

HOW TO RECEIVE A MASSAGE

Because massage is not a common part of our contemporary cultural experience, many people feel uneasy about receiving their first massage. Here are a few guidelines to help you feel at ease and to gain the greatest benefit from your massage therapy session.

Close your eyes and allow yourself to relax as completely as possible. Focus your attention on your breathing, which should be slow, deep and even.

Put all “lists” and worries out of your mind. This may be hard for some to do. Imagining yourself on a beach, in a forest, or near a lake, can help you to let go of the world and quiet your mind.

When the therapist’s hands locate areas of pain or tension in the body, consciously try to relax those areas. As you inhale deeply, visualize the breath flowing to the tense area and relaxing it. As you fully exhale, visualize the tension leaving the body with the breath.

Conversation can be distracting to you and the therapist. Good massage requires concentration on the part of the therapist. Please confine your conversation to feedback about the massage.

Allow the therapist to move your limbs into various positions. Be limp, like a rag doll, and do not try to help move your arms, legs or head. The therapist is a trained professional who will not do anything to hurt you. However, feel free to speak up if anything the therapist does is too painful or ticklish, or uncomfortable in any way.

Very often, as the body releases tension during a massage, the mind will release emotion. If you suddenly feel sad, angry or joyful, do not be alarmed. Allow yourself to express these feelings by crying or laughing. At the very least, feel free to sigh with relaxation or hum with pleasure.

Many people fall asleep during a massage, an indication that the body and mind are releasing stress and tension. Your therapist will gently wake you when it is time to turn over or to end the massage.