



7. With your thumbs atop the shoulders and your fingers up on your partner's back, knead the tops of the shoulders, also called the trapezius muscles, as shown in Figure 11-4e. While you're doing this, you can feel for tight spots and then stop for a moment to apply pressure with your thumbs directly on those areas.
8. Switch your position to your partner's side. Then, using medium pressure, glide your hands up the back, separating them at your partner's shoulders and gliding back down with lighter pressure. Do this two or three times, being careful not to press too hard directly over the spine.
9. Reaching across your partner's back, drape your fingers over her side, then pull back slowly, actually lifting her body up a tiny bit as you engage in a nifty "reverse glide," as shown in Figure 11-4f.



10. With "small" kneading movements, using mostly just the fingers, reach down and pull up the muscles along the back of the neck, alternating one hand after the other, as shown in Figure 11-4g. You can be firm, but be careful not to pinch your partner. Also, make sure not to pull her hair when you're doing this maneuver. You should also avoid reaching around too far with your fingertips because you may end up in an *endangerment site* on the throat.



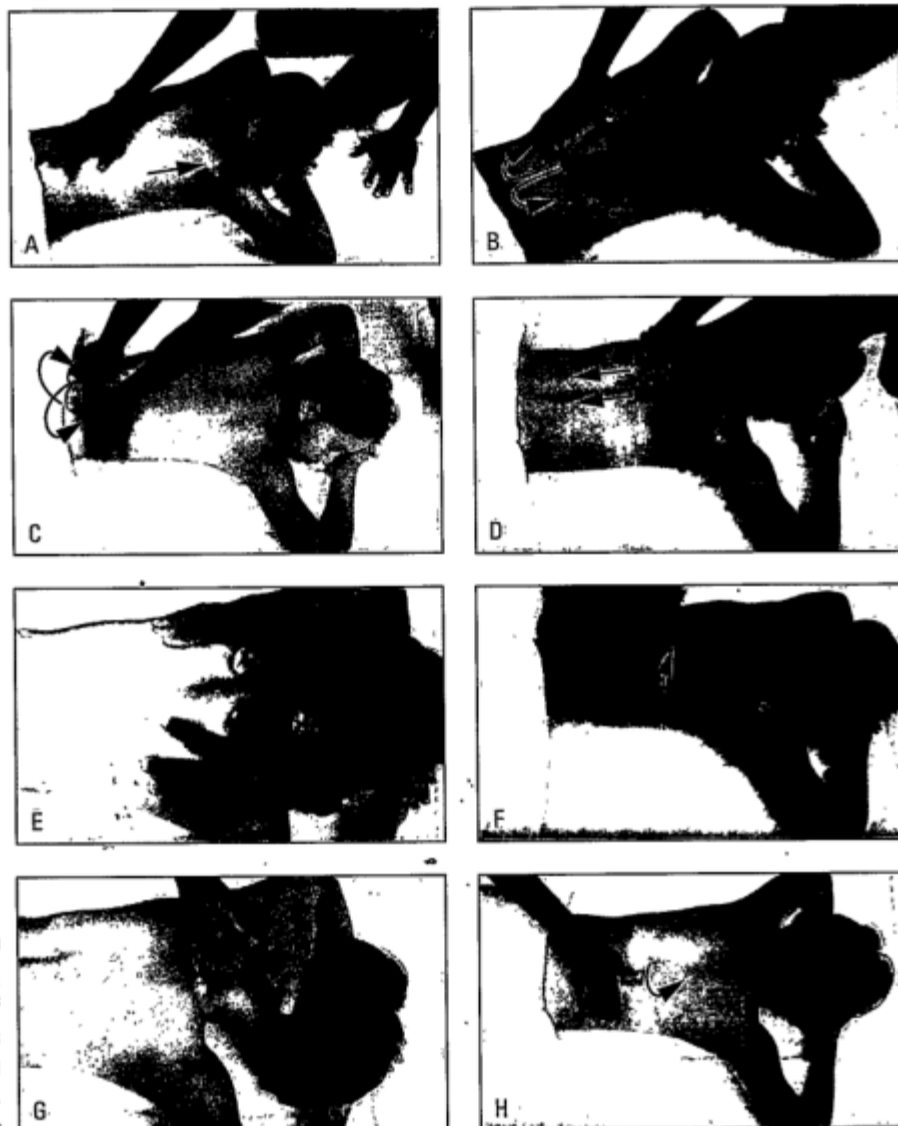
11. Now is the time for you to really focus in on the tight spots you discovered during your thumb glide down alongside the spine. Start at the base of the spine and place your thumbs in the little groove that's formed between the spine itself and the *erector spinae* muscles that run up alongside the far side of the spine. Then press out toward the opposite side of the back, moving your thumbs in a little reverse "J" motion over the muscle, as shown in Figure 11-4h.



Never press directly on the spine itself while you're doing this move. Instead, keep your thumbs pressing away from the spine at all times.

The main difference between a good massage and a mediocre one is that a good massage is always custom-made for each person every time. So, customize this maneuver and apply it exactly where your partner needs it this time, seeking out the tight spots you find during your earlier gliding, and then concentrating on them.

12. With your partner's hand lifted onto her lower back, it's easy to see the shoulder blade, which automatically lifts up and reveals itself. A great way to release tension in this area is to run your fingers along the lifted inner edge of the shoulder blade, pressing in and down while you do so, as shown in Figure 11-5a. Sometimes you can feel the shoulder blade lifting even further from the back as you relax the muscles.



**Figure 11-4:**  
A series of  
back moves  
to get you  
started.

13. Use your thumbs to zero in on the spot that lies about midway out from the spine at the level of the armpit. It's right at the base of the inner edge of the shoulder blade, and is usually tight on almost everyone. If you can find this spot and do a thumb press with firm pressure for 10 seconds or longer, you may feel the entire shoulder "fall" away from the back in relaxation.

## Knots, and what to do with them

As you get used to gliding over people's bodies with your hands, you may quickly realize that no two bodies are the same and that, in fact, the same body can even feel different on different days. Eventually, you'll know how to distinguish a "knot" from an area of normal muscle tone. Then you can apply the techniques you find in this chapter and Chapter 10 to start relaxing those tight places.

You could easily spend an entire hour just dealing with your partner's knots, so you have to

decide when enough is enough and move onto the next area. This is a tough call because your partner's knots and sore spots are the areas that need the most attention.

In general, during a full body massage, spend no more than 5 minutes on any particular tight spot. If you want to focus on it more later, schedule a special session just for that purpose.



14. Tap all across the upper and lower back, being careful to avoid the spine, as shown in Figure 11-5b. This is a typical way to finish massaging the back, and every body part for that matter. It feels good, but I find it sometimes disrupts the calming, soothing effect of the massage. Only use tapping if your partner wants it, or if he's about to jump off the table to engage in some activity in which case some serious karate chops and loose fist pounding are called for. Otherwise, stick to some soft fingertip tapping at this point, or leave it out altogether.



15. After you press and rub on all the major spots, it's time to bail out of the back area, but you don't want to make your exit too obvious, lest you shock your partner and cause sudden back-massage withdrawal symptoms. So make your departure from the back a gradual one and use gliding *connective strokes*. See the sidebar, "Creating wholeness" later in this chapter.



Figure 11-5:  
More moves  
for the back.



## Creating wholeness

You can create a better experience for your partner if you never really “finish” one part of the body. Because, if you finish, that means the clock is ticking, and the massage is slowly dripping away. It’s better to create the illusion of timelessness by connecting all the pieces of the massage together into one whole.

So, after you “finish” the back, that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t allow your hands to move

there again. In fact, it’s a good idea to add some “connective strokes” throughout the massage so that it feels as though you never completely finish with any particular part of the body. You can even connect the front of the body to the back by reaching beneath your partner during certain moves, as you see later in this chapter.

## Back of the legs and buttocks

The buttocks contain the largest muscle in the human body, and they do a large percentage of the work. Without them, you couldn’t walk, sit, or dance the “Bump.” Buttocks really deserve a lot of respect, but often they’ve been disparaged and have unfortunately become the “butt” of many off-color jokes. Don’t let this flippant attitude about buttocks keep you from spending some serious time there during your massage.

1. After you glide your way down from your partner’s back and reposition yourself by your partner’s legs, apply some oil to the entire back surface of one leg with firm gliding strokes, circling your outer hand around at the buttock and gliding more lightly back down.
2. Lift your partner’s foot, supporting it with both of your hands while applying circular rubbing all around the ankle bone with your thumbs and fingertips of both hands, as shown in Figure 11-6a.



It helps your partner relax if you can get her to “let go” of her lower leg and allow you to take the full weight of her limb in your hands. Take a look at the “Limp arm experiment” in Chapter 7 for a reminder on how to do this.

Be careful not to press too hard directly on the upper ridges of the heel bone right behind the anklebones, because it is a sensitive area and may be uncomfortable for your partner.

3. Before you put your partner’s foot back down, do some gentle shaking movements, using the foot as a “handle” to move the leg, as shown in Figure 11-6b. This can help relax the muscles of the entire limb, right up

into the joints, in this case the knee and hip. Practice until just using a gentle shaking at the foot can produce a rhythmical movement throughout the body up to the head.

4. The largest muscle in the calf is actually separated into two "bellies." It feels great to run your thumbs or the tips of your fingers up the middle of the calf, separating the two sides, as shown in Figure 11-6c. You can also make a straight line up on either side of the middle.
5. While you knead the calf muscle with a back and forth motion, move your hands up and down also, so you cover the entire muscle, as shown in Figure 11-6d. Stop about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way down from the knee because the calf tapers down to the Achilles tendon there and becomes too thin to knead. At that point, you can continue by squeezing the tendon between your thumb and fingers down to the ankle.
6. Grasping the leg just above the ankle with both hands, use the webbing between your thumbs and forefingers to create a tight seal. Then squeeze in and push up at the same time, moving slowly, as shown in Figure 11-6e. Stop when you reach the back of the knee. With this maneuver, you can actually help move stagnant blood out of the limb, improving circulation. If you do it correctly, this move may incite your partner to say something like, "Whoa, that's intense!" Take this as a sign that you're doing things right, but also make sure that you're not squeezing too hard. There's a fine line between intense and painful.  
  
Remember to apply only very slight pressure over the back of the knee! And be careful to avoid any varicose veins.
7. Making your hands into fists, apply pressure with the knuckles into the back of the upper legs, called the hamstrings, as shown in Figure 11-6f. Knuckling is a form of gliding that is especially appropriate to this area because each knuckle slides between the long bands of muscles here.
8. This move feels like an ice cream sundae for the leg muscles. Knead from the top of the leg down to the knee, moving up and down three to four times. To make this move most effective, try keeping as much of your hand in contact with the skin as possible as you squeeze, roll, and push.
9. Depending upon how big any particular buttock is, you have a variety of choices of where to press, but to be most effective you have to find just the right spot. In order to do that, palpate the outer upper edge of the tailbone (sacrum), and then go straight down toward the leg half way across the buttock. This should be right in the middle. Press directly in here with thumbs, as shown in Figure 11-6g. Use your fingers, fist, or elbow at an angle perpendicular to the surface. Hold this move for 5 to 10 seconds. This move is particularly beneficial for sciatica pain.





## Turning over

In my opinion, not enough is said about the art of turning over during massages. Often, this turn is the only physical effort a massage recipient has to make for over an hour. And, as it comes right in the middle of the experience, there's a potential for it to be disruptive and a little jarring. For these reasons, most massage pros are quite gentle with their clients when it comes time for them to turn. In a soft, soothing voice, they say something like, "All right, Mr. Smith, I'm going to ask you to gently roll over onto your back now. Take your time."

You have to watch your wording carefully because there are those who take what you say too literally. I have one client who is a world-class athlete, and once when I asked him to "flip

over," he literally flipped, springing a foot off the table and twisting over in midair to come crashing back down on the table, splintering one of its wooden legs.

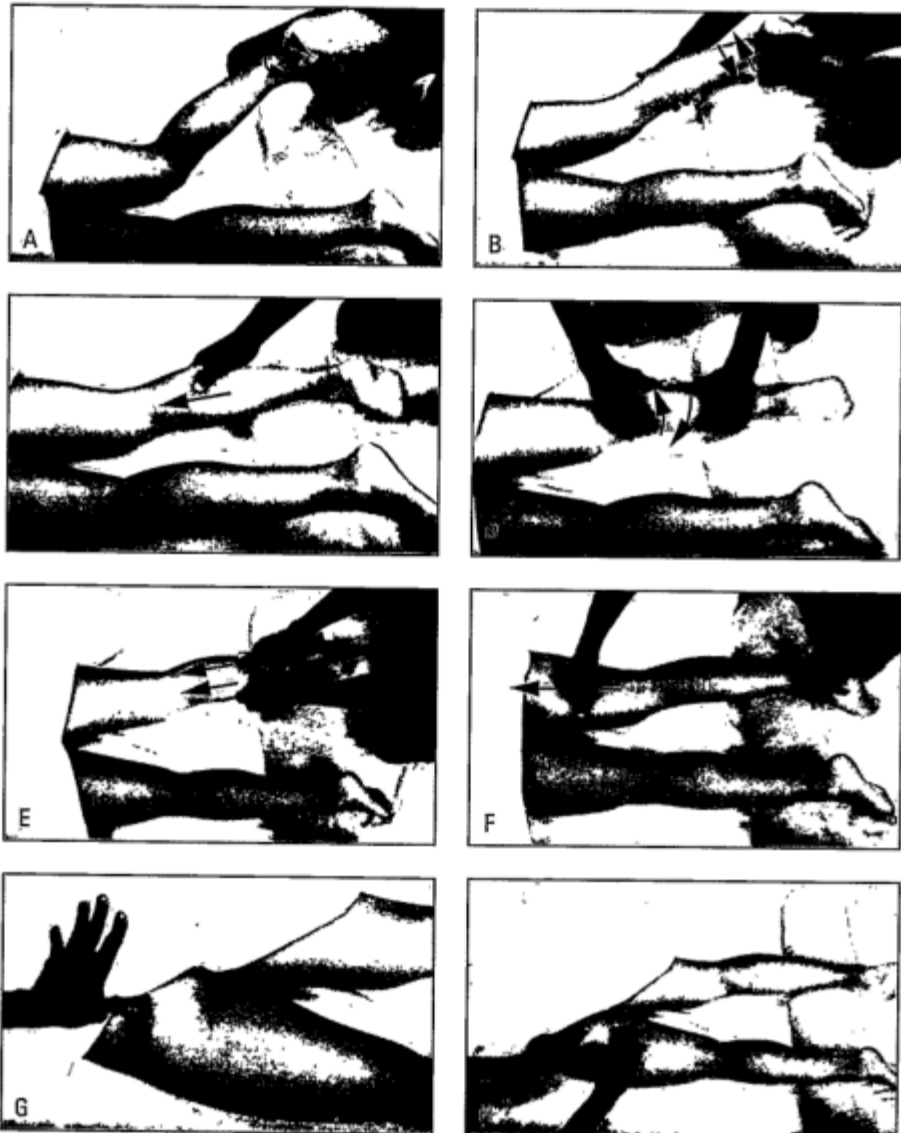
When it comes time for your own partner to turn over, follow the example of the pros:

- ✓ Be gentle
- ✓ Speak softly
- ✓ Give them as much time as they need
- ✓ Assist them if necessary, offering support
- ✓ Use the words "roll over" or "turn gently, please" instead of "flip"

10. Knead the thick muscles of the buttocks, particularly on the upper, outside portion, which often tends to be the most sore, as shown in Figure 11-6h. You have to watch where your fingers are going while you squeeze, roll, and push here, though! It's kind of a tight area to work in.
11. Because the buttocks include the largest muscles in the body, they can withstand some heavy percussion movements. Use loose fists and firm pressure, but be sure not to pound with your fists on the tailbone, which is much more delicate. Then move the tapping down the leg, opening your fists so that you're doing karate-chop moves. Remember to lighten up over the back of the knee!
12. Apply light fingertip brushing up the back of the leg and onto the back, then back down again. After pummeling, pressing, squeezing, and kneading your way across your partner's back, fingertip brushing is a really good way to remind your partner how nice you are. You can extend the move from the feet all the way to the head.



After you finish the first leg, switch to the other leg and repeat. Remember, because you already connected the back with the first leg, you want to do some connecting strokes when you begin the second leg as well. So, make your initial gliding on the second leg go up and over the buttocks and onto the lower back.



**Figure 11-6:**  
Giving the  
back of the  
legs a kick  
in the pants.

## Face and scalp

After your partner has turned over, you are presented with entirely different terrain to massage. The front of the body is a little more perplexing. There are more intricate surfaces to deal with, as well as more private, vulnerable, and delicate areas. Therefore, you need to be more of a diplomat while massaging the front of someone's body. Most people allow just about anyone to give them a backrub, but when it comes time for you to touch the front of their body, they have to trust you.



The face, for example, is quite a private area. Although it's exposed to the world for all to see, it's not there for all to touch. You have to be sensitive as you begin to massage your partner's face. Avoid large gestures, or quick movements. All of your maneuvers here, including those you make before you even touch your partner, should be smooth, deliberate, and slow.



You probably don't need any extra oil for the face. The oil left over on your hands from massaging the back is sufficient.

1. Start by placing your hands gently on the side of your partner's head, thumbs resting on the forehead. This is the perfect position from which to start massaging the forehead with some thumb gliding and firm circular rubbing. First, glide your thumbs out from the middle toward the sides, starting low by the brow, making three to four lines progressively higher. Then begin making circles with your thumbs, as shown in Figure 11-7a, all across the forehead.
2. Leaving your hands in about the same position, begin using the fingertips instead of the thumbs. Circle your fingertips into the side of the head around the spot where sideburns would start if your partner had some, as shown in Figure 11-7b.
3. Using the tips of your first two fingers, trace around the edges of the bones that surround the eye — across the brow, down along the nose, and around the top of the cheek bones, as shown in Figure 11-7c. You may try a little mini-kneading along the same path with your thumbs and fingertips.



If you apply pressure very near the eyes or directly on the eyelids, make sure your partner isn't wearing contact lenses.

4. Glide your fingertips lightly across the top and down along the sides of the nose, being careful not to block your partner's breathing passages. At the base of the nose, near the outside edge of the nostrils, is a good place to apply light to moderate pressure and small circular rubbing, as shown in Figure 11-7d, which helps open sinuses in the area.

5. Use your thumbs in an "opening" gesture to fan out across the cheeks from just under the inside corner of the eye down toward the jawbone. The pressure you apply should be light to medium.
6. At the corner of the jawbone, slightly in front of and below the ear, you find the chewing muscles. In order to palpate them, ask your partner to clench her teeth, which makes these muscles bulge slightly out to the side. Then apply circular rubbing with the fingertips, as shown in Figure 11-7e, all around this area. Locate the highest point on this muscle, directly in the center, and use some pinpoint pressure directly inward for 5 to 10 seconds while suggesting to your partner, "relax your jaw, let your mouth open slightly, and just breathe."
7. Use some pinch and roll kneading to walk your fingers and thumbs from the jaw muscles out onto the chin, as shown in Figure 11-7f. Glide back softly and repeat twice more.
8. Most people love for you to massage their ears. Use your fingers and thumbs to pinch and roll the ear from the lobe up around the edges to the top, as shown in Figure 11-7g. Repeat this twice and then tug gently for a second on the top, back, and bottom of the ear.
9. The scalp is often mistaken for a thin flap of skin without much potential for massage moves, but actually it's a great place to use medium to deep circular rubbing with the fingertips, as shown in Figure 11-7h. Keep lifting your fingers up slightly, moving them a half-inch or so, then placing them firmly on the scalp again. During the rubbing, keep your fingers glued to the scalp and move the muscles below it over the cranium. Be careful not to pull your partner's hair while doing this move.



### Favorite places

Everyone has his or her own particular favorites when it comes to getting a massage. Some swoon over an ear massage, while others go into ecstasy as soon as you lay a finger on their forehead. Oftentimes, you can find these "favorite places" somewhere on the head, neck, or face, although other areas like the hands and feet are popular, too.

Encourage your partner to communicate with you about any areas that feel particularly therapeutic or pleasurable. Then, during her next massage, spend more time focusing on the area she likes the most. She'll enjoy the sensation and appreciate you for remembering.

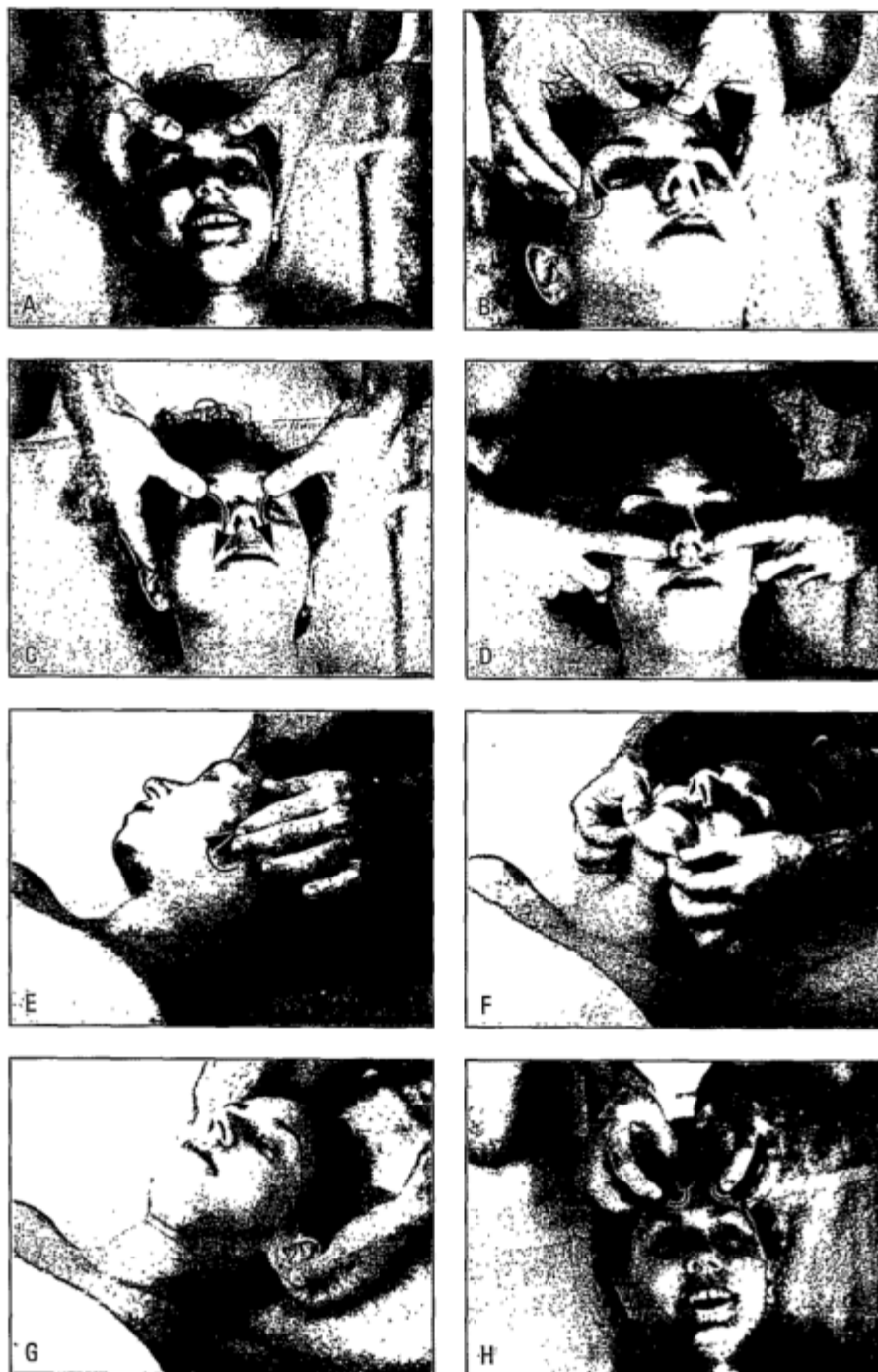


Figure 11-7:  
Face the  
face!

## Neck and shoulders

We refer to just about anything that bothers us as a “pain in the neck.” Perhaps this is because the neck is particularly vulnerable to feeling pain. Filled with delicate nerves, vertebrae, and vessels, your neck can give you pain if you simply turn your head too quickly. Massage is a great way to soothe some of the minor complaints that people experience in this area, many of which are a reaction to stress. Be especially sensitive when massaging here, “tuning in” to your partner’s muscles and letting what you find guide your movements. Sometimes, simply by adding your awareness to the equation, you can help your partner get rid of that pain in the neck she’s been complaining about.

1. The “shoulder swoop” move may be a little tricky at first, but after you master it you have a great tool under your massage belt. Pouring a small amount of oil into one palm, rub your hands together, then place them on your partner’s upper chest, with your fingers pointing inward, as shown in Figure 11-8a. Slide your hands outward, pivoting your palms on top of the shoulder so that your fingers end up beneath your partner’s upper back, as shown in Figure 11-8b. Finally, glide your hands in and up the back of your partner’s neck to the base of her head, lifting slightly while you do so, as shown in Figure 11-8c.
2. Slip your fingers beneath your partner’s neck, cradling her head in your hands. Then lift very gently just until you can turn her head to one side, supporting it in your bottom hand. Rock her head back and forth slightly until your partner no longer tries to hold onto her own neck muscles. You can then use the other hand to apply circular rubbing to the muscles in the back of the neck, as shown in Figure 11-8d. Move your circles up and down, and when you find a tense spot, apply some pinpoint pressure. By using both hands for different purposes (one massaging, the other cradling the head), you have extra-effectiveness with this move.
3. Still supporting your partner’s head in one hand, use the other to knead up and down the back of the neck. Practice switching the position of your hands during this maneuver until you can create a fluid sensation for your partner — left, right, left, right. This feels darn good.
4. Supporting your partner’s head with both hands, lift up and forward, bringing her chin toward the chest, as shown in Figure 11-8e. Hold this position for about 5 seconds, being careful not to twist your partner’s neck. Then slowly lower her head back down. I believe this is the only stretch you should try with the neck until you receive further training.
5. Pushing down with your palms, glide across the tops of your partner’s shoulders, also known as the trapezius muscles. As a more intense alternative to this move, you may try using the knuckles to glide in this area, too.





6. Take the muscles on top of your partner's shoulders between your thumbs and fingers, kneading with a good amount of pressure, as shown in Figure 11-8f. As your fingertips reach down beneath your partner's back, curl them up so you're applying pressure in that area at the same time.
7. Now that the neck and shoulders are warmed up and relaxed, use some pinpoint pressure with your thumbs to zero in on the tight spots you find, as shown in Figure 11-8g. Remember to keep a straight line from your elbows and shoulders to your thumb so you don't stress your joints.



To create a smooth transition, finish the neck and shoulder area with another shoulder swoop. Then move down onto your partner's left shoulder and arm with a long flowing glide, which leaves you in position to begin massaging the hand.



**Figure 11-8:**  
Taking the  
burden off  
someone's  
shoulders.

## Arms and hands

Arms and hands are some of the most active parts of most people's bodies. Think about it. Even couch potatoes use their arms and hands to reach for the potato chips and open cans of beer. In fact, just about everybody is so used to doing things with their arms and hands that, at first, you may find it challenging to get your partner to "let go" in this area (see the "Limp arm experiment" in Chapter 7 for help in getting your partner to "let go"). However, this doesn't mean that you can't perform some spectacularly beneficial and pleasurable massage moves here.



The secret of good arm and hand massage is to make your moves smaller and to focus on the little details. Every pinkie finger counts!

A typical reaction you may get when you begin massaging in this area is, "I didn't know my arms were so sore until you started doing that!" Good massage techniques can put vitality back into this active, expressive part of your partner's anatomy.

1. Your initial gliding in this area spreads the oil, of course, but it also does much more. At this time, you help your partner "let go" and loosen up. You accomplish this by offering some support to the limb at the wrist and elbow while you're gliding. This means you're actually picking the arm up and supporting it with one hand while gliding with the other. Practice switching hands with this lift-support-glide maneuver until you get fluid with it.
2. Begin kneading the palm. You've already picked up your partner's hand, so you're in the perfect position for this move. You can flip your partner's hand up and down to work at different angles, spreading open and squeezing between the bones of the palm.
3. You have to build up a little dexterity in your fingers in order to get this knuckle rolling technique down. One at a time, curl your fingers closed into a fist then open them back up again over your partner's palm, as shown in Figure 11-9a.
4. Squeeze each finger as you pull slightly at the same time, moving up from the base of the finger to the tip, as shown in Figure 11-9b. Make sure to rub the sides of the fingers as well as the tops and bottoms.
5. The pressure point in the webbing between one's thumb and index finger is especially good for helping to relieve headache pain. The best way to massage it is with direct pressure from your thumb, as shown in Figure 11-9c. Hold this pressure point, pushing in toward the bones of the hand, for approximately 5 seconds.



6. This little move feels surprisingly good. While holding your partner's hand palm-down, you apply circular rubbing over the top of the wrists, as shown in Figure 11-9d. For serious wrist problems such as *carpal tunnel syndrome* (CST), see Chapter 13.



7. The forearms are jam-packed with muscles all crying out for attention. In this move, you use your thumbs to trace lines straight up the forearms from the wrists to the elbows, as shown in Figure 11-9e. This is a deep gliding that is meant to sink down between the bands of muscle in this area.

There are special massage moves for the forearm that are effective on tennis elbow, and you can find out about them in Chapter 16.

8. Your kneading movements on the forearms are basically a smaller version of the ones you used on the legs, but this doesn't mean they aren't just as effective. Try to get as much of the muscle tissue between your thumb and fingers as possible, and remember to involve your whole body in the movement, all the way down to your hips, as shown in Figure 11-9f.

9. With your partner's elbow bent and resting on the ground for support, encircle the arm at the wrist with both of your hands, creating a tight seal around the entire circumference. Then begin pushing up the arm *very slowly* until you reach the elbow, maintaining firm pressure the whole time. This "squeezing toothpaste through a tube" glide is great for tired, achy arms that need some renewal.

10. In order to massage the entire upper arm from one simple position, lift your partner's arm up, supporting it at the elbow, allowing her hand to fall back toward the floor near her head. Then use your free hand to massage the upper arm. For example, in Figure 11-9g the left arm is supported by your left hand, allowing the right hand to massage the biceps. In Figure 11-9h, your right hand supports the elbow, leaving the left hand free to massage the triceps.



As you're doing this move, make sure to keep track of where your partner's hand is. If you're banging it against the side of her head, it detracts from the pleasure of the experience.

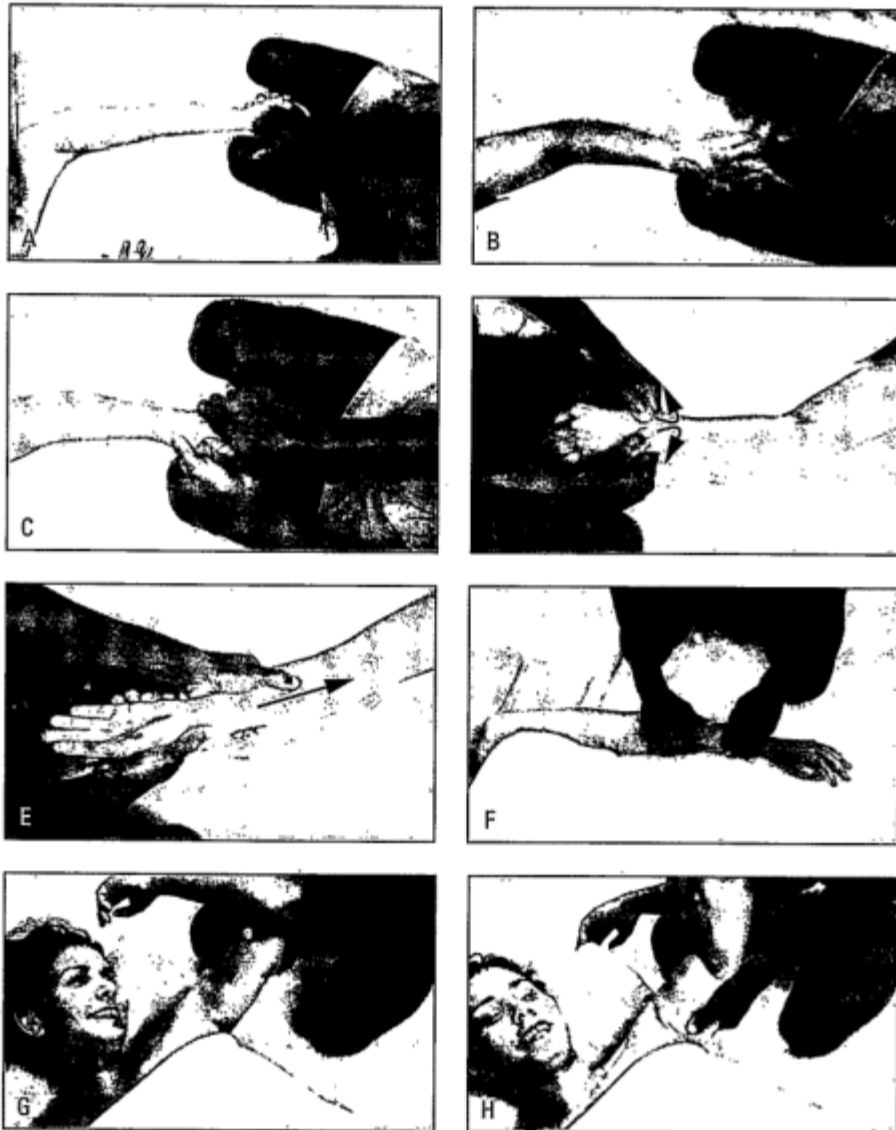


This is a perfect position for stretching the upper arm and chest, too, and you find instructions on how to do just that in Chapter 16.

11. Grasping your partner's hand near the wrist, shake the whole arm gently until you can see some movement way up at the shoulders, neck, and head. Try positioning her arm at three different angles to achieve a different stretch on the shoulder joint: down by her side, out at a 90-degree angle, and up by her head.

12. Finish the arm with a light fingertip glide that floats up over the shoulder to the chest, where you're going to massage next.

Repeat this sequence on the opposite arm.



**Figure 11-9:**  
Taking up  
arms  
against a  
sea of  
troubles.

## Torso

As a species, we've taken a big collective risk by standing erect on two feet and exposing our defenseless underbellies to the world. The front of your body, especially the abdomen, can be a very vulnerable area, and you have to be extra sensitive when applying massage moves here.

Your abdomen is the physical home of many emotional realities such as fear, anger, and intuition. That's why we say we have a "gut instinct" about something. You're not just massaging a stomach when you place your hands on your partner's belly. You're massaging her soul. This fact has been recognized by many Asian cultures, such as the Japanese, for example, who have even given this soul-in-the-belly a name: the *hara*.



Make your movements on the chest and abdomen gentle at first, until your partner relaxes a little and allows you to massage more deeply. Keep in mind that your touch here penetrates to the deepest layers, both physically and psychologically.

1. Place your thumbs across your partner's upper chest muscles below the collar bone, with your fingers reaching down toward his sides, as shown in Figure 11-10a. Begin some kneading, which, as you soon discover, is a tricky maneuver to perform without causing your partner to squirm and writhe in fits of hysterical giggling. Yes, this area can be quite ticklish. Start out gingerly, like a kitten pawing a pillow, then gradually intensify, always staying within your partner's comfort level.



This area can be extremely sensitive, especially on people who exercise a lot or who are overly ticklish. Be careful not to poke your fingers into your partner's ribs or armpits. And make sure to use extra oil if your partner has a lot of chest hair.

2. Lifting your hands off the chest just slightly, begin pressing back down by using pinpoint pressure of the thumbs along a line about two inches below the collar bone, as shown in Figure 11-10b. This can have a beneficial effect on your partner's breathing, "opening" the upper ribcage.
3. Placing your fingertips near the top of the breastbone, push in gently and then begin circular rubbing as you move slowly down toward the abdomen, as shown in Figure 11-10c. As your fingers skim over the edges of the breastbone on either side, you find ridges and valleys where the ribs attach. Make a small circle in each one of these valleys, too, as you move down.
4. Gliding on the abdomen not only spreads oil and relaxes muscles; it also aids digestion. Your large intestine runs clockwise starting on the lower right-hand portion down by your hip bone, up along your side, across

the base of your ribs, and down your left side. When you massage in this same direction (clockwise), you're helping the digestive organs do their job. Press in with firm but sensitive pressure so your movements affect these organs as well as the muscles on top of them, as shown in Figure 11-10d.



When you get really good at circling your hands over the belly, try speeding up your movements a little by letting your left hand glide right over the top of the right each time they cross paths, without pausing to lift the left hand up. This creates a smoother flow for you and a neat sensation for your partner.

5. Right around the navel, in the pit of the belly, is where people often store pent-up emotions. By gently touching several points here, applying just the softest pressure inward, as shown in Figure 11-10e, you can help coax the emotions out. It's possible that your partner may sigh with relief or even begin to cry when you press here with sensitivity and compassion. This is a good time to offer nonjudgmental support and perhaps even suggest a positive image, or visualization, your partner can focus on. See the sidebar, "Visualize whirled peas," later in this chapter.
6. This move offers a chance to massage the lower back while your partner is lying face up, and it's a nice stretch, too. Slide both hands over the waist until the fingertips slip down all the way to meet at your partner's spine. Then curl the fingertips up to apply a little pressure as you simultaneously lift the whole lower back a fraction of an inch upwards and glide your hands back toward the abdomen, as shown in Figure 11-10f. Repeat this move three times.



During this move, make sure you're not putting too much strain on your own back. Position yourself close to your partner's side, and use your legs and hips to do the lifting.

7. Finish the abdomen with a glide that swoops around your partner's side at the hipbone, onto the front of the legs, and then down to the feet.

## *Front of the legs and feet*

Think of how many miles your feet and legs have put in for you, selflessly hanging around beneath the rest of your body, taking you everywhere you want to go, seldom asking for anything in return. The average person doesn't realize how great a good leg and foot massage feels, and so you can surprise your partner with the simple, effective techniques in this section.

You finish the full body massage on the legs and feet because this is where we stand, literally. Ending here leaves your partner feeling more grounded and "down to earth."

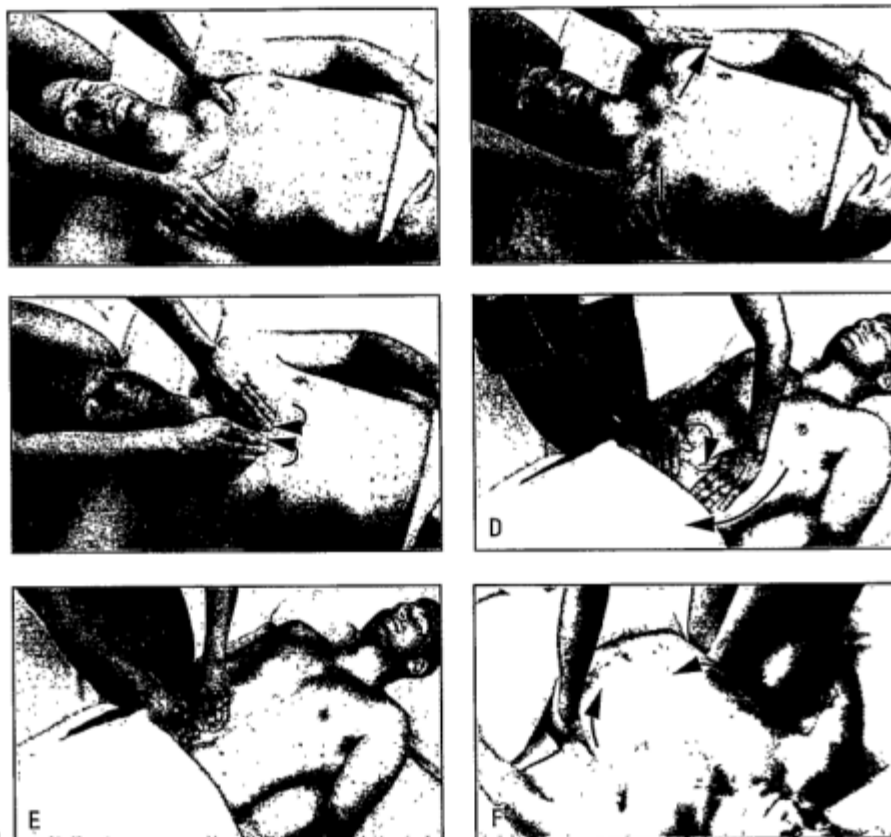


Figure 11-10:  
Torquing the  
torso.



Feel free to spend some extra time on the feet. Although the full foot massage isn't described until Chapter 14, you can incorporate many of those moves here as well.



1. Begin by pushing in with both thumbs on the bottoms of your partner's foot and then "spread" the sole open as you move your thumbs out toward the side, as shown in Figure 11-11a. Use firm pressure and repeat this move three times.
2. By using the thumb on the sole and forefinger on top of your partner's foot, rub between the long bones of the foot, as shown in Figure 11-11b. You should find a "groove" between the bones that you can easily slip your finger into.  
Make sure to press sideways, as well as inwards, against the foot bones.
3. Holding the top of your partner's foot in one hand, use the knuckles of the other hand to "rake" into the arch of the foot in a continuous one-knuckle-at-a-time movement, starting with the pinkie finger, ring finger,

middle, then index, over and over, as shown in Figure 11-11c. Done correctly, this move feels exquisite, but you have to build up considerable finger dexterity to achieve that.

4. As if you were squeezing a coin, rub each toe between your index finger and thumb, as shown in Figure 11-11d. Start with the little toe and progress toward the big toe, making sure to rub on the sides of the toes as well as the tops and bottoms.
5. Then, find the exact location of your partner's shin bone, also called the tibia, and then apply firm pressure with both of your thumbs together along the outside (lateral) edge of this bone as you glide your way slowly up toward the knee, as shown in Figure 11-11e.
6. You have to use mostly the tips of your thumbs and fingertips to knead effectively on the front of the lower leg because, as you may notice, the front of the lower leg is mostly bone. Contain your kneading/squeezing movements to the fleshy areas on either side of this bone as you move up and down from near the ankle up to the knee, as shown in Figure 11-11f.

## Visualize whirled peas

At many points during the massage, you can offer a visualization to help your partner relax and melt more fully into the experience. These visualizations usually incorporate three ingredients:

- ✓ A reminder about how important it is to breathe during the experience.
- ✓ Some guidance about what specifics to think about during the visualization.
- ✓ A positive message meant to uplift your partner's state of mind.

I cover breathing pretty extensively in Chapter 7. After you have your partner breathing evenly and deeply, then it's time to suggest an image to visualize, and when it comes to visualizations, concrete is better than vague. Make the images you suggest extremely specific, including textures, colors, sounds, and even aromas.

An example of something vague to visualize is World Peace. Plenty of people may tell you to visualize it, but how do you do that? What does

world peace look like? What color is it? How big is it? How would it taste? Does it need any salt?

I personally find it much easier to imagine smashed vegetables, which perhaps explains the existence of a well-known bumper sticker that urges us to "visualize whirled peas." It may sound silly at first, but can't you just see them there, swirling around topsy-turvy inside the blender, eventually turning to green mush as the blades increase from chop to blend to puree?

Of course, the image of pureed peas itself is not enough for a fully effective visualization. You have to include the ever-important uplifting New Age message, which in this case may well be, "See the color green as a vast sea of tranquility. Imagine each pea as a grain of green sand on an unending beach of bliss."

Or something like that.



7. Reaching around behind your partner's knee with your fingertips, lift slightly while making circles over the sides of the knees with your thumbs, as shown in Figure 11-11g. Use moderate pressure inward against the knee while making this move, and monitor your partner's response closely; some people are ticklish in this area.
8. Continuing up over the knees, use your palms to glide with firm pressure in an upward direction on the front of the thigh, also known as the quadriceps muscles. Slide back down the thigh with light pressure and repeat four to five times.
9. Apply kneading to the front of the thighs. This is where you can use some really big movements, sliding your hands all the way from the inside of the thigh to the outside in a constant motion. Remember to use your whole body to create the kneading motion, not just your arms and hands. And don't be surprised if you work up a sweat during this move.
10. Imagine a line running along the outside of your partner's thigh from knee to hip (right where the stripe is on many warm-up suits). Starting at the knee, apply pinpoint pressure with your thumbs to a series of points along this line, as shown in Figure 11-11h. Hold each point for 3–5 seconds, then release and move up to the next point. When you reach the hip, slide back down and repeat one more time.



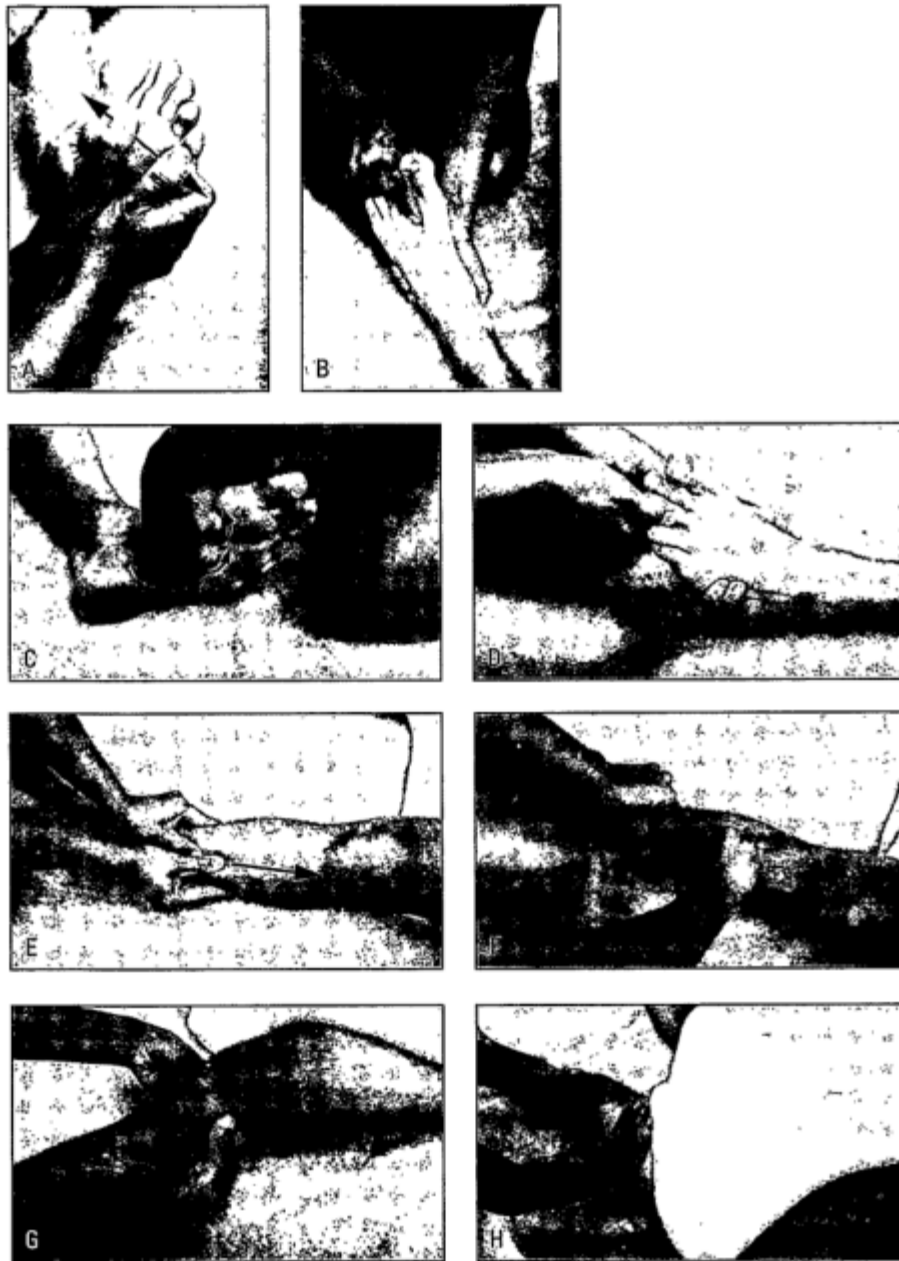
This area is often very sensitive on many people, so you have to be careful when pressing here. Start out softly and increase pressure gradually. You can tell if you push too hard by noticing that your partner tenses his leg. If this happens, lighten your pressure.

11. This is an advanced move that requires quite a bit of trust on your partner's part. You are putting him in a vulnerable position, one leg bent at the knee, with the hip open to the side. By using your palms, press down firmly just above the knee, then glide slowly up toward the hip, as shown in Figure 11-12a. For even more intensity, use your knuckles instead of your palms. Glide your hands back down to the knee with light pressure then repeat twice more.



Lighten your pressure as you approach the upper thigh, which contains many delicate nerves and vessels.

12. Lay your partner's leg flat again, and then glide your hands upwards over the thigh. When you reach the hip, swivel your outside hand around and slip your fingers toward your partner's lower back, as shown in Figure 11-12b. Glide up as far as you can alongside the spine, then press your fingers up into the muscles there as you slowly pull back down toward the hip again, letting some of your partner's weight do the work of pressing. When you reach your partner's leg again, continue gliding down by using both hands on the back of the leg, lifting slightly to get your hands underneath. Finish your glide down at the foot.



**Figure 11-11:**  
Fleet moves  
for the feet  
and legs.

13. Cupping the heel in your palm, lift your partner's leg just an inch or so, reminding him to "let go" if he tries to lift the leg for you. Shake back and forth with a vibrating motion.
  14. Your last move on the leg is a light fingertip brushing down from the hips toward the feet to leave your partner feeling "grounded."
- Repeat this entire sequence on the other leg.

Figure 11-12:  
Finishing up  
the feet and  
legs.



## The grand finale

As with so many things in life, like fireworks and circus acts, in massage it's the grand finale that really counts. Sure, you can apply superlative techniques all throughout the massage; flowing from one bliss-inducing maneuver to the next in seamless perfection; but if you finish with a ho-hum squeeze of the toes and then rush off to grab a cold one from the fridge, you're going to leave a slightly disgruntled partner behind. It's like watching a good movie with a bad ending: All anyone can talk about is how bad the ending was, not how good the rest of the movie was.



The way you end the massage leaves a lasting impression. To make your finish the best it can be, follow these steps:

1. Use long gliding strokes that flow over the entire body, starting at the feet and moving up onto the torso then down the arms, as shown in Figure 11-13. This is the lightest kind of long-soft-light gliding, not meant to actually affect the tissues beneath the skin, but rather to send your partner a message of connection (see the sidebar, "Creating wholeness," earlier in this chapter).



You don't have to wait until the end of the massage to use *connective strokes*. In fact, you can use them throughout the entire massage to connect everything together. Starting an arm? Connect it to the neck you just finished a moment earlier. Go ahead, experiment. Connect away! The point is to make your partner feel that you're treating his body as a whole, not segmenting it into chunks.

**Figure 11-13:** Whole-body connective strokes create a sense of wholeness and continuity for your partner at the end of a massage.



2. To finish your massage, place one hand on your partner's forehead and the other gently upon his belly, letting them rest there in contact, but without pressure, for 30 to 60 seconds, as shown in Figure 11-14. You may begin to feel his pulse, or some warmth emanating from his body. This is good. Just tune in to whatever it is you're feeling and, for just these last few seconds, make sure your partner knows he's the center of the universe.



This type of intentional hand placement to balance your partner's inner energy is known in some quarters as *polarity*.

The last moment of the massage is as important as the first. When you finally break contact with your partner for the last time, make it a conscious, gentle letting go.

**Figure 11-14:** Placing your hands softly on two areas also creates a sensation of connection.





# Part IV

## Massage at Work

The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave

By Rich Tennant



"THE SHORT ANSWER TO YOUR REQUEST FOR A RAISE IS 'NO'. THE LONG ANSWER IS 'NO, AND GET OUT OF MY OFFICE.'"

## *In this part . . .*

**N**ot too long ago, work used to be a very physical activity for almost everybody on the planet. Sure, there were always a few pharaohs, high priests, and ladies-in-waiting whose main activity was flicking fingers and shouting commands, but for 99.99 percent of humanity throughout our entire history, "work" meant physical work, and we used our bodies a lot.

As you may have noticed, this is not the case anymore. In a sense, we've all become pharaohs, masters of a digital domain in which we push around bits of data as if they were slaves. Click a button, and your wish is executed. Most of us check our bodies at the door when we walk into work each morning.

However, even though many of us don't use them as much anymore, our bodies are still subject to high levels of stress and strain. Recently in the U.S. alone, absenteeism went up 25 percent in one year, and stress was the top reason cited for missing work.

Luckily, massage is here for us, ready to breathe some life back into our corporate bodies. It is now possible for massage to become a part of your life at work, where you may need it the most. I'm talking about corporate massage here, which is the subject of Chapter 12, in which you find out how to take advantage of the growing number of massage pros who specialize in on-the-job stress reduction.

Of course, a massage pro might not always be available, and you need to know how to de-stress yourself on the job too. Chapter 13 is all about self-massage and stretching that you can do right at the desk or workstation. In addition to relaxation techniques, you'll discover some basics about how to combat a very serious problem many office workers, and others, face: carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS).

The work environment also forces many of us, especially females, to wear strange, sadistic contraptions on our feet, what Steve Martin called "cruel shoes." We then walk around on hard, unnatural surfaces all day, until our feet end up needing some serious massage attention of their own. Chapter 14 explains reflexology, a type of massage that concentrates on the feet, with the added benefit of affecting the entire body through its actions as well.

## Chapter 12

# The New Coffee Break: Corporate Massage for a Digital Generation

.....

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Considering corporate massage
  - ▶ Sitting down to a massage chair
  - ▶ Going through the chair routine
- .....

**G**uess which of the following touch-gurus wrote these words: "Touch is a very powerful message. It is very honest. People know immediately when you touch them if you care about them."

- A. Brian Weiss, psychiatrist and author of *Many Live, Many Masters*.
- B. Deepak Chopra, proponent of Ayurveda, the ancient healing science of India, and author of books such as *Quantum Healing*.
- C. Ram Dass, modern mystic and author of such classics as *Be Here Now*.
- D. Ken Blanchard, corporate consultant and author of the business best-seller, *The One Minute Manager*.

Strangely enough, the answer is D, and Blanchard is basically talking about a pat on the back, not a massage. But his statement does point out the great need for people in the work environment to use the right kind of touch with each other.



Appropriate, stress-relieving touch in the workplace is so important that an entirely new category of massage has been invented in the past several years to specifically address this issue. This category is called *corporate massage*, and it has become quite popular in offices and workplaces around the world. With corporate massage, a professional massage therapist comes to your office with a specially designed chair that you sit on to receive a massage with your clothes still on. This saves time and makes the whole massage procedure easy, safe, and acceptable.





You've probably heard more than you want to about sexual harassment, abuse of power, and ruined careers, but the wrong kind of touch in the workplace can get you in a lot of trouble. Corporate massage, however, can help fulfill your *touch quotient* (your natural need for touch) while in an environment that otherwise stifles much healthy contact.

## Corporate Massage

Your first reaction to the thought of massage at work may be less than positive for several reasons. As you contemplate the idea, you may come up with some of the following:

- ✓ Can I really handle the thought of my co-workers lining up to get undressed and rubbed with almond oil in the employee lounge?
- ✓ What will my (wife/husband/girlfriend/boyfriend, and so on) say?
- ✓ Won't the boss think that this kind of massage is a waste of time? Or, if you're the boss: Won't my employees take advantage of this and turn the office into a massage parlor?
- ✓ Will I be in an awkward position on a table or chair and look stupid while receiving a massage at work?
- ✓ How much will the massage cost?
- ✓ Will it mess up my hair?

These concerns are all rational, and this section is meant to set you straight on what corporate massage really is so that you'll run straight out to contact your nearest practitioner and at least give it a try.

What does corporate massage look like, anyway? Well, imagine this scenario: It's late on a Friday afternoon. Your whole department has been under intense pressure to wrap up that humongous project you've been working on for months. Nerves are frayed. Happy hour is looming. No one can think about anything but escape. Then right at four o'clock, in walks a healthy-looking individual toting a strange, padded, chair-like contraption that he proceeds to unfold over in one corner. This is the "corporate massage" that your boss promised.

One brave soul offers to go first, and the rest of you watch while he sits down — fully clothed — on the device, which seems to support all of his weight easily at the knees, elbows, chest, and head. As he leans forward and relaxes, you can feel the pressure on your own limbs start to dissipate, too. The massage therapist begins with some strong kneading of the shoulders and upper back.

"Ahh, this is great!" roars your co-worker through the circular face rest. Quietly, but quickly, people start to drift over to that side of the room, and soon a line begins to form. One after another, everyone is treated to ten minutes of much-needed relief, and a funny thing starts to happen. Happy hour is no longer calling so urgently. As you stand around chatting with newly relaxed colleagues, the ideas begin to flow again, and you end up staying till after 7 p.m., coming up with a few great new concepts that will make this project even better.

Yes, scenarios like this one can actually occur. Massage in the workplace has many such benefits, including the following:

- ✓ Increases employee morale
- ✓ Lowers stress
- ✓ Decreases overuse injuries
- ✓ Provides some high-touch to counterbalance high-tech environments
- ✓ Offers employees something new and different

The benefits of this type of massage quickly outweigh the concerns I mention at the beginning of this section:

- ✓ Nobody has to undress, and if they really don't want their hair messed up, they just have ask the massage therapist not to massage their head.
- ✓ The massage is usually given in a public space and is very conservative.
- ✓ The boss realizes that happy employees are productive employees.
- ✓ Employees who receive this extra benefit are more likely to feel grateful and be more responsible.

So you're left with one last issue — who pays for all this? Normally, payment is handled in one of three ways:

- ✓ **The company pays:** This scenario, which is the most common, allows employees to forget about whether or not they can afford the massage, and it makes the boss look great.
- ✓ **Everyone contributes to a pool:** This scenario is less common, but some companies still choose it. Pulling those few dollars out of your pocket may hurt at first, but what you receive is better for you than the typical office-pool birthday cakes.
- ✓ **Everyone pays separately:** This scenario is the least common. Though it may prove quite popular, paying separately often leaves people feeling a little at loose ends. Should they pay? Should they not pay?

No matter what the scenario, the massage therapists often appreciate tips, unless everyone is aware that a service charge has been added up front.

Either way, the massage more than pays for itself almost immediately. A massage pro brought in once a week or once a month can truly upgrade the total work experience of everyone involved.

In addition to chair massage, many corporations now offer full body massage through their wellness programs, employee fitness programs, and so on. My advice? Take advantage of this benefit immediately.



Call a local corporate massage provider and ask him to come in for a free “demo-day.” With the prospect of potentially gaining a new, ongoing client, he’ll probably be eager for the opportunity to prove how good he is with no investment on your part. This approach is also a way to convince your boss that the expense involved is worth the improved morale and productivity. This situation is win-win-win: The massage provider wins new business. Your boss wins happier workers. And you win as the hero who introduced this great new idea to your co-workers.

## Massage Chairs

Massage in the workplace goes by various names, including corporate massage, on-site massage, and chair massage. But regardless of what you call it, this type of massage is guaranteed to involve the use of a specially constructed device known as the *massage chair* (see Figure 12-1).

Massage chairs were originally developed in the U.S. by a man named David Palmer who wanted an easy way to massage his clients on the job at the Apple Computer company. Now, several models are available from a number of suppliers. The basic idea is that people can lean forward into the device, taking a load off their hips and legs and thereby position themselves perfectly to receive a back, neck, and shoulder massage. Getting into one of these things is more like lying down than sitting in a chair. Try it sometime; you’ll be amazed at how supported and relaxed you feel.

Although they may look slightly intimidating at first, massage chairs are actually quite easy to get into and out of. Here’s how they work:

- 1. Place your knees against the pads and lean your chest forward onto the support; then wrap your hands around front and place your arms on the arm rest.**

The chair will be adjusted for you so that the face rest is the correct height; simply lean forward into it and feel your weight shift and become distributed evenly throughout your body.



If you’re wearing a dress, you can still get on. Just swivel your legs in modestly from the side.

**Figure 12-1:**  
The mas-  
sage chair,  
a strange-  
looking but  
comfortable  
piece of  
equipment.  
(This one  
was custom  
made for the  
authors by  
Golden  
Ratio  
Woodworks.)



2. **Make sure that the face rest is covered with a tissue or towel, for sanitary reasons.**

Wipe the surfaces down after each treatment to prevent body oils from building up on the material.

3. **Let the chair take your weight and the massage therapist do the rest.**

Don't try to support yourself in any way during the massage. Just relax and enjoy!



Make a little vow to yourself right here — the next time you spy one of these strange contraptions somewhere with a massage therapist standing by ready to work, take the plunge and jump aboard. You can find them in malls, at airports, in special storefronts like The Stress Station, and even on street corners. See what happens!

Of course, not everyone has access to chair massage. Perhaps you live in a small town where no one has ever heard of this concept before. Maybe you work at a place where people would look at you like you're insane for suggesting that you pay somebody for the privilege of sitting in such a strange contraption.



## Taking the chair on the road

Offices aren't the only place where massage chairs are put to good use. You also see them in the front lines at athletic events and disaster sites, among others.

For example, after Hurricane Andrew struck in south Florida, I and a crew of other massage

therapists headed to the epicenter with our trusty massage chairs to provide neck, shoulder, and back relief for weary soldiers and Red Cross volunteers.

If you don't have a specially made massage chair around, you can use a normal chair to receive many of the same benefits. As shown in Figure 12-2, simply turn the chair around and sit in it backwards. Then lean forward onto a pillow while your partner works on you. The techniques pictured in this chapter are done in a professional massage chair, but you can recreate them easily at home by using this setup.



**Figure 12-2:**  
If you don't have a custom-made, \$400 massage chair, a regular chair turned backwards works pretty well, too.

## The Chair Routine

Following is a simplified version of the chair massage routine that people learn in classes and workshops. You can follow it exactly or feel free to concentrate on the areas where your partner needs the most work.



You don't need any oil or cream to do this type of massage, and your partner definitely doesn't have to take his or her shirt off. Also, creating an ideal "inner chamber" (as described in Chapter 9) for this experience isn't so important either. Think of chair massage as a rough-and-ready kind of experience that you can enjoy anywhere, anytime, no matter how many distractions surround you.

The photographs in this chapter show some basic maneuvers. You're free to develop your own style based on the moves I show you in Chapter 10.

### *Shoulders and upper back*

The shoulders — where almost everyone holds a good amount of tension — are best part of the body to begin a chair massage. After your partner is comfortably seated, start with some kneading in that area (see Figure 12-3).

**Figure 12-3:**  
The chair offers a perfect angle from which to work the shoulders using hands, forearms, and elbows.



1. **Grasp the tops of both shoulders firmly, with your thumbs in back and fingers in front, and then begin kneading.**

Your kneading can be relatively firm. For variety, switch both hands to one shoulder and then the other, but return to both-shoulder kneading at the end.

2. **With your palms facing down, press the meaty underside of your forearms directly down on top of your partner's shoulders.**

For a more intense sensation, turn your hands palm up and press the forearm bones into the shoulder.

3. **For the ultimate in pressure, bend your arm and use the point of your elbow as a finely honed instrument to zero in on tight spots atop the shoulders.**

Use the fingers of your other hand to guide the elbow precisely into place, and then ease slowly into pressing because this move is very intense.

4. **Stepping back a couple feet, *lean* into your partner's back, supporting yourself with your thumbs against the ridge of muscles on either side of the spine.**

Lean back, slide down, and press again, hitting several points down along the spine to mid-back.

5. **With your elbow on the muscles alongside the spine, hit roughly the same points that you did with your thumbs.**

Be careful not to press directly against the spine with your elbows as this could be quite painful.



## Arms

When a person is seated in a massage chair, her arms are easily accessible. Support the entire weight of the arm in your hands while you're working on it so your partner doesn't have to help you.

1. **Squatting or bending at your partner's side (see Figure 12-4), use both hands to encircle the arm, starting at the top near the shoulder, and then squeeze.**

Release the squeeze, move down a couple inches, and squeeze again, repeating this process all the way to the wrist. If you want to add something to this move, try pressing with your thumbs as you're releasing pressure with your palms.

2. **Follow the hand massage routine from Chapter 11.**

Don't languish there too long in a squatting or bending position or you'll end up with a sore back yourself.

3. Standing up and stepping back a bit, grasp your partner's arm at the wrist and elbow then apply a little gentle shaking.

Afterwards, gently bring the arm back around to the front and lay it down again.

4. Repeat the process on the other arm.



**Figure 12-4:**  
You massage the arms from a squatting position either in front of the chair or to the side.

## Lower back

The lower back is the hardest part to get to during a chair massage because it's so low. You can kneel if you want to, or squat, to make these moves more comfortable on yourself.

1. When you finish the arms, brush lightly down the back to the lumbar area, get into a squatting or bending position again, and apply some firm pinpoint pressure (as described in Chapter 10) with the thumbs into the muscles on either side of the spine (see Figure 12-5).

Be careful not to press too firmly in the kidney area. (See Chapter 10 for the reasons.)







**Figure 12-5:**  
You have to  
squat or  
kneel to  
work the  
lower back.

2. Press in firmly with the heel of your hands against the upper portion of your partner's buttocks, and then make rapid circles with the right hand going clockwise and the left counterclockwise (see Figure 12-6).

First made famous in the movie, *The Karate Kid*, this move incorporates a little coordination on your part, along with some good old-fashioned rubbing. I know, it's complicated, but you can do it!

## Neck

As you can see in Figure 12-7, the neck is in the perfect exposed position for you to work on it to your heart's content.

1. Standing slightly to the side, use the thumb and fingers of one hand to knead up and down the back of the neck.

You can switch back and forth from side to side and hand to hand.

2. Starting at the base of the skull, press in with your thumb on the muscles to one side of the spine.

"Walk" your thumb down that muscle to the top of the shoulder, pressing in at half-inch intervals as you go. Repeat this maneuver two more times, each time slightly further away from the spine.

**Figure 12-6:**  
Pressing with the heels of the palms, move the left hand counter-clockwise and the right hand clockwise.



**Figure 12-7:**  
With the head tilted slightly forward into the face rest, massaging the neck is easy.



3. With your thumb on one side of the spine and your fingers on the other, make small firm circles on the base of the skull where it attaches to the neck.

## *Head*

You can modify the three steps in this section in many different ways, depending on your intentions and the situation you find yourself in. If you're giving seated massage to someone who's going out on a date ten minutes later, for example, don't mess her hair up too much because she wants to look neat when she stands up from the chair.

1. Plant your fingertips firmly on your partner's scalp and make small circles, moving the tissue below but not sliding over the hair (see Figure 12-8).

Repeat in several spots. Before you start, ask your partner whether he minds having his hair messed up a bit.

2. Reaching your fingers forward on both sides of the head, find the temples (which are partially covered by the face rest in a professional massage chair) and press in for 5 to 10 seconds.

This move is great for people with minor headaches.

3. Use your fingertips and thumbs to apply mini-kneading all over the outside rims of the ears, pulling gently up on the tops and down on the lobes.

## *Finish*

Chair massage is usually an invigorating experience, and people often have to get back to work or another activity soon afterwards. Tapping over the entire back with moderately firm pressure of the fists or open hands is a great way to finish the experience and send them off into the world again.

**Figure 12-8:**  
The scalp,  
temples,  
and ears are  
all easily  
accessible  
in the chair.





## Chapter 13

# Cubicle Maneuvers: Self-Massage for the Keyboard Jockey

---

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Utilizing self-massage
  - ▶ Following a self-massage mini-routine
  - ▶ Recognizing carpal tunnel syndrome
- 

**Y**ou're not always going to be able to convince somebody else to give you a massage. Like it or not, at times you'll be sore, achy, tired, emotionally needy, and just plain crying out for a massage, but the people around you will be much more interested in the football game on TV, or in going to lunch.

Don't despair. There are some simple massage techniques that you can use on yourself, without the need for anyone else's participation — or sympathy. And, coincidentally, those very techniques appear in this chapter!

These moves work equally as well at home, of course, but I'm including them here in the massage-at-work section because that's where so many people end up all stressed-out, with no outlets to relax. Sure, you can stand up in your cubicle and sing the Frank Sinatra tune, "I did it *my* way," to take a slight edge off the tension, but wouldn't quietly engaging in a few self-massage techniques be easier — and a little more discreet?

Some of these moves not only feel good, but can actually make quite a difference in your productivity level, which should make your boss happy, too. The techniques to fight carpal tunnel syndrome, for instance, can help keep you tapping away at the computer for years, and spare your company some expensive worker's comp bills at the same time.

So, limber up those fingers (use the massage-muscle building tips from Chapter 10 if you'd like) and get ready for a treatment from one of the most talented, and reliable, massage masters around — you.

## Self-Massage: The Basics

Say you're sitting at your desk. Your neck is killing you, but you don't want to ask a co-worker to massage it because the other people in your office may get nervous, jealous, or both. What're you gonna do? Well, you can grab that nifty massage gizmo that you have stashed in your bottom drawer, but it makes a loud, buzzing noise. Instead, sitting right there in your chair, you can give yourself an entire mini-massage, get some good relief, and be relatively discreet.

Self-massage is as easy as following a few simple guidelines. Don't stress the rest of your body out while trying to relax one spot. Use correct *body mechanics* (see Chapter 10) while applying self-massage moves, just as you do for partner massage. Here are the basic rules for self-massage:

- ✓ **Keep breathing:** This rule holds true whether you're massaging a partner or yourself.
- ✓ **Focus on the sore spots that you find and be willing to experience a little "pleasurable pain":** At the same time, don't overdo it — self-inflicted, black-and-blue marks are hard to explain.
- ✓ **Be intuitive:** Nobody knows better than you where that tight spot is. Using the routine in this chapter as a mere template; follow your own inner guidance.

## Self-Massage Mini-Routine

Keeping the points from the preceding section in mind, you can move straight into a ten-minute mini-routine right at your desk. If you're at home, you can do this on a sofa or a stool just as easily as you can on your chair at work. In fact, you can do this routine anywhere you can sit down, although you may look a little funny massaging your own feet on a city bus.

### *Irrigate your head*

One of the biggest causes for all of your problems, whether you know it or not, is a non-irrigated head. Think about it. All day long you're walking or standing or sitting, and your head is the highest point on your body. Your heart has to pump the blood against gravity to supply your brain, which can leave you feeling foggy-headed at times. Have you ever experienced that in the middle of a long day at work? Why not help your brain stay sharp by irrigating it with extra oxygen-rich blood?

A great way to start the self-massage routine is to simply lean forward in your chair, getting your head somewhere in the vicinity of your knees. Keep your feet flat on the ground and clasp your hands behind your back, as shown in Figure 13-1. If you feel limber enough, raise your hands up toward the ceiling for a nice stretch.

**Figure 13-1:**  
To start the self-massage, lean forward in your chair and bring some fresh blood to your brain.



### *Stretch your arms and upper back*

Sitting upright once again, continue your warm-up by reaching across your body with one arm and grasping it at the elbow with the opposite hand. Pull the elbow in against your chest (see Figure 13-2), which should create a stretching sensation across your shoulder. If you don't feel a stretching sensation, either you're super-limber, or you're not pulling on the elbow firmly enough.

Repeat with the other arm.

Reach around to the back of your neck this time, grasp your elbow once again and pull to the opposite side (as shown in Figure 13-3), which stretches your upper arm and further opens your shoulder joint. For an extra stretch, bend toward the side you're pulling with at the same time.

Repeat with the other arm.



**Figure 13-2:**  
Sitting up  
straight  
again, reach  
across your  
body to  
stretch the  
shoulder  
and upper  
back.



**Figure 13-3:**  
With one  
hand behind  
your head,  
raise the  
elbow,  
grasp it with  
the opposite  
hand, and  
pull for  
another  
stretch.



## *Massage your temples, face, and jaw*

Time to start the actual massage moves. Reach up and apply circular rubbing — see Chapter 10 — to your temples, as Figure 13-4a shows. This move is a good way to combat tension headaches. Make your circles slow, deliberate, and firm, staying in contact with one area on the skin while you move over the bones below.

Sliding your fingers up on to your forehead, continue the circular rubbing until your fingers meet in the middle above the nose (see Figure 13-4b). Then push in with the fingertips and glide back toward the temples again, keeping firm pressure against the skin the whole time. Repeat two more times.

You may be surprised at how much tension gets lodged in your jaw muscles. Tension hides out there like an enemy soldier wearing camouflage gear, especially while you're sitting at your desk, straining forward to concentrate on the computer screen. With the proper pressure and sensitivity, you can flush this tension out.

Using your fingertips, press in at the angle of your jaw, and while you're pressing, open and close your mouth slightly, which allows you to find the exact point that feels like it's holding the most tension. Apply slow deep circular rubbing to that spot, plus a little pinpoint pressure (both moves are described in Chapter 10), until you feel your jaw start to relax and drop (see Figure 13-4c).



Use enough pressure with these moves to sink your fingers into the jaw muscles slightly but not so much that you feel pain. Be careful; the jaw's a sensitive area.

Using your thumbs, "hook" them in to press up against the bone just beneath your eyebrow, right next to your nose, as shown in Figure 13-4d. This is another good headache point. Hold the pressure for about 5 seconds.



**Figure 13-4:**  
Massaging  
all around  
the face.

## ***Rub that neck***

Reach around to the back of your neck with both hands and hook your thumbs up under the base of the skull (see Figure 13-5a). Press in firmly and hold for 5 to 10 seconds. This move alone should leave you feeling more alert and relaxed.

Now drop your head forward and pick a hand, any hand (probably your dominant one), to perform kneading on the back of your neck as you see in Figure 13-5b. Squeeze from the base of your neck up to your head and then back down again. Repeat twice.

Turn your head to the left and reach across with your left hand to knead atop your right shoulder and up onto your neck, using your thumb to press into any knots you find along the way (see Figure 13-5c). This move also provides a good stretch for your neck. Repeat on the opposite side.

## ***Squeeze your arms and hands***

Starting at your shoulder, begin squeezing down your arm, as shown in Figure 13-6. When you reach a tender spot, hook your thumb in and hold for a moment. Stop when you reach your wrist, glide lightly back up to your shoulder, and repeat one more time.

Repeat on the opposite arm.

Pinch the webbing between your thumb and forefinger of your opposite hand (see Figure 13-7). Hold for 5 to 7 seconds. This spot may be quite sensitive. You can also do some coin rubbing on the fingers, circular rubbing on the wrists, and any of the other moves featured in the hand massage section of Chapter 11 — modified, of course, to be performed by one hand on yourself.



**Figure 13-5:**  
Getting rid  
of that pain  
in your  
neck.

### *Massage your lower back*

Scoot forward to the front of your chair and reach around to your lower back. Using your thumbs, press into several points along the muscles beside your spine (see Figure 13-8). Then lift and press onto the base of your spine (the sacrum) itself, hitting several more points. You can also use your knuckles quite effectively in this area by balling your hand up into a fist and “rolling” it over the area.

**Figure 13-6:**  
Squeeze  
down your  
arm from  
shoulder to  
wrist.



**Figure 13-7:**  
Press firmly  
with your  
thumb. This  
spot some-  
times helps  
relieve  
headaches.



### ***Squeeze your legs***

Bring one foot up onto your knee and use both hands to squeeze down all the way from your upper thigh, across the knee, and to your ankle, pressing in with your thumbs along an imaginary line down the inside of your leg. (See Figure 13-9).

**Figure 13-8:**  
Reach  
around to  
your lower  
back and  
use your  
thumbs  
and/or  
knuckles to  
press in.



**Figure 13-9:**  
Bend one  
leg and  
place your  
foot on your  
opposite  
knee to  
massage  
down  
your leg.



If you're in an area where you can take your shoes off, by all means do so and apply as many of the foot massage moves from Chapter 14 as you can.

When you finish the self-massage mini-routine, take a couple of deep, relaxing breaths (see the "Breathing lesson" sidebar in Chapter 7) before you dive into whatever activity you have lined up next.

### Why massaging yourself feels different

You may notice that even when you apply self-massage techniques with an incredible amount of verve and enthusiasm, they still don't feel quite as good as when somebody else applies the very same moves on the very same parts of your body. But why?

The reason is simple. Massage, like tickling (you can't do that very well to yourself either), is primarily a social interaction. Studies (yes, actual tickle studies by serious researchers) have shown that preschool children couldn't be

tickled when they were in a bad mood or by someone whom they didn't like. They were poked in the ribs and brushed on their feet, but the reaction was completely negative. It seems that tickling is as much about relationship and context as it is about contact. And so it is with massage. A large part of the enjoyment of a massage is the social interaction with another person, which actually causes the sensations to feel different.

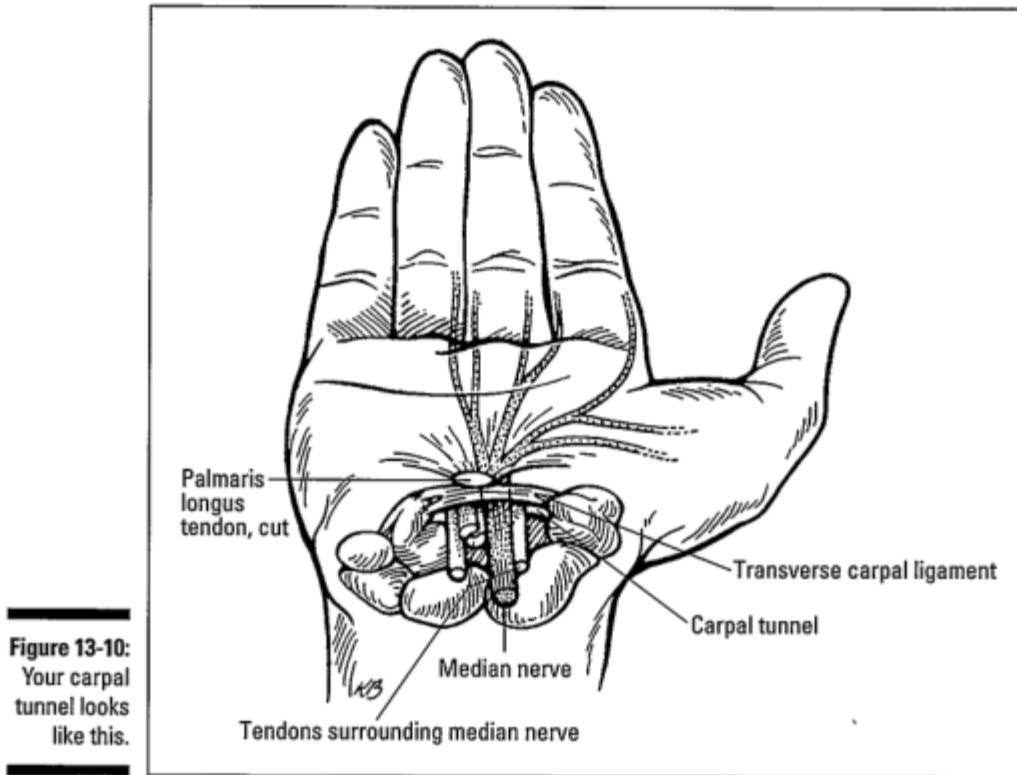
## Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)



You've probably heard the phrase *carpal tunnel syndrome* (CTS for short), and you know it has something to do with pain in the hand and wrist area, right? That's the "syndrome" part of the phrase. But what is the carpal tunnel anyway? An underground passage for carp? A tube running through your hand somewhere? No, the carpal tunnel is actually an area in your wrist, surrounded on three sides by the little bones of the hands (carpal bones) and on one side by the transverse carpal ligament, as shown in Figure 13-10. Several tendons pass through this "tunnel," along with the *median nerve*, a very important nerve that supplies sensation and action to most of your hand.

Inflammation or swelling of the tendons and tissues that surround the median nerve can compress it within the carpal tunnel's constricted space. This decidedly un-fun experience can cause pain, numbness, tingling, burning, and loss of hand strength, amongst other problems. Repeating the same wrist-intensive activity, such as typing on a computer keyboard, over and over and over again, triggers this inflammation.

Compression of the median nerve was recognized as a problem as far back as 1854; in 1947, Dr. George Phalen made his first diagnosis of "carpal tunnel syndrome." Today, this condition debilitates people at an alarming rate. It now affects approximately ten percent of all workers who engage in repetitive activities with their hands.



**Figure 13-10:**  
Your carpal  
tunnel looks  
like this.

## *Do you have CTS?*

If you've been experiencing some funky sensations in your own hands and arms lately, don't panic. You may just have some normal aches and pains caused by overwork. A nice vacation and some well deserved wrist-rest will put you right back in shape. However, CTS is not something to take lightly. Many people end up having to undergo surgery, endure considerable pain, and lose valuable time at work because of this condition.

As with any health problem, early detection is the key to effective treatment. If you notice any of the symptoms in the following bulleted list, immediately seek medical advice, in addition to trying the exercises and massage techniques in this section:

- ✓ You wake up in the middle of the night or first thing in the morning with numbness, tingling, and an achy feeling in your hands.
- ✓ Your little finger seems to be unaffected while the rest of your fingers experience pain and numbness.



- ✓ You begin losing strength in your hands: Your grip becomes weak; you begin dropping things.
- ✓ You experience pains shooting down your forearms.
- ✓ Your hands and wrists become swollen.



One way to test yourself for CTS is to take *Phalen's test*, which is quite easy to do. Completely flex your wrists and hold the backs of your hands together — without force — for 60 seconds (see Figure 13-11). Any numbness, tingling, or pain, indicates a positive test, and you should seek a physician's opinion.

**Figure 13-11:** Phalen's test for CTS. The backs of your hands are together, but without pressure, for 60 seconds.



## *What you can do about CTS*

At first, you don't have to do much to combat CTS. Simply shaking out your hands vigorously relieves the initial numbness or tingling. But the pain can progress to a point that makes your work unpleasant or even impossible. (CTS is not uncommon, by the way, in massage pros who're using their hands all day in quite intensive ways.)

The best strategy at this early stage is, of course, to stop doing what's causing the pain. However, because your pain-causing activity is often your money-making activity as well, the pain is often overruled. If you must continue the activity, you can do several things to try and improve the situation. Just one or a combination of the suggestions listed here may help you:

- ✓ **Take breaks:** Even short breaks during the work day help relieve the repetitive stresses you're putting on your hands.
- ✓ **Get ergonomic:** Make sure that your wrists are as straight as possible while working and that your back is upright. Use wrist rests for your keyboard and mouse. Don't press weight onto your wrists while working.

- ✓ **Immobilize it:** Use inexpensive splints and braces (available in drug and medical supply stores) to immobilize your wrist while working and even while sleeping.
- ✓ **Ice your wrist:** An ice pack on your wrist helps reduce the inflammation of tendons and tissues in your carpal tunnel.
- ✓ **Apply heat:** Heat helps soothe tightened muscles in your upper arms, shoulders, and neck that often accompany CTS.
- ✓ **Seek treatment**
  - **Chiropractic:** Spinal adjustments may help relieve pressure on the nerves of your arm and hand, reducing pain.
  - **Acupuncture:** This therapy balances the entire system and may help heal the injured nerve.
  - **Ultrasound:** High-frequency sound waves may help relieve pain and inflammation.
  - **Physical therapy:** Physical therapy includes many types of therapy that can help rehabilitate the wrist area after treatment.
  - **Massage therapy:** Certain massage therapists are experts in CTS relief.
  - **Homeopathy:** Some good anti-inflammatory ointments and creams are available that can be used alone or in conjunction with any of the other treatments. Homeopathy utilizes minute amounts of a remedy that would cause symptoms (in this case inflammation) in a healthy person.
  - **Surgery:** Surgery involves cutting (and sometimes severing) the transverse carpal ligament that surrounds your wrist, which is a pretty dramatic step to take. Pressure is taken off the median nerve, and eventually scar tissue grows in to fill the gap. Sometimes, in later stages, it's the only thing that will help. But then you run the risk of re-experiencing the pain as the scar heals and the tissues tighten around the carpal tunnel once again.
- ✓ **Use the exercises and self-massage techniques in this section.**

## *Exercise and self-massage for CTS*

The following are simple techniques that are meant to help, not cure, CTS. Remember, always seek the advice of a physician when treating any serious health problem.



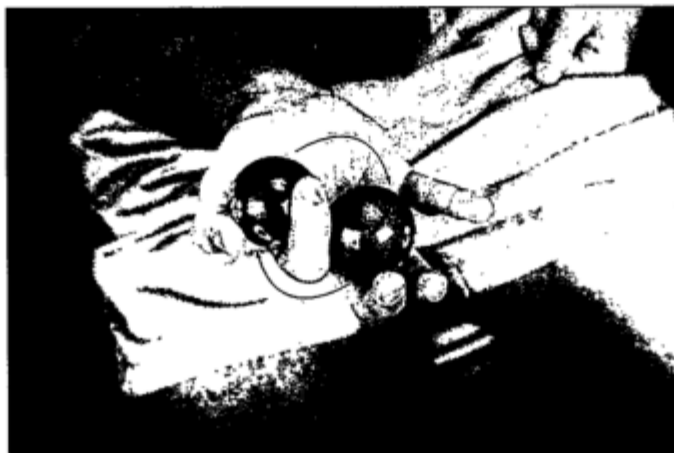
If you want some up-to-date information on CTS, visit [www.sechrest.com/mmg/cts/ctsintro.html](http://www.sechrest.com/mmg/cts/ctsintro.html), where you can even view an animation of what CTS surgeries look like.

***Chinese exercise balls***

Steve Chagnon, a massage therapist who studied in China and the U.S., has developed a treatment program for CTS sufferers, and he offers a simple approach for people who want something they can do for themselves. According to him, Chinese exercise balls are an effective, consistent way to treat this situation.

Chinese exercise balls are inexpensive and widely available in department stores, specialty shops, and Chinese grocery stores. They're a little smaller than a golf ball, and they come in pairs. To use them, you put them both in one palm and rotate them around each other, using only the one hand to create the movement (see Figure 13-12).

**Figure 13-12:**  
Using the  
Chinese  
exercise  
balls is a  
quick and  
easy way to  
relieve some  
CTS pain.



Most squeeze-gizmos get all your muscles flexing and extending at the same time, but with the exercise balls you're only flexing one muscle at a time, in rotation, which helps to pump your lymph fluids. Traditionally, the exercise balls are said to stimulate reflex points in the palm, but this lymph-pumping action is a more important factor in addressing CTS, according to Chagnon, who believes that a build-up of lymph fluids in the wrist area is a major contributing factor to the condition (see the explanation of the lymph system in Chapter 1).

Just using the exercise balls five minutes a day will help. You may want to keep them nearby and pick them up during computer downloads or while booting up. Warming up your arm and hand muscles in this way at the beginning of a work session is especially important.

*Self-massage for lymphatic drainage*

"Once you realize how it works," states Chagnon, "CTS can be looked at as a plumbing problem with the lymph fluids." Since 60 percent of lymph flow is in the top  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch of your skin, all massage moves lymph. His technique, called *Specific lymphatic massage* clears superficial tissues of excess lymph fluids and in doing so reduces the volume of lymph fluids in the extremities as well.



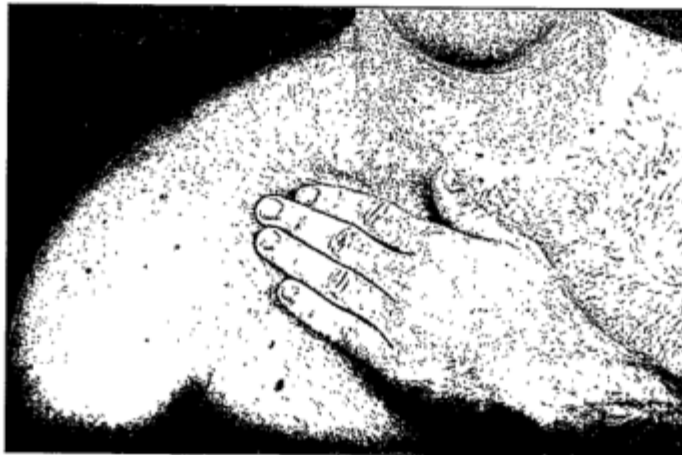
When your hand and wrist hurt, the natural tendency is to start massaging at the site of the pain, but starting at the "lymph drain" (a point just under your right collar bone where your lymph empties back into your circulatory system) and working your way back along to the problem is actually more effective. Leave direct manipulations of your painful wrist to a massage pro instead of jabbing in there yourself, no matter how tempting it is.



Although you're working far from the painful area itself, this move helps unclog the main lymphatic drain where it all dumps out into the circulatory system at the junction of the *subclavian vein* and jugular vein. Lymph drainage massage in this area reduces hydraulic pressure on all the tissues down the arm into the wrist and carpal tunnel.

Using very light pressure (about the amount you feel when a nickel rests on your skin), lay your hand on the opposite side of your chest with your palm down and your fingers alongside the lower edge of your collar bone. Then slide your skin up over your collar bone with a very short stroke of only  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long (see Figure 13-13). Continue with this move for about 5 minutes on whichever side of your body is affected or 5 minutes on each side if you're experiencing pain in both of your hands. Then you may want to drink a glass or two of pure water to help flush your system of toxins.

**Figure 13-13:**  
A light pressure on the skin up over your collar bone helps drain lymph from the arm, improving CTS.



Just this one move itself will offer some relief by beginning to drain lymph from the area. For more information on the technique, visit Chagnon's Web site at [www.carpaltunnelmassage.com](http://www.carpaltunnelmassage.com).

Another technique you can use is some self-kneading on your forearm, as shown in Figure 13-14. Overuse of the muscles in this area can be a main contributing factor to CTS, and releasing some of the tension there may help reduce pain.

**Figure 13-14:**  
Kneading on  
your forearm  
loosens  
muscles  
and aids  
circulation.



## Chapter 14

# Relief for the Feet with Reflexology

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ The problem of high heels and other enemies of the feet
- ▶ Reflexology
- ▶ Foot massage routine

**O**ne great universal truth exists outside the boundaries of any race, religion, or culture. A truth that has stood for centuries throughout human history, it is so fundamental that most of us take it for granted. That truth is this: Almost nothing beats a good foot rub.

Yes, I'm aware that some people are not big fans of foot rubs and in fact don't want their feet touched at all. In this chapter, however, I flagrantly disregard these people, because the vast majority of us absolutely love foot massage. In fact, entire civilizations have been built up and sustained for the sole purpose of giving certain people enough power, money, and influence to be able to get other people to rub their soles.



You may know a certain person in your own circle who is famous for giving "good foot." Some people seem to have a special knack for it, almost as if foot massage were a completely separate entity from body massage. Foot massage isn't really separate from the whole-body massage we discuss in Chapter 11, but feet definitely deserve a chapter of their own. After all, feet have a massage technique all their own, called *reflexology*, which we cover in this chapter.

## High Heels and Other Enemies of the Feet



If you're a woman and you wear high heels, you have an especially big problem to deal with. I'll never forget the first woman I saw on my massage table with high-heelitis. She was lying down, relaxed and comfortable; but her legs and feet were still bent into the position they would have been in if her shoes had still been on — feet extended, toes pointed down, calves flexed. Extended wearing of those torture devices we know as high heels can actually change the shape of your lower body. The effects reach all the way up into your hips, lower back, and spine.

If you're a man and you wear high heels, you'll have the same problems with your calves and lower back, plus the added problem of seldom finding anything at a clothing store that truly matches your choice of footwear. What a dastardly predicament!

The common problems certain shoes cause are some of the reasons that a large number of massage pros wear Birkenstock-type sandals. We want to give our feet and bodies a little break from the pounding they take on the cruel streets of life.

Part of the reason feet get so sore is the delicate nature of their structure. They sustain your entire weight during walking, standing, running, and so on. Thousands of pounds of cumulative pressure, day in and day out, press on 26 relatively small bones. Add to that the fact that you have approximately 72,000 nerve endings in each foot, making them some of the most sensitive parts of your body, and you can see why keeping your feet happy can be a tough job.

## Reflexology



The feet deserve massage, just for being feet, but another reason exists for concentrating some extra time on your feet and perhaps even devoting an entire session to foot massage. I'm talking about *reflexology*. You've probably heard this strange word somewhere before, right? Maybe on the Discovery Channel, or in a magazine with a picture of a New Age M.D. on the cover. But did you really know what the word meant? Quiz yourself by trying to complete the following sentence. Reflexology is:

- A. The practice of stimulating certain points on one area of the body (usually the feet) that have an effect on corresponding reflex areas in other parts of the body.

- B. The art of developing fast reflexes for use in such real-world situations as gunfights and race car driving.
- C. The act of flexing something over again after you've flexed it once already.
- D. None of the above.

The answer, as you may have suspected, is A, but just knowing that doesn't do you much good, does it? Not unless you know a little of the background of reflexology and the philosophy behind this unique therapy, as well.

## Zone Therapy



The origins of modern reflexology are rooted in another treatment method called *zone therapy*. In 1917, Dr. William H. Fitzgerald of Boston City Hospital published a book called *Zone Therapy, or Relieving Pain at Home*. In it, he stated that many types of health problems could be helped, or even cured, by applying pressure to various strategic points, mostly on the hands.

This whole idea did not catch on like wildfire, but one of Dr. Fitzgerald's associates, a therapist in his office named Eunice Ingham, took the idea and tweaked it a bit, experimenting with many people, mostly on their feet, which she thought were more sensitive than the hands. Eventually, she wrote her own books, *Stories the Feet Can Tell*, and that follow-up favorite, *Stories the Feet Have Told*. Ingham's work and her books heralded the birth of modern reflexology.



The work of Eunice Ingham is continued today at the International Institute of Reflexology, founded in 1973. You can call or write the institute to request books, charts, tools, and more.



But just what is *zone therapy* anyway? According to zone theory, your body can be divided (metaphorically, of course) into long slender pieces. Everything that's going on in any one part of a particular zone can be felt in a distant part of that same zone. You can see, then, how something happening in your abdomen can be reflected, or felt, in your foot. By stimulating a certain point in the foot, you can treat the pancreas, for example.

All of this talk about reflexes and zones may leave you feeling a little "zoned out" yourself, but don't let that worry you. The whole concept is pretty simple if you just remember that the bottoms of the two feet put together can be looked at like a miniature map of the entire body. So the head is up by the big toe, the spine goes down the middle, and so on. Figure 14-1 shows a reflexology chart.





**Figure 14-1:**  
A reflexology chart.



Some people swear by reflexology as a life-saving healing method. In fact, the woman I learned the technique from was diagnosed with a serious form of cancer and not given much chance of survival. None of the conventional treatments seemed to be helping, so as a last resort she turned to a Greek man in his nineties who specialized in reflexology. He also recommended coffee enemas. Within several months, this woman was cured and has been living a normal, productive life for over 20 years. (After the experience, however, she did develop a slight aversion to coffee shops.)

Frankly, nobody can tell you why reflexology works. But the truth is it often does. Reflexology is still a *theory*, but one with practical applications, and it certainly won't hurt you to give it a try. It may indeed help your overall health, but at the very least reflexology is guaranteed to feel darn good on your feet.

## Foot Massage Routine

This section gives you a 20-minute foot massage routine based on the principles of reflexology. The routine is so easy to do that almost anyone can follow

the instructions and perform the entire routine from start to finish the very first time, even members of the United States legislature. So, of course, that means you should have no problem at all.

## *Positioning*

First, get yourself and your partner in a comfortable position. The partner-reclining position shown in Figure 14-2 is the one favored by professional foot massagers around the world, but you can also position your partner on a bed or massage table so that her feet are just at the edge. She can even lie on the floor. Also, pay attention to the way you're bending over to access your partner's soles and toes. You don't want to hurt yourself while trying to help someone else.



You can perform this routine through stockings or socks if you don't want to remove them. So far, though, no method has been devised to perform reflexology through a pair of shoes.

## *Points to remember*

If you want to remain friends with the person you're giving the foot massage to, keep in mind a few things when you're about to dig into her soles:

- ✓ Start on the left foot. This compliments your partner's natural digestion and circulatory patterns.
- ✓ Don't use oil, because it makes the foot too slippery. Corn starch works well to absorb excess moisture, so rub some on your partner's feet before you begin.
- ✓ Always talk to your partner and ask for feedback.
- ✓ Don't diagnose any problems or treat someone for serious disorders (leave that to physicians).
- ✓ Don't use any instruments or tools to push against the feet (such as pencil erasers for example, which have been known to get lodged between toes). Use only your fingers and thumbs.
- ✓ Never push so hard that you cause pain or discomfort. If your partner is in pain, ease up your pressure a little bit.
- ✓ Finish one foot completely, and then go on to the next.

**Figure 14-2:**  
Kick your  
feet up. Rest  
a spell. This  
is an optimal  
position for  
reflexology.



## *Basic moves*

You can make certain basic, time-tested moves on the feet. These moves have been passed down by practicing reflexologists from generation to generation, and now you can use them, too. This section provides you with detailed explanations of these moves and how to use them yourself.

### *Cradling*

Cradle your partner's foot (at either the ball of the foot or the ankle) in both palms, with your fingers pointing straight ahead. Then move your hands back and forth rapidly, just an inch or so (as shown in Figure 14-3). This move is especially good for warming up, and you can also use it in the middle of a foot massage to give your partner a little extra pleasure. Cradling feels so good it was called "dessert" by one of my colleagues who specialized in reflexology at a spa where I worked.

### *Thumb walking*

The most basic move of all in foot reflexology is "thumb walking," which is a lot trickier than it looks. Start by placing the pad of your thumb firmly against your partner's foot (as shown in Figure 14-4a). Then bend the thumb and creep it forward like an inchworm across the surface, pressing in while you do so (as shown in Figure 14-4b). Every time you bend your thumb, move your hand forward just slightly. You may want to practice this technique a little before subjecting your partner to a spastic or weak inchworm movement.

**Figure 14-3:**  
This move is  
called  
"cradling,"  
and it feels  
most  
delicious.

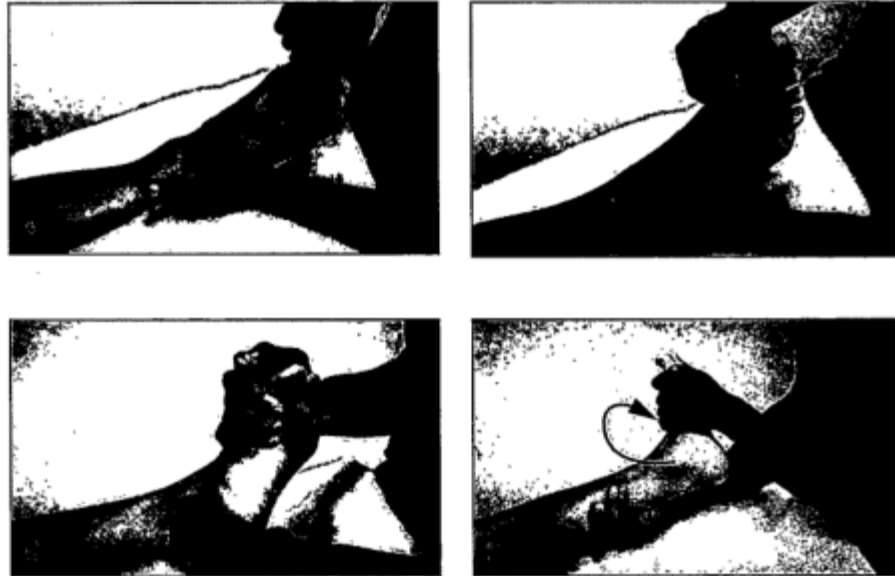


**Figure 14-4:**  
Start with  
your thumb  
in the posi-  
tion on the  
left (a); then  
inch your  
thumb for-  
ward while  
bending it  
to wind up  
in the posi-  
tion on the  
right (b).



### *Index finger technique*

Sometimes (for example, when you're working on the sides and tops of your partner's feet), using your thumbs is just plain awkward. That's when you can use the length of your index finger to slide next to the ankles and between the long bones that run from the heels to the toes, for example, as shown in Figure 14-5a.



**Figure 14-5:**  
Using your  
index  
finger (a),  
hooking  
in (b),  
wringing (c),  
and doing  
circles (d).

### *Hooking in*

Using the tips of the thumbs or index fingers, bend slightly at the last knuckle and “hook in” at the point you’re targeting (see Figure 14-5b). This technique allows for some pinpoint pressure on the bony, intricate surfaces of the foot.

### *Wringing the foot*

Because the arch of the foot corresponds to the spine in reflexology, this technique is like giving a chiropractic adjustment to the foot. Grasping your partner’s toes with one hand and her heel with the other, give a gentle twist in opposite directions as if wringing out the arch of the foot (as shown in Figure 14-5c).

### *Ankle circles*

Holding your partner’s ankle in one hand, circle her foot around in both directions (clockwise and counterclockwise) for several seconds, stretching the muscles and tendons in the area, and warming up the ligaments (see Figure 14-5d).

## *Step-by-step*

Begin by getting into the most comfortable position, as mentioned earlier, and then do this warm-up:

- ✓ Cradle the ball of the foot.
- ✓ Cradle the ankle.
- ✓ Do ankle circles.
- ✓ Stretch the toes back and forth.
- ✓ Squeeze the foot.

Now you're ready to move into the 15-step foot massage routine that follows, which is based on the work of Claire Marie Miller in North Carolina.



Remember to start on the left foot, complete the entire routine, and then repeat the process on the right foot. Refer to Figure 14-1 if you need help.

- 1. Head: Your head is filled with lots of important anatomical highlights, such as the brain. It's worth spending a few extra minutes here as you begin your reflexology routine.**

To affect the reflexes of the head, do some small, focused, thumb walking in three lines down the big toe and three lines across the bottom of the big toe.

- 2. Neck: The neck can be an area of nagging pain. Sometimes working the reflex areas for the neck can help bring relief.**

Do thumb walking back and forth along the base of the big toe, right where it attaches to the foot. To specifically treat the region at the base of the back of your skull, "hook in" with your thumb on the lower, inside part of your big toe, between it and the second toe. This is often a key point for relieving headaches and neck tension.

- 3. Face: Yes, even the face has a reflex on the foot, which is perhaps why it seems so easy to put your foot in your mouth.**

Do thumb walking across the top of the big toe, then "hook in" right at the base of the toenail.

- 4. Sinuses: The sinus cavities are hollow areas in your head, behind your face. Keeping them clear and healthy helps you breathe more easily.**

The points for the sinuses can be found on the bottoms of all of the little toes. To stimulate them, do three lines of thumb walking down the bottom of each toe, and "hook in" right in the center of each toe for a couple seconds.

- 5. Ears/eyes: The ears and eyes have reflexes by the base of the middle toes. Stimulating those reflexes may help you keep your senses of sight and hearing keen and alert.**

Using your knuckles or both thumbs, press in on the spots on the bottom of the foot between the second and third toes (for the eyes) and between the third and fourth toes (for the ear reflexes). You can press both areas at the same time. The spots are on the very edge of the bottom of the feet, almost on the webbing between the toes themselves.

- 6. Lungs/chest:** The area around the balls of your foot reflects your air passages, bronchial tubes, lungs, and chest muscles. If you stop breathing, you may run into some serious problems, and so you will benefit by paying attention to the healthy functioning of your lungs.

Use the index finger technique for this reflex, sliding the length of your finger between the long metatarsal bones on top of the foot and pressing in against them. You can also switch your hand around and slide your finger between the same bones from the bottom.

- 7. Diaphragm:** The diaphragm (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7) is the muscle at the bottom of your lungs that is responsible for keeping you breathing. So, if you like breathing, try to keep this muscle happy.

Pushing the toes up toward your partner's head with one hand, use the thumb of the other hand to walk back and forth along an imaginary line at the base of the ball of the foot, approximately two inches from the toes.

- 8. Spine:** Many people experience back pain, and many of those same people seem to have pain in the arches of their feet as well. A coincidence? Not when you know that the arches of the feet correspond in reflexology with the spine.



Do thumb walking up and down the reflex for the spine, which is basically the arch of the foot. You may want to switch thumbs when you're moving up the arch and back down, which will make this technique less awkward.

Then "wring" the spine out by twisting the arch of the foot. Hold the heel with one hand and the toes with the other, while twisting gently in opposite directions.

- 9. Inner organs:** The center of the bottoms of the feet correspond to several of your internal organs, and this is the area where you can easily get confused. You may want to study the chart in Figure 14-1 quite closely as you go about stimulating the reflexes here. The internal organs are where you take the outside world in and transform it into your body. Important digestive and filtering processes take place here.

When you're working on the left foot, do thumb-walking in the center below the lung and diaphragm reflexes, where you'll find the areas corresponding to the stomach, the pancreas, the spleen, and the heart. Then walk your thumb from left to right across the center of the foot and down the outside, which corresponds with the last half of the large intestine.



When working on the right foot, walk the thumb in the same area, but as you do, you'll be stimulating the liver and gallbladder instead. Then walk your thumb up the outside edge of the heel and across the center of the foot to stimulate the first half of the large intestine.

Understanding the large intestine reflex is easier if you consider both feet together. Picture the large intestine going up the right side of the abdomen, across the upper abdomen, and down the left side (because this is what it actually does). Now you can imagine how you're affecting this reflex by walking your thumb up the outside of the right foot, across the center of both feet, then down the outside of the left.

10. **Small intestine:** "A man is only as happy as his digestive tract." This ancient saying, which I just made up this minute, highlights the importance of healthily functioning intestines.

Using your thumbs to walk helter-skelter in all directions, crisscross back and forth over the bottom of the heel, which corresponds to the lengthy loops of the small intestine.

11. **Hips/knees:** Your hips and knees are your foundation, and stimulating these reflexes can help keep you in balance.



Walk your thumbs along the upper part of the foot toward the outer edge, midway between the toes and the heel, moving in all directions around the general area of the *cuboid bone*, which is the little protuberance that sticks out the farthest in the middle of your foot on the outside edge.

12. **Sciatic:** The largest nerve in your body, the sciatic can be the unfortunate victim of a proportionally large amount of pain.

Using the thumb and index finger, pinch all along the back of the base of the heel, then up a couple inches along the Achilles tendon toward the calf. Repeat several times.

13. **Reproductive organs:** Men and women, as you've undoubtedly noticed by now, have different reproductive organs. But, as it so happens, the associated reflexes are located on the same areas of the feet for both sexes.

Halfway down from the center of the ankle bones, toward the bottom of the heels, you'll find the reflexes for the reproductive organs. The inner ankle points correspond to the uterus or prostate, and the outer ankle points correspond to the ovaries or testicles. Use your thumb or the tip of your index finger to "hook in" for a few seconds on these points. You can also walk your thumb up over the top of the ankle from one point to another, which stimulates the fallopian tubes.



## What to do if you find a problem

While you're exploring the various reflex areas on your partner's foot, you may come across a very specific spot that is significantly more tender than the rest. You'll be able to tell you've hit a tender area, because your partner will suddenly jerk her foot out of your hand and shout, "Whoa, what's *that* spot?" When this happens, consulting your reflexology chart, discovering the corresponding reflex, and immediately proclaiming the presence of a life-threatening disease in that area of the body is *not* a good idea. Feel free to tell your partner which part of the body the tender area represents, but that's all you should do. This is not a time to show off

your newfound knowledge of foot anatomy and proclaim yourself a medical expert.

Rather than diagnosing her "illness," tell her that if the pain persists in that spot, she should consider consulting with her physician and get a general checkup. You actually may have stumbled upon a viable health concern here. Then again, your partner may have stepped on a tack the day before, in which case, the tender spot you're hitting in the center of her left foot is simply a boo-boo, not the sign of a diseased spleen.



Stimulating the reproductive organ reflex points for pregnant women is said to help induce labor. Although I've never heard of a woman going into premature labor due to a massage to the foot, just to play it safe, stay away from this area completely if your partner may possibly be pregnant. Some people skip foot reflexology altogether on potentially pregnant people for this reason.

- 14. Bladder and kidneys: Save these reflexes for the end of the routine, because they're organs of elimination, and stimulating them promotes a cleansing reaction.**

Starting near the heel, use thumb walking up and back along the arch of the foot, almost up to the ball of the foot. This line is a little more onto the bottom of the foot than the spine reflex (explained in Step 8). Repeat twice.

- 15. Overall squeeze of the foot: Never finish a foot without saying good-bye to it first. You may want to reapply some of the warm-up moves from the beginning as a cool-down here. Reflexology can be rather intense, and leaving your partner with some nice, pleasurable sensations at the end is a good idea.**

Finish with an overall squeeze of the foot, very quickly touching all the areas you've worked on before, cradling a little bit, and generally being nice. Some people like to apply a soothing skin cream at this point. Cooling mint preparations feel especially good, and you can find plenty of mint cream options at popular bath stores.

## Part V

**By Rich Tennant**



"I've tried massage, meditation, and aromatherapy but nothing seems to work. I'm still feeling dizzy and disoriented all day."

## *In this part . . .*

**A**lright, you can confess. You've finally gotten all the way to Part V, and still there's a nagging little voice in the back of your head saying something silly like, "Massage really isn't for me, at least not on a consistent basis. Sure, maybe as a novelty once or twice it's great, but how am I supposed to take advantage of it in real life? Isn't it just for the rich and famous, after all?"

No, no, no! Don't get so down on yourself like that. There are lots of ways that you can enjoy massage in many areas of your life, areas that perhaps you hadn't thought of before. That's what this section is all about.

You don't need to be rich and famous, for example, to take part in the luxury spa lifestyle you've seen on TV. Chapter 15 shows you how to simply and inexpensively recreate those experiences for yourself, your friends, and your family. Or say you're a weekend warrior looking for a way to stay limber and uninjured while pursuing your part-time passion for sports. Then the massage moves and stretches in Chapter 16 should be perfect for you.

And how about if you have a new baby? Or if you're pregnant? Or 96 years old? Chapter 18 provides easy-to-use tips and techniques made exactly for you. Of course, if you're "in the mood" and you're with that special someone, you can use massage as a sensual prelude to your encounters, as explained in Chapter 19.

Finally, if you find that people are calling all hours of the day and night asking for massage, telling you you're a "natural" and that you have "great hands," Chapter 20 offers some tips on going pro and creating a successful career for yourself based on helping others feel better.

Whether you're an athlete, an infant, a road warrior, a hedonist, a sexy octogenarian, or expecting triplets, you'll find something here that can improve many levels of enjoyment, pleasure, and health in your life. Massage truly is for every body.

## Chapter 15

# The Spa Lifestyle: Massage, Youth, and Beauty

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Understanding spas
- ▶ Choosing the right spa
- ▶ Looking at fantastic spa treatments
- ▶ Finding massage specialty stores

**E**ver notice how some people seem like they were born with a silver-plated bottle of Evian water in their mouths? They're the ones out there living it up at expensive luxury spas, getting all the massages, right? Not!

Over the past decade, the household income of the average spa-goer has dropped from around \$500,000/year down to about \$50,000/year. That one "0" makes a lot of difference. Today, spas are for everybody. If you're not making \$50,000/year, don't despair. With the advent of *day spas*, which I describe in this chapter, the experience of luxury is becoming even more accessible to people from all walks of life. And, if you're steadfastly opposed to spending money, this chapter also contains a few tips and techniques to turn your very own home into a luxury spa, almost for free.

## *Spas: More than Just a Pretty Jacuzzi*

Spas are not, as commonly believed, just a kind of Jacuzzi. Although the word *spa* has become interchangeable with *hot tub*, a spa can also be a really cool place where all kinds of exciting things take place, like chardonnay grape massages for instance.



Back in the good old days of King Louis' court in France (it may have been Louis XV, or XIV, or perhaps VIP . . . I'm not sure), certain ladies-in-waiting found themselves waiting around so much that they began feeling jaded. "Another typical almond-oil massage from our love slave, Gregory?" said one lady to the next. "How boring."

So, they came up with a new idea. Their servants filled huge vats with smashed chardonnay grapes, and the ladies proceeded to jump in *au naturel* for a total-immersion aromatherapy experience. The sensation was so new, and the positive effects of the grapes on their skin so pronounced, that they decided to make it a tradition.

Thus was born an early version of a spa treatment that can still be experienced today. At the Meadowood Spa in Napa Valley, California, for example, they offer a treatment based on this theme (ladies-in-waiting not included). The distilled essence of chardonnay grapes is infused into the massage cream used by the massage therapists there.

## Choosing a Spa

Today, whether you plan to immerse yourself in grapes, or to simply try to lose a few pounds and look your best, you can choose from a large array of spas to visit. They range from super-luxurious to down-home rustic. So how do you decide where to go?



### Spas = H<sub>2</sub>O

What is a spa anyway, and what does the word *spa* really mean? Originally, it was a Latin acronym from the words, *Sanitas Per Aqua*, meaning *health through water*. This was a phrase favored by the Romans, who took those three words with them everywhere they went, including a town in modern-day Belgium that had healing hot spring waters bubbling out of the ground. They called this town Spa, perhaps

also in reference to the Latin words '*espa*' (meaning "fountain") and '*sparsa*' (from *spargere*, meaning, "to bubble up").

You can go to Spa, Belgium, and immerse yourself in the waters there. Visit 209.41.63.136/spa/spa.htm on the Web to find out more.

First, knowing what kinds of spas are out there helps. Spas fall into three basic categories:

- ✓ **Destination spas:** This is the King Louis kind of spa, the type of place you go when you want a super special experience. They're called *destination spas* because they are dedicated to the spa experience and nothing else. When people visit them, the spa is their final destination, and they usually stay for several days to a week.
- ✓ **Resort spas:** Becoming more and more popular, these spas are an important part of a larger resort. Guests may travel to the resort for other reasons, but many of them take advantage of the spa while they're there.
- ✓ **Day spas:** The fast food joints of the spa world. Day spas are places to go to receive spa treatments, massages, and more, and you don't have to travel far or stay overnight to do so.

## Visiting the spa down the street



These days, you can probably find a day spa available right in your very own neighborhood. Several multimillion dollar day spas have opened recently, but the majority existed first as hair salons that expanded into spa services. Some good massage is going on at day spas, because many skilled massage therapists are finding work there.



Although the true origins of the term *day spa* are somewhat shrouded in mystery, the term is generally attributed to a business woman and spa owner from Connecticut named Noelle DeCaprio. She started her day spa in 1978 and is credited with being the first person to classify her establishment in this manner.



Want to give your Aunt Minnie in Cleveland a spa surprise for her birthday but you don't know how to set it up? Just call 1-888-SPA-WISH (888-772-9474) and order a gift certificate that's good for massages, facials, and other treats at nearly 800 day spas across the U.S. And check out the coupon at the back of this book to receive a discount!

## Choosing a spa that's right for you

Spas range from rugged adventure outposts in the desert to the most puffy pampering palaces on the planet. You have almost unlimited choices when you're deciding where to go, which is great, but the number of choices may also make your decision kind of difficult.

Some spas, such as the Green Valley spa in St. George, Utah, offer rock climbing on the menu right alongside their massages. Some spas expect you to join in on every exhausting 6 a.m. mountain hike they offer. Others leave you alone to steep in herbal baths all day.

So, how do you choose?

First, decide what's important to you and what you want to accomplish on your spa trip. This can usually be broken down into a few basic categories: fitness, healing, spirituality, relaxation, or some combination of these.

Next, talk to someone who's been there before, or get the details from a reliable source. Here are three sources that may help you make the right match with a spa:

- ✓ Get in touch with Spa Finders travel agency and check out their magazine by calling 800-ALL-SPAS (800-255-7727) or visiting [www.spafinders.com](http://www.spafinders.com).
- ✓ Pick up the spa travel guide, *Fodor's Healthy Escapes* (Fodor's Travel Publications), by Bernard Burt, which lists great spas of all types in many parts of the world.
- ✓ The International SPA Association (ISPA) has a Web site, the Global Spa Guide, at [www.globalspaguide.com](http://www.globalspaguide.com), which may help you find the right place for your spa trip.

## Spa Treatments



So what do people actually do at spas all day, other than get massages and douse themselves in crushed grapes? Believe it or not, they are also in pursuit of improved health. Yes, that's right. And the way they achieve it is to eat spa food, follow a spa exercise program, and receive what are known as *spa treatments*, all of which are good for you in one way or another. Spa treatments include:

- ✓ Scrubs
- ✓ Wraps
- ✓ Hydrotherapy
- ✓ Facials
- ✓ Mud, seaweed, and other messy things

If you don't want to travel to one of the three types of spas to receive these treatments, you can create them at home for yourself and your family. The advantages of this approach are obvious. First, if you're like most people, you live right in your own home, so you won't have to travel far to get there. Also, having your husband or wife or best friend wrap you in herb-infused sheets is a lot cheaper than paying a professional wrapper to do it.

If you're like most people, a 10-day spa vacation in Maui is a little out of reach, except perhaps as a once-in-a-lifetime dream vacation. But you can still take advantage of your local day spa a few times a year, and create some spa experiences for yourself at home, each and every week. Each type of spa treatment I list below includes a version you can try at home, and, as you can see, they're not that difficult.



For the following treatments, you need a very specialized piece of equipment. Don't worry — it's very inexpensive, and you can find it in the spa department of your local drug store. It looks amazingly like a simple 6-pack cooler, but I call it a *spa thermal unit*. Use it to store the hot moist towels that you need to wipe off spa goop from your partner's body.

## Scrubs



During their stay at a spa, many people sign up for an exfoliation, which is a word that comes from that ancient spa language, Latin. It means "to strip away dead leaves." In other words, it's a fancy name for a body scrub.

Body scrubs are good for you because they slough away dead skin cells, allowing your skin to breathe again and preparing your pores to absorb all those enriching ingredients like massage oils from India and mango bath salts from The Body Shop.



If you don't have the time or patience to create the entire body scrub experience that follows, try using a pair of *scrub gloves*. You can find them in beauty supply stores, drug stores, and gift shops. These textured gloves do the exfoliation for you while you simply rub the skin. No water, soaps, or other ingredients are needed.

### Body scrub ingredients

Body scrubs are very easy to do. You need just a few simple ingredients:

- ✓ Loofah sponge
- ✓ 4 cups of warm water in bowl
- ✓ 4 hot, moist, wrung-out hand towels in an ice chest



- ✓ Washcloth
- ✓ 2 bath towels
- ✓ Body bath
- ✓ Exfoliant (1/2 cup sea salt with approximately 3 tablespoons of water and 3 drops of essential oil added)

The exfoliant itself is quite simple. Mix the sea salt with water a little at a time until you have a batter-like consistency, and then add a few drops of your favorite essential oil. Any of the many over-the-counter skin scrubbing products you can buy at the beauty store or department store will work quite nicely, too.



You may not want to do this treatment on your new \$800 silk carpet from Turkey, because drips and drops of salt and other ingredients do tend to find their way onto whatever surface you're using.

### *Step-by-step body scrub*

The following steps show you how to create a body scrub that's as nice as one you experience at a spa. Just make sure to keep your partner warm because wet bodies cool down fast. You can cover the areas you're not working on with a towel.

1. With your partner face down on a bath towel, moisten her back and the back of her legs with a washcloth.
2. Place a dab of exfoliant in one palm and use circular movements to scrub your partner's skin.
3. Use a hot, moist towel from the cooler to wipe off the exfoliant.
4. Dip the loofah sponge in the bowl of water, squeeze a dab of body bath onto it, and then go back over your partner's skin again with circular movements.
5. Use your second hand towel to wipe the skin.
6. Have your partner turn over and repeat Steps 1–5 on the front of the legs, torso, and arms.



Never use sea salt or body exfoliants on the face. You can purchase exfoliants made specifically for the face in the cosmetics departments of most major department stores.

7. When you've finished exfoliating the front of the body, apply some massage lotion to the skin.

You can either do this application of lotion quickly, or you can linger and perform an entire massage, depending upon your mood and your partner's mood.

8. Have your partner turn over once more, replacing the damp bath towel beneath her with a dry one, and apply skin lotion to her back and the backs of her legs.
9. Touch your partner's skin (or have somebody else touch it) gingerly, exclaiming, "Ooh, aah, you feel *so* smooth!"

## Facials

As you may know, the cosmetics industry is big business, with lots of expensive products out there for you to buy, but all you need in order to give yourself or a partner a very nice facial treatment is a little bit of aloe and a ripe papaya. You never knew it could be so easy, did you?

### Facial ingredients

You have to have just a few things ready in order to perform a fun and effective facial:

- ✓ 3 hot moist hand towels in your cooler
- ✓ Cotton pads
- ✓ Facial toner
- ✓ 1/2 ripe papaya (no seeds or skin) blended with 1 teaspoon aloe vera gel
- ✓ Skin cream

### Step-by-step facial

Follow the steps in this section to create a relaxing, rejuvenating facial.

1. Cleanse the face with skin toner and remove any makeup.
2. Place a hot, moist towel on the face and hold it in place for 2 minutes, allowing the pores to open.  
  
Remember to leave an opening for the mouth and nose if you want your partner to be able to breathe through this procedure.
3. Remove the towel and apply the papaya/aloe blend in a thin smooth layer over the face, using your fingers.
4. Place another hot towel over the face to keep the mixture moist.
5. Massage your partner's hands while the face is covered.
6. Exchange the towel for a warm one after a few minutes and continue massaging the hands.



TIP

7. Remove the towel, wiping off whatever's left of the papaya/aloe mixture with it.
8. Using a face cream, do the face massage routine in Chapter 11.



Remember to always stroke upwards when you're giving a facial, like professional estheticians do, so you won't pull down on the delicate collagen fibers which give your skin its tone.

## Wraps

Some people think that body wraps are only good for losing inches. And certain wraps *can* help you slip into that red dress that's been hanging for years in the closet. But, as you've probably been told (by everyone except the manufacturers of the wraps), what you're really losing is water weight, which will, unfortunately, come back.



Serious health spas use wraps that detoxify the body, usually known as *herbal wraps*. And they work by tricking your body into thinking it has a fever, causing it to purge itself of internal toxins. While working as a wrapper at big spas, I used to routinely unwrap people and find the sheets permeated with the smell of nicotine and other products that the client's body was purging.

Other types of wraps, like aromatherapy ones, for example, are available, but my favorite is the herbal wrap, because it is the most deeply detoxifying, so that's the one I describe for you here.



This treatment is a bit more involved than the others, so only attempt it if you're in a truly experimental mode and want to learn by trial and error.

### Herbal wrap ingredients

Get ready for a fun production in your kitchen as you prepare the herbal wrap, and don't be discouraged if the wrap is not as warm as you'd like the first time you try. This treatment takes a little practice to do well.

- ✓ 3 ounces of herbs — the fresher the better (Try a combination of chamomile, rosemary, lemongrass, and eucalyptus.)
- ✓ A little bag or piece of cheese cloth in which to tie up the herbs for soaking (Even a clean sock will do in a pinch.)
- ✓ A sheet for soaking and wrapping
- ✓ A big pot to heat water in and make the herbal solution
- ✓ A pair of rubber gloves handy so you don't scald your fingers

- ✓ A rubberized sheet, or space blanket, or piece of plastic (like a drop cloth)
- ✓ A wool blanket

### *Herbal wrap step-by-step*

Follow these steps to create a do-it-yourself herbal wrap similar to the type given at great luxury spas.



1. **Place the herbs in the cloth, basically creating a big tea bag, and drop it in a big pot of hot (not boiling) water.**

Maximum temperature should only be around 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Soak the herbs 20 minutes. Then add the sheet to the pot of hot tea and let it soak for a few minutes.

2. **While the sheet is soaking in the herbal tea, lay the wool blanket down, then place the plastic or rubberized sheet on top of it.**
3. **Wring the sheet out *very well*, remembering to wear your rubber gloves.**



Lay the sheet down on top of the plastic and have your partner lie down on it. In order to make the herbal wrap work best, have your partner sit in a hot bath, Jacuzzi, or sauna before getting wrapped.

4. **Wrap around your partner the hot sheet, then the plastic wrap, and then the wool blanket.**
5. **Make sure your partner is comfortable.**

You can put something beneath his knees and head for support, if desired, and give him a sip of cool water through a straw. Leave him wrapped for about 20 minutes, keeping an eye on him. And, if he asks, scratch his nose for him (wrapped people often complain of itchy noses).

6. **When you unwrap him, give him some more water and help him sit in a comfortable chair where he can relax for another 20 minutes, letting the herbs dry naturally on his skin.**

## *Hydrotherapy*



*Hydrotherapy* is a word that means, obviously, therapy with fire hydrants. Just kidding . . . but that description is actually quite close to the truth. Would you believe, for example, that people pay good money in spas to stand naked against a tile wall while a hydrotherapy expert sprays a blast of cold water at them from a pressure hose? It's true (this is called a *Scotch Hose treatment*).

Hydrotherapy treatments in luxury spas can also involve the use of super-expensive *hydrotherapy tubs*, which look like a cross between a bathtub and a Jacuzzi. You don't need to be in one of these tubs to experience hydrotherapy. In fact, your own bathtub or shower at home will do just fine.

Here are a few ideas for taking advantage of your own water source to do a little hydrotherapy at home:

- ✓ **Bathe someone.** For most of us, the last time we were bathed was in early childhood by our mothers, and we've forgotten how soothing it is. Using a pitcher, pour warm water over your partner's head, shoulders, and back in the bath. Then wash her slowly and luxuriously.
- ✓ **Take a cold plunge.** Many spas have what's known as a cold plunge, which is a pool kept at a shockingly low temperature. Patrons jump in after being heated up in saunas and whirlpools. You can simulate the extremely invigorating effects of this activity by drawing a cold bath and immersing yourself for 30 seconds (or as long as you can stand it).
- ✓ **Share a bath with a friend.** First, make sure the friend wants to share the bath with you. After you determine that, slip into a tub of warm water with 10 drops of aromatherapy oil added, and see what happens next. It may not be entirely therapeutic, but it certainly will be fun.

## Exercise . . . a day of pleasure

The spa lifestyle is for everyone—unless you're the type who disdains pleasure and health, like the flagellant monks of the Middle Ages, for example, who used to wander around the streets beating themselves with sticks. If that's your idea of fun, definitely stay away from anything to do with spas.

If, on the other hand, you have what it takes to treat yourself to some healthy enjoyment in life, why not plan an entire day of spa pleasures? The sultans used to do it, and so did Cleopatra with rose petals a foot thick on the floor of her love chamber. But how about you?

You can recreate a day of luxury just like the ones people experience at spas. Trade each treatment with a lucky partner and spend the day together. Then go out and celebrate your indulgence with a healthy meal at a restaurant.

The whole exchange (not including dinner) takes about 5 hours. Just follow these simple steps:

1. First, start with a body scrub to cleanse the skin and prepare you to absorb the healthy effects of the oils and other ingredients to follow.
2. Take turns soaking in a bath (or soak together if you're so inclined), with a dozen drops of your favorite aromatherapy oil or a few ounces of healing herbs added.
3. Exchange long luxurious massages, following along with the step-by-step instructions in Chapter 11.
4. Give each other a spa facial to prepare yourselves for reentry into the world.

## *Mud, seaweed, and other messy things*

Other kinds of spa treatments work, too, but I don't go into them here, because if you tried them at home you may mess up your furniture or carpet. These treatments involve the use of such products as mud, seaweed, and clay — and they can be really messy! If you do experiment with these products (many of which are available at cosmetics counters and in beauty supply stores), try to confine your activities to the bathroom, where you're less likely to stain things.

## *Massage-O-Matic Specialty Stores*



When you're searching for items to create your own spa or massage environment at home, try checking out a new type of outlet known as the *massage specialty store*. Until recently, this type of store didn't even exist, but now they're popping up in many locations. If you ever find yourself near one of them, you really should pay a visit, because they're quite cool. And don't be intimidated by the New Age feel at some of these places. Everyone is allowed inside, not just crystal-toting members of the massage avant-garde.

Three basic types of massage-oriented storefronts exist:

- ✓ Manufacturers' outlets
- ✓ Ergonomic specialists
- ✓ Massage-o-matics

## *Manufacturers' outlets*

Some of the companies that manufacture equipment such as tables and chairs for massage pros have also begun experimenting with selling their wares directly to the public. These companies are still concentrated in that global hotbed of massage innovation, California, although they exist elsewhere as well. Their number will grow quickly as these items become more popular, and in the meantime you can find some quality massage products in a number of other stores, too, such as the Sharper Image. (See the "Massage Gizmos" section in Chapter 10, which explains the use of many massage devices.)

Check these massage stores out, if you have the opportunity:

✓ **The Massage Company:**

- 1714 Lombard Street, San Francisco, CA 94105 (telephone: 415-346-7828)
- 1533 Shattuck Ave, Suite A, Berkley, CA 94709 (telephone: 510-704-2970)

✓ **Bodywork Emporium:**

Call 800-TABLE-4-U (800-822-5348 or 310-394-4475 extension 14) for a free, 48-page catalogue

✓ **Massage Central:**

12235 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (telephone: 310-826-2209)

✓ **New Life Massage Equipment:**

2853 Hedberg Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55305 (telephone: 800-852-3082 or 612-546-4100)

✓ **Best of Nature:**

176 Broadway, Long Branch, NJ 07740 (telephone: 800-228-6457, or 732-728-0004)



You can find a lot of massage equipment on the Web as well. Go to [www.mtswarehouse.com](http://www.mtswarehouse.com), for example, to find good prices on professional massage tables, and [www.massagematters.com](http://www.massagematters.com) for a few, select, high-quality massage items.

## Ergonomic specialists



Some stores are not primarily massage outlets, but they do offer massage items and other tools that make our working and living environments more ergonomically correct. *Ergonomics* is a fancy term for the science concerned with designing and arranging things (like pieces of furniture) so that people interact with them most efficiently and safely.

One store in particular, Relax the Back, has created the mother lode of ergonomically designed furniture to help you prevent injuries and keep you healthy. It also sells several massage items that you can choose from. The philosophy of Relax the Back is that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Call 800-290-2225 to find a store near you, or look them up at [www.relaxtheback.com](http://www.relaxtheback.com) on the Web.

## *Massage-o-matics*

Believe it or not, places exist where you can just pop in off the street and get your back rubbed for ten minutes. This kiosk take on the massage phenomenon is ideal for people traveling through airports or rushing through big cities. Here are a couple of examples:

- ✓ **The Great American Back Rub (800-BACK-RUB or 800-222-5782):** This company has stores in New York City; Kennedy Airport (New York, New York); Dallas, Texas; Toronto, Canada; and Los Angeles, California — and it's always looking to expand.
- ✓ **The Stress Station:** This company has two locations in the Phoenix, Arizona, area, one in Scottsdale (480-990-1701), and one in Paradise Valley (602-692-9004), with plans to expand. It also provides outcall massage to your location.



TIP

In some areas, you may find independent massage practitioners who've set up shop on their own or in small groups in public places such as Central Park in New York City, The Champs-Élysées in Paris, or the beach in Bali or Southern Thailand. Approaching these people for a massage-o-matic experience is perfectly safe. Just follow the same words of advice found in Chapter 7 that you'd heed when receiving any kind of massage, especially the one that tells you to remember that "You're the boss." Declaring what kind of massage you want to receive from these public practitioners is perfectly acceptable, even if the massage only lasts five minutes. Don't let an overly enthusiastic street masseur pound your back until it's black and blue.





## Chapter 16

# Higher, Faster, Stronger: Sports Massage

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### *In This Chapter*

- Understanding the techniques of sports massage
  - Tackling pains specific to certain sports
- 

**H**ey . . . you there . . . do I see you getting ready to put this book down and rush out to the local schoolyard for an impromptu ballgame? Yes, you. Are you planning on stretching much before you jump into that game? If you're like most part-time athletes, you're probably not guilty of overstretching. Am I right? It's just such a hassle. Well, this is another arena where massage can come in handy. What could be better than having someone stretch your muscles for you? That, and much more, is precisely what you can do with sports massage. And you get the lowdown on it in this chapter.

## *When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get a Massage*

If you're a serious athlete, chances are pretty good you probably understand the benefits of massage already. Most competing athletes think massage is valuable to athletic performance. Just look at top Olympic competitors, many of whom have used massage for years to gain an extra edge. In fact, beginning in 1996, massage became an official part of the services offered to all athletes in the Olympic Village itself.

Athletes utilize massage in a number of ways:

- ✓ To rehabilitate after getting injured in their sport
- ✓ To recover from intense workouts and competition

- ✓ To maintain optimal muscle tone and flexibility on an ongoing basis
- ✓ To appear relaxed and cool getting their massages in front of the competition at big events

## *Good times to use sports massage*

You can use sports massage any time you want, even right before church on Sunday morning, or at midnight after drinking margaritas all evening at the annual company Fourth of July party. But using sports massage right around the time you're going to be engaging in the sport just plain makes more sense, don't you think? And that basically boils down to three different occasions:

- ✓ **Pre-event massage:** As the name would imply, this type of sports massage is used by athletes directly before the event. And, contrary to popular belief, a massage at this time will not zone the athlete out to a state of zombiehood, but rather invigorate her further in preparation for competition.
- ✓ **Post-event massage:** Directly after an event (like just past the finish line at the Boston Marathon), is a place and time that athletes almost universally appreciate a good massage. Massage helps the muscles, not to mention the psyche, recover more quickly.
- ✓ **Ongoing training massage:** Getting massaged throughout the training cycle is more and more popular with many athletes. Some even receive massage every day.

## *Where to find sports massage*

If you live in a large metropolitan area, chances are good that you have a sports massage clinic somewhere close by. If you live in a small town, try inquiring at your local osteopath or chiropractor's office. They may know someone who offers sports massage.

Massage pros go through a special advanced training in order to become certified sports massage therapists. You won't offend anyone by asking about their certification and where they got it. So if you're really looking for a qualified person, check out their qualifications. Makes sense, doesn't it?



Athletic trainers are quite often sports massage therapists also, or they can at least recommend one. Beware, though, of the trainer who thinks he's doing sports massage just because he knows how to give a few karate chops to your back. He may be doing you a disservice, and he probably doesn't understand that true professional sports massage is becoming a highly evolved discipline. The days of Rocky Balboa's coach giving him a shoulder rub along with a motivational speech before the big fight are over. "And if he gets up, hit him again!"



Call the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) at 847-864-0123, and they will provide you with the name of someone on their National Sports Massage Team (NSMT).

## The Techniques

Sports massage, when applied by skilled practitioners, is an advanced form of massage therapy, with many involved maneuvers. The instructions here are not meant to make you an expert. They simply suggest a couple of moves that can help ease the strains of the weekend warriors in your life, including you. In other words, after reading this chapter, don't go out and announce yourself as a special trainer for Olympic marathon runners. That should be left to the pros.

### *Sporty moves*

This section provides you with some basic sports massage moves. Notice how they're similar to regular massage moves? It's just that they're bigger and often deeper, and certain moves are used much more frequently during sports massage than, say, during a relaxation massage.

#### *Compression*

Often in sports, overworked and overtired muscles have to be pressed into submission. With this move, shown in Figure 16-1a, you can apply enough direct pressure to help relieve muscle spasms and provide a calming effect to the area.

#### *Cross-fiber friction*

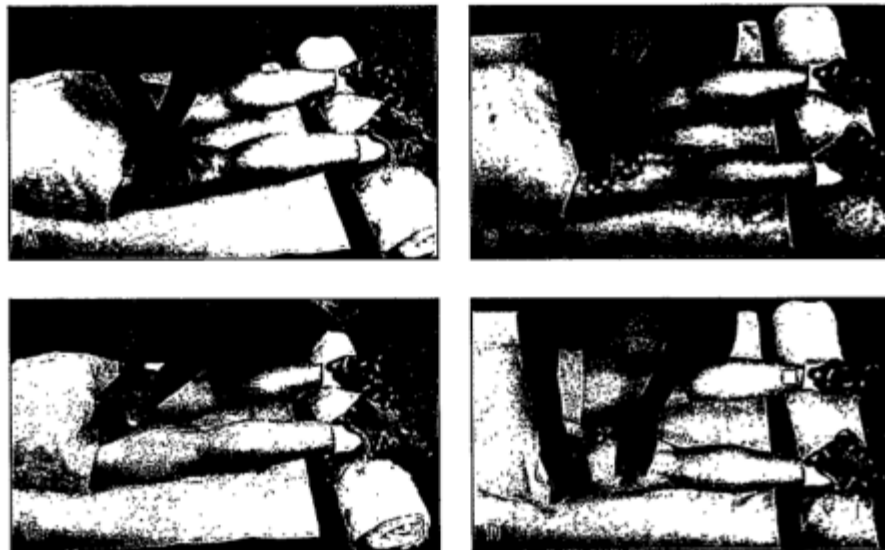
You may remember the term cross-fiber from Chapter 10. Then again, you may not. And you may be thinking to yourself, what the heck is cross-fiber friction anyway? Don't fret: Cross-fiber friction is simply the use of some relatively intense rubbing across the opposite direction that the muscle fibers run in any particular area, as you can see in Figure 16-1b. This technique is especially good for muscle fibers that are put under strain during sports.

#### *Deep pressure*

People who work out a lot often end up creating some really sore spots along with the improved tone in their bodies. Pinpointing these sore spots can be tricky, but after you do, treat them to some direct deep pressure, as shown in Figure 16-1c, to help release knotted, cramped, and contracted muscle tissues.

### *Kneading*

When you're kneading an athlete, you want to make sure your motions are big and strong, and that your hands grasp as much muscle tissue as possible. See Figure 16-1d, and refer to Chapter 10 for the three steps of kneading, which are squeezing, rolling, and pushing.



**Figure 16-1:**  
Compression  
(a),  
cross-fiber  
friction(b),  
deep pres-  
sure(c), and  
kneading(d).

## *Stretches*



Stretches feel really good to people who've been using their muscles a lot in sporting activities, but be careful not to over-stretch people and possibly injure them. Always ask for feedback from your partner while you're performing the stretch, and always err on the side of not-enough stretch rather than forcing it toward too-much.

### *Hamstring stretch*

With your partner lying on her back, lift one leg up, supporting it firmly at the ankle and on the hamstrings themselves, as you push the leg slowly and steadily back toward the head. Don't lock the knee during this maneuver. Hold the stretch for 5 to 10 seconds, and then release (see Figure 16-2a). You can add more impact by having your partner push back against your hands during the stretch, then release while you stretch the leg a little farther.

### *Quad stretch*

The quadriceps muscles in the front of the thigh get especially tight on runners and other athletes. A good way to stretch them is to have your partner lie face down, raise her leg up to 90 degrees, then lift her foot straight up while also lifting beneath her knee with your other hand, as shown in Figure 16-2b. Only lift until you feel the natural resistance of her muscles. For an extra stretch on limber partners, bring the foot closer to the buttocks at the same time.

### *Calf stretch*

When you stretch the calf, you stretch the Achilles tendon, too, which is extremely strong. So don't be afraid to give a deep stretch here by cupping the heel and pressing your forearm firmly against the bottom of the foot, moving the toes toward the head, as shown in Figure 16-2c.

### *Arm stretch*



Lift the hand up over the head, pulling up slightly on the elbow, as shown in Figure 16-2d. This stretch is easier to do on a massage table, but if you don't have access to a table, just try bending your partner's elbow out to the side a little first until you get her arm into the correct position.



**Figure 16-2:**  
Stretches  
for the  
hamstring(a),  
quad(b),  
calf(c), and  
arm(d).



## *Routines*

You can perform an entire sports massage routine, which is going to look similar to the regular routine you discover in Chapter 11, except that your partner will be wearing an athletic outfit instead of a towel! But that's not the only difference. You'll also be using a lot more cross-fiber friction, compression, and deep kneading, focusing on the muscles that have done the exertion. And some extra stretching aids in recovery, too. Other than that, though, don't be too surprised if sports massage looks amazingly similar to non-sports massage.

## *A Pain in the Elbow, a Pain in the Butt*

Athletes run into all kinds of problems because they push their muscles to the limits, and certain sports are famous for causing certain pains. You've probably heard of tennis elbow, for example, and runner's cramps, both of which are problems that can be helped with sports massage.

### *Tennis elbow*

Tennis elbow is a slow, creeping, debilitating condition that can really make you unhappy over a long period of time. This condition is a swelling of the tendons in the forearm near the elbow and an irritation of the muscles there caused by repetitive use. Of course, the best thing to do when you start noticing this type of pain is to stop doing what's causing it (namely, playing tennis). Some people don't want to stop playing tennis, though. In that case, try taking a break just for a few days, using ice to reduce soreness in the area. Also, a physician may be able to help by prescribing anti-inflammatory drugs, so check with your doctor.



A little sports massage can help tennis elbow, too. Remember to do some gradual warm-up massage moves first before digging straight in with these two rather intense maneuvers. Also, apply ice for 5 to 10 minutes beforehand to reduce inflammation. Then follow these steps:

1. Supporting the arm at the wrist, with the elbow resting on the floor or massage table, grasp your partner's forearm and slide your hand down *slowly* from her wrist toward the elbow, as shown in Figure 16-3a. Repeat this move several times with your hand in different positions so your thumb presses against the entire forearm.

2. Using the tips of your fingers or thumbs, apply cross-fiber friction to the muscles on top of the forearm near the elbow, as shown in Figure 16-3b.

This is the area most directly affected in tennis elbow, so take it easy on your partner, using more ice if necessary to lessen discomfort. Apply more squeezing, gliding, and a little kneading afterwards to help smooth things out.

**Figure 16-3:**  
Squeeze the forearm muscles and push slowly down toward the elbow(a); then apply deep friction to the forearm muscles near the elbow(b).



## Runner's cramps

Runners often get muscle cramps in their calves, hamstrings, quads, or buttocks after pushing themselves to the limit. If you've ever been the victim of runner's cramps, you know that they are not fun at all. These cramps take over your leg like an invading alien from the latest episode of *Star Trek*, and they show no mercy. If you're standing at the time the cramp starts, you begin limping around and screaming like a maniac. And if you're lying down, the cramp is even worse. The following techniques may help the next time someone you know falls victim to a charley horse.



For over a century now, runner's cramps have also been known by the term *charley horse*, which originally came from the world of baseball. No one knows for sure who Charley was, or why he had a lame horse, though some people say he was a groundskeeper at a Sioux City ballpark.



Make sure the athlete drinks plenty of fluids to counter the cramping effects of dehydration. And after the massage, try placing some ice on the area for a few minutes to further reduce soreness.



When a cramp strikes, follow these steps to help ease the athlete's pain:

1. Get the person to lie down comfortably and apply direct compression to the area, as shown in Figure 16-4a.
2. After a few seconds, release the pressure and apply a stretch to the muscle that is cramping, as shown in Figure 16-4b.
3. Grasping at the far end of the muscle on either side of the spasm itself, push the muscle fibers in toward the middle, as shown in Figure 16-4c.

Hold for several seconds.

4. Have your partner contract the opposing muscles, which in Figure 16-4d are the muscles in front of the lower leg, near the shin.

This technique will have the effect of further loosening the cramping muscle.

5. Stretch gently one more time.



**Figure 16-4:**  
Relief for a  
cramping  
muscle.

## Chapter 17

# Taking It With You: Massage On the Go

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Receiving massage around the world
- ▶ Getting massaged while on the road
- ▶ Using massage to relax while flying

Wherever your hands can go, massage can go, too. And there's no limit to the strange and wonderful environments you can find yourself in when seeking out professional massage or exchanging one with a traveling partner.

The only problem is, you have to get to your destination in order to enjoy the massage offered there, and the getting-there part often causes quite a bit of tension. That's why I share a coach-class massage with you at the end of this chapter, to help make getting there a little less of a pain.

## *One World, Many Massages*



If you travel around much and receive massages in different parts of the world, one thing you'll notice pretty quickly is that each culture has its own distinct attitudes about massage and its own unique ideas about what a massage should be. In Turkey, for example, the massage you receive in a traditional *hamam*, or bathhouse, may include a tremendously vigorous rub-down in a big steamy chamber by a silent giant who is apparently indifferent to your discomfort, or your bliss, for that matter. On the other extreme, a massage on a cruise ship sailing the warm waters of the Caribbean may be an airy-light, soothing experience given to you by a sensitive and delicate English woman.

### Just say the word

Wherever you are in the world, people often appreciate it if you attempt a few words of their language. And what better opportunity to practice your language skills than when seeking a massage in Madagascar, a backrub in Bangalore, or some reflexology in Rotterdam? With that in mind, I include a list of phrases in several different languages in the following table, all of which will get you the same result no matter where you are in the world — a massage!

Language	Phrase		
French		Je voudrais un massage.	
Portuguese		Gostaria de uma massagem.	
Chinese		Woa Yao ANN MOU.	
Japanese		Messeji wo uketaitai.	
Italian		Gradirei un massaggio.	
Thai		Chan yahk die maw newad pan bow lan.	
Greek		Thelo ena massage.	
Hindi		Mujhe massage chahiye.	
German	Ich möchte eine Massage.		
Spanish	Me gustaria un masaje.		

In Thailand, you can enter one of the public pavilions at a sacred temple to receive your massage on a low, wide bed, while dressed in loose-fitting pajamas.



The Japanese take their bathing and their massages seriously, and they've developed a very elaborate system of hot spring resorts called *onsen*. If you visit one, you'll get to immerse yourself in a series of ever-hotter baths and receive a massage directly afterward.

And, in Mexico, you may find yourself in an adobe enclosure up in the mountains where white-robed massage therapists try to attune you to the inner rhythms of the surrounding environment.



You get the idea — massage can be found almost anywhere you go these days, even in the places you least expect it. I have a client who was on a trip through the Yucatan, visiting ancient Mayan ruins, when she received a message about massage from a very unexpected source.

She had heard of a spiritual healer who lived in a remote Mayan village, and she wanted to meet this woman. After traveling for hours on a dirt road, she was escorted into the healer's hut. This ancient woman, way out in the jungle, took a close look at her and said (through a translator), "You need to get a massage. And not just any massage. Special massage! Many many special massages." Sure enough, my client has been on a quest to receive as many massages as possible ever since, and the massages have helped her recover from a number of injuries.

## Massage on the Road

You don't have to travel by Jeep to a remote Mayan village to have someone tell you to get lots of massages, right? No, you've probably already figured that one out for yourself. And when you travel, chances are you're much more likely to receive your massage-on-the-road in a hotel room rather than in the Yucatan outback.

Hotel rooms, even though they're often expensive and advertised as luxurious getaways, offer their own distinctive brand of discomfort. They are, after all, not home. Massage is the perfect antidote for hotel discomfort. Chapter 8 shows you what to do to get a professional massage while staying in a hotel and how to deal with the hotel concierge. In this section, I offer a few words of advice for exchanging massages with each other in hotel rooms.



The most important thing about on-the-road massage is to bring along your own traveling *inner chamber* like the one described in Chapter 9. That way you can transform almost any blah hotel space into your own personal massage sanctuary. Then simply follow the instructions from Chapter 11 as you trade massages with each other.

To create your traveling inner chamber, remember to pack:

- ✓ Massage oil
- ✓ A little massage gizmo (see Chapter 10)
- ✓ A portable CD player with mini-speakers
- ✓ Candles and matches
- ✓ A familiar photograph
- ✓ Incense
- ✓ A bathrobe



In a pinch, you can always try *magic fingers*, if it's available in your room. Magic fingers is a rather hokey-looking device installed in the beds at many hotels and motels. When fed with coins, it vibrates the entire bed, and can be actually quite pleasurable. As singer/songwriter Jimmy Buffet says, "Put in a quarter, turn out the lights, magic fingers makes ya feel all right."

### 18-wheeler massage

All around the world, the people who probably put in the most hours traveling are truckers. Day after day, for thousands of miles, with their butts glued into high-bucket seats, they roll across the countryside, their necks, shoulders, and backs getting more and more tense as they go.

You can't get much tougher than truckers. They're not the type to complain, but recently even they, too, have seen the light about massage. The Triple T Truck Stop in Arizona now

offers therapeutic massage to the guys and gals hauling goods in their big rigs across the U.S.

If you've ever had any thoughts along the lines of, "I'm too tough for massage. That's for wusses who can't stand pain," just consider the example of the truckers.

If they see the value of massage therapy, it's good enough for me — and for you!

## Massage in Coach Class

The toughest thing about travel is that it involves an awful lot of moving around, often in air-tight steel tubes hurtling through the upper atmosphere. Air travel is one sure way to get stressed out. Whoever uttered that famous phrase, "Life is a journey, not a destination," probably wasn't sitting in coach class on a transoceanic flight at the time.

Although there's just no way to get what you need the most on flights (namely, a hot shower and lots of fresh oxygen), you can still offer yourself or your traveling companions a little relief with a coach-class massage. By the way, this technique works equally well in first or business class, although it may not be quite as necessary.

### The coach-class self-massage

Imagine yourself sitting in your coach-class seat like a good little passenger, all packed in like fruitcake in a tin, when suddenly the thought strikes you that you are, indeed, exceedingly uncomfortable, and you need to do something about it. You've already stood up twice to stretch, climbing all over other passengers to do so. Nothing seems to help.

The time to try massage has arrived. The five-step routine shown here is especially good for relieving tension in your sinus area, which can become sore due to cabin air pressure changes and dehydration. Just follow these steps and take a look at Figure 17-1:

1. Lean forward slightly (not too far, or else you'll bang your head into the tray table of the seat in front of you), and hook your thumbs into the tender neck muscles just below the bony ridge at the base of your skull. Press in here, making little circles with your thumbs as you apply firm pressure, as shown in Figure 17-1a.
2. Use your thumbs to press in to the upper inner corner of your eyes, right next to the nose, as shown in Figure 17-1b.

Pressure against the nose bones can help relieve sinus soreness. If you're wearing glasses, take them off first. And if you're wearing contacts, don't press directly against them through your closed eyelids.



This move can be done very discreetly, but if you end up sitting next to someone who looks at you strangely, just smile, point at your own head, and say, "Sinus trouble. If I don't do this my eyes will fall out."

3. With firm pressure, make fingertip circles on your temples, moving the skin and muscle over the bone below while keeping your fingers firmly anchored to one spot on the skin (see Figure 17-1c).
4. Press straight in on the temples and hold for 5 to 10 seconds (as shown in Figure 17-1d).

You may also try moving your jaw around a bit at the same time, which will allow you to press at slightly different depths into the muscles.



5. Press the heels of your hands into both sides of your head, above the ears, compressing the junction between your *parietal bones* and your *temporal bones* (as shown in Figure 17-1e).

Hold this for up to 30 seconds. It often helps reduce headaches and take pressure off your poor skull in those pressurized airplane cabins.



Be careful not to wallop the passengers on either side of you with your elbows when performing this maneuver.

## A couple extra tips

Try stretching your legs out a little and pushing several points along the outside of your thighs (being careful not to kick the person in the seat in front of you and cause a mid-air scene!). Then bend forward a bit and reach underneath your knees to massage the upper calves.

If you have stuffy sinuses, and nothing else has helped, try doing what the scuba divers do: Pinch your nose shut and blow gently into it (be careful not to blow too hard). This simple technique often equalizes pressure inside and outside your head.

Ah . . . relief.



**Figure 17-1:**  
Your coach-  
class  
massage.

## Chapter 18

# Massage for the Whole Family

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Sharing massage with your whole family
- ▶ Massaging your baby
- ▶ Enjoying massage during pregnancy
- ▶ Giving massage to seniors

Welcome to the mom-and-pop chapter of this book, the one that gives you that warm and fuzzy feeling inside. Yes, you can include everybody in the family in your newfound passion for massage, from newborn babies right up through Grandma and Grandpa. All it takes is a little creativity on your part, and the willingness to share your newfound skills.

## *All in the Family*



Elaine, a sales manager from Living Earth Crafts massage manufacturing company in California, put it best: "The family that massages together, stays together."

That makes sense. If you can't share massage with your family, who can you share it with, right? But just how exactly do you go about sharing it? Often, getting your family members to lie still for massage isn't that easy. And getting someone to *give* a massage is even harder. People all have their own agenda, their own time schedule, and their own feelings about physical contact. You are the person interested in massage, and you're the one who is reading this book. So, if you want to introduce massage into your family, you have to use certain stealthy techniques to get everybody thinking the same way you do.

Here are a few techniques you can use to get your family into massage, even if they don't seem interested at first:

- ✔ Give a foot massage to the couch potato while he's watching his favorite team in action.