

How to Get the Most From Your Massage

1. Be as receptive and open to the process as possible.
2. Do not eat just before a massage session, unless your blood sugar is low.
3. Be on time. If you arrive in a frenzied, rushed state, it will take longer to get to a relaxed state. Please let your massage therapist know in advance if you need to cancel. Most massage therapists require a 24- hour notice.
4. If you do not want to remove all your clothing, wear clothing that you will be comfortable wearing during the massage, and will allow the massage therapist to touch and move the areas of your body you expect will need to be worked on.
5. Give the massage therapist accurate health information.
6. Good communication is very important. Before the session, let your massage therapist know what your needs are. During the massage session, report any discomfort, whether it is from the massage or due to any problems or distractions related to the environment, e.g. room temperature, music volume, lighting, etc. Feel free to give feedback to the massage therapist regarding the massage, e.g. amount of pressure, speed of movement, etc.
7. Don't be afraid to discuss any apprehensions or concerns. It is important that you be as comfortable as possible during your massage. Your massage therapist is a professional dedicated to do his or her best to help you feel at ease.
8. Some massage therapists like to play music during the massage session and may have music specifically composed for relaxation and other effects. Others may find music distracting. Let your massage therapist know if you have any preferences regarding music.
9. Some clients prefer to talk during their massage session, while others remain silent. If your massage therapist encourages you to talk or not talk, it is usually based on whether or not it seems to help let go of tension and getting in touch with oneself. Sometimes talking can be a way of unburdening oneself or opening up. Sometimes being silent can be a way of letting go of thoughts or concentrating. On the other hand, talking can be a way of "being in the head" and out of touch with one's body or feelings, and being silent can be a way of holding back or not opening up.
10. Breathing helps to facilitate relaxation. People often stop or limit their breath when they feel anxious or a sensitive area is massaged. If you realize you are stopping your breathing, let yourself breathe.

11. Tightening up or contracting your muscles during the massage is counterproductive. If you are able to, relax those muscles. Let your massage therapist know this is happening. They may need to adjust the massage technique being used. They may also be able to help you relax the affected area.
12. If you find your thoughts are racing during the massage, one way to be more body-centered, and to quiet the mind, is to follow the hands of the massage therapist and focus on how the touch feels.
13. If you feel dizzy or lightheaded after the massage, do not get off the table too quickly.
14. Drink extra water after the massage to flush out toxins released into the bloodstream during the massage.
15. Allow for some open, quiet time after your massage session, if possible. Sometimes one needs a little time to integrate or absorb the results of the massage session.
16. Massage has its greatest benefits over time. The therapeutic effects of massage are cumulative, so the more often a person gets massage, the better he or she will feel and the more quickly one's body will respond. From one session to the next, relaxation deepens as the chronic patterns of stress in the body are affected and released. These changes are readily felt in day-to-day life as well, which adds another dimension of reinforcement. If you are getting massage to address chronic muscular tension or recovery time from a soft tissue injury, more than one session is usually needed, so be prepared to schedule several sessions.