

Everything you always wanted to know about massage *but were afraid to ask*

Do I have to get undressed? **No.** There are many types of massage that do not require the client to get undressed. These include Workplace Massage, Shiatsu & Thai Yoga massage to name a few.

Do most people get undressed for their massage? **Yes.** When your massage therapist has access to the skin she is able to palpate the tissue more readily. This allows her to more effectively treat the areas that need attention. Also the skin which is the largest organ of the body receives better treatment. Swedish massage is a typical massage people commonly disrobe for. It is also the most popular massage.

If I have undressed how is my privacy respected? **Sheets.** You are covered by a sheet and blanket during the entire session. Massage Therapists are trained to use sheets in such a fashion as to reveal only the body part being currently massaged.

I am a woman. Is it appropriate to have a male Massage Therapist? **Yes.** Massage therapy is a form of health care regulated by the Board of Nursing and gender is not an issue anymore than it is for Physical Therapists, Doctors or Nurses. However, you should always go to someone you feel comfortable with.

What do NCMT and CMT mean? **National Certified Massage Therapist and Certified Massage Therapist.** The Virginia Board of Nursing oversees massage therapists in the state of Virginia and requires them to attend 500 hours at a state approved school and to become Nationally Certified. Anyone can perform massage but only certified practitioners can perform Massage Therapy.

Are all parts of my body massaged? **No.** The eyes, throat and sexual organs are not massaged nor are any parts of the body that have local contraindications. Neck, shoulders back, arms, legs and hips are the most common areas massaged. The mouth is also avoided unless you have severe TMJ that you wish to have addressed. Also any area you specify is avoided. For example if you don't want your feet massaged then tell your therapist.

What is a contraindication? Contraindication is a medical term used to indicate when treatment should be avoided. For example if you have a cut on your hand and received stitches then massaging the hand is a local contraindication.

I have a cold. Is massage recommended? **No.** Cold and flu are the most common systemic contraindication. Reschedule your massage when you feel better.

Where should I go to receive a massage? **It depends.** Any CMT in private practice is always a good choice but if you are in good health and have no real medical issues to be addressed then any spa that employs certified massage therapists should be fine. Alternatively if you have a specific health issue you should employ a therapist in private practice and specifically one that can help your particular problem. Call around, talk to friends, ask your Dr. or see if there is a local massage school that can recommend someone. In the New River Valley you can go to swvmta.org to see a listing of members of the Southwest Virginia Massage Therapists' Association.

I'm having my period. Should I cancel my massage? **No.** A massage is typically helpful during menstruation. Most women will just leave their underwear on. Your massage therapist typically will not ask if you are menstruating but if you let them know you are they may place a heat pack on your abdomen if you are having cramps.