. Instead you should always lock the elbows when applying downward pressure, so that you are using your body weight rather than your muscles
- **Tilting the head downwards.** It is 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

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, pilates, or if none of those appeal a dance class of some kind will help you keep supple and flexible just as well.

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.

Major Muscles of the Body:



3) PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

1. Hands on head, 3 deep breaths



Notes:

2. Palm shoulders, with fingers to the side , front and back



Notes:

Muscles worked?

3. Arm on knee: bend neck sideways, rolling pin on traps, opposite side



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

4. Rotate shoulder joint, holding elbow & squeezing same traps



Notes:

Muscles worked?

5. Interlace hands & elbows, pull back, squeeze triceps



Notes:

Muscles worked?

6. Place hand behind neck, pull elbow back & hand down on exhale



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

7. Place hand behind head & twist back palming opposite erector muscles



Notes:

Muscles worked?

8. Bow & arrow, elbow in traps, under scapula



Notes:

Muscles worked?

8. Bow & arrow, elbow in traps, between spine and scapula



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

10. Place hand on shoulder, hold elbow & twist back palming erector muscles



Notes:

Muscles worked?

11. Baker: knead the shoulder muscles



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Repeat techniques 3-10 on opposite side. Repeat technique 11.

12. Thumb neck with thumbs pointing downwards



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

13. Squeeze neck between heels of palms



Notes:

Muscles worked?

14. Holding elbows place palms on floor in front, push forward and palm back



Notes:

Muscles worked?

15. Palm quads



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

16. Diagonal stretches



Notes:

Muscles worked?

17. Thumb pressure on erector muscles up & down



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

18. Bring back up to 45 degree angle & pummel with fists



Notes:

Muscles worked?

18. Pummel with sides of hands



Notes:

Muscles worked?

19. Tap back, arms and head with finger tips



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

20. Pull back upright for Titanic stretch down to lower back & side-ways twists



Notes:

Muscles worked?

21. Interlace hands behind head. Elbows to front, knuckle spine down



Notes:

Muscles worked?

22. Place palm between shoulder blades & rotate elbows both directions



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

23. Open elbows, knee on thigh, sideways stretch, both sides



Notes:

[illegible]

Muscles worked?

24. Forward swoops to left & right, holding forearms



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

25. Stand & stretch elbows back & twist to each side with your knee supporting the back

26. With fingers still interlaced, place your neck under their hands & stretch their neck forward as you pull up to stretch their arms



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SEATED POSITION

27. With their arms in the air, kneel sideways behind their back & pull them onto your knees. Pull up opposite side of body with one or both hands. Swap sides & repeat



Notes:

Muscles worked?

28. Kneel behind their back and guide them into supine position



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Continues in section 5) Supine Position

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 futons are too thin, inexpensive massage oils aren't as aromatic, cheap sheets and pillowcases 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 saved to the taxman!

And if you use good quality equipment 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 futon.** Invest in a good quality massage futon long enough and wide enough for all the Thai Yoga stretches. Ensure the cover is removable so that you can launder it occasionally



- **Massage oils.** You can use a scented oil for massaging the face, neck and There are many available, but our favourites are Neal's Yard's Ginger and Juniper oil, or their Neroli scented Mother's Massage oil
- (www.nealsyardremedies.com) and Rachawadee or Jasmine massage oils by iMantara (www.thaisquarespa.com/imantara)
- **Sheets and pillowcases.** I cover my futon with a sheet to protect it from the oils and to make it look nice. If you are only doing Thai Yoga massage, you don't have to change the sheets between every client, once a day should be fine. (Pillowcases should be changed between clients). You can use whatever sheets you like but if you want to create an Indian ambience, you can use Indian patterned bedsheets (available on www.amazon.co.uk or www.etsy.com)

- **Pillows and cushions.** You'll need an ordinary pillow for your client's head and another to use for a few of the massage techniques. 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. A Thai single fold cushion is also necessary for some techniques
- **A bar stool** for working the back with both feet (whilst leaning on the stool).
- **Small bowl** for your massage oil. Polished coconut shells work well for this purpose.



- **An electric blanket** for your massage futon, to keep your clients toasty during the 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).

- It's a good idea to get a **digital thermometer** so you can monitor the temperature 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 providing 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.

5) PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

29. Head massage with head to the side



Notes:

Muscles worked?

30. Neck & shoulder massage with oil



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Repeat 29-30 on other side.

31. Face massage with oil on chin, upper lip, cheek & forehead lines



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

32. Ear massage



Notes:

Muscles worked?

33. Head massage, both hands. Straight strokes, circles on the side of the head



Notes:

Muscles worked?

34. Turn head from side to side x10 then stretch neck to both sides



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

35. Stretch neck forward



Notes:

Muscles worked?

36. Massage traps and neck with knuckles, using oil



Notes:

Muscles worked?

37. Paddleboat. Walk on the shoulders, with the arches then balls of your feet, then poking into the traps with your big toes



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

38. Little fish, big fish



Notes:

Muscles worked?

39. Leave feet under scapula, with knees on floor. Rotate neck to limits in large circle & stretch neck to the right. Repeat in other direction



Notes:

Muscles worked?

40. Work neck with thumb and fingers (and gravity). Remove feet, stretching neck forward



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

41. Arm stretches



Notes:

Muscles worked?

42. Palm shoulders



Notes:

Muscles worked?

43. Palm left arm



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

44. Kneel on forearm



Notes:

Muscles worked?

45. Twist wrist, stretching muscle in opposite direction. Twist and stretch both ways



Notes:

Muscles worked?

46. Thumb circles on outer and inner arm and wrists



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

47. a. Stretch and slide along fingers & thumb. b. Circles between joints of each finger and thumb. c. Stretch each finger joint.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

48. Massage palm and fingers with thumbs



Notes:

Muscles worked?

49. Wrist rotations and stretches



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

50. 3rd arm shoulder rotations



Notes:

[illegible]

Muscles worked?

51. Fingers between scapula and spine, bounce on exhale



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

52. Walk on left shoulder and left arm. Repeat on right



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Repeat 43-51 on right arm. Move to feet

53. Feet Sen lines, using pillow. Rotate and pull toes



Notes:

Muscles worked?

54. Palm insteps, press outwards, rotate inwards



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

55. Outwards and inwards rocking



Notes:

Muscles worked?

56. Hold ankles - rock towards and away from head



Notes:

Muscles worked?

57. Shake ankles, hip joints



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

58. Hip rotation on right leg



Notes:

Muscles worked?

59. Using a pillow for support, palm and thumb inside right leg



Notes:

Muscles worked?

60. Palm and thumb outside left leg



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

61. Bend knee. Finger pulling on centre of calf muscle, down and up



Notes:

Muscles worked?

62. Sideways calf stretches, down and up



Notes:

Muscles worked?

63. Squeeze calf between palms, down and up



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

64. Knee rotations, and thumbs under knees



Notes:

Muscles worked?

65. Squeeze quads between palms, down and up



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

66. Foot under lower back, pull back on quads, down and up



Notes:

Muscles worked?

67. Use knee pressure on calf and IT band lines



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

68. Knee stretch, leg stretch



Notes:

Muscles worked?

69. Paddleboat hamstrings, with 1 foot, heel, 2 feet



Notes:

Muscles worked?

70. Squeezing hamstrings and quads



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

71. Tree pose, hip opener, palming quads and abductors



Notes:

Muscles worked?

72. Foot in groin, palm abductors



Notes:

Muscles worked?

73. Foot in opposite side of groin, hands on floor, lean forward on top of knee to stretch Piriformis muscle



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

74. Pigeon stretch



Notes:

Muscles worked?

75. Teapot calf stretch, palm quads



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

76. Leg in air, calf and hamstring stretch



Notes:

Muscles worked?

77. Outwards leg stretch



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

78. Bend knee, stretch towards head



Notes:

Muscles worked?

79. Lift foot and palm hamstrings, work with soft fist



Notes:

Muscles worked?

80. Stretch leg over body, supporting inner knee with foot



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SUPINE POSITION

81. Helicopter hip rotations



Notes:

Muscles worked?

82. Spinal twist



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Continues in section 7) Side Position and Back Stretches

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. We 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 rebook!

- **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 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
- **Market stall.** Unlike other types of massage, in the summer at least, you can perform massages outside. Why not apply for a stall at your local market. All you need is a gazebo (in case it rains) and a portable futon and you can start offering massages in the street, Its a great way to boost your businesses visibility and attract new clients!

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 online sales reports. But to work out your net income (your gross income minus your expenses) you'll need to have a accurate record of everything you spend. Dont 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 its 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 get insurance, after completing both parts of this course, from **www.salongold.co.uk/thai-massage-insurance**, who will ask on their online application if you are a member of a professional association (you'll need to join the CMA) and whether you have completed a training course that has been recognised by one the relevant professional associations.

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 be 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, either when they call to book an appointment or during the massage, for 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 ask if you have a female therapist** (if you are a man). 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 jus that she feels uncomfortable being massaged by a managed 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.** 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 doesn't 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: SIDE POSITION & BACK STRETCHES

83. Thumbing next to spine and on glutes



Notes:

Muscles worked?

84. Stretch arm backwards. Scapula stretch over foot



Notes:

Muscles worked?

85. a. Walk on erector muscles b. Poke toes into erector muscles



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SIDE POSITION & BACK STRETCHES

86. Sit facing head, grab shoulder. Rotate shoulder & stretch scapula



Notes:

Muscles worked?

87. a. The claw b. Rhomboid pinches c. Squeeze traps



Notes:

Muscles worked?

88. Knuckle slides on neck and shoulder muscles



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SIDE POSITION & BACK STRETCHES

89. Shoulder rotations



Notes:

Muscles worked?

91. Shoulder rotations with arm in air



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SIDE POSITION & BACK STRETCHES

92. Arm stretch upwards



Notes:

Muscles worked?

93. Palm side of body, squeeze triceps



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SIDE POSITION & BACK STRETCHES

94. Place arm on side of body. Heel pressure in traps



Notes:

Muscles worked?

95. Crushing the watermelon



Notes:

Muscles worked?

96. Rolling pin massage on upper and forearm



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SIDE POSITION & BACK STRETCHES

97. Banana boat stretches. Lift legs if client is not too heavy



Notes:

Muscles worked?

98. Push up side of back to walk on erector muscles from underneath



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SIDE POSITION & BACK STRETCHES

99. Place both clients feet in your chest, rotate both hip joints to massage lower back



Notes:

Muscles worked?

100. The Plough (hold knees to keep legs straight)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: SIDE POSITION & BACK STRETCHES

101. With legs raised, kneel with your back to their legs. Ask them to place their legs over your shoulders and pull them onto your back for a whole body stretch



Notes:

Muscles worked?

102. Cross legs and use cushion to stretch hip joints



Notes:

Muscles worked?

103. Ask receiver to give you their hands, push knees and pull arms for lower back stretch, then walk backwards into seated position.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

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' next to my treatment menu, on the wall of my massage room. The playlists (African, Arabic, Birdsong/Nature Sounds, 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 our 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: PRONE POSITION

Ask client to lie face down. Check to which side your clients face is turned. Start with the foot that's on the same side

104. Massage foot with fingers, squeezing between palm & fingers



Notes:

Muscles worked?

105. Stretch each toe



Notes:

Muscles worked?

106. Rotate ankle joint to its limits both directions



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

107. Stretch ankle, outwards, inwards, toes up, toes down (squeeze Achilles heel)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

108. Bend knee over other leg, work shin muscles with knee



Notes:

Muscles worked?

109. Palm IT band up & down



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

110. Push knee upward, Work glutes with forearm rolling, presses. Then elbow rotations, presses



Notes:

Muscles worked?

111. Stand to the side. Push erector muscles away from spine with the ball of your foot



Notes:

Muscles worked?

112. Lift bent leg onto your lap & stretch scapula. Palm side of the body with one hand & do the Claw on the scapula with the other.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

113. Rotate knee joint in both directions with knee fixed on hip bone, 3 positions



Notes:

Muscles worked?

114. Slide knee under thigh, rolling pin massage on lower back and leg (using both forearms)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

115. The Locust (with foot on floor & kneeling beside receiver for a stronger stretch)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

116. Back diagonal stretches



Notes:

Muscles worked?

117. a. Palm opposite side b. Circles c. figures of 8 d. Pranayama pumping



Notes:

Muscles worked?

118. Double palm pulses



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

119. Palm rotations, leg astride body. Foot on other side



Notes:

Muscles worked?

120. Palm twisting on closest (ipsilateral) side



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

121. Rocking, erector muscles only at first then pulling up IT band & quads



Notes:

Muscles worked?

122. Forearm presses, up & down back. Continue onto hamstrings & back



Notes:

Muscles worked?

123. Place elbow in centre of glutes, pull towards you to dig into the muscle & rotate. Both directions



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

124. Double forearm presses up & down back



Notes:

Muscles worked?

125. Sideways stretches with rolling pin action



Notes:

Muscles worked?

126. The Snake



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Turn the clients head and repeat 104-126 on the other side

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

127. Place lower foot on floor below bent knee, upper foot above knee on hamstring. Pull foot up with hands & lean into hamstrings



Notes:

Muscles worked?

128. Place lower hand behind back. Upper hand with fingers on ankle & heel of palm on toes. Push receiver's foot towards buttock & lean into hamstrings. Walk up to butt crease & back



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

129. Place upper foot in lower back. Pull up foot to stretch quads & compress lumbar erectors. 3 positions.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

130. Face head. Place outer foot on the floor below the bent elbow & upper foot across spine, with heel and ball of the foot on either side of the spine. Lean in. Walk up and down back.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

131. Turn inner foot to point towards the head & push the erector muscles away from the spine. Walk up and down back.



Notes:

Muscles worked?

132. Face sideways. With your heel above the armpit & toes touching the spine, lean in to compress shoulder muscles. Turn foot from 3 o'clock to half past 1, to 12 o'clock (3 positions)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

133. Walk gently down upper arm & with more force on forearm & back of the hand



Notes:

Muscles worked?

134. Place the big toe side of your foot next to the spine. Lean in, using your whole foot then the ball, then your big toe to poke into traps



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Repeat 130- 134 on other side in reverse order (horseshoe pattern).

135. Using a stool, walk on the back with both feet from both sides



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

Repeat 129 on other side of the back, then 127-128 on other leg

136. Kneel below receiver bent knees. Place your chest on their feet & lean forward, stretching quads



Notes:

Muscles worked?

137. Place hands on feet & press towards the floor on either side of the buttocks



Notes:

Muscles worked?

138. Flex ankles & place the heels of your palms below the balls of their feet & press their heels towards their buttocks



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

139. Push knees together & press feet outwards to stretch knee joints



Notes:

Muscles worked?

140. Push knees apart & press feet inwards to stretch knee joints the other way



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

141. Double locust. Stand astride the back. Grab both feet, holding the tops of the feet with one hand and the heels together with the other. Pull feet up to stretch lower back. Move from side to side



Notes:

Muscles worked?

142. Scap-puller. Place receiver's arm behind their back & a square cushion, then your knees under their shoulder. Grab the shoulder blade with fingers of both hands & lean back to stretch the scapula



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

143. Stand up and place your toes or blade of your foot under the scapula & lean in



Notes:

Muscles worked?

Repeat 143-143 on other shoulder

144. Classic cobra (knees in buttocks)



Notes:

Muscles worked?

145. Standing cobra



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

146. Pillow cobra



Notes:

Muscles worked?

147. Rotate both shoulder joints holding wrists, both directions. Ask receiver to straighten their fingers & bring palms together into Namaste. Place arms by the sides of the body



Notes:

Muscles worked?

PRACTICAL: PRONE POSITION

**148. Elephant walk. Palm back, buttocks & hamstrings.
Squeeze calves**



Notes:

Muscles worked?

152. Use Bamboo sticks on feet Sen lines



Notes:

Muscles worked?

153. Hold feet & ask receiver to take 3 deep breaths 2



Notes:

Muscles worked?

AFTER THE MASSAGE

- **Turn the light back up slowly, not too bright**
- **Say to your 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"*.
- **Leave the room quietly, and do your self-care stretches and self massage, while you are waiting for your client to emerge.**
- **When they do you can ask them** *"How are you feeling"* or *"Do/does your shoulders/ lower back/ hips feel any better"* depending what aches and pains they told you about before you started.
- **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**

10) CLIENT AFTER CARE ADVICE

If a client visits you with a painful neck, lower back or knots in their traps 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 practicing 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 fingers and the heel of your 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 from 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 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, leaning on your thigh, 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.

ThaiVedic massage

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