

"One of the great masters of massage." — Robin Leach, from the foreword

Massage

FOR

DUMMIES®



Steve Capellini, LMT
Michel Van Welden, PT, NT

Foreword by Robin Leach

A Reference for the Rest of Us!



Massage For Dummies®

Cheat Sheet

The Rules for Giving Massage

Review these rules before you begin giving a massage:

- ✓ **Do no harm:** This is the number one rule for giving a massage. Refer to Chapter 10 and make sure you're aware of the moves that you shouldn't make, the places that you shouldn't press, and the conditions you shouldn't treat.
- ✓ **Think 3-D:** Refer to Chapter 4 and try to visualize the invisible physical structures beneath the skin that you're affecting with your hands during the massage.
- ✓ **Use your whole body:** Remember to use correct *body mechanics* in order to save your own body from overexertion while applying just the right amount of pressure for your partner.
- ✓ **Focus on the other:** This is no time to be thinking about politics, sports, the weather, or your upcoming turn to receive. As fully as you can, focus on your partner, what she's feeling, and how you can make her feel better.
- ✓ **Go out of your mind:** After you figure out the moves, practice the technique, and focus on your partner with all your concentration, then you can stop thinking. Let go of your extraneous thoughts — and even your thoughts about doing a good job.
- ✓ **Get creative:** Go ahead, go crazy; just let yourself feel whatever you're feeling and go with your intuition. As long as what you're doing is generated from caring and commitment to your partner, it is going to be the right thing.
- ✓ **Let love flow:** Certain people develop an ability to send a very distinct and palpable sensation of love into their fingers and palms. You can feel it when they touch you. Everyone else has the potential to develop that ability. Why not use massage as an opportunity to explore your own innate abilities to send a powerful message of caring to others through your touch and presence?

Massage-English, English-Massage Dictionary

Term	Definition
Rolfed	Deep massage work on fascia that realigns the body with gravity
Body worker	A practitioner of massage or similar hands-on healing techniques
Structural work	Massage that realigns the body's structure
Spa	Health facility where people go to learn holistic practices, eat healthy foods, exercise, and receive massages and spa treatments
Ayurveda	An ancient healing system from India that uses diet, meditation, herbs, and massage to balance the body
Swedish	The most well-known and widely practiced form of massage in the Western world, consisting of stroking, kneading, applying pressure, stretching, and so on
Trigger point	A tight, tender spot in muscles that responds well to targeted massage
Connective tissues	The web of tissue (primarily collagen fibers) that surround your every muscle, organ, and bone, holding your body together
Deep tissue	A type of massage that targets the deeper layers of muscle and connective tissue
Energy work	Type of massage that focuses on vital, invisible energies in your body
Adhesion	Muscle and connective tissue fibers that are stuck together, which massage can separate
Drape	Towels, sheets, and so on, used to cover a person receiving a massage
Knots	Tight bands of muscle fibers and connective tissues that massage often softens
On-site massage	Seated and clothed massage given in special chairs — usually in offices, in stores, or at special events
Parlor	Place where people eat ice cream
Full body massage	Relaxation massage treating the whole body as compared to remedial massage treating a localized area

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Massage For Dummies®

Cheat Sheet

Danger Zones

These areas contain important pieces of your anatomy in exposed and vulnerable positions. Highly trained therapists can actually work in these areas, but if you're not a massage professional yourself, it's better to stay away from the following spots:

- ✓ **Front of the neck/throat:** You've heard of the expression, "Go for the jugular," right? Well, this is where you find it. Unless you're trying to choke someone, it's a good idea to stay away from this area that also contains the carotid artery and major nerves.
- ✓ **Side of the neck:** Not quite as sensitive as the front of the neck, you should still treat delicately.
- ✓ **The "ear notch":** Just behind your jawbone and beneath your ear you find a little notch. It's not a good idea to jam a finger into this notch, unless you're trying to extort money or favors from the person receiving the massage, as it contains a sensitive facial nerve.
- ✓ **The eyeball:** Unless you're trying to do a Three Stooges massage (popular amongst college males), don't poke your fingers directly into the person's eyes.
- ✓ **The axilla:** This is a fancy term for the armpit which, as you know, is a sensitive area, filled with nerves, arteries, and lymph glands. Not to mention, most people are very ticklish there.
- ✓ **The upper inner arm:** Just down from the armpit, along the inside of the upper arm, is a sensitive, nerve-filled area along the length of the arm bone. Pressing here too firmly gives you that yucky-nervy feeling.
- ✓ **The ulnar notch of the elbow:** Otherwise known as the "funny bone," this spot contains the ulnar nerve which, if you touch it too hard, causes normally discrete people to curse in several languages.
- ✓ **The abdomen:** Houdini was killed by an unexpected punch to this area, which is filled with many squishy important bits known as organs. Be especially gentle around the upper abdomen along the ribs, where you find the liver, gall bladder, and spleen.
- ✓ **The lower back:** Just to both sides of the spine, and below the ribs, is where you find the kidneys. Don't press too hard here or pound on them. Kidneys don't like it when you do that.
- ✓ **The femoral triangle:** Not to be confused with the Bermuda triangle, this area is often referred to as the "groin." It's the inner part of the line in front where your leg meets your body. If you press too hard here you can actually cut off circulation to the leg.
- ✓ **Popliteal area:** Popularly known as the back of the knee, you should always treat this spot gingerly. It's very sensitive to pressure.

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Cheat Sheet \$2.95 value. Item 5172-8.

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Praise For Massage For Dummies

"Touch is a powerful tool in any relationship, and learning to use that power with wisdom, compassion and skill is what *Massage For Dummies* is all about. I recommend this book for everyone who would like to make the art of massage a part of their lives."

—John Gray, author, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*

"The only bad thing about this book is that Steve Capellini no longer works at a spa where I can get his revitalizing massage. Learning how to get the benefits at home through *Massage For Dummies* is the next best thing to being in Steve's hand."

—Bernard Burt, author of *Fodor's Healthy Escapes* and Senior Editor *Spa Management Journal*

"I have long recommended massage as an important ingredient of a holistic, self-nurturing lifestyle. Finally, there is a book for the average person that gives you everything you need to know about giving and receiving massages. I highly recommend this book."

—Jack Canfield, co-author of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series

"I've received massage from experts around the world and have become somewhat of an expert in the art of receiving. Steve Capellini is definitely the 'best of the best,' and I've been one of the most loyal clients for over twelve years now. If readers of *Massage For Dummies* come away with even a small fraction of the skills and knowledge he's shared with me over the years, they'll be well on their way to some of the most incredibly healthy, relaxing, and spiritually nourishing experiences of their lives. Enjoy!"

—Phyllis Sandler

"Massage therapy hits the big time!!! What a wonderful approach to the art and science of massage. *Massage For Dummies* blends factual information with a good sense of humor. Even though we've been in practice for over twenty years, we couldn't put it down. We highly recommend the book to laypeople as well as those in the field."

—Dan & Tekla Ulrich, Suncoast School of Massage, Tampa, Florida

"*Massage For Dummies* is an easy read: delightfully funny, thought-provoking without any work on the part of the reader. There is a wealth of information that is almost automatically absorbed. Steve is a born teacher. The authors use humor and wit to help you understand the many facets of massage. They help you visualize the material and see the advantages of touching and being touched. With a single pen swipe, they destroy myths, create mirth, and foster curiosity. The book is well-designed for easy access to technically sound material, and can be used as a reference, quick read, or a teaching text for a wide audience. I have over twenty-five years in this business, and I was entertained, laughed a lot, and appreciated the authors' techniques and competent teaching methods."

—Nancy W. Dail, LMT, Director, Downeast School of Massage

"Capellini and Van Welden literally take their readers by the hand and gently lead them into the delightful practicalities of massage. Sensitive and fun, this book is like a good rub."

—Gil Headley, Ph.D., Rolf Institute Adjunct Founder, Somanautics, Inc.

"As a massage therapist and school owner for a total of sixteen years, I highly recommend this book for the student, professional, and novice alike. It's easy to comprehend, entertaining, informative, and most of all, it's fun! Readers at any level will find themselves developing skills faster than they ever imagined."

—Jody Stork, owner, Space Coast Massage & Allied Health Institute, Melbourne, FL

"As a new millennium approaches, the essence of our being human will truly be defined as our ability to *feel* and experience the fullness of life in the face of an increasingly depersonalized world. *Massage For Dummies* not only legitimizes, but goes the furthest of any book, in demystifying massage, whether as a receiver or giver. A careful reading will guide you in how to integrate massage and its incredible benefits into the 'here and now' of your everyday life."

—Deborah A. Smith, Spa Director and Founder of Smith Club & Spa Specialists

"*Massage For Dummies* is not just for the novice (or Dummy), but for the professional massage therapist as well. The information is invaluable and presented in a light and humorous style. Steve — whose Spa Certification Workshop, The Royal Treatment, has opened doors for massage therapists everywhere — is truly a massage and spa genius."

—Gerald Levine, LMT

"Massage is a great medicine, and with the help of *Massage For Dummies*, all of us can have healing hands — or at least know how to find them."

—Margaret Pierpont, coauthor, *The Spa Life at Home*

"My congratulations to Steve Capellini and Michel Van Welden for writing *Massage For Dummies*. I enjoyed reading this book from cover to cover. *Massage For Dummies* is a practical guide for anybody who would like to enhance their skills in massage, from the novice to the 'professional body worker.' The authors deliver their message with intelligence, passion, and humor. I will enthusiastically recommend this book to my clients or to anybody who seriously wants to learn about massage, its origins, and applications, yet have fun doing so."

—Michael F. Livingston, LMT, Personal Therapist to Jimmy Buffett and Brian Wilson

"What a treat! You feel massaged just reading this book. Superb professionals in their field, the authors demystify this oft-misunderstood arena. They convey essential information on every aspect of bodywork in a warm, humorous, and inspiring way. This book is truly inspired — and inspiring. Not only is it full of excellent scientifically-based information, it is a joy to read. Read it, you'll love it!"

—Hyla Cass, M.D., author, *St. John's Wort: Nature's Blues Buster* and *Kava: Nature's Answer to Stress, Anxiety, and Insomnia*

"With lots of deep (k)needed information and long smooth strokes of humor, Steve entirely entertains, expertly educates, and masterfully manifests for any reader the essential facts, fictions, functions, and fun of massage, touch, and bodywork."

—John Paul De Vierville, Ph.D., M.S.S.W., T.R.M.T, Owner/Director Alamo Plaza Spa, San Antonio, Texas; Co-Chair Education Committee, International Spa Association

"It's about time that people understood the medical benefits of massage. [This] book presents practical ways that *everyone* can decrease stress and prolong their lives by something as simple and elegant as therapeutic massage."

—Pamela M. Peeke, M.D., MPH, Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of Maryland, Division of Complementary Medicine

"Discover the life-enhancing information provided for you in this remarkable book. Steve Capellini and Michel Van Welden have done an outstanding job delivering the message of self-healing, and in doing so, have created a valuable resource for all to use."

—Suzy Bordeaux-Johlfs, Kohala Spa Director, Hilton Waikoloa Village, Hawaii

"Here is a rare mix: one of massage therapy's most knowledgeable, experienced, and sensitive practitioners happens to be a fine and funny writer! Breath deeply and enjoy learning from a master."

—Patricia Weinman, Massage Connoisseur

"I found *Massage For Dummies* to be a wonderful and funny guide to massage, whether you're a massage therapist or first-time recipient. . . . Steve brings his passion for the massage profession along with a journalist's perception to print. A must for everyone's library to put touch in your life everyday."

—Lynda Solien-Wolfe, LMT, NCTMP, Massage Therapy Public Relations Specialist

Praise for Getting the Most out of Massage by Steve Capellini

"A beautiful book at the right time. . . ."

—Bernard S. Siegel, M.D., author, *Love, Medicine, & Miracles*



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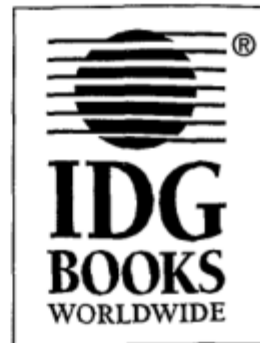
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by Steve Capellini and Michel Van Welden

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Foster City, CA ♦ Chicago, IL ♦ Indianapolis, IN ♦ New York, NY

Massage For Dummies®

Published by
IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.
An International Data Group Company
919 E. Hillsdale Blvd.
Suite 400
Foster City, CA 94404
www.idgbooks.com (IDG Books Worldwide Web site)
www.dummies.com (Dummies Press Web site)

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Library of Congress Catalog Card No.: 99-64908

ISBN: 0-7645-5172-8

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

1B/RT/QY/ZZ/IN

Distributed in the United States by IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.

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About the Authors



Steve Capellini: You may be thinking to yourself, "What makes HIM so special that he should write this book on massage?" Perhaps what most specifically qualifies me is the inordinate amount of time, amounting to many thousands of hours, I've spent cooped up alone in a room with just one other person, touching them all over their bodies and getting paid for it.

What could be more fun? Or more weird? I hope I've got the communication skills to get across to you the reasons why an otherwise sane human being would spend such a large percentage of his life in such a strange manner.

And in addition, to give you an idea of some more specific qualifications, here's a rough chronology of my life in touch:

1977: Received first massage ever, from high school girlfriend Grace, and knew that something important had just transpired.

1983: Attended 108 hour massage class in Los Angeles and became certified. Had to take V.D. test at local health clinic in order to receive license (a local prostitution ordinance).

1984: Massaged members of the cast and crew of a movie being filmed about Ernest Hemingway in Pamplona, Spain, during the famous running of the bulls. Yes, I ran.

1985: First regular massage job, at a spa in Florida, giving 25-minute full body oil rub-downs to cigar-smoking "good ole boys" for \$4 an hour.

1986: Rethought career choice. Started working at a friend's landscaping company.

1987: Was called into work at a new spa in Miami, the Doral. Massaged Dr. Ruth Westheimer, who gave me the "secret" of aphrodisiacs.

1988: Became supervisor of the massage and spa treatments department at the Doral, in charge of 40 therapists.

1989: Became a traveling spa trainer, hiring staff and overseeing openings of spas in Vermont, Jamaica, on cruise ships, and more.

1992: Started teaching workshops to massage therapists and business owners. Massaged Red Cross volunteers and army personnel in aftermath of Hurricane Andrew.

1997: Began publishing books on massage and spas (this is the third one).

1998: First child born. Waiting until he's a year or two old before teaching him how to massage Mommy and Daddy.

1999: Continuing to rub, teach, and write.

Michel Van Welden, PT, NT, received his training at the Physical Therapy Institute of Paris, specializing in orthopedic and neurological rehabilitation, as well as sports medicine and the treatment of burn victims.

For 26 years, he practiced both in hospitals and in his own private clinic. Working hand in hand (no pun intended) with plastic surgeons, he helped develop Plastic Physical Therapy, which increases the positive results of plastic surgery procedures. He also assembled a procedural manual and produced a video about lymphatic drainage and has taught his technique to therapists throughout France and around the world.

Since arriving in the U.S., he has become an "expert on the skin," who, in May 1998, substantiated the first derivative claim ever approved by the FDA for the treatment of cellulite using a patented massage device. All the other stuff you see on infomercials about cellulite is a lot of malarkey.

Mr. Van Welden is currently a consultant and acting Director of Research for two American clinical research projects studying the effects of massage on cute little pigs. These are underway at UCLA and Vanderbilt University, believe it or not.

Michel is also a wild and crazy outdoorsman. He has run to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro seven times. He also became the record holder for long distance running along the Great Wall of China, covering 1,500 miles, half of the wall's length. His greatest achievement in the sports field, though, was in helping dozens of other people discover their own potentials by leading fitness trips to the Great Wall, Kilimanjaro, the Andes peaks, and other destinations.

Mr. Van Welden is married and is the father of three children. He lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

He can be contacted by email at michelvp@worldnet.att.net.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to the coolest little massage partner ever, Brandon Sunthorn Capellini, born August 3, 1998.

Acknowledgments from Steve Capellini

I thank Atchana, my darling partner and wife, who received less massages because I was so busy writing these past months. The rest of my family was equally supportive and enthusiastic too: Mom & Dad, Tina, Bala & Adi, Jim & Lalitha, Rob, Suzanne, Chris, Ari, & Nicole. And of course the Thai side of the family: Umpun, Lek, Pat, Rangsan, Tina, & Rolando. And the father-in-law I never knew, Sunthorn Chuaindhara; he lives on in our hearts.

I appreciate my co-author Michel Van Welden for his help and for being so dedicated to his worldwide massage research.

I'm very grateful to Carol Susan Roth, who believed I was right for this project and made it all possible through her dedication and hard work, and to Lori Huneke for introducing us.

Thank you to stellar literary agents, Michael Larsen and Elizabeth Pomada, who've been steadily supporting my writing and helping me grow.

All the folks at IDG have been a pleasure to work with because they are smart and they have vision and they like massage! I really appreciate being treated as part of the team, especially at BEA, and I'd especially like to thank Tami Booth for her support, encouragement, and hard work on this project. I also thank Kathleen Welton for remembering me from two years earlier; Tim Gallan, a brave soul who endured major surgery while right in the midst of editing this book; Christina Turner; Karen Young; Kristina Pappas; Mimi Sells; Jonathan Malysiak; Steve Berkowitz; Charles Berkstresser; Roland Elgey; Sarah Woodman & Ana Noetzel for creating killer trade show events; David Scott for staying in touch from Australia; and John Kilcullen for proudly proclaiming "Free massages! Only in America!" at the Book Expo. You've got a great team, and you know how to throw a party!

Also, there are so many friends and clients from the massage and spa world who've helped with this book too: Jai Varadaraj for all her help from India; Lynda Solien-Wolfe for her guerilla massage marketing and the great Massage For Dummies chair; Don Payne; John Fanuzzi; Carole Spellman; Ed Wilson; Iris Burman; Dan & Telka Ulrich; Pat Weinman; Harvey & Phyllis Sandler; Dave Kennedy; Amory Rowe; the Dail family up in Maine for their unparalleled hospitality; and especially Nancy Dail for her technical review of this book; Steve Chagnon; Vincenzo & Susy Marra; Giovanni Grippando; Regina Kipnis; Ellen Wickersham; Connie Johnson; Jim Berenholtz; Mark Siciliani; and Carol Ann Ferrol.

Also, I thank the co-creators of the book: Kathryn Born, for the illustrations; Peter Barrett for the photography; and his assistants Alfredo and Ava, and of course the models, Fardan Karibee, Josephine B. Hortenbrink, Jason Barger, & Linda Vongkhamphra.

Acknowledgments from Michel Van Welden

For my Mom, for all that she did for me, including going through sciatica pain to show me the way of my future. Thanks.

To all the patients who knocked on my door to receive a massage and ended up sweating in Africa or in Bolivia.

To Steve Capellini for not thinking that all French are arrogant, carrying their baguettes and bottles of wine everywhere they go, and for offering me the pleasure of sharing the success of this book.

To Sebastien and Jordane my sons, for all the support they bring to their too often gone away, Dad.

To Jocelyne who taught me how to speak to pigs about massage, and convince them that the guy with the white coat and a strong French accent was not the butcher. And for the love she brings me every day.

To Dr. James Watson, plastic surgeon at UCLA, and Dr. David Adcock plastic surgeon at Vanderbilt University, for all the hours spent together in the lab and in the Plastic Surgery Department trying to understand a non-surgical technique.

To Tami Booth for giving me this extraordinary opportunity — to be published in the USA. And to Carol Susan Roth for making it possible.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

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◆
The publisher would like to give special thanks to Patrick J. McGovern,
without whom this book would not have been possible.
◆

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Cartoons at a Glance

By Rich Tennant



"This is what I get for marrying a massage therapist. Every Thanksgiving he's got to knead the turkey's spine before he'll carve it."

page 63



"Now, that would show how important it is to distinguish 'massage therapists' from 'massage parlors' when downloading a video file from the Internet."

page 9



page 301



"I really don't think a simple neck massage is going to get rid of your headaches."

page 115



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

page 241



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

page 197

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Foreword

When done right, it can free your body, invigorate your spirit, and refresh your soul. I'm of course talking about massage. Logging 20,000 miles a year may have made me somewhat of an expert on the lifestyles of the rich and famous, but it also taught me to value some of life's simple pleasures, like massage. Whenever I arrive at a new destination, be it the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand, or the Canyon Ranch Spa at the Venetian in Las Vegas, the first thing I do after I check in is escape to a good massage. It's the only cure for whatever ails you. Being a devotee of the art of a good massage, my mania isn't confined to just when I'm traveling. I have a massage table in my home in Jumby Bay, Antigua, and SueHua, my Chinese masseuse, is a daily treat. . . .

Perhaps the best thing about massage is that absolutely everyone can enjoy it, recreating one of the greatest pleasures of the jet-set crowd right at home. And now, finally, there's a way for all of us to learn the secrets from one of the great masters of massage, Steve Capellini. This book reveals dozens of healthy tips to help you achieve inner harmony, peace of mind, and an entirely new level of well-being, whether you're receiving your massage at a great luxury hotel on the island of Maui, or on your very own living room floor.

Massage is truly one of the greatest gifts that is a delight to receive and a joy to give. Have fun as you read along and practice because you may even make a few new friends.

Robin Leach

Introduction

For those of us who've already discovered it, massage is just about the niftiest thing on the planet. Better than chocolate. Better than pizza. It's a great way to feel better, look better, treat people better, and treat yourself better, too. It's one hundred percent good for you, with no artificial additives or ingredients, and it's easy to do. In fact, one of the best things about massage is that you don't need a lot of fancy expensive equipment in order to get one or give one. All you really need to get started is a human body. Got one? Great! Then you're ready to go.

First, let me introduce myself and explain what qualifies me to teach you about this subject in the first place. I've been massaging people for a living since I was 23 years old. That's more than 16 years and well over 10,000 massages. I've trained other massage therapists around the world at resorts, in workshops, and in massage schools, and I've written a few books on the subject.

But there's something more to it than that. If all I were offering you was technical experience, analytical knowledge, and rah-rah enthusiasm, I wouldn't blame you for approaching this book with indifference or even boredom.

Yet another book about the beauties and wonders of massage strokes and maneuvers? Wax on, wax off. Yawn.

The Massage Adventure

What I hope to offer you is more than technique, more than know-how, even more than increased pleasure and greater health in your everyday life. What I will be trying to get across in all of the pages to follow is a new way to *be*. I've transformed my own life into an ongoing, unfolding massage adventure and would be most sincerely honored to act as your guide along a similar journey of inner and outer exploration. There's a big, wild world out there, and there's an even bigger, wilder world inside your own body and mind. Massage is an excellent vehicle through which to explore both.

Touching other people with the intention of making them feel better and improving the quality of their lives is one of the most worthy ways to spend one's time as a human being. Massage, in this sense, is more than a job. It's a calling, a cause, a mission. I realize, of course, that this may sound a tad overzealous. Not everybody feels this way, which is good because if they did

feel this way, then they'd all be massage therapists like me, and there would be nobody left to do other important jobs like delivering office furniture, piloting commercial airplanes, and making incorrect predictions about the stock market.

But regardless of their "real" jobs, whether they know it or not, everybody in this world is a living, breathing massage sponge. Take you, for example. Right now, before you get to the next paragraph, take a moment to become aware of your body. Where are you? What is touching you? A chair on your bottom? A bed on your whole backside? A carpeted floor pressing against your feet? Somewhere, something is touching you, unless you are reading this introduction to *Massage For Dummies* in free fall during a skydiving expedition (in which case your clothing and the harness over your shoulders are still touching you, not to mention the friction of the air rushing by). In fact, this entire world is reaching out and massaging you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Gravity is the grip, and everything else is the hand.

Those people with a more spiritual bent may even be tempted to say that "God" or the "Supreme Being" or the "Ultimate Massage Therapist" is touching us all the time, as reflected in mystical songs throughout the ages, such as the ancient Gregorian chant, *Omnis Mundus In Manus Habeo*, which, roughly translated, means "He's got the whole world in His hands. He's got the whole wide world. . . ."

You're not alone

The world is filled with millions of people who have already started their own massage adventures. In fact, in the U.S. alone, approximately 28 million people have received a professional massage, and that number is growing quickly. Millions more have exchanged massages on a non-professional basis with friends and family. Insurance companies are starting to reimburse for it, doctors are including it in their practices, and practically every hair salon in every city is turning into a day spa and offering massage to clients. You've probably seen massage on shows like *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. It's everywhere, and yet, if you're like most people, you still haven't received a massage, and you have quite a few questions about how it works and what it can do for you. If that's the case, then this is the book for you.

You don't have to be a hippie

Let me reassure you right here at the beginning that I'm not going to ask you to do anything you're uncomfortable with. In fact, if you want to receive a massage while wearing a formal, ankle-length ball gown or a football uniform

complete with pads, that's fine with me. It may cut down on the effectiveness of certain massage techniques, but I'm not here to tell you what your style should be. I'm here to help you feel comfortable about including massage in your life in whatever ways you see fit.

In this book, you're going to find lots of ways to make massage a part of your day-to-day activities so that it becomes as natural as brushing your teeth, driving your car, or peeling the stickers off sales items you buy as Christmas presents. And in order to help you accomplish this, I've enlisted the help of a pretty impressive character, my co-author, Michel Van Welden. First of all, you should know that Michel is a man. In France, where he's from, many men are called Michel. He's a physical therapist and naturopathic therapist who's traveled the world teaching other therapists and physicians about massage. An expert on physiology and the skin, he has been personally responsible for getting the FDA in this country to sit up and pay serious attention to the effects of certain kinds of massage. The way he accomplished this was through several highly complex laboratory experiments studying (I'm not making this up) the effects of massage on pigs. I defer to Michel's clinical expertise on many crucial issues, and my hope is that his scientific knowledge sets your mind at ease regarding the effectiveness and safety of massage. Throughout your average, everyday paragraphs in this book, though, it will be me, Steve, acting as your guide. Together, Michel and I have created a book that goes beyond any other of its kind to offer you everything you need to know to change your life from a dull, drab, non-massage existence into an exciting massage adventure.

This Book Is for You If . . .

As I stated earlier, this book is for anyone with a body, which should qualify almost every single reader. Disembodied spirits and poltergeists may find it difficult to get the correct amount of friction necessary to perform effective massage maneuvers and should therefore abstain. Certain people in particular will quickly discover the most obvious benefits in reading these pages; you know who you are, and this book is especially for you if . . .

- ✓ You've ever wanted to touch another person with grace, compassion, and caring.
- ✓ You want to share a new level of communication with the people you're close to.
- ✓ You want to increase your well-being and reduce many types of pain.
- ✓ You have a desire to enhance various aspects of your life, including athletic performance, job efficiency, and even your love life.
- ✓ You have a handicap of some kind and would like to discover how in fact massage is the therapy of choice for many people with physical limitations.

- ✔ You want to pursue this adventure more seriously and are perhaps thinking about becoming a massage pro yourself.
- ✔ You think knowing how to give a good massage may be a neat way to get more dates.

So How Do I Get Started Already?

By now you're probably saying, "Alright, Steve. You've convinced me. My muscles are sore and I'm ready to get going. How do I get started with this whole massage thing anyway?"

The best way to use this book is to choose the subject that interests you most and then jump right in at that point. Many of you may be eager to start giving a massage right away, in which case, you can zoom ahead to Part III. I highly encourage you to read all the material in the sections leading up to the how-to stuff, however, instead of simply flipping through the photographs and list of instructions. The attitudes and intentions with which you approach massage are, after all, what make the biggest difference in terms of what you get out of it.

For those of you who like to approach your reading in a systematic fashion, you will find that each part of the book builds upon the one before it in what is, I hope, a logical manner, so that by the end, you can come away knowing just about as much as you'd ever want to know about massage, unless of course you start pursuing it as a passion and profession in your life as I have, in which case, the learning never ends.

How This Book Is Organized

Here are the subjects that you find spread out before your eager eyes and fingers as you use this book:

Part I: Discovering Massage for Greater Health and Happiness

In this part, you find the background information you need to understand how the massage techniques actually work, and where they came from in the first place. You can discover all kinds of interesting things about your skin and what's beneath it, for example, and what it is about massage that helps your whole body feel better. If you're up to the task, you can test your touch-ability

in a specially designed quiz. You can also encounter important vocabulary words and, perhaps most importantly, finally find out what all those massage gizmos at The Sharper Image are all about.

Part II: The Art of Receiving Massage

What, there's an art to receiving too, you ask? You mean I can't just lie there like a blob and let someone else do all the work? That's correct. Massage, in this respect, is like the tango, and you know what they say about the tango. In this part, you develop the fine art of "tuning in," which allows you to fully enjoy the benefits and pleasures that await you with massage. I describe how you can invite healthy pleasure into your life, choose the right style of massage for you and your body, choose a good massage therapist, and start receiving massages just like the pros do, with all the trimmings like proper breathing, meditative awareness, and other advanced techniques for basically blissing out.

Part III: The Art of Giving Massage

This part is the "meat" of the book, so to speak, with all the pretty pictures that you may be tempted to flip to immediately and never draw your attention away from again. Resist this temptation, oh hedonistic reader! In fact, go ahead right now (if you haven't already) and flip forward to the photos and then come back after a couple of minutes. Go ahead. I can wait.

There, satisfied? Now promise that you'll look through the other important sections of Part III as well. Make no mistake about it: To give a good massage requires some effort and energy, and you'll do well to prepare mentally beforehand so you don't burn yourself out. You may also discover vital information about when and how not to massage people, including yourself.

Part IV: Massage at Work

If you're suffering from some of the typical aches and pains of office workers and computer users everywhere, rush directly to Part IV. In this part, I give you simple massage moves that you can apply to your own aching body right at your desk, and I offer an entire chapter on how to relieve sore, tired feet with a special kind of massage known as reflexology. (Don't worry, I define that strange sounding word soon enough.) Hint: You may even be able to use this part of the book as evidence to help convince your boss to pay for professional chair-massage right in the work place. You'll see what I mean.

Part V: Living the Good Life: Massage for Every Body

In the fifth part, you can take your pick from a smorgasbord of offerings, reading through the chapters that intrigue you in whichever order you choose. Whether you're an athlete, a pregnant woman, a world traveler, or whatever, you're sure to pick up a ton of useful info here that you can use to integrate massage into your life.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

The last part contains lists of ten quick ways you can improve your life with massage, including suggestions for great places to take massage classes, outstanding locations to receive incredible massages, quick massage tips to ease stress, ways to offer massage as a gift, and, for you pet lovers, massage techniques designed especially for pooches and kitties.

Massaging the Icons

Throughout this book, I place lots of little round things in the margins, calling your attention to various details in the text. These pictures are called *icons*, and I have included some particularly pertinent ones for people learning the ropes of the massage world. To wit, you have your:



The Message Tale icon lets you know there's a real-life massage story from an actual person in the adjacent paragraph. These stories may leave you happy, misty-eyed, or thoughtful, depending on the subject matter, but they all go to prove how powerful an influence massage can be in your life.



This one signifies that some sagacious and perhaps famous individual is contributing various words of wisdom on the massage subject at hand, words which usually highlight my own brilliant remarks.



The Tip icon clues you in right away to the presence of some especially important information. Perhaps I'll reveal a secret technique for massaging your way into Harvard Business School, for example. Perhaps not. You have to check the tip to be sure. At the very least, you may find some quick and easy pointers to make your reading experience as pleasurable as possible.



The practice of massage is not without its potential dangers. For example, once, after receiving three massages in one day as part of my job interviewing therapists for positions at a new spa, I turned into a human noodle and kept banging my knees into furniture. Seriously, though, there are certain things you have to watch out for when practicing massage, and there are various reasons why you should not offer massage in certain circumstances (what we professionals call *contraindications*). You can catch them right away when you see this icon.



Not wanting to make you feel like you're a wallflower just observing the massage-dance of life from the sidelines, I'm going to do my best to explain in plain English everything you need to know on the subject. When, out of necessity, I use some massage terminology that seems foreign or unnecessarily complex to you, I warn you first with one of these little icons.

Sharing the Adventure

Massage, ultimately, is a way to share with others and to express yourself in a direct, hands-on way, and I hope this book plays a big part in helping you discover this. If you'd like to share some thoughts about what you learn on your own massage adventure, you can contact me in care of IDG Books Worldwide, or you can visit me on the Web at www.royaltreatment.com and send e-mail to steve@royaltreatment.com. I'll be most pleased to hear how your journey is going.

So What Happens Now?

I can feel you getting a little antsy. You wanna get your hands on somebody already, don't you? Well, as I said earlier, you can always skip ahead. In fact, now that you're a little jazzed up about all these great benefits you can get from massage, this may be a good time to flash forward to Part III. Give yourself a little treat by mastering one or two moves, either for yourself or a partner, spend an hour happily practicing your new skill, and then come back and read the first few chapters, in which you find out the answers to such burning questions as, "What famous inventor of psychoanalysis used massage in his practice to calm patients?" Hint: His last name rhymes with void.

8

Massage For Dummies

Part I

Discovering Massage for Greater Health and Happiness

The 5th Wave By Rich Tennant



"Now, that would show how important it is to distinguish 'massage therapist' from 'massage parlors' when downloading a video file from the Internet."

In this part . . .

As you explore this first part of this book, you may begin to get a sense that there's something really *big* out there that you've been overlooking, almost as if an elephant were living in your backyard, right over there behind the clothesline, but you'd somehow failed to see it. Yes, it's true: The parallel universe of massage has existed right beneath your nose all along, and millions of people around the world have enjoyed its benefits and pleasures for untold centuries. So, you might ask, if massage is so darn popular and everyone loves it so much, why haven't I been informed?

Don't feel bad. You're in the majority. Most people have no clue about the rich tradition that massage has to offer, and that's because they were never taught by their parents, or their peers, or a respected teacher in grade school. Learning massage is kind of like learning geometry, or your ABCs. If no one teaches you, how are you supposed to find out?

There are certain controversies that still swarm around the whole issue of massage, most of them based on ideas held-over from the Victorian age. In this first part of the book, I'm going to completely quash all such concerns into little tiny bits, leaving you with a jaw-agape appreciation for the tremendous benefits massage can have for you, your family, and friends.

Whether you're already somewhat familiar with massage and are raring to go, or you're a trembling neophyte, slightly intimidated by the very concept of touching another person, or being touched, Part I will quickly usher you into a new world filled with the millions of us who already know and enjoy the many benefits of massage.

Welcome to the club.

Chapter 1

Not Just a Rub: How Massage Can Improve Your Life

.....

In This Chapter

- ▷ What makes massage work
 - ▷ Types of massage and how they help you
-

What does massage really do for you anyway? Sure, it feels incredible to receive one, and it looks nice to watch beautiful people massaging each other on how-to videos, but what's going on beneath the surface? Is it worth it to actually fork over your hard-earned cash to have someone rub your skin for an hour? Should you spend your precious time and energy learning how to give a good massage yourself? Is massage really effective, or is it just an unnecessary, flashy indulgence, like fish eggs on toast?



Well, being a massage junkie myself, I find it difficult to imagine why anybody would *not* want to get a massage, anytime, anyplace, for any reason at all or no reason at all. For me, massage has just always seemed like such an obviously good thing to do, starting way back in 11th grade when Grace came over to visit at my parent's house one afternoon, and nobody else was home. Being a typical seventeen-year-old, I was hoping that we were soon going to engage in some good old-fashioned hanky-panky, and when Grace told me to loosen my belt and lie down on the carpet, I began singing Handel's *Messiah* silently to myself.

Grace touched me then, on the small of my back, and I'll never forget the sensation. "This is a massage technique that somebody taught me," she said. "How does it feel?"

"Ah, it feels, um, kind of, uh, unbelievable!" I said, and unbelievable was exactly the right word. Grace was doing something clearly non-sexual, and I could not believe that anything non-sexual could feel so good. I could not

believe that there was a way to be so intimate with somebody and yet not get in trouble with her father, if he were to find out about it. In short, I could not believe that something that was neither illegal, immoral, nor fattening could be so sumptuously pleasurable.

I asked Grace to keep doing what she was doing, and as she did so, I began devising, right there with my face buried in my parent's green shag carpeting, a future lifestyle that would include the absolutely highest number of massages possible.

This early experience pointed out a fundamental truth about massage therapy, but one that is often missed by those people who judge it before they even give it a try. That truth: There is a difference between sex and massage therapy. There, I said it, right here in Chapter 1, and I'm glad. Some people out there will forever be mixing the two up, which does a disservice to everybody else, especially those people who have shied away from massage over the years because of a perceived less-than-pristine image.

I discovered, in that youthful, eye-opening experience, that massage does indeed feel unbelievable, and that discovery was a great place to begin. Now, more than 20 years later, after studying massage and teaching massage and experiencing the myriad facets of massage both in the U.S. and in other countries, I've been introduced to other, deeper reasons for including it in my life, reasons with profound implications for improved health, well-being, and even longevity. These are the reasons I'd like to share with you in this chapter and throughout the book.

Basic Benefits of Massage

If I were to go into some of the stories about how massage has helped people change their lives, heal themselves, become rich and famous, and so on, you probably wouldn't believe me right away, because, after all, we're still in Chapter 1. So I'm going to start out slowly and offer you some of the simplest, everyday ways that massage can help you, some of which still may come as a surprise to you.

Here, then, not ranked in any particular order, are some basic benefits of massage that perhaps didn't pop straight into your head the first time you thought about it. Massage . . .

- ✓ Helps relieve muscular spasm and tension
- ✓ Raises immune efficiency

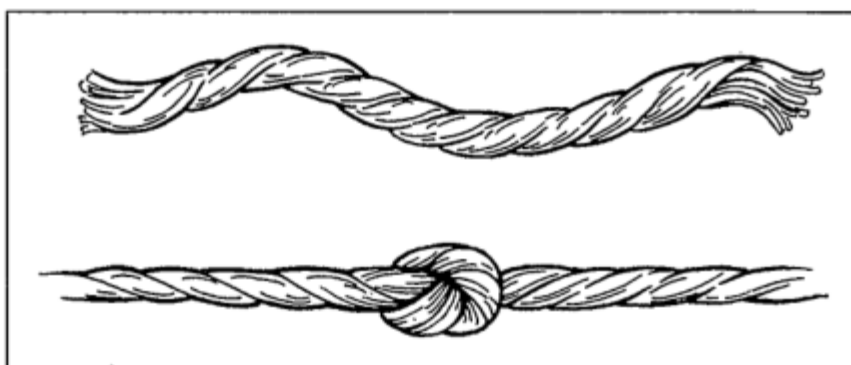
- ✓ Improves circulation
- ✓ Promotes the healing of tissues
- ✓ Increases healthy functioning of the skin
- ✓ Engenders profound relaxation
- ✓ Offers emotional reassurance
- ✓ Improves appearance

I'd like to take these points one at a time and let you get comfortable with them.

Helps relieve muscular spasm and tension

As you can see in Figure 1-1, there is a definite physical difference between muscles that are relaxed and happy and muscles that are tensed up due to stress, overuse, injury, and more.

Figure 1-1:
The limp
rope is your
muscle. The
knotted rope
is your
muscle on
stress.



But there's more to it than that, believe it or not. Regardless of how wickedly clever my rope analogy is, the human body is much more complex. In fact, it's so complex that nobody has completely figured it out yet, even though countless researchers have spent a lifetime trying to do so. A whole bunch of really interesting things about the body have been discovered, however, along with how it responds to various types of stimuli, including massage.

For example, one of the most direct effects of massage is to help loosen the tension we experience as knots, kinks, and spasms in our muscles. This is achieved in a number of ways:

- ✓ The application of pressure creates awareness that there is indeed tension in a particular area, and the person receiving the massage can then begin to consciously release that tension.
- ✓ Through the application of friction to the area, a *thermodynamic* effect takes place, warming and softening the tight, hard tissue.
- ✓ By stimulating *trigger points*, the local nerves are soothed, allowing a release of contractions.

Raises immune efficiency

Did you know that there is a vast system of vessels running through your body, roughly parallel to your circulatory system, and that this system is filled with a fluid that is responsible for carrying away and eliminating many of the organisms, bacteria, viruses, and other microscopic bad guys that might otherwise attack you? Yes, it's true. This is the *lymph system*, otherwise known as the Canadian Mounties of your body.



Your lymph system has *nodes* at various strategically located areas throughout your body, and these nodes have the job of capturing the invaders and processing them before eventual expulsion through your *excretory system*. Now, you may be wondering, how the heck does this lymph fluid get pumped through your body anyway? Funny you should ask. I've devised a test to discern your knowledge on that very subject.

Holy anatomy quiz, Batman!

That's right, but it's just a one-question quiz, so don't let your anxiety levels rise too high over it. Here we go:

Question: How does the body pump the critically important lymph fluid through its lymph vessels, keeping your inner ocean clean and healthy?

- a. The heart pumps the lymph, just like it pumps the blood.
- b. The centrifugal force from riding various carnival rides is the best way to get the lymph fluid moving.
- c. Fear caused by sudden, unexpected physical proximity to vampires or werewolves causes the lymph vessels to contract, circulating the fluid.
- d. Movement, muscular contraction, and massage therapy are the ways lymph fluid is most effectively moved through the body because the lymph system has no pump of its own, such as the heart.

Right! The answer is d. By helping your body circulate this lymph fluid, massage aids in the elimination of noxious invaders (*toxins*) from your body.

Our neglected muscles

Even though you have over 600 muscles that take up approximately 60 percent of your body weight, they sometimes get neglected, especially when it comes to your average physician.

For example, many times after serious trauma, such as a car accident, physicians perform appropriate procedures to save the life of the injured person and to repair any gross damage. Then physical therapists take over to help restore as much use and feeling to the affected areas as possible. What happens, though, when that person returns to his physician or physical therapist six months later complaining of

chronic pain? If no further operations are warranted, and continued physical therapy doesn't seem to help, there are only two choices as far as most physicians are concerned:

- ✓ Prescribe drugs
- ✓ Counsel stoicism

That's right, the only two choices are to either mask the pain or learn to live with it. In the massage model, though, something restorative can be done with that 60 percent of your body known as *soft tissue* to bring about relief.

There are other factors at play, too, in massage's effectiveness as an immune booster. As reported in *LIFE* magazine (August 97), studies in orphanages have shown that infants and children deprived of touch experience stunted growth, both emotionally and physically. Further study showed that touch promotes the release of human growth hormone (HGH), which is essential to our development. If a child is not touched sufficiently, his or her development will be stunted, and susceptibility to disease will be increased, with potentially catastrophic results. Many of the untouched children in orphanages have died for lack of simple contact.

Improves circulation

This is the reason that the cigar-smoking octogenarians who frequented old-fashioned health spas used to give for receiving massage: "It's good for the circulation!" they'd say. And they were right.

Students in massage school are taught to always massage in the direction of circulation, toward the heart, whenever they're applying enough pressure to move the blood underneath the skin. The reason for this is that your veins have little one-way valves in them that keep blood from going back in the wrong direction. So obviously it's not a good idea to push the blood back against these valves, potentially harming them. In fact, when these valves don't work properly on their own, the blood seeps backward

and pools up, causing the appearance of varicose veins, which are a *contraindication* for massage, but I'm skipping ahead to Chapter 10 already. Sorry about that.

You have the idea: Some massage movements physically push the blood around in its vessels and can therefore, when done properly, push it in the right direction, improving circulation.

Massage also draws more blood to the surface of the body and into areas of relatively poorer circulation, thus bringing with it much-needed oxygen and other nutrients for the tissues.

Promotes the healing of tissues

This benefit is primarily a result of the previous two. By helping to bring nutrient-rich blood into areas that are recovering from any type of problem, and by helping to cleanse these same areas of toxins (by stimulating the lymph system), massage promotes quicker healing.

Also, certain types of massage stretch and soften tissues in traumatized areas, helping them regain natural elasticity and strength faster.



But beware: You definitely don't want to rush straight in and massage your cousin John's swollen knee after his recent surgery unless you've been trained in bona-fide massage classes and know what you're doing.

Increases healthy functioning of the skin

The skin is where massage has its most pronounced effects. In fact, I've devoted the whole of Chapter 3 to it. So let me just say here that massage includes several actions that leave the skin silky, vibrant, and fully functioning in both directions. By that I mean it promotes the shedding of dead cells while also encouraging the absorption of moisture, nutrients, vitamins, and other vital elements, especially when the massage is given with the aid of creams, oils, and lotions created for just that purpose.

In this sense, massage helps the skin "breathe." Just as our lungs breathe both in and out, inhaling and exhaling, healthy skin must breathe in both directions, too, and massage can help with that.

Offers emotional reassurance

In a famous experiment conducted by some truly sadistic researchers, some unfortunate little monkeys were brought up in cages with surrogate mothers. Each monkey had two mothers in the cage with him. One was a rag doll and the other was a hard wire shell. The uncomfortable wire mother had a nipple with real milk coming out, but the rag doll mother had no nipples and no milk. The researchers shocked the monkeys, then they sat back with smug-researcher-expressions on their faces to see what would happen. In every case, when they were desperate for comfort and safety, the monkeys scampered straight over to rag-doll-mommy, regardless of the fact that she had never provided any other kind of food or sustenance beyond the fact of being soft and cuddly.

This brings us to an important realization as far as humans are concerned, too: Almost every person alive, when shocked, would rather squeeze a rag doll than a hard wire shell with a nipple attached. This bit of information, I've found, makes a fascinating ice-breaker at cocktail parties.

Extrapolating from this data, the researchers were able to conclude, with a good degree of confidence, that tactile sensations are the most important factors involved with emotional comforting.

Massage, by offering a sustained, intentional, caring form of tactile stimulation, is one of the best ways to impart emotional reassurance, and emotional reassurance just may be the number one need of humans in the twenty-first century. We modern urban dwellers are all a bunch of shocked monkeys searching for Mom, basically. And massage is the ultimate rag doll.

Engenders profound relaxation

Dr. Robert Benson of Harvard wrote in *The Relaxation Response* that by repeating certain breathing and concentration exercises, people could greatly reduce their levels of stress. Massage, by its very nature, induces a similar response. It's a mini-vacation that you can take right there inside your own body. No need to buy expensive plane tickets or submit yourself to the hassles of taxi rides and hotel rooms. Just close your eyes and let someone else send you to your own virtual Tahiti.

If you receive a massage and don't relax, it's the same thing as going to Tahiti and not enjoying the scenery, the warmth, the water, or the colorful little umbrellas in the cocktails. In other words, it's up to you. Nobody can force you to relax while receiving a massage, just as no one can force you to enjoy the South Pacific, but you'd have to be kind of crazy not to.

Improves appearance

The combination of all the preceding benefits leaves just about anybody who receives them looking better than they did before they started, and in that way, massage can improve the appearance of even the most stubbornly unattractive person. You know the type: the man with the big crease down the middle of his forehead, or the woman with her mouth pulled taut like she just chewed an entire lemon. Most of what we deem unattractive is simply poor attitude, and the people with the strangest looking faces and bodies can still be very attractive, especially if they are . . .

- ✓ Tension-free
- ✓ Healthy
- ✓ Flushed with the rosy glow of good circulation
- ✓ Quickly recovering from any painful conditions
- ✓ Covered with silky “breathing” skin
- ✓ Confident and emotionally assured
- ✓ Profoundly relaxed

Who can resist a person like this?

The Massage Menu



There are literally hundreds of types of massage practiced around the world, many of them with wonderfully evocative names like *tui-na* and *lomi lomi*. This is not the section in which I'm going to explain each of those massage *modalities* to you, however (a fairly extensive explanation of several major styles is the focus of one section in Chapter 5). Instead, what I'm doing here is explaining the generic types of massage, broken down into categories based on the observable effects they can have in your own life.

Think of this section like the menu in a restaurant. Each category (breakfast, lunch, dinner) consists of distinctly different dishes, and yet the foods used to prepare the dishes can be the same. So the same eggs used to make your omelet at breakfast can be used in your egg salad at lunch or your dessert after dinner. It's the same with the following categories of massage. Any particular massage technique can be used to create various effects.

When you head into Chez Massage, you can order a-la-carte or request a pre-arranged sampling of offerings, like on a prix-fixe menu. The following do not present a completely exhaustive list, but they cover all the main entrees and several side dishes as well:

Relaxation massage

This category may be the most familiar to those of you who have not delved into the world of massage before. It's the type of massage you see on TV. For example, in one of the older James Bond movies, Sean Connery poses as a massage therapist in a European spa and rubs some information out of one of his enemies (a beautiful Russian enemy, of course). The impromptu maneuvers he made up at that point consisted of simple, straightforward rubbing and sliding. A trained massage therapist delivers quite a bit more effectiveness than Sean did, but in essence, the purpose of the relaxation massage is, duh, to relax. This is particularly helpful in these instances:

- ✓ For stress relief, when the daily grind is just too much and the simple act of lying down and having someone pay solicitous attention to you for an hour is enough to make a big difference.
- ✓ For pampering, which is fine, as long as you don't feel guilty about it.

Sports massage

Just ask the world-class athletes who travel with their own personal massage therapists. They'll tell you what a difference a massage can make. Many Olympians and high-level players in all sports are true believers, but they are not the only ones who use massage as part of their training. Even amateur athletes and weekend warriors incorporate it whenever they can, specifically, pre-event, post-event, and for ongoing training.

Rehabilitative massage

This type of massage helps the body repair itself. Many people have found that it was the key factor in helping them heal quickly and get back to normal activity levels as soon as possible after injuries and after surgery.

Doctors are people, too

You may notice that on several occasions in this book, I allude to physicians as people who are not quite up to speed with reality when it comes to the very provable value of massage therapy. In fact, I've already said something to that effect in this chapter.

So I just want to make something clear before you get the wrong idea: I think doctors are great. I respect and admire doctors and consider several to be friends. Sure, there are some jerk doctors just like there are jerk massage therapists, but all-in-all, physicians are some of the most responsible, educated, humane, helpful humans on the planet, doing all kinds of good work.

When you hear me say anything less than complimentary about physicians or *allopathic medicine*, it's not the people themselves I'm referring to so much as the system we've created in which they work. Unfortunately, our present situation does not allow for doctors to spend the time with each individual patient that they'd probably like to. At the same time, many of them are realizing the value of massage and have even begun including it in their practices. In fact, a September 1998 survey of medical schools published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* revealed that 64 percent of medical schools offer courses in complementary medicine, including massage, which is the most popular alternative modality taught.

Miriam Wetzel, Ph.D., director of curriculum development at Harvard Medical School, says that therapeutic massage is part of the school's training. "I would like to see the medical community recognize that there is a difference between therapeutic massage and something that's just relaxing," she says.

In France, where my co-author Michel Van Welden received his training, physicians look at massage in a wholly different light. "What we do is respected as part of the medical model all across Europe," says Michel. "Physicians there have no qualms about referring particular cases to massage therapists. In fact, the word we use in France for massage therapist is *kinesiotherapeut*, which really signifies a combination of massage therapist, physical therapist, and holistic practitioner who utilizes a number of healing tools, such as aromatherapy and herbology. There are 25,000 of them in France, which is an area the size of Texas. Most of them have their own clinics, and they are very highly regarded by physicians and patients alike."

Some of us in the alternative health world have given doctors a bum wrap for too long. I say let's move forward toward an *integrative medicine* that includes their expertise and ours together. This is already happening as witnessed by the quickly growing number of health clinics and hospitals with practitioners from many disciplines: M.D.s, acupuncturists, massage therapists, nutritionists, herbalists, and others.

Esthetic massage

We all want to look as good as we can, and massage can help. Through a combination of several of the benefits mentioned earlier in this chapter, massage softens your skin and gives you a healthy glow. It is also used to improve the

Chapter 1: Not Just a Rub: How Massage Can Improve Your Life

appearance of certain skin irregularities such as cellulite, with varying degrees of efficacy. People include massage in their beauty regimen for its ability to promote a youthful appearance and as an auxiliary treatment to enhance the effects of other beautifying procedures, such as plastic surgery and facials.

Energy-balancing massage

If massage were a map of the world, energy-balancing would be China. Yes, that's how big it is. Because energy is invisible, it's easy to dismiss it as unimportant, as far as our bodies go. But for a moment, imagine your body without energy. That's right: limp as a cooked noodle, flat as a pancake, blah as all get-out. Many of the massage styles I go over in Chapter 5 are based on an understanding of the body's energy systems, focusing on how to balance and enhance our inner invisible energy. These techniques can basically be categorized as either ancient systems, such as acupressure, or modern systems, such as cranio-sacral work.

Massage for increased awareness

Most of us inhabit our bodies without giving it much thought. We walk around in them and sit around in them and lie around in them, all on automatic pilot, relying upon the old patterns and habits we picked up in childhood. Sometimes, we're negatively influenced by injuries and other traumas that turn these unconscious habits into potentially debilitating conditions. We feel "stuck" in certain postures and can't get out. A massage can help you become aware of how you're holding onto certain patterns of tension and thus let you break them, and it can help you gain self-confidence through releasing old, negative body images.

Spiritually oriented massage

Depending on your frame of mind, any massage can be a spiritual experience, regardless of whether you receive it in an ancient Asian temple or the treatment room of your local health club. All you need are two people focused on awareness, breathing, releasing, and compassion. This spiritual aspect of massage can be used in the following ways:

- ✓ For meditation, when the sensitive sharing that takes place between two people in a good massage leads you to quiet your mind and remember some of the more important things in life.



- ✓ By ministers, nuns, and other clergy members who use this "laying on of hands" as a means to express compassion and in some cases to invoke healing.
- ✓ By practitioners of Eastern traditions such as Taoism and Buddhism. Buddhist monks in Thailand, for example, often learn the art of massage and practice it in their temples.

Massage for emotional growth

Allowing yourself to be touched with caring, therapeutic intentions takes a high degree of maturity. Several types of massage have been developed to access inner psychological issues and bring them to light. This is especially true in specific cases of past emotional trauma involving abuse and negative body-image caused by being overweight or handicapped.

Massage for sensual pleasure

This type of massage can be performed by any two consenting adults who have a relationship of respect and trust between them. It's especially useful for long-term couples seeking new and exciting activities to spice up their lives and for short-term couples looking for ways to slow themselves down and enjoy the moment rather than rush through to you-know-what.

Massage for non-humans

Believe it or not, there are special courses offered to teach people how to massage animals. As anyone who's ever scratched behind the ear of an appreciative pet can tell you, they love it. Certain animals in particular have been the lucky recipients of massage:

- ✓ Horses, especially race and show horses that are each worth more than the gross national product of the average third-world country
- ✓ Dogs and cats and other "people with fur" that we live with on an intimate basis

Chapter 2

A Brief History of Touch

.....

In This Chapter

- ▶ The development of massage therapy around the world
 - ▶ Massage in today's world
 - ▶ Where massage is going
-

This chapter is supposed to extol the virtues of certain Greek physicians who developed massage a couple thousand years ago, and then it's supposed to move on to the beginning of the twentieth century and talk about a certain Swedish man who was the father of modern western massage. And then the chapter should chronicle the . . . ZZZZZZZZZZ.

Was that the sound of your head smacking the table? Are you already getting so bored that you're about to fling this book against the nearest wall in desperation? "Why can't he tell me something fascinating and different?" you're about to scream.

Okay, I can hear the psychic echoes of your potential screams, so this chapter is going to be a teeny bit different than the history chapters in most massage books, the ones that treat the chronology of massage like the dry academic stuff you find in history texts. What could be more unlike the vibrant flesh-and-bones reality of a subject as physical as massage?

Dramatic Moments in Massage History

For your benefit and edification, I'm going to recreate dramatic scenes from various important massage moments throughout history. Much of what follows has been garnished with a large dose of creative license, but rest assured that the information is based upon historical fact. Only the boring parts have been deleted to protect the innocent reader.

Shaman Bob — hands-on healer



Thousands of years ago, beneath the primeval rainforest canopies of the vast Amazon jungle in what is now part of Brazil, an old *shaman* squatted down by a river, twisting the leaves and stems of a hardy vine between his worn fingers. The shaman's name was unintelligible to modern ears, so we'll call him Bob. His fingers were working the powerful ayuhasca vine, which gave his people visions that helped them to heal. Bob boiled the leaves and stems of the vine in water with other plants, making a thick syrupy tea that he brought with him back into the village.

It was night. The rainforest canopy above was filled with the screeching sounds of life. Arranging the members of the tribe in a circle around a fire he had built, Bob gave them each sips of the tea, and they began to twirl and dance and sing traditional songs. Some of them, the ones who needed healing the most, fell into a trance, and Bob approached them.

As the others watched, Bob appeared to literally reach into each person's body with his fingers. Then his fingers would flutter up toward the dark sky above the fire. He would touch them, brush them off, shake their limbs, staying in almost constant contact, and everyone could see (with the help of the ayuhasca) what Bob always saw — blurry spots where each person's body was weak, demons of darkness clinging to a shoulder.

Although Bob used powerful herbs and jungle plants, his primary tool was touch. The difference between a casual touch from another tribe member and an intentional, focused touch from Bob was sometimes the difference between life and death. His touch healed, and everyone knew it.

The Tao of massage



The enigmatic Chinese word, *Tao*, confuses many people. For one thing, why is the word spelled T-a-o when it's pronounced Dow? And for another thing, what's it supposed to mean anyway? Does it have anything to do with the New York Stock Exchange?

Many of you have heard of the *Tao of Pooh* or the *Tao of Physics* or the *Tao of Flower Arranging*, and if you ever read one of those far-out books on Eastern philosophy published in the 1970s — the kind printed on organic-oatmeal type paper — you probably remember the phrase, "The Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao." So then, how are you supposed to talk about it?

Regardless of the fact that you apparently can't talk about the Tao, you can still talk about massage, which is exactly what an early Chinese Taoist did around 5,000 years ago. He wrote a book called the *Con Fou of Tao-Tse* (Cun Foh of Dow Zee) that described the use of medicinal plants, exercises, and a



Great Greeks go nude

Imagine the Greek sun burning in a clear, blue sky. Below, in the outdoor *gymnazein*, dozens of naked athletes are exercising, each of them so tanned and muscled and healthy that they look like, well, Greek gods. Why naked, you ask? The word gymnasium itself comes from the Greek *gymnazein*, which means "to exercise naked," from *gymnos*, naked. Those fun-loving Greeks, I tell ya.

At any rate, the sun's beating down, all these naked Greeks are running around outdoing each other in feats of fitness, and old Asclepius is over there in the trainer's corner, ready and

waiting each time another Adonis comes running up with a torn Achilles tendon or sore lower back. The natural thing, of course, is to offer massage, along with other herbs and remedies. Supposedly, Asclepius became so proficient at this healing that he could even raise the dead. As a reward, Zeus struck him down with a thunderbolt and killed him.

This tale brings us to one of the very earliest philosophical lessons tied to the practice of massage: If you like to massage naked Greek athletes, try to keep it a secret.

system of massage for the treatment of disease. Because it was one of the first books ever written on any subject, the *Con Fou* really goes to show you just how ancient and important this whole subject of massage is after all.

A Greek man with a mission

Asclepius (as-klee'-pee-uhs), son of Apollo, the Greek god of healing, may have been an actual Greek man who lived around 1200 B.C., but just as likely he was a mythological figment of the Greek imagination. At any rate, he was credited with being the first to combine exercise with massage. He also founded the world's first gymnasium.

The Middle Ages

Nobody massaged anybody else (or was even allowed to touch much) during the Middle Ages, which almost wiped out western civilization. Luckily, a few hardy souls decided, despite vigorous opposition, to sneak off and touch each other in barns, stables, and other hidden places whenever possible, thus assuring the continuation of the human race and allowing people a chance to practice rudimentary massage techniques at the same time. Needless to say, the Middle Ages were *not* a good time to be a professional massage therapist, and many of them suffered extreme deprivations. In fact, some say that a famous book by Victor Hugo, and the Broadway musical

The Hypocritical oath

You may wonder why doctors have to take a hypocritical oath after they finish medical school and before they begin practicing. After all, you trust your physician with your life; why would you want him or her to be a hypocrite?

The answer is simple. They're not taking a hypocritical oath, but rather a Hippocratic Oath, which means that it was first uttered by none other than that great Greek physician himself, Hippocrates (460–380 B.C.). In the very first line of this oath, Hippocrates swears by Apollo and Asclepius to uphold the virtues of his healing art,

to not seduce women (or men) in the households he visits as a physician, and to abstain from mischief of all kinds.

Hippocrates also spoke about massage movements, saying that "hard rubbing binds, much rubbing causes parts to waste, and moderate rubbing makes them grow." He recommended massage for many conditions.

So, the man who penned the words that physicians around the world utter to this day was a believer in massage. Go figure.

based upon it, are actually plagiarized versions of an original story about the lives of these wretched medieval massage practitioners. Sadly, the original manuscript has been lost, and the true origins of *Les Massagerables* will forever remain a mystery.

The Swedish scenario

In most places you go in the western world today, when you ask for a massage, you'll receive one form or another of *Swedish* massage. And so, you may ask, *why* is it called Swedish massage? Here are some of the typical answers people have given to that question:

- ✓ People in Sweden were the only ones liberal enough to allow massage to be named after them.
- ✓ The Swedish director Ingmar Bergman liked to receive massage after a hard day on the movie set, and so they named the technique after him.
- ✓ Nobody knows why it's called Swedish massage, but everyone agrees it sounds better than Lithuanian massage or Uruguayan massage.

Actually, Swedish massage is named after a Swedish physiologist and fencing master by the name of Per Henrik Ling (1776–1839), who developed a system of Medical Gymnastics that included the moves we now use in basic massage. He eventually became known as the father of physical therapy. The fact that his

original system embraced massage is interesting because physical therapists in the modern world have to a large degree ostracized massage from their repertoire, and there is sometimes discord between them and massage therapists.

Decline of massage in the twentieth century

Due to the infighting amongst massage practitioners, and the sudden, powerful influence of technology in the medical world, massage faded from favor during the early and mid-1900s. Also, the earlier popularity of massage induced some people to try to make a profit from it illicitly. Around the turn of the century, several schools in Great Britain, for example, were turning out poorly trained practitioners, some of whom ended up acting as prostitutes, which was a big downfall for massage. Since the days of Hippocrates, and even further back into the ancient history of China and India, massage had been accepted as a healthy pastime by a sizeable number of people. Now, things were different.



Massaging Cain and Abel

Perhaps the discord in the massage world can be traced back to the pair of American brothers who were responsible for bringing massage to the United States from Sweden — Charles and George Taylor. The Taylor brothers shared similar interests, obviously; they both became doctors, both went to Europe to learn these new techniques, and they both wanted to spend their lives helping other people. But, as so often seems to happen when people go on a quest to help others, they just couldn't seem to get along themselves.

Coming back to New York in the 1850s, they opened a clinic together, but within a year they dissolved it and went their own ways.

"It's *MY* technique for helping other people feel better," said Charles, adjusting his bowler hat atop his head.

"No way, it's *mine*," replied George, adjusting his identical bowler cap.

"Mine."

"Mine."

And thus started a problem that has persisted to this day, with various massage innovators and practitioners teaching that their way is the best way. George and Charles Taylor were the Cain and Abel of the modern massage world. And, even though massage as a whole is a glorious way to help people feel better on many levels, it has been broken up into sects, with the proponents of certain techniques loudly proclaiming theirs as the best. This book, I hope, will help you cut through all that so that you can gain an appreciation for massage as a whole.

Freud and massage

Sigmund Freud, the inventor of modern psychoanalysis, used massage with his patients. Early on, when Freud wanted to calm and reassure his clients that he was on their side, he used massage maneuvers primarily on their hands. Unfortunately, Freud left massage behind as he further developed his psychoanalytic techniques, perhaps out of a fear that he wouldn't be

able to know what was really working, talking or touching. But he was greatly in favor of it from the start. In the modern world, many psychologists are rediscovering the power of massage and incorporating it into their practice with body-centered psychotherapy and somatic therapies.



Throughout the mid-1900s, many massage therapists in the U.S. worked in a YMCA or a Turkish bath house and weren't expected to do much more than pummel their victims (er, clients) with some extraordinarily vigorous maneuvers, usually meant to purge the recipient of excess alcohol and fatty acids ingested the night before. In fact, some spa towns, such as Hot Springs, Arkansas, had massage facilities that were open on Sunday mornings especially for this purpose. The upstanding men of the community came in early to have the effects of Saturday night's revelry pounded and sweated out of them by hardy massage practitioners.

Hippies save massage from extinction

Overall, things weren't going so well for massage in the United States. And the same was true, for the most part, in Europe. Only people with hangovers wanted massage. Of course, on a worldwide level, massage in many areas still retained the same untainted prestige it had enjoyed for centuries. But even in the most remote areas there was a clamoring for things new — vibrating massagers instead of actual massages, for instance — and as technological revolution swept the planet, it left people high and dry as far as contact goes.

The human species was literally getting out of touch.

As always, when society swings too far in one direction, a mounting momentum tends to bring it back toward equilibrium. Somewhere in the 1960s, people began to tire of the soulless sway of machines and technology in their lives, and they started to react against it. These revolutionaries were called hippies, or flower children, and they spread out from San Francisco to cover much of the world, toting with them tie-dyed T-shirts, prayer beads, big black vinyl discs called albums, and home made massage tables.



Keep in touch, Lorraine

The hippie movement brought people back into touch with themselves, as exemplified by the story of Lorraine, who, in 1968, couldn't decide exactly what to do with her life and so went off in search of something new in California, like so many of her generation.

"I need to get in touch with myself," intoned Lorraine to anyone who asked her what she was doing. Perhaps she didn't realize how precise her choice of words truly was.

Heading her faded yellow VW Bug west, with "Go Ask Alice" playing over and over again on the eight-track tape deck mounted under the dash, Lorraine kept driving and driving until she

came to the remote spot on the winding highway south of Big Sur in California that so many people had told her about.

The place was called the Esalen Institute, and it was a mecca for consciousness-raising workshops, research into alternative health, superb massages and massage instruction, and just plain blissing out. People from all over the world came to Esalen to get back in touch, literally, with themselves and with life. Lorraine moved in, stayed for five years, and by the time she left she had found her calling in life and became a massage therapist.

Massage Today

Through the years, massage has had a serious, multiple-personality disorder, kind of like Sybil. Every time you look at it, you're never sure exactly what you're going to see. A Greek physician massaging athletes? A Swedish physiotherapist creating movements to help ease common suffering? A shaman purging evil spirits? A spiritual seeker sending healing vibrations through her fingers during an Esalen style massage at a spectacular seaside retreat?

So many choices

Massage is enjoying such a large renaissance right now, in fact, that at times the market may appear glutted with too many massage therapists. An alternative newspaper in Asheville, North Carolina, for instance, printed a cartoon summarizing the plight of that city's abundance of highly trained, under-employed massage therapists. The cartoon showed an out-of-work therapist standing at a corner holding up a sign: "Will massage for food."

So where does that leave you as you head out the door today, tomorrow, or next week to go seeking your own massage experiences? Well, you certainly

have a lot more choices, which I clarify in Chapter 9. You also have a lot more massage therapists to choose from — somewhere between 30,000 and 50,000 new massage therapists in the U.S. each year, for example. And France, which is not a huge country, has over 35,000 practicing *kines*, short for *kinesiotherapeut*, their term for massage/physical therapist. These practitioners are popular, partly because insurance has covered their services since 1974; people in France are used to receiving massage as part of their healthcare.

Although you do have more choices than ever, I think the assumption that we're getting anywhere near a critical mass of massage practitioners in the world is mistaken. There are just too many people around these days to massage — over six billion of them as of August 1999 — and the population continues to expand rapidly.

What you can expect in terms of massage in the year 2000 and beyond is an ever-increasing number of choices, kind of like you find in those designer coffee shops. Whereas before the choice used to be simple — regular or decaf? — now you're faced with an overwhelming array of mochas and frappes and lattes and on and on. This phenomenon has been termed the Starbuckizing of massage.

Touch research

To keep up with all the rapid changes and to document the effectiveness of massage in the midst of all these changes, somebody had to start some serious research into the matter, and that's just what they do at the Touch Research Institute.

If you happen to live in South Florida, and you were to stroll down to the local medical center, you probably wouldn't be too surprised to find some scientific studies being conducted in one of the buildings there. But you may be surprised to find that, instead of an operating room or a clinic, these studies are being conducted in softly lit chambers with flute music playing in the background. And the subjects, instead of undergoing cutting-edge medical technologies, are receiving the age-old techniques of massage therapy.

The Touch Research Institute was founded in Miami in 1992 to study the effects of touch on human beings. Whereas the senses of smell, hearing, sight, and taste all have had their institutes and studies for decades, poor little orphan touch was neglected until the 1990s.

Perhaps touch was neglected because it is just so obvious. When you think about it, nothing is *not* touch; your body is a large antenna feeling everything as it happens to you. The other senses all involve touch in one way or another, too; molecules of various kinds hit you in the taste buds, the optical nerves, the ear drums, and the nasal passages, which set off the sensations that make the senses work.

A massage pilgrimage to Esalen

The pioneering work done at Esalen helped keep massage alive and well after its decline in the early and mid-1900s. Esalen, located in Big Sur, a couple hours south of San Francisco, was founded by Michael Murphy in 1962, and some of the best massage teachers and researchers in the world have taught and worked there. The result of their efforts has been a shifting of the entire paradigm upon which massage is built. No longer simply a remedial form of "gymnastics" to restore movement and ease pain, massage has become a way to increase awareness and sometimes even access the spirit.

If you're passionate about learning what massage can be on this spirit-enhancing level, you

may want to make a trip to this massage-mecca yourself. Wherever you are in the world, if you are a massage lover, making your own massage pilgrimage to Esalen will benefit your spirit!

Esalen's location itself is spectacular, perched upon steep cliffs overhanging the Pacific Ocean, where hot springs flow from the mountainside directly into a series of pools adjacent to the massage area. (Esalen's Web site is at www.esalen.org.)

Nudity alert: Beware, Esalen is clothing optional, and nudity is common. Think of it as a great way to get used to viewing the grand masterpiece of the human body.

In 1998, two new Touch Research Institutes opened, one in the Philippines and one in France, which points toward a globalization of studies on massage. How can they get away with testing massage like that, you ask? How can people just lie around feeling good and then call it research? First of all, they don't call it massage, but rather *Tactile Kinesthetic Stimulation*, which, translated, means "massage that someone can receive a medical research grant for." And the studies include extensive psychological tests, blood analysis, double-blind tests (tests in which neither the participants nor the researchers know which subjects have a particular disease or condition and which don't), and a large amount of paperwork. So it's not just a big vacation.

Some of the studies that have been done at the Touch Research Institute include the following groups:

- ✓ **HIV patients:** Serotonin and killer T-cells increased due to the massage.
- ✓ **Premature infants:** Massaged infants gained weight more quickly and left the hospital an average of six days earlier than non-massaged infants, at an average savings of \$3,000.
- ✓ **Depressed teenage mothers:** Massage helped them gain self-confidence and provided a way for them to connect with their infants.
- ✓ **Children with post-traumatic shock syndrome after hurricane Andrew:** Massage offered psychological reassurance that the world could be a safe place again.
- ✓ **Cancer patients:** Researchers are still gathering data about how massage can help with this disease.

The Future of Massage



Many people are familiar with John Naisbitt's book *Megatrends*, which discusses the problems people face as society heads into an increasingly technological world. Naisbitt says that as people get more high-tech, they have to become equally *high-touch* as well. Massage, of course, is one obvious answer to this dilemma.

Following are examples of some high-touch trends that show every sign of continuing into the future as massage integrates more and more into society's high-tech lifestyle:

- ✓ **Diplomacy:** Massage therapists already travel around the world as ambassadors of compassion. This trend will continue as hands-on techniques evolve and cross-cultural communication develops further.
- ✓ **Performance:** More and more performers, athletes, and high-profile individuals will discover the value and relevance of massage. Every professional sports team, for example, will have massage therapists on staff (many do already), creating a trickle-down effect as fans and the general public become increasingly aware of massage through the team's example.
- ✓ **Affordability:** As the world gradually shifts from a manufacturing-based economy to an information- and services-based economy, the demand for massage will continue to grow. Employers and insurance companies will be increasingly willing to pay for massage services, which will benefit the bottom line by reducing absenteeism, stress-related injury, and so on.
- ✓ **Increased sophistication:** Massage techniques (some of which have been around for centuries) will become more and more sophisticated as practitioners from various schools cross-train and add new skills to their repertoires.

Chapter 3

Your Skin: Frontier to the Rest of the World

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In This Chapter

- ▷ Thinking with your skin
 - ▷ Looking at your multidimensional skin
 - ▷ Recognizing that your skin is on guard
 - ▷ Understanding how massage affects the skin
-

"We touch heaven when we lay our hands on a human body."
— Novalis (pen name of Frederich von Hardenberg)

Skin is the essence of what makes humans human. How do I know, you ask? I saw it in a *Star Trek* movie, so it must be true. In the movie, a wily alien treated Data, the android, to a taste of being human by grafting a swatch of flesh to his mechanical arm. He already had a brain and a fully functioning body, but the one thing he lacked was sensation. He was just a machine until he had this little patch of skin attached to him, and with it, he became human.

The essence of being human is the ability to feel. "But," you might respond, "I feel things in my mind and with my nerves, too, not just my skin. And besides, can I really trust *Star Trek* as a source of anatomical knowledge?" Well, guess what? In this case, the writers of *Star Trek* happened to be right on the money. Your skin, your nerves, and your mind are really just different layers of the same thing.

Thinking with Your Skin

In his book, *Job's Body*, Deane Juhan, a researcher into the effectiveness of massage and other touch therapies, says, "Depending upon how you look at it, the skin is the outer surface of the brain, or the brain is the deepest layer of the skin."



This assertion, though it may seem absurd initially, can be proven quite easily if you look closely at the development of the embryo. As you know, you start out as a little clump of cells deep in your mother's womb. In the very first days after conception, these cells begin to divide into three distinct layers that will later become your body. The *endoderm* layer of cells eventually forms your internal organs, the *mesoderm* forms the muscles and connective tissues, and the *ectoderm* forms the nervous system and the skin.

As the *ectoderm* cells develop, they gradually turn into your brain, spinal cord, nerves, and skin, which are really all one unit. "Nowhere along the line can I draw a sharp distinction between a periphery which purely responds as opposed to a central nervous system which purely thinks" (Juhan p. 36). In other words, your skin "thinks" as well as feels, and your brain "feels" as well as thinks. It's all one thing. And it starts at a very early age. In fact, at six weeks and less than an inch long, the little embryo can already "feel" light stroking on its upper lip, which causes a withdrawal reaction.

Feeling = thinking

Imagine the following sequence:

1. Imagine a pinprick at a certain point on the skin (Point A).
2. Imagine the sensation that travels up from the sensory receptor near the skin's surface, to the nerve, and then on toward the spine, which it enters at Point B. From there it continues up to the brain.
3. Imagine your brain processing this impulse somewhere around Point C, sending a further impulse to your mouth, which then says "ouch."

So the question is, at what point does the sensation of the pinprick cause you to pull your skin away from the sharp object?

- A. At point A, the exact moment the pin pricks the skin.
- B. At point B, a nanosecond later, when the sensation enters the spine.
- C. At point C, inside the brain itself.
- D. None of the above.

This question is tricky. Most people assume that the answer is C, inside the brain, because that's where they think they have the thought, "That hurts." But in actuality the answer is B, when entering the spine, for the following reason:

You pull yourself away from the pinprick as a result of a *reflex arc* at point B, which is an impulse that enters the spine and then shoots right back out again in the form of a reaction. You actually experience the pulling away before your brain catches up to what's happening and you say the word "ouch." Ever notice that? For the same reason, your knee jerks when tapped with a little rubber hammer, without your having time to think about it. So, in this sense, your skin and nerves do the "thinking" for you.

Note: Do not try this pinprick experiment at home on friends or family. I guarantee that they won't appreciate it.

Investigating Your Multi-dimensional Skin



In his book, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin*, Ashley Montagu offers many pearls of wisdom, such as: "To shut off any one of the senses is to reduce the dimensions of our reality, and to the extent that that occurs we lose touch with it; we become imprisoned in a world of impersonal words, sans touch, sans taste, sans flavor. The one-dimensionality of the word becomes a substitute for the richness of the multi-dimensionality of the senses, and our world grows crass, flat, and arid in consequence."



Sadly, he's right. People end up ignoring most of what they feel, and as they get less and less in touch with themselves, they become more and more hectic, filling their days with frantic activity rather than just enjoying the sensation-filled miracle of being alive. Instead of hectic, I think people should become more *haptic*. A *haptic* person is especially in tune with her sense of touch, or, as Ashley Montagu would say, has a "mentally extended sense of touch which comes about through the total experience of living and acting in space."

Haptic comes from the Greek word, *haptesthai*, to touch. To start yourself in a haptic direction, you need to know a few details about the skin:

- ✓ You have more than 3 million cells in a patch of skin about the size of a bottle cap.
- ✓ Your skin contains 2 to 5 million sweat glands and about 2 million pores.

- ✓ Your skin is your largest organ system:
 - 2,500 square centimeters in newborns and approximately 19,000 square centimeters (19 square feet) in an adult male.
 - An adult male's skin weighs approximately 8 pounds.
- ✓ Your skin gets strength and form from collagen, which comprises 70 percent of your skin's dry weight.
- ✓ You have approximately 640,000 sensory receptors embedded in your skin.
- ✓ Your skin ranges in thickness from $\frac{1}{16}$ of a millimeter on the eyelids to 3 or 4 millimeters on the soles and palms.
- ✓ Your skin becomes softer in summer and more dense in winter.

Because you have so many sensory receptors in your skin (pain cells are the most plentiful, followed by a variety of pressure sensors, cold sensors, and warmth sensors), it's no wonder you can be so "touchy" if you're "rubbed the wrong way." And no wonder that a caring, calming massage can be so soothing.

All you really have to do to get back "in touch" with your true, haptic self is to tune in to your senses, your skin, and your environment, like you did when you were six years old and mud puddles were sources of unending pleasure. To help you get back to that sacred sensory space, you can try the sensitivity exercises that follow.

Sensitivity exercise #1: The Zen cantaloupe ceremony

Consider, for a moment, the word "cantaloupe." Nice, round word that evokes the picture of the fruit itself in your mind. Perhaps the word even summons up a sweet cantaloupe memory or two. But too often the word itself is a substitute for the fullness of the thing, a crutch people use to classify this or that specific bit of reality, filing it away for easy reference.

If you want to move yourself beyond your mind's habitual categorizing mechanisms, try the Zen cantaloupe ceremony:

- 1. Buy or borrow a fresh, ripe, high-quality cantaloupe.**
- 2. Find a quiet, private place (where no one can see you and make fun of you) and sit with your cantaloupe placed on a plate within reach.**
Have a knife handy. Then close your eyes.
- 3. Spend five minutes or so just calmly breathing and slowing your mind.**

- 4. Slowly, with your eyes still closed, reach your fingertips out until you make contact with the cantaloupe.**

Do not attempt to pick it up. Just feel the surface in extremely minute detail, as though you're trying to decipher a message encoded in the fruit's convoluted furrows. Pay attention to your fingertips.

- 5. Begin to lift the melon up, using your fingertips alone.**

Spend a minute feeling the weight, shifting it from hand to hand. Then slowly bring the fruit up to your face, rubbing the rough texture against your cheek.

- 6. After this thorough tactile encounter with the melon, place it on the plate again, and then slowly and ritualistically lift the knife and begin your incision, slicing out just one sliver, cleaning off the seeds.**

Open your eyes while slicing but then close them again.

- 7. Lift the slice to your nose and take three long inhalations.**

- 8. Open your mouth and place the cool orange flesh inside your lips, but don't bite down at first.**

Let the juices gather on your tongue and savor the sensation.

- 9. Let your teeth literally sink down into the fruit, and then let the piece melt in your mouth for a minute before chewing.**

- 10. Repeat the biting and chewing until you eat the whole sliver.**

Breathe deeply for a few minutes again. Then, finally, open your eyes.

If you pay attention to the feelings that you have at each step of the ceremony, you'll discover that cantaloupes have much more depth than just the word "cantaloupe."

Just as the original Zen tea ceremony was used by Samurai warriors in Japan to calm their minds and bring them into the present moment, the cantaloupe ceremony can help focus you on the tactile reality underlying your ongoing reinterpretation of the world through thoughts and words. You can repeat the experience with other fruits, vegetables, and just about any safe, non-toxic foodstuff.

This exercise is a great way to help yourself get into the right frame of mind for giving a good massage. You don't have to think so much. Don't speak. Just touch. Feel. Be with the world you come into contact with, including other people. Performing the Zen Cantaloupe Ceremony is a great way to sensitize your fingers and your mind immediately prior to giving a massage.

Sensitivity exercise #2: The texture of the world

Your fingertips have the largest concentration of sensory receptors of any part of your body. This feature is quite convenient for giving massages, which requires a real sensitivity to the person you're touching.

With their unique sensitivity, your fingers can actually "see" objects, a fact you confirm every time you fish through a purse or pocket, searching for keys. You can develop and fine-tune this capability through a simple attunement exercise called the "texture of the world." The exercise helps you gain a certain sensibility that is crucial for getting and giving good massages.

You need a partner for this experience — someone you trust.

- 1. Have your partner gather four or five objects and arrange them on a table, without showing you what they are.**

See why you have to trust your partner? You don't want someone who may choose bird droppings, tar, rotten dairy products, and so on.

- 2. Have your partner blindfold you and sit you in front of the table, within arms' reach of the objects.**

If you haven't been blindfolded since playing Pin the Tail on the Donkey as a child, be prepared for a startling and powerful experience.

- 3. Reach out and touch one object at a time, picking it up and using your fingertips to try to determine what it is.**

If your partner has been creative in choosing the objects, you should have an interesting experience. Use just your fingertips for this exercise and resist the temptation to get your nose or other senses involved in the process.

- 4. Override your mind's tendency to identify the object and then create a visual picture of it, categorize it, and dismiss it.**

Your mind goes into its automatic pattern the moment you realize what the object is. Instead of giving in to that tendency, continue to explore the object, discovering properties you overlooked before. If you can't guess what the object "really" is, that's okay. In fact, that's good. Just continue to feel it. When your mind can't categorize something, you're forced to perceive it in a new way.

- 5. Based on your present tactile encounter alone, rename the objects.**

A golf ball, for example, may become a dimple-nut. Have your partner write the new names down on pieces of paper and place them next to the objects.

Little skin, lotta feeling

Do you know why little tots seem so extraordinarily sensitive when it comes to touch? Children up to three years old have a total of 80 specialized sensory receptors called *Meissner's corpuscles* per square millimeter of skin, as

opposed to 20 in a young adult, and 4 in old age (Montagu, p. 7). That's why babies are so overwhelmed by tickles and touches. They feel more than we do.

6. Remove the blindfold and check out your work.

Just being blindfolded greatly alters your perception of the objects. Unable to take them for granted, labeling one a "golf ball" and another a "yellow stick-on note," you will quite likely discover something about your ability to feel, and in the process increase your touch-ability (see Chapter 5 for more on touch-ability).

Layering It On

Your skin, like every other part of your body, is a living, growing, changing thing. In fact, you have an entirely new outer layer of skin every 27 days, which means you're an awful lot like snakes, lizards, and other animals who leave their skins behind periodically. You just shed your skin one skin cell at a time, so it's not so obvious.



The *epidermis*, the outer portion of your skin that keeps replenishing itself and flaking off, is made up of several layers. The bottommost layer keeps reproducing new skin cells, which are then pushed toward the upper layers, collectively known as the *horny zone*. It is called the horny zone because the cells there are hardened, like horns.

So, what you're really seeing when you look at somebody's skin is a whole bunch of dead, hardened cells that are about to fall off. In fact, *exfoliation*, a particular type of spa treatment that I explain further in Chapter 15, assists the skin in this process.

Keep in mind that certain skin conditions make performing a massage inadvisable (see Chapter 10). For now, I'm talking about basic, healthy skin in an average person.

The hazards of breathing

The "dust" particles that you see floating in a shaft of sunlight are mostly dead skin cells from the epidermis that have recently been shed by you and any other people who have inhabited the room. As you breathe, you can't help but inhale some of these flaky cells, thus sucking cousin Bob, Aunt Julia, the refrigerator repair

man, and even your own self into your lungs. This situation presents no biological hazard and is usually not a cause for concern because most people don't know about it and therefore don't get grossed out.

Whoops.



Beneath the epidermis lies the *dermis*, which is filled with fat cells, blood and lymph vessels, oil glands, sweat glands, nerve endings, and hair follicles. The dermis also helps to bind the outer layers of the skin to the subcutaneous (which means "beneath the skin") tissues below. In this area, you find some very important cells called *fibroblasts*, which are responsible for producing connective tissues. You owe a great debt of gratitude to your fibroblasts, especially after you break your skin in some way, because these specialized cells are responsible for rushing to the area and filling it with connective fibers, mending you back together. Massage can also affect these fibroblasts to enhance the appearance of your skin.

Getting the Skinny on Your Personal Border Guard

Throughout your life, your skin defines the intimate boundaries of your existence. Skin is the millimeters-thin line that separates you from the rest of reality and allows you to perceive that reality. Here are the six major functions of your own personal border guard, the skin:

- ✓ Protection
- ✓ Absorption
- ✓ Secretion and excretion
- ✓ Heat regulation
- ✓ Respiration
- ✓ Sensation

The importance of getting licked

Have you ever watched a cat give birth? Directly afterwards, mamma cat begins licking her babies all over, with a special concentration in the genital area. The same is true for dogs. And horses. And cows. And aardvarks and antelopes and giraffes. In fact, every species of mammal with the exception of man lick their young immediately after birth.

At first, you may assume that this licking is to clean off the goopy stuff plastered all over the newborn's body. That's partially true, but far more important than the cleaning is the licking itself, the touch of tongue to flesh or fur.

I was in my first massage therapy class, in California, when the instructor stated that massaging a newborn baby's *perineum* (the area between the genitals and anus) with a warm moist cloth was a good idea to simulate the

action of licking engaged in by other animals. In other words, he was advising us to metaphorically lick the baby's butt.

At the moment, and for several years afterwards, I thought this California massage instructor was a little too "out there" for his own good. But now, after discovering the importance of this type of stimulation in every other species of mammal, it makes perfect sense. This critical form of early contact jump-starts the newborn's gastrointestinal tract and is perhaps the most primal type of "massage" that we can offer our young.

You can recreate the natural sensations of licking for your newborn by taking a baby-wipe or moist towel and rubbing it gently over the skin in this important area a couple times a day for the first few months of life, starting on day one.

Protection

Whenever anyone tries to pass over the border from Spain to France, say, he or she is stopped by the border guard (usually men in sadly decorative hats, with sour expressions on their faces). The same basic thing happens with your body. Your skin says "Stop and present your papers" to anything big and obvious trying to get inside of it, such as steak knives, harmful bacteria, #2 pencils, and so on. Having the men in the sad little hats there to protect us is a very good thing, as I'm sure you can appreciate when you think about what kind of chaos would ensue were millions of Spaniards to suddenly turn up in your pancreas.

Absorption

Once in a while, you want to allow some people across the border to spend those tourist dollars and improve the economy, right? Your skin can do the same thing through a process called absorption. Your skin can absorb certain cosmetic products, chemicals, drugs, and water in small amounts. Unfortunately, certain items are not beneficial to your body, such as toxins

and pesticides. Your skin is equally capable of allowing these terrorists to cross the border, which means you should stay on guard regarding the products you come into contact with.

Excretion and secretion

Your skin can also get rid of toxic elements, like exiling unwanted characters from the country. This process is called *excretion*, and it's handled by those ruffians, the sweat glands. You have several million of these glands, and they eliminate waste products via perspiration.



In addition to excreting, your skin secretes as well, issuing forth an oily substance called *sebum* that coats the skin and helps preserve moisture. Secretion is a good thing, because the skin is about 50 – 70 percent moisture, and you don't want it to dry out.

Heat regulation

Your skin is constantly monitoring the temperature in the environment and helping to maintain your body's internal temperature at an even 98.6°F (37°C) through adjustments of blood vessels and sweat glands, which dilate or contract in response to heat and cold.

If you don't touch me, I'll die

Touch is literally a matter of life and death. The philosopher Bertrand Russell noted the importance of touch, saying, "Not only our geometry and our physics, but our whole conception of what exists outside us, is based on the sense of touch." For this reason, it's urgently important that infants and small children receive an abundant supply of human contact.

In the early 1900s, Dr. Henry Dwight Chapin reported that when orphaned babies were routinely put in homes and left to wither away with

essentially zero human contact, a startling 99 percent of them died within one year of admission (Juhan p.43). Those who survived suffered signs of retardation and maladjustment.

To say that the world would truly be a better place if more people received massage — especially as part of their developmental years — is not an exaggeration. Touch is a vital part of human growth, for individuals and for the entire community.

Respiration

Oxygen comes in through the pores of the skin, and carbon dioxide goes out, just like in the lungs, but on a smaller scale. If you're a James Bond fan and saw the classic movie, *Gold Finger*, you may remember the famous opening scene, which featured a woman painted completely gold and then left on a hotel room bed in Miami Beach. In the movie, she died because her skin couldn't "breathe," and a similar fate could happen to you in real life if all of your pores were suddenly blocked.

Sensation

If skin were basically just nature's way of keeping what's inside of our bodies in and what's outside out, life wouldn't be nearly as much fun as it is, and, as it turns out, those guards at the border have a sensitive side beneath their hats after all.

Providing you with a rich, complex variety of sensations is by far the most personally gratifying of the skin's functions, which is something you'll develop an even greater appreciation for as you practice the techniques in the other chapters of this book.

Touching the Skin through Massage

Recently, even the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has become convinced that massage offers undeniable results. My co-author, Michel Van Welden, has worked with the FDA extensively and has substantiated some claims for the effectiveness of massage. Following are some of his findings:

- ✓ Scientific evidence points to the fact that massage can positively impact skin tone.
- ✓ Pigs love massage.

It's true. In a series of experiments at Vanderbilt University and UCLA, Michel worked with a team of ace physicians administering a series of massage experiments on some very special subjects: Flopsy, Zeus, and Peewee, three Yorkshire pigs.

The three pigs were chosen for their high moral character and love of luxurious spa treatments. No, actually they were chosen because pigs (even though you may not like to admit it) have remarkably similar skin to humans. Twice a week for 13 weeks the three brave little oinkers received deeply stimulating

massages with a device that strongly affects circulation. The FDA eventually approved this device as an effective way to tone the skin and improve the appearance of cellulite. Here are some of the findings of these experiments, as reported in *Newsweek* magazine, November 1998:

- ✓ This type of massage, called Endermologie®, stimulates fibroblasts, which produce collagen.
- ✓ An increase in collagen fibers can improve the elasticity and youthful appearance of the skin.

Michel should know. He's been a physical therapist in France for almost 30 years, and in that country the physical therapists do an awful lot of massage. In fact, each of the 35,000 practicing physical therapists in that country gives an average of 4,374 massages a year, most of them paid for by national insurance. Perhaps that's why the French have a saying, *bien dans son peau*, for someone who is happy and content; the phrase means "good in his skin."

Chapter 4

I've Got You Under My Skin: The Basics of What's Inside

.....

In This Chapter

- ▷ Discovering your three-dimensional body
 - ▷ Getting a feel for muscles and bones
 - ▷ Exploring the organ systems
-

Most people would prefer to leave the interior of the human body a mystery, like the ingredients in a Hostess Twinkie. You're better off just enjoying the thing, they figure, and not asking too many questions. This attitude works fine for most applications in life, such as walking around, going to the movies, eating pizza, and so forth, but once you decide to massage somebody, you'll benefit by knowing a little about human anatomy.

Here's why:

- ✔ You become aware of certain areas that are delicate or sensitive and should therefore be avoided (see Chapter 10 for more information on this issue).
- ✔ You develop an idea of what's going on internally when someone complains about specific aches and pains.
- ✔ You discover how certain strokes on the surface are acting on deeper structures, such as the circulatory system, the lymph system, and more.
- ✔ You come to understand how your touch is affecting the body as a whole.

The purpose of this chapter is to give you a very basic understanding of how your touch is felt, not just on the surface of the body, but into its depths as well.

Michelangelo's inner vision

Have you ever been to Florence and visited the Galleria della Accademia where Michelangelo's famous statue of David stands? Well, let me tell you, it's worth it. You enter and walk down a long corridor filled with half-finished sculptures before you come to the high glass-domed chamber where David awaits. The power of the piece is not just in its mass and detail, but also in its fullness. David seems to be filled to the brim with life, as if he's about to burst out of his skin at any moment.

How did Michelangelo know exactly how each of the muscles and bones were arranged inside the human body in order to recreate such reality? Did he study anatomy at the medical school of Florence? Did he look it up in books?

The fact is that studying anatomy the time-honored way (using cadavers) was illegal during Michelangelo's lifetime, outlawed by the Catholic Church as sacrilegious. Undaunted, the artist found a sympathetic priest who gave him a key to one of the city's morgues where Michelangelo would break in at night to perform illicit autopsies. Even though he had to risk his own life to do it, exploring the interior of the human body proved invaluable to the creation of his art.

To give a massage that feels like a work of art, you'll want to know what's inside the human body, too. And these days, nobody's going to arrest you for wanting to find out.

Wow, That's Deep

Perhaps the most fundamental misconception people have as they first set out to massage somebody is that the human body is a two-dimensional object rather than a three-dimensional object. How is that possible, you say? Everyone knows we're not flat. Right?

Well, that's true, but everyone knows that a lake is three-dimensional, too, having depth as well as width and breadth, right? What do you picture in your mind when you think of a lake, though? If you're like most people, you think of the surface of the lake, the visible area of water surrounded on all sides by the shore.

And in a similar way, even though you know there's depth inside you, too, containing all the unfathomable mysteries of tissue and bone, you may still habitually concern yourself with the surface, because that is what you see.

The problem with this two-dimensional way of thinking is obvious if you consider what would happen were you to attempt to walk out to the middle of the lake. Quite quickly, you'd understand about the lake's three-dimensionality. The same applies when you wade out onto the seemingly two-dimensional surface of a person's body as you give her a massage. The mysterious liquid depths beneath the skin suddenly surge up around your fingers, and if you don't know how to swim, you'll drown. Or at the very least, you'll look silly doing the dog paddle as you head desperately back to shore.

You can give a nice, pleasant rubdown without knowing a thing about what you're doing: The mere tactile stimulation of skin-to-skin has positive therapeutic effects; but to give a good massage, one that makes people say "wow, that was incredible," you have to learn how to swim.

Proof That You're Three Dimensional

Here's a way to prove scientifically that you are indeed a three-dimensional being and that all kinds of secrets exist below the surface of your skin. You only need two things to do this experiment: your hand and a flat surface such as a table or desk.

First, turn your hand palm-downward and hold it over the table a few inches high. Then reach down with just your fingertips to touch the surface. And finally bend your middle finger and fold it under your hand until the first two knuckles are flat on the table. Good.

What I'd like you to do now is lift your other fingers up and away from the table top one at a time while leaving your middle finger firmly planted. Go ahead and do this right along with me as you're reading if you'd like. First try the thumb; it lifts downright easily, doesn't it? Way up high. Next try the index finger; not quite as impressive as the thumb but still definitely off the table. Try the pinkie finger; you see how it lifts up about the same or higher than the index finger? And lastly, try the ring finger. Go ahead. I'll wait. What's wrong? Come on! Lift it up already. Can't do it?

Why can't you lift your ring finger? You may have tried this experiment before, but did you ever figure out what's going on? Somebody showed it to me when I was in high school, but it wasn't until I was studying anatomy as part of massage training that I understood what's happening.

The secret is this: Buried within the depths of your forearm are three tiny little muscles, one that lifts your index finger, one that lifts your pinkie finger, and one that lifts your thumb. But you have just one muscle that lifts both the ring finger and middle finger, and so when one of them is held down, the other one can't lift up. Go ahead, try it with the ring finger on the table instead of the middle finger. Same result, right?

This example is just to show the effects of your three-dimensional depths on your two-dimensional surface. It's important to remember this when you're getting ready to massage someone, and I'll remind you to "think 3-D" when you read the chapters in Part III.

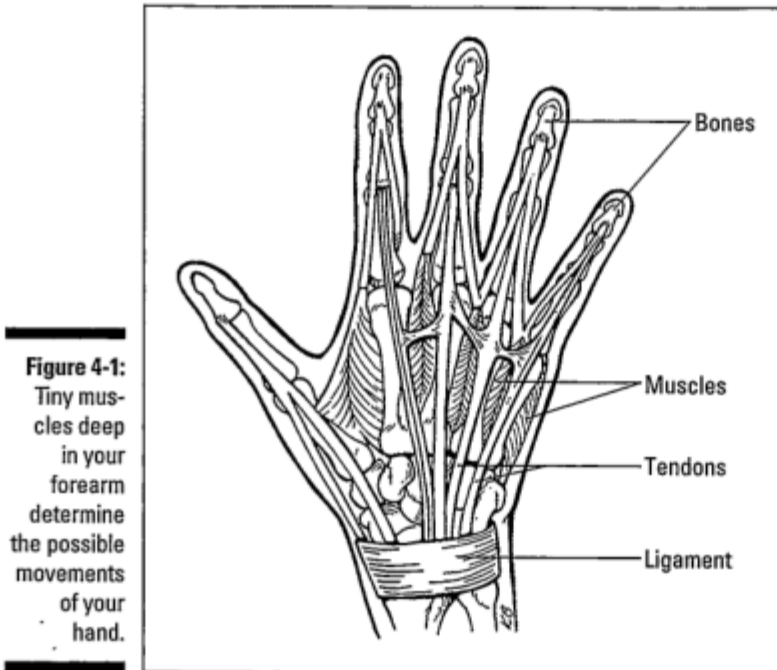


Figure 4-1:
Tiny muscles deep in your forearm determine the possible movements of your hand.

Learning to Feel

For a moment, imagine you have a bas-relief map of the world before you in which all the landmarks are raised from the surface. Now imagine an opaque layer of rubber a quarter-inch thick covering the whole thing. Reaching down and touching this smooth surface, can you tell where your fingers are just by feeling? Where's California? Where's the tip of South America? Where's the protruding peninsula of Iberia? Can you determine what it is you're feeling, even without seeing it?



Now, making a leap in your imagination, think of the human body as that covered-up map that you are trying to identify by feeling its contours. This type of feeling-with-a-purpose is called *palpation*. Many professional massage people use palpation to determine what type of massage they are going to give to an individual, based on the way the person's body feels compared to the norm. You can get very sensitive fingers by practicing this, and in the next section, I lead you through an exercise to help you start that sensitization process.

Getting a feeling for palpation

Try this exercise to begin sensitizing your fingers to the various textures, shapes, and landmarks you will find beneath the skin.

1. **Sitting in a chair, with your back straight, turn your head to the right, as if you were trying to look back over your right shoulder.**
2. **Now, reach up with your right hand and, using just the fingertips, feel gently along the front of the neck until you locate the long band of vertical muscle stretching from your collar bone up to the side of your head, called the sternocleidomastoid muscle, which is illustrated in Figure 4-2.**
3. **"Walk" your fingertips up and down this muscle, feeling for where it connects near the center of your collar bone (the origin) and up along the base of your skull (the insertion).**

Do certain parts feel tighter than others? Is part of the muscle thinner than others?

4. **Grasp the muscle between your fingertips, as if it were a guitar string and you were going to pluck it.**

Be careful not to dig your fingers into the sensitive front part of your neck.

5. **Still grasping the muscle, slowly bring your head back to center, feeling the softening in the muscle between your fingers as you do so.**

Repeat the process several times, back and forth.

6. **Walk your fingers down to the base of this muscle and then onto the collar bone, following it along out toward the shoulder.**

How does the bone feel different than the muscle? In what ways is it the same?

7. **Now walk your fingers away from the collar bone up over toward your back until you reach the top of your shoulder.**

Use a little firmer pressure to feel along the length of this muscle. Where does it feel harder? Where does it feel softer? Are there any "knots" or "bands" of harder tissue within the more pliable surrounding area?

Notice whether there are any points that feel more tender when you touch them, and whether these tender points correspond to the "knots".

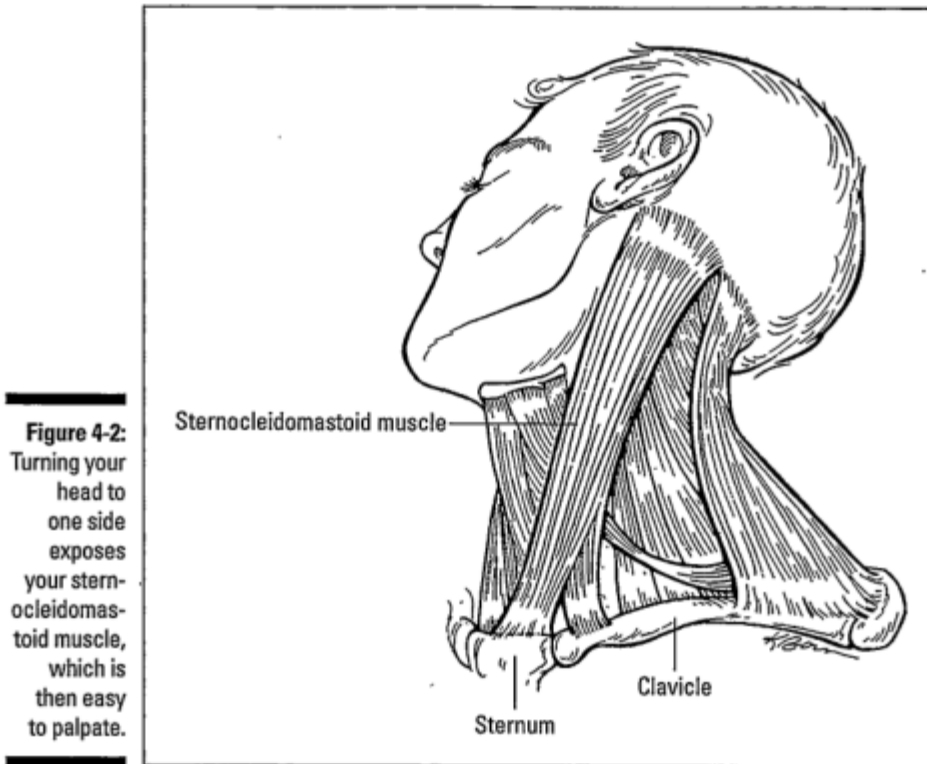


Figure 4-2: Turning your head to one side exposes your sternocleidomastoid muscle, which is then easy to palpate.

Take several minutes to do this. Get a feeling for feeling. Let your fingers become familiar with all the permutations of texture, density, and tone that you can find just below the surface of the skin.

Bony landmarks

If you attend massage school yourself one day, you'll learn all kinds of intimidating anatomical terms with which to impress your friends and loved ones, such as "Boy, Cheryl, that's one exquisite medial malleolus you have there."

Cheryl probably won't know that you're talking about her inner ankle bone. And there's a very good chance she won't care either. Therefore, I'm not going to bore you or her by loading you down with all kinds of Latinate words and phrases. Instead, I'm going to do something fun, in plain English, that's going to help give you an idea where things are located anatomically.



Your medial malleolus, or inner ankle bone, is one of at least forty seven “bony landmarks” throughout your body. Now, before you go making any crude comments about bony landmarks, let me assure you that this is indeed what they are called by professionals everywhere. They have compelling names, such as *xiphoid process*, *occipital protuberance*, and *greater tuberosity of the humerus*. I’m going to use laymen’s terms, though, and expose you to a few of these landmarks as part of a game. That’s right, it’s time to play . . .

The bony landmark game

It can really be a lot of fun getting to know what’s where beneath your skin, and, in fact, for many centuries (before the invention of TV) people the world over would sit around the campfire playing the bony landmark game. This was a great way to pass the time between wolverine attacks, and it’s an effective method to teach anatomy to the young at the same time.

The game is simple: I describe a particular landmark (see Figure 4-3) for you in terms that you can understand and give you directions on how to locate it through *palpation*. Then, all you have to do is supply me with the common, everyday term we use to describe this landmark. It’s important that you actually do the palpation, not just read the words, because that is what will familiarize you with the terrain you massage in future chapters.

Ready?

1. You can find this landmark by holding one hand out in front of you, with your palm facing you. Feeling with the fingertips of your other hand, notice that you have two bones in the forearm, one on the pinkie finger side (the ulna), and one on the thumb side (the radius). Follow the bone on the pinkie finger side all the way from your wrist to its extreme other end. You’ll find a bump there, called the *olecranon process*, otherwise known as the _____.
2. Cross one of your feet up and rest it on the other knee so you can examine it. Then feel with both hands along the shin bone (tibia) in the front of your lower leg. Follow it down all the way to your foot and see what happens to it. Feel how it curves back toward you and ends up in a bump at the top of your foot? This is the *medial malleolus*, or _____.
3. Trace your fingers down onto your foot and then back in the opposite direction from your toes onto the *calcaneus*, or _____ bone.
4. Now sit up straight. Reach down along one side of your body until your hand almost slips underneath you. Right at that point you should feel a bone called the *greater trochanter of the femur*, which is otherwise known as the bony knob at the top of the longest bone in the body, the _____ bone.

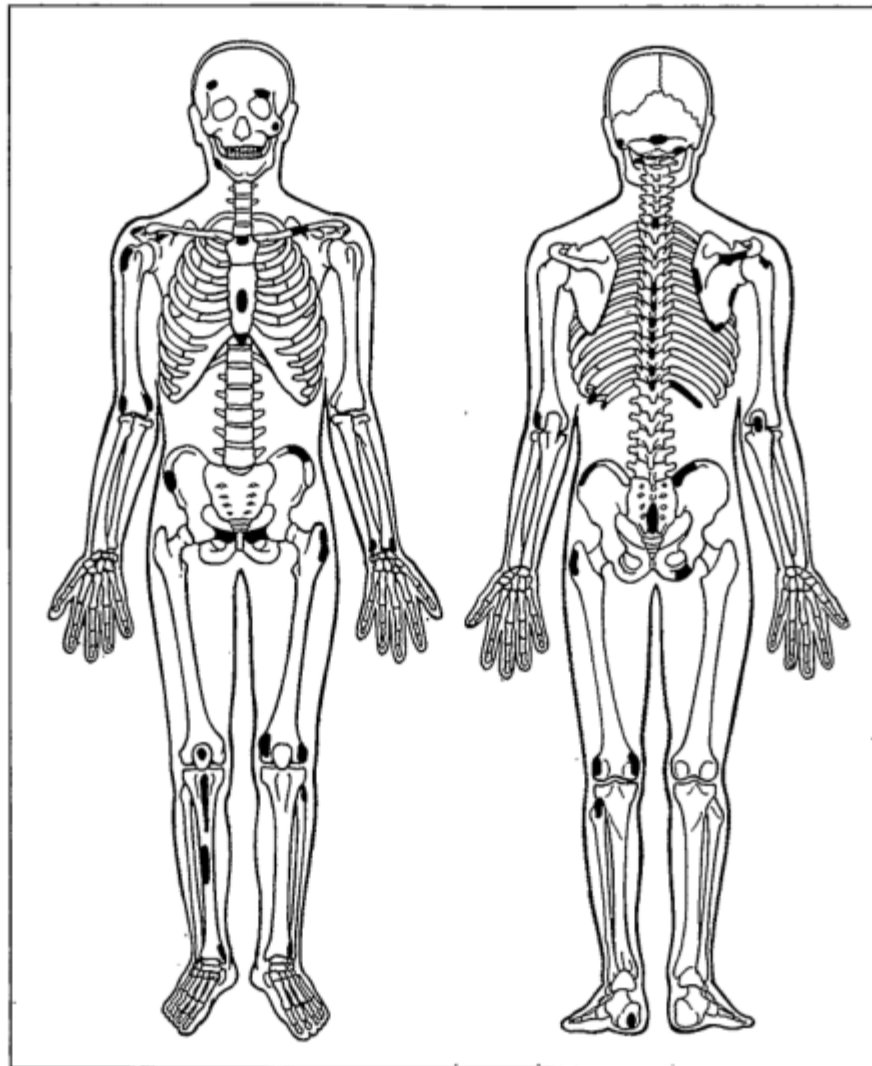


Figure 4-3:
 “Bony landmarks” are
 specific
 areas on the
 skeleton
 that you
 can feel
 from above
 the skin.

5. Walk your fingers back up along the side of your body about 6 – 8 inches until you hit the next bony landmark. It should be a sharp ridge that sticks out and that you can follow along toward the front of your body for a few inches. This is the *iliac crest*, also known as the _____ bone.
6. Reaching your hands up to your face, locate your chin and then feel back along the lower ridge toward your ear. It curves up here, forming the *ramus of the mandible*, otherwise known as the point at the angle of the _____ bone.

7. You'll need a partner for this one. Have her lie face-down on a comfortable surface with her back exposed, and then gently lift her arm, bend it at the elbow, and place her hand on her lower back. Let her upper arm rest down along her side. You'll notice that by doing this you cause a big bump to appear on her upper back. Feel along the edges of this triangular-shaped bone, otherwise known as the _____.

Answers: 1. elbow, 2. inner ankle bone, 3. heel, 4. thigh, 5. hip, 6. jaw, 7. shoulder blade.

These are just a few of the many landmarks you can palpate, and this game is meant to get you comfortable with the fact that you can actually feel and affect the structures of anatomy without being a scientist or doctor. When you practice hands-on massage, remember this and use your knowledge to guide you through your partner's body.

Soft tissues

Now that you know how to familiarize yourself with bony landmarks, you're probably wondering about all the other parts of your body that are *not* bony landmarks. After all, you're not going to be massaging bones. It's the *soft tissue* that you'll have in your hands most of the time, and by soft tissue I don't mean Kleenex brand facial tissues. I mean muscles, mostly, and a little bit of connective tissue as well.



Muscles comprise 40 to 60 percent of your total body weight, depending upon your gender and physical condition, and you have over 600 of them, large and small. Each one is compartmentalized in a sheath of *fascia*, which sets it apart and helps it function as a distinct unit, although the truth is that you never use just one muscle to perform any given action. As Mark Beck says in *Theory and Practice of Therapeutic Massage*, "Muscles have anatomic individuality, but they do not have functional individuality." They are always working in groups to create movement. That's their whole purpose for being.



The larger obvious muscles you can see simply through observing a body in motion are called *skeletal muscles*. There are also two other types of muscle tissue: *cardiac* and *smooth*. Cardiac, as the name implies, is the special muscle tissue that makes up the heart. Smooth muscle lines the stomach, intestines, and blood vessels.

The slightest movement of the most mundane part of your anatomy (your left knee, for example) requires the precisely timed and perfectly executed synchronization of many muscles, and there's absolutely no way that you could consciously coordinate all that without going nuts. Imagine Michael Jordan driving in for a lay-up and having to fire off messages to every single one of his separate muscles to do so. It would look something like this:

"Okay, contract the quadriceps, especially the rectus femoris, and simultaneously pull in the psoas, push off the soleus, shorten the gastrocnemius, and extend the web of flexors and the tibialis anterior. Now compensate for the lifted foot by tightening the opposite gluteus maximus and bracing all the muscles in the lower back, too numerable to mention here. Whoops, that threw me off, and . . . whoa!"

And down he'd go, before even moving one step. In fact, it's much more complex than that for even the simplest of maneuvers, and we'd all be helpless to try and stand up, sit down, or walk to the refrigerator if we had to think about it.

So how do we do it? Basically, we learn to move one little piece at a time as we develop during infancy and childhood, laying each chunk of the pattern down in a movement-memory groove, and then building upon it with the next movement. That's why you see babies experimenting with things like kicking their legs out, bobbing their heads around, and bringing small electrical appliances toward their mouths for examination. Every time they do something successfully and then master it through repetition, they file it away, and that's one less thing they have to consciously think about next time. Of course, this is the same procedure that athletes use later in life through their practice as they gradually layer all the perfect little movements they need one upon the next until they no longer have to think about it but rather, "Just do it."



By all of this explanation, I mean to say that muscles don't just flex and contract — they *learn*. What you're holding in your hands when you massage someone is conscious matter. In fact, it's your muscles that tell you where you are in space and time, through special nerve endings embedded in your muscles known as *proprioceptors*. I don't want to freak you out with bizarre-sounding anatomical terms, but there are two of these proprioceptors that are particularly interesting and important, and I want to share them with you.

- ✓ **Golgi tendon organs** are nerve endings found, strangely enough, in your tendons. They measure how far any particular tendon has stretched, how much pressure it's putting on the nearby bone, and if the tendon's in danger of snapping. It's through these little organs that you are saved from ripping yourself to shreds and pulling all your muscles and tendons right off the bone.
- ✓ **Muscle spindle cells** are found in the center of muscles, what's known as the "belly," where they perform the important task of constantly communicating the state of the muscle's contraction and movement back to the central nervous system. They are basically scouts on the outpost of your active physical self. Without them, you wouldn't be able to tell where you were going, how fast, or if you were going at all.

Cartilage, ligaments, and tendons

Many people find themselves confusedly referring to various connective tissue structures between the muscles and bones as "tendons" or "ligaments" or "cartilage" without really knowing what the heck they're talking about. Now, I know you're not one of those people, but just in case you have a friend who's guilty of such anatomical faux pas, here's the skinny to set you straight:

- ✓ Cartilage gives shape to external features like the nose and ears, and it is also found between bones as a cushion at the joints. (Vertebral discs are made from cartilage, for example.)
- ✓ Ligaments connect bone to bones.
- ✓ Tendons connect muscle to bone.

Muscle tissue itself is largely insensate, meaning if someone were to cut, jab, or even burn you directly on an exposed muscle, you quite likely wouldn't feel much at all. Your muscles don't so much *feel* massage as they *experience* massage as it retrains them how to *be* more relaxed in stillness, and fluid in movement.

Muscles learn, and massage teaches.

Name that muscle

What often intimidates people when they're first learning massage is the anonymity and invisibility of muscles. Skin is plainly visible: You can clearly watch your own hands make contact with somebody else's body, skin to skin. But muscles? How can you really tell what muscle you're touching when that muscle is covered by the skin? And besides, the muscles are all jumbled together and not that clearly defined, except in professional body builders, whose muscles are so hard and tight that they're almost impossible to massage anyway. So how are you expected to really know what the heck you're touching when you're touching a body?

Glad you asked. This brings us directly to our next little exercise: Name That Muscle. This game is a bit tougher because you need to know the names of the muscles, which you might have forgotten if you weren't paying close attention in high school anatomy class. So, to be fair, I'm going to give you the answers first. Can't complain about that, right? All you have to do is match the right muscle in Figure 4-4 to its description and action. If you're not sure about one, see whether you can use common sense and deductive reasoning to figure out which the best choice might be. It will help if you actually perform the action described in the questions so that you *FEEL* the muscles you're looking for. After all, feeling is what this book is all about.

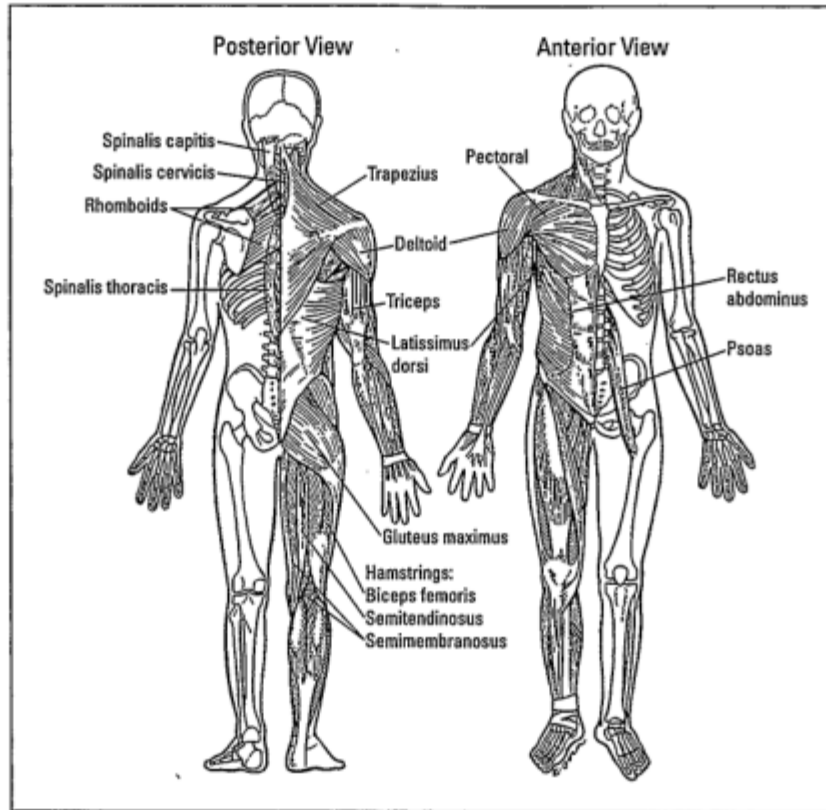


Figure 4-4:
See whether you can match the right muscle to its description.

First, here are the answers:

- ✓ Pectorals
- ✓ Deltoid
- ✓ Spinalis
- ✓ Rectus abdominis
- ✓ Gastrocnemius
- ✓ Hamstrings
- ✓ Triceps
- ✓ Gluteus maximus
- ✓ Trapezius
- ✓ Biceps

1. Standing with your back against a wall, push against the wall with one heel and reach around to the back of your thigh to feel a tightening in your _____.
2. Place the back of your hand flat on the edge of a desk or table in front of you and then push that hand firmly down onto the desk. With the other hand, feel the underside of your upper arm and discover a tightening in your _____.
3. Standing up tall, lift your right leg out behind you as far as it will go comfortably, keeping it straight. Place your hand on your right buttock to feel a tightening in the _____.
4. Reach across with your left hand and place it on top of your right shoulder, right next to your neck. Now shrug your right shoulder as far up toward your ear as possible to feel a contraction of your _____.
5. Standing up, push onto your tip toes to feel a contraction of the _____ in the rear of your lower legs.
6. Sitting in front of a desk or table, place one hand palm-up beneath the table and lift up, creating a contraction in the _____ muscle of your upper arm.
7. When you lie down to perform a sit-up, the muscles in the front of your body that you're trying to tone through contraction are the _____.
8. Stand in front of a wall and push forward against it with your right hand while touching the right upper portion of your chest with the left hand. The muscles you feel bulging beneath your fingers are the _____.
9. Sitting up straight, reach across with your right hand and place it on the left shoulder, out by the arm. Now lift the left arm straight out to the side until it's at a ninety degree angle from your body, engaging the _____ muscle beneath your hand.
10. You'll need a partner for this one. Have him lie on his stomach, with no shirt on, and then ask him to lift his head and shoulders off the floor with no help from his arms. The two long cords of muscle down along either side of his spine are part of the _____ group.

Answers: 1. hamstrings, 2. triceps, 3. gluteus maximus, 4. trapezius, 5. gastrocnemius, 6. biceps, 7. rectus abdominis, 8. pectorals, 9. deltoid, 10. spinalis.

These three extra credit muscles are more obscure and I don't blame you if you don't know them offhand, but it may be fun to see whether you can decipher which is which.

- ✓ Rhomboid
- ✓ Latissimus dorsi
- ✓ Psoas

1. If you stand up and lift one leg in front of you with the knee bent, you engage a deep muscle that connects your leg bone to your backbone called the _____.
2. You'll need to observe a partner for this one. Have her sit facing away from you with her back exposed and then gently reach one of her hands up as far as possible along her spine. Her shoulder blade will lift and you'll be able to feel between it and the spine for the _____ muscle.
3. Lift your right hand over your head and reach across with the left hand to grasp your right side below the armpit. The large muscle you feel there is the _____.

Extra credit answers: 1. psoas, 2. rhomboid, 3. latissimus dorsi.

This is not a test. Repeat, this is not a test. It's just a way for you to become familiar with locating muscles. I refer you to several of these landmarks, bony and otherwise, when you move through the how-to massage chapters in Part III.

Other Body Systems

Don't get the idea that it's just the skin, muscles, and bones that count when it comes time to massage somebody. You also deal with a few other anatomical systems that are strongly affected by your touch as well. These include the . . .

- ✓ Circulatory system
- ✓ Nervous system
- ✓ Endocrine system
- ✓ Digestive system
- ✓ Respiratory system

The next few sections take a brief look at these systems and discuss how they're important when you give or receive a massage.

Circulatory system

The heart is constantly pumping your blood (about 11 pints of it in a 160-pound adult) out through your arteries and into each and every tiny little cell of your body, carrying the nutrients and oxygen that make it possible for you to stay alive. Then the blood travels back to your heart through the veins. On this return trip, the blood has to pass through a series of one-way valves that keep it from accidentally heading back in the wrong direction.

Massage strokes have a direct effect on the flow of blood in the veins, so keep in mind that when you massage someone, your strokes should always be in the direction of venous flow. You wouldn't want to accidentally push the blood back through these valves and therefore weaken them. When a number of the valves weaken and stop working efficiently, blood can pool up visibly and form varicose veins.

As much as half of all your blood is in your skin at any given moment, which accounts for that rosy glow certain people have, and also for the less healthy appearance of varicose veins and other problems. Massage works powerfully on your circulatory system, and for this reason you should always be aware of how your hands are affecting it.

Massage also affects that other circulating fluid referred to in Chapter 1, the lymph. In fact, there is an entire system of massage called manual lymphatic drainage meant to assist the movement of the lymph because, as you may know from Chapter 1, lymph has no heart of its own to pump it along.

Nervous system



As a busy person in the twenty-first century, you don't have any time to fiddle around reminding your heart to beat, your lungs to breathe, and so on. Luckily, your *autonomic nervous system* takes care of all that for you. This system is further broken down into the *sympathetic* and *parasympathetic nervous systems*. The sympathetic nerves prepare your body for action, and the parasympathetic nerves calm you down. Massage is a great way to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby lowering the pulse, slowing breathing, and in general, chilling you out.

The largest and longest nerve in the body is the *sciatic*, which many people are painfully familiar with. It runs from the base of your spine down the back of your leg, and when any of its length becomes pinched or trapped between muscles, bones, and connective tissues, it can cause the condition known as *sciatica*. That's the way all nerves work; you don't want to get in their way or piss them off. Massage can help soften the muscles and other soft tissue that surround nerves and sometimes entrap them.

As I mention earlier in this chapter, you also have specialized nerves called proprioceptors that tell you where your body is in space, giving you your sense of depth, position, and movement. Without them, you'd be internally blind, and by making you more aware of them, massage can help you "see" yourself in a new way from the inside out. Chapter 7 has some exercises to get you in touch with your proprioceptors. Look for "The limp arm experiment."

The mind-body connection

Did you ever wonder what the heck people were talking about when they used the term mind-body connection? Is it part of the nervous system you weren't told about in school? Did you think maybe there was a tube or special cable of some kind near the base of your neck that linked your mind and your body, and that you were the only one who hadn't been shown where it was? Well, don't worry; you're not alone. In a far-reaching survey conducted by my wife one day at her restaurant, it was ascertained that only 2.4 percent of normal people understand what the term mind-body connection really means, and those people are new-age geeks.

Typical incorrect responses about what the mind-body connection is included the following:

- ✓ That sinking feeling you get when your mind realizes your body did something it shouldn't have
- ✓ Nerves
- ✓ The neck

Actually, the mind-body connection is simply *awareness*. It's an awareness that permeates way down into every cell of your body, as compared to the awareness of your brain alone. It's the entire *you* consciously affecting every other part of you.

This whole mind/body split problem developed gradually over many centuries and was not really caused by any one individual, but many scholars have pointed to the French philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes as having had the greatest influence. He's the one who coined that famous Latin phrase, "*Cogito, ergo sum*," which means "I think, therefore I am." That was in 1637. Well, pretty much ever since then people have been assuming that it was only specific types of electrical activity inside their skulls that proved they indeed existed. What's glossed over in the history books is that Descartes never received a great massage from an expert holistically oriented practitioner. If he had, he certainly would have modified his statement a bit, to something like, "*Cogito et sentio, ergo sum*." I think *and I feel*, therefore I am."

Endocrine system

Heard of hormones? The glands that make up the endocrine system are what secrete hormones into your body. It's been shown that massage stimulates the release of human growth hormone (HGH), among others, thereby affecting the healthy maturation of your entire body.

Digestive system

Your digestive system is a tube approximately five times as long as you are tall (see Figure 4-5). This tube, along with several digestive organs, has the magical ability to transform whatever enters it into a very special substance known as "you." Massage can beneficially stimulate this process if you're familiar with the various twists and turns this tube follows through your body, especially over the large intestine.

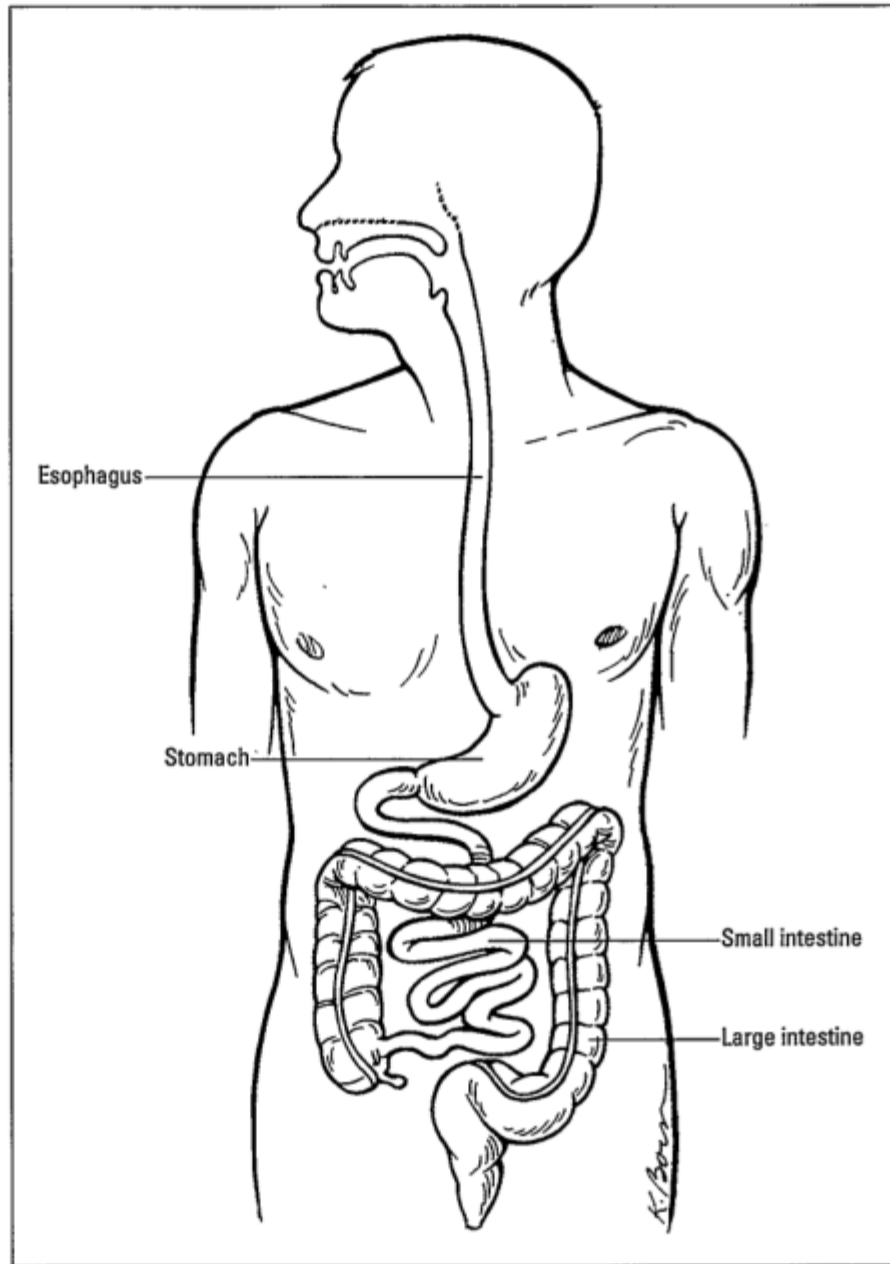


Figure 4-5: From input to output, your food travels about 30 feet. It's a good idea to follow the general direction of this pathway when massaging the abdomen.

Cleaning the pipes

If you visit a health food store and search through the herbal potions that line the shelves, you'll find some strange-looking mixtures that promise "internal cleansing." The ingredients in these products have two major actions: absorption and expulsion, and they act primarily in your large intestine, also called the colon. First, certain ingredients (often psyllium husks) absorb much of the matter that tends to get lodged in the many folds of the colon, and then a mixture

of herbs comes along to "sweep" it all out. It's similar to the technique favored by many garage mechanics of throwing sawdust on dirty grease before pushing it away with a broom.

This type of cleansing is highly advisable, and some extra massage at the same time may aid the elimination process by stimulating lymph flow.



One landmark along the digestive pathway that many people are able to palpate is the *cecum*, which is a little pouch at the beginning of the large intestine, or *colon*. You can locate it by first touching bony landmark number 5, your right hip bone, and then walking your fingers in toward your belly button a couple of inches. Sometimes this spot makes a liquid-squishing noise, especially after meals. In Part III, I discuss how to use this landmark as a starting point for some abdominal massage techniques.

Respiratory system

Breathing is an extremely important activity for human beings, as can be attested to by the millions of people around the world who have stopped breathing and suffered serious side-effects, even death. Massage is an excellent opportunity to engage in some full deep breathing, as described in Chapter 7. This reconnects you with the source of life. It also fills your blood with fresh oxygen because the first place your blood goes when it leaves your heart is the lungs.

Surprising facts about your stomach

Most of us think of the stomach as a large roundish ball in the center of our abdomens, but actually it's a smallish oval sack up and to the left, tucked mostly under the ribs on the side of your body by your heart. Like the entire intesti-

nal wall, it's lined with smooth muscle. What people are really referring to when they point at the center of their abdomen and say "Look how flat my stomach is" is actually the intestines.

Part II

The Art of Receiving Massage

The 5th Wave By Rich Tennant



"This is what I get for marrying a massage therapist. Every Thanksgiving he's got to knead the turkey's spine before he'll carve it."

In this part . . .

Okay, I can hear you scoffing now: the art of receiving message? That's like the art of getting rained on. You really don't have to try very hard; just step outside and get wet. Anyone can do it.

Receiving message? Nothin' to it. No problem. Child's play. Right?

Wrong.

Receiving message is more like dancing your part in a very intricate pas-de-deux, such as the tango, which, interestingly, means "I touch" in Latin. Both activities, at their best, are extremely interactive. During the tango, if you just stand there and don't do anything, you're going to make your partner look pretty bad. Similarly, when you receive a message, you've got to communicate with your partner, through both verbal and nonverbal means, in order to get the most out of the experience. Your partner touches you, you react to that touch, your muscles respond accordingly, and then your partner adjusts his touch to suit the reaction, and you go back and forth like this throughout the entire exchange, constantly conscious of each other's presence and movement — two dancers creating one dance.

A good message is a two-way street, equal parts proper giving *and* informed receiving. That's the focus of this part of the book, in which you'll begin as a freshman in *Message 101* and then graduate just three chapters later with the ability to receive a message like a real pro. I know, it's tough, but somebody's gotta do it.

Along the way, you'll master the tricky intricacies of message vocabulary, discover the ten rules for receiving a message, and get the scoop on all the message gizmos you see for sale everywhere. I also cover the difference between various message styles, discuss how to enjoy the pleasures of message without guilt, and offer techniques for increasing your touch-ability, and lots more.

Chapter 5

A Massage Road Map

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In This Chapter

- ▶ Obtaining healthy pleasure
 - ▶ Examining your touch-ability
 - ▶ Choosing the right style of massage for you
 - ▶ Deciphering touch terminology
-

When you first begin to discover massage, you'll undoubtedly encounter some strange new words and some strange new concepts that might confuse you at first. Have no fear! This chapter is your own personal travel guide to help you navigate the sometimes puzzling new terrain in the world of massage. Here you'll find out how to accept the pleasures of massage into your life and how to choose the type of massage that's right for you. You'll even find an English-Massage dictionary at the end of the chapter that will help you speak the language of massage with other people.

Healthy Pleasure

To paraphrase Forrest Gump, sometimes massage is like a box of chocolates — you never know exactly what you're gonna get, but you know it's gonna be good. However, if you eat the whole thing, you're gonna end up feeling guilty and a little bloated.

Many people just can't seem to understand that massage is anything more than . . .

- ✔ Indulgence
- ✔ Luxury
- ✔ Pampering

And therefore they pass when it comes to massage. Some people raise their noses up at its pleasures as if they were too good for it. Others shy away from the experience, calling it expensive and extravagant, as if massage were too good for them.

The Mary Poppins problem

In my opinion, you can trace the debilitating attitude so many people have concerning pleasure back to one particular person, somebody you'd never suspect. Yes, I'm talking about Mary Poppins. In the film, she waltzes around looking all prim and respectable and happy in her tight-fitting outfit, singing, "It takes a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down" until eventually people end up believing her. Now, everybody thinks that anything good for him or her should feel bad. No pain, no gain, right? This philosophy pretty much messed up an entire generation. What if sugar *was* the medicine? What if pleasure — not the medicine — made the pain go away?

As one scholar put it, "Recent research supports the view that the deprivation of physical pleasure is a major ingredient in the expression of physical violence" (Juhan p.53). People need pleasure to be healthy, and receiving massage is one of the most natural, healthy ways to experience pleasure without any negative side effects.

The following definition is inscribed on a coffee mug from a massage school in New Jersey: *Mas-sage: (n.) the pleasure that relieves the pain.* That's a good way to look at it. If you think of massage as pleasurable medicine, you will be able to accept it into your life more easily.

The underlying reason for both of these attitudes is guilt. Many people simply have trouble justifying paying for something that feels as good as massage. They also have difficulty justifying having another human pay such lavish attention to them for an entire hour.

Well, this guilt is truly unfortunate, and completely unnecessary, because massage is actually much better for you than chocolate. In fact, it has all of the pleasures without any of the negative side effects. That's right, there's not a single thing wrong with massage.

Massage . . .

- ✓ Is calorie free
- ✓ Is fat free
- ✓ Won't rot your teeth
- ✓ Is impossible to overdose on

Well okay, massage does have one catch. Make no mistake about it, once you taste good massage, you're going to want more — lots more. Like chocolate, massage can be addictive. But that's not necessarily a bad thing. You can receive a massage every day for the rest of your life with absolutely no negative side effects.

In fact, beloved entertainer, Bob Hope, has received a massage almost every day of his life for over fifty years. He's dragged a number of massage therapists all over the globe with him while he was off entertaining the troops and making his movies. I had the opportunity to massage him once myself. At the time, he was 87 years old, but because of all the massage he'd received over the years, his skin was smooth and supple, and his muscles were amazingly well toned.

Of course, you may not have the time or money for a massage every day like Bob Hope. But time or money isn't what's most likely to stop you in the first place. It's your attitude.

Testing Your Touch-Ability

The one thing about massage that you really can't avoid is the fact that you have to touch another human body in order to do it. This basic reality is what keeps many people from taking the first step of either getting or receiving a massage. Touch another human? Yuck!

Most societies have quite a few touch-related taboos and complexes, things that may be holding you back from experiencing massage. The following touch-ability survey can help reveal your own, perhaps unconscious, touch taboos, and suggest ways to overcome them. After you know what problems you're dealing with, you can proceed more easily. Be totally honest with yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, only helpful ones.

For each question, fill in the number that most closely matches your feelings.

- ✓ Strongly disagree: 1
- ✓ Disagree: 2
- ✓ Neutral: 3
- ✓ Agree: 4
- ✓ Strongly agree: 5

1. My childhood family encouraged touching and hugging between members. _____
2. I can offer a compassionate touch on the arm, shoulder, or back of someone I don't know, and doing so feels natural. _____
3. When someone bumps me on the street, instead of feeling anger, my first reaction is to brush it off as an accident. _____
4. My natural inclination is to massage animals (at least ones that don't bite), scratching them behind the ears to make them feel good. _____

5. I can touch or be touched by someone I find attractive without having sexual intentions or fantasies about them. _____
6. I prefer to go barefoot outdoors when safe and appropriate. _____
7. I have, on occasion, hugged a tree or draped myself luxuriously over a warm rock in the sun. _____
8. I believe in heart-to-heart hugs that express my affection and openness to people. _____
9. People tell me I have "good hands" and ask me to rub their shoulders when they're feeling stiff or sore. _____
10. In work situations, I offer encouragement and recognition to others with a heart-felt touch in combination with words of praise. _____

Total: _____

The higher the number you come up with, the greater likelihood that touch and massage are something easy for you to accept in your life. If you scored a 50, great! Forge straight ahead into the following chapters, and enjoy. If you scored in the 40s, you're among the most tactile people in the world, and massage is probably a part of your life already. If you scored in the 20s or 30s, you're somewhere in the average regarding touch-ability, and you may want to stop here for a few minutes and consider trying some of the experiences listed below. If you scored below twenty, you're still in the developmental stage of touch-ability, and you will definitely benefit by trying some or all of the following suggestions.

- ✓ Pick a parent, sibling, or even a cousin and give that person a hug for no reason.
- ✓ The next time an appropriate situation arises, gently place your palm on the shoulder of someone you've just met, offering compassion and solidarity for a moment.
- ✓ When someone bumps or jostles you, stop and take a deep breath and look for the hidden cause of your anger. Usually, the anger results because you feel that you're in the "right." Let go of being right and be forgiving instead.
- ✓ Spend a full five minutes concentrating on nothing else but massaging the head and ears of a dog or cat (assuming you're not allergic, of course).
- ✓ Get a serious, therapeutic massage and concentrate on the inner relaxing of your muscles, just to show yourself that massage involves more than sensual pleasure.
- ✓ Take a walk through a park barefoot, feeling the textures of various surfaces — sand, sidewalk, grass, gravel. Notice how your feet feel during and afterwards.

- ✓ Head out to the woods, a quiet park, or deserted beach and hug a tree, or drape yourself luxuriously over a warm rock in the sun.
- ✓ Give a heart-to-heart hug that expresses your affection to someone who would truly appreciate it.
- ✓ The next time someone you know complains of tight shoulders, offer to give him or her a five minute mini-massage. Don't worry about doing it "right." Just focus on caring and compassion.
- ✓ The next time someone you work with does something right, offer a heart-felt touch on the arm or back in combination with a few words of praise. Examine your intentions before making this sort of contact, to make sure you don't have any subconscious motivations that could later lead to a sexual harassment case. And offer this tactile support in plain view of other coworkers.

So Little Time, So Many Massages

Okay, so you're filled with enthusiasm to go out and experience your first massage; you pick up the phone, call a massage school or clinic in your area, and ask to book an appointment. (See Chapter 8 for details on booking an appointment).

"What kind of bodywork do you prefer?" asks the receptionist.

"Bodywork?"

"Yes. Massage."

"Oh. Just something that feels good," you say.

"Of course. But we offer several modalities. Would you prefer the Swedish, the sports massage, the deep tissue, the Hellerwork, the Aston repatterning, the Thai massage, or the neuromuscular session?"

"Ah, let me get back to you on that," you say, and you hang up, ready to slip quietly back into your non-massage lifestyle before you even begin.

Don't let this scenario happen to you! Now that you've decided to get a massage, the last thing you want is to get confused by the vast array of choices available and end up not receiving any kind of massage at all.

Be forewarned, this section is just an overview of the types of massage available. For now, I just want to familiarize you with a few of the choices, based upon the three main reasons that people decide to get a massage:

- ✓ To relax
- ✓ To feel better
- ✓ To improve your body's functioning

Often, your reasons are probably a combination of all three. You may have a little pain in your shoulder you'd like to ease, but at the same time, you want to lower your overall stress level. The three components of massage dovetail with each other; what helps you relax may lessen your pain, what realigns your body may help you relax, and so on.

The spiritual aspect of massage is a fourth component, a wild card that can pop up unannounced during any type of massage. This spiritual aspect is the way that you can use massage to attune to your own inner experience and get in touch — literally — with a deeper sense of self. (See Chapter 7 for more information on this topic.)

So which is the right style for you? Take a glance at the following categories and become familiar with some of the massage styles associated with each.

Massage for relaxation

Stress and tension are real. The human body has developed through eons of evolution to respond to stress and tension by preparing to either fight the obstacle or run away from it. This, the famous *fight-or-flight response*, came in very handy when primitive man was confronted with the occasional, large, dangerous animal. But in modern times, people are faced with a constant, unceasing barrage of tension-inducing stimuli, and they're getting overloaded by it. If you live in a large metropolitan area, for instance, you're being exposed to the equivalent of several dozen grizzly bears and a pack of ravenous wolves every time you venture out into rush-hour traffic.

Reducing the stress and tension in your life is a very good reason for wanting to get a massage. You don't need any more justification than that.

If you're interested in relaxing massage, ask for the following:

- ✓ **Swedish massage:** What most people envision when they think "massage." This method includes stroking, kneading, squeezing, rubbing, and so on.
- ✓ **Light work:** As in "not heavy," light work is a generic term for non-intrusive, gentle massage. See the section "Remodeling your body for fun and profit" later in this chapter for information about deeper massage during which the therapist's fingers "intrude" into your musculature.



When in Hawaii . . .

Once, in Hawaii, I was in the mood for a relaxing massage to help relieve jet lag after a long trip. I was working at a spa there, and one of the massage therapists on staff, a native Hawaiian named Wesley Sen, offered to give me a *lomi lomi* massage.

"Is that relaxing?" I asked as we walked together back to my hotel room.

"Sure it's relaxing," he said.

"Then why are you carrying that pole with you?"

Sure enough, Wesley was carrying a thick, ten-foot long wooden pole in one hand. "It's just for balance," he said. "Don't worry."

Back in my room, Wesley had me lie down on the floor and then proceeded to pray over me in Hawaiian, which sets the mood at the beginning of every true *lomi lomi* experience. In his prayer, he invited healing forces to be present with us in the room. For the next hour he stood on me, knelt on me, pressed on me, and tossed my

limbs around, all along skillfully keeping his weight partially supported by the pole, one end of which he pushed against the floor to balance himself.

Wesley is not a small guy. I was amazed that he could perform this entire balancing act, using my body as a tightrope, and never once cause me the slightest discomfort. Afterwards, I was more relaxed than I'd felt in many months; the relaxation penetrated way down into my joints and up my nerves into my brain. Also, a pain I'd been experiencing in my shoulder disappeared, never to return again, and my digestion improved noticeably, too.

Skillful relaxation massage can take you way beyond relaxation, healing what ails you and improving your body's functioning as well. Several massage styles offer relaxation as well as deeply therapeutic results, such as *lomi lomi*, Trager, Rubenfeld Synergy, and many others.

- ✓ **Relaxation massage:** Another generic term for nice-and-easy massage, relaxation massage usually refers to a light form of Swedish massage.
- ✓ **Esalen massage:** Developed at the famous Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, this massage features many long, flowing, gentle strokes.

Plenty of massage styles leave you relaxed, but the Swedish style is the one you're most likely to run into. Swedish massage is kind of like the Visa or MasterCard of massage, accepted at millions of establishments around the world. It has many therapeutic benefits also, and some of its more advanced moves can be quite vigorous. If your intention is simply to chill out and be soothed by soft fingers, make sure to request light, easy pressure during your Swedish massage.



Communicate! Even if you're just trading massage with a friend, you have to let the other person know what you want out of the experience.

Rx massage

Many people visit their massage therapist for the same reason they visit their doctor — to fix something that's painful. This type of massage is called *remedial massage*, because it's used as a remedy. Several types of massage, including good-old, relaxing Swedish massage, can have definite remedial effects; but here's a short list of some styles particularly well-known for belonging to the "massage apothecary."

Of course, only well-trained professionals should attempt to give these types of massage.

If you're interested in remedial massage, ask for the following:

- ✓ **Manual lymphatic drainage:** This type of massage helps your body flush toxins, such as pesticides and residual chemicals, by stimulating the flow of lymph in your body. It's a very gentle massage that features light superficial movements on the skin.
- ✓ **Touch for health:** This treatment, which helps balance your inner healing energies, isn't really a massage at all because the therapist's hands don't necessarily come into contact with the recipient's body. The technique was developed by a nurse on the faculty at New York University and has been taught to thousands of healthcare practitioners.
- ✓ **Neuromuscular therapy:** This type of massage works on tight muscles that create the deep patterns of tension that can keep you in pain.
- ✓ **Cranio-sacral:** This type of massage adjusts the healthy functioning of your spine and cranium.
- ✓ **Deep tissue massage:** This generic term refers to any number of therapies that apply deep pressure and affect the body's connective tissues.
- ✓ **Shiatsu:** This massage involves pressure point therapy — to balance the entire body and restore health — on specific points along invisible energy lines in the body called *meridians*.

Shiatsu is the most well-known of several types of massage that work on the *meridians*. It can be quite relaxing, but its primary focus is on restoring health and balance, as are other types of massage that work on these energy lines.



After having a serious car accident, a young man in Ohio began experiencing severe, debilitating pain every day. His doctors told him they had no drugs or surgery that could help him and that he'd have to learn to live with the pain, but his mother decided there must be a better way. She took him to see a massage therapist who treated the young man for several months using neuromuscular and cranio-sacral therapies. The end result was a pain-free young man who has now decided to become a massage therapist himself in order to help other people.

Remodeling your body for fun and profit

Several types of massage have developed over the years that focus on realigning your body, straightening you out, helping you form a healthier relationship with gravity and a more graceful, efficient way of moving. People often refer to this type of massage as *structural bodywork*. You only want to sign up for one of these if you have specific goals in mind (such as improved posture, better athletic performance, and so on.) and, of course, you want a highly trained pro to do the work. The movements involved are quite deep, and the experience is not “relaxing” in the normal sense of the word, but your massage therapist will always keep your comfort foremost in mind.

If you're interested in structural massage, ask for the following:

- ✓ **Rolfing:** The most well-known form of structural bodywork, this type of massage was invented by Ida Rolf.
- ✓ **Hellerwork:** A unique development of Rolfing, this type of massage was created by Joseph Heller.
- ✓ **Aston patterning:** This type of massage is a combination of touch techniques and movement repatterning that helps people move with ease and improve their posture.
- ✓ **Myofascial release:** This type of massage is a combination of techniques that combine to “unwind” and release chronic tension patterns in deep tissues, which can cause many painful conditions.

Touch Terminology

Massage has its own lingo, much of which can be somewhat confusing at first. Massage lingo can also be intimidating, for two main reasons:

- ✓ Some massage terminology has origins in the medical field and can sound academically dense.
- ✓ Some of the words used are just plain weird (and the only people you've heard speak them before are sophisticated, semi-naked celebrities on *Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous*).

Truthfully, though, no insider's massage clique is sitting around in cashmere robes at some exclusive, country-club spa, ready to snicker at you for not knowing what the word “acupressure” means. Most of the massage words you encounter are the result of cultural influences from around the world, with a medical/scientific reference thrown in now and then.