

Equipment

Care of the massage practitioner's hands and body

Most important pieces of massage equipment

Protect from injury and abrasion

Use forearms and, in some modalities, knees and feet

Body mechanics

Health maintenance

“Like any other athlete, the massage therapist needs to train, stay in good physical condition, and ‘bench’ herself when she is injured to allow enough time for healing. An athlete is very aware of her own body, since it is her tool for doing her job.” Lauriann Greene, L.M.P. Save Your Hands! Coconut Creek, FL: Gilded Age Press, 1995.

The Massage Table

Portable and stationary types

Manufacturers offer basic models and more expensive models with features

Should be purchased from a reputable manufacturer

Must be sturdy and properly assembled

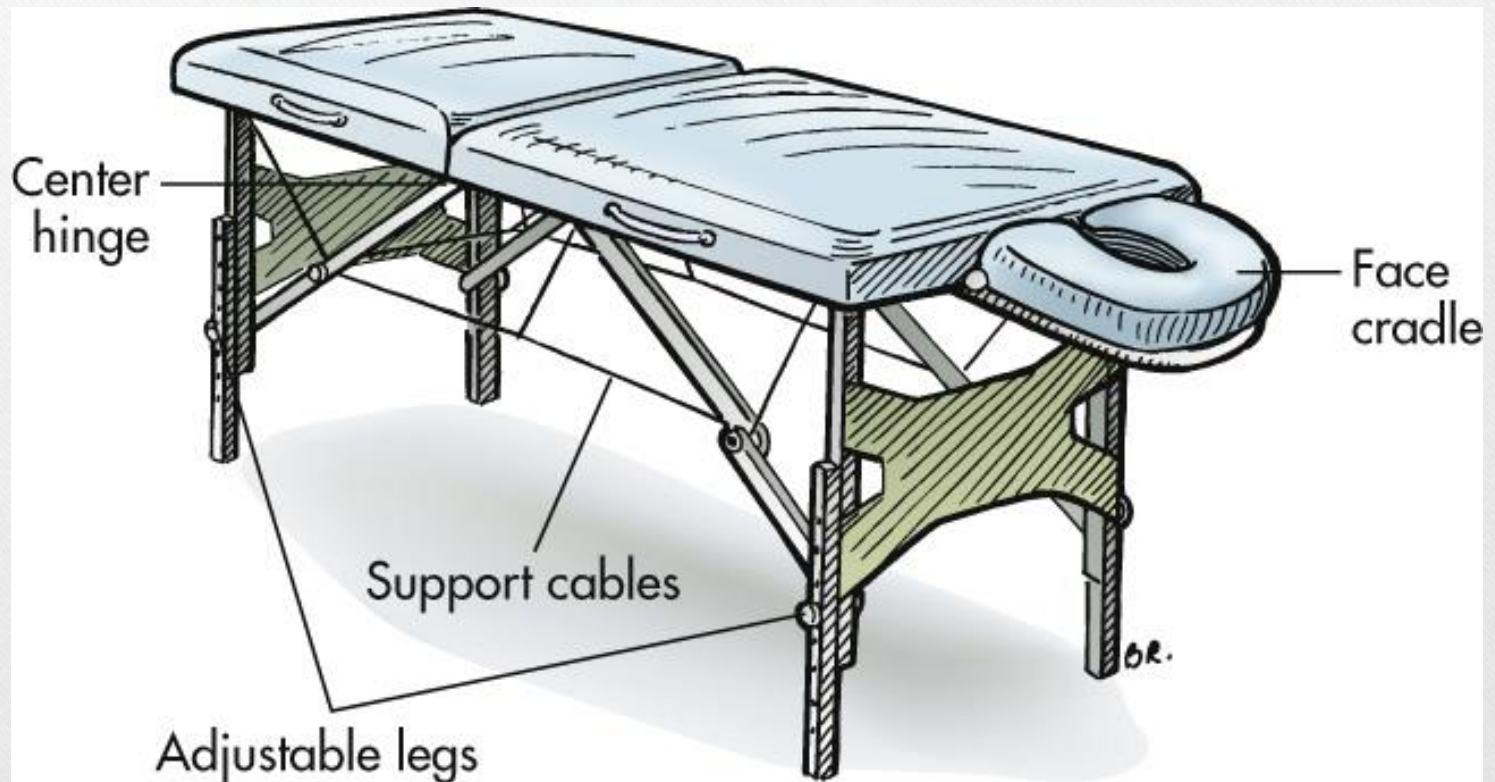
Must be checked daily for structural stability

If client is concerned, demonstrate stability and/or offer alternatives

Purchasing both a portable and a stationary table would make sense if both a portable and stationary table are within a therapist's means and both would be used because the therapist has both an office and an on-site client base.)

Portable Massage Table

Center hinge counterbalanced by cable supports; includes face cradle



Box 9-1

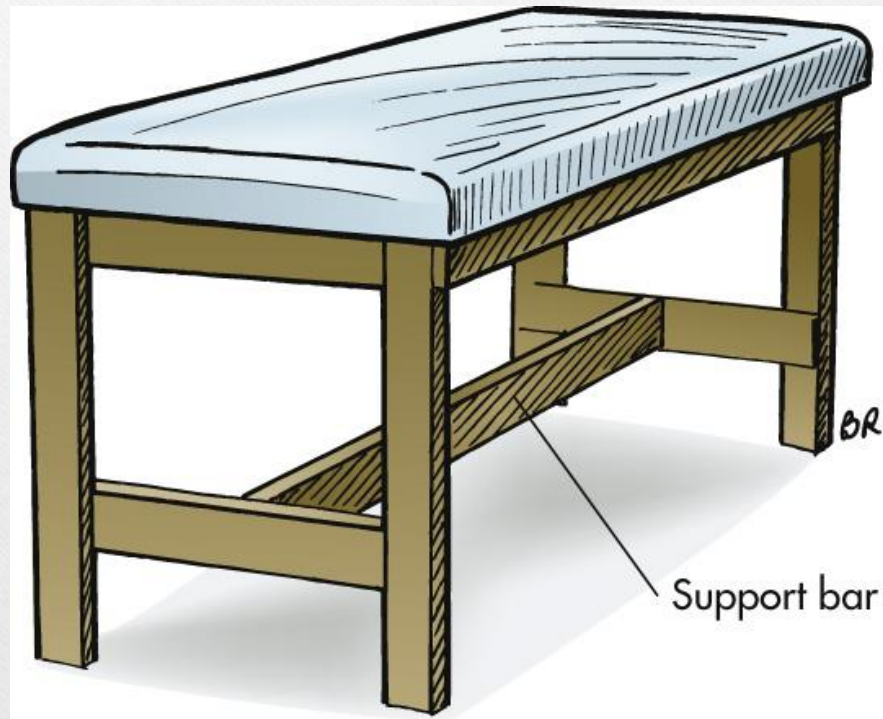
Features of a Portable Massage Table

A portable massage table is the most versatile type of massage table. At minimum, it should have the following features:

- Sturdy construction, including cable support on the legs
- Manual height adjustment
- A face cradle
- A washable covering (usually vinyl) that also can be cleaned with disinfectant
- Adequate padding to ensure comfort and firm support
- A width of 24 to 28 inches; tables narrower than 24 inches are too narrow for the client's comfort. A width of 28 inches appears to be best suited to most situations. Tables wider than 30 inches are difficult to carry and ergonomically inefficient. Note that most tables are about 6 feet long, which can accommodate most clients.

Stationary Massage Table

Heavier, more stable with cross bracing and leg supports



Lift Tables

Two types:

Hydraulic

No electricity required

Hand crank or foot pump

Electric

Electric lift mechanism with button controls

Most ergonomically supportive, but can be expensive

Massage Chair

Used for seated massage (on-site or corporate massage)

Massage chairs also are excellent for working with clients who are more comfortable sitting upright, such as a woman in the last trimester of pregnancy or a person who has difficulty getting on and off a massage table.)



Box 9-2

Advantages and Disadvantages of a Massage Chair

Advantages

1. Massage chairs, which are specially designed for that purpose, usually are very comfortable and easy to use.
2. Professionally manufactured equipment adds to the professional atmosphere of the massage setting and ensures safety through quality workmanship in construction and design.
3. Professionally manufactured massage chairs are light-weight and portable.
4. Clients with certain respiratory, vascular, and cardiac conditions are best given a massage in a seated position.

Disadvantages

1. Some people have difficulty getting into and out of the semikneeling position required to use the massage chair.
2. Access to certain body areas is limited.

Massage Chair

Massage support device for working at a desk



A straight-backed chair with no arms also can be used. The client sits facing the back of the chair and leans on the chair back, supported by pillows.

A stool or chair pushed up to a table or desk is another option. The client leans forward on a supporting pillow placed on the table.

Special triangular or block-shaped foam forms can be purchased to provide support.

Massage Mat

Soft and supportive, protected by a sanitary covering

Large enough to allow movement around client and support for the practitioner's knees

Massage modalities in which a massage mat is regularly used include acupressure, reiki, shiatsu, and Thai massage.



Advantages

Less expensive

Lighter and portable

Safe (little risk of falling)

Disadvantages

Proper training required

Floor may be drafty and cold

Hard for physically challenged and elderly clients

No face cradles

Face cradles from massage tables or bolstering systems can be adapted to use on the floor. They are placed on the floor at the end of the mat or on the mat itself, depending on the client's preference.

Body Supports

Bolsters body, provides contoured surface

Commercial support products or covered foam

Several shapes needed; depths and densities

Additional supports for pregnant women

Rolled or folded up towels, sheets, and blankets can be used as body supports. Folded washcloths or pillowcases can be used to cover a client's eyes in supine position.



Draping Materials

Draping materials provide privacy and warmth.

Standard bed linens are most commonly used.

Full or twin-sized sheets are adequate.

Cotton, cotton blends, or cotton flannel are able to withstand bleach or other disinfecting solution.

Launder materials or use a linen service.

Bolsters and Draping Materials

- 1, *Sanitizing wipes.*
- 2, *Disposable face cover.*
- 3, *Bolsters and pillows.*
- 4, *Sheets, pillowcases, and blankets.*
- 5, *Rolling carry bag*



Additional Aids

1, Disposable face cover.

2, Bottom sheet.

3, Fitted sheet.

4, Top sheet.

5, Neck roll (rolled towel).

6, Pillow for placement beneath abdomen or knees.

7, Mat sheet.

8, Ankle support.

9, Bolster (knee or abdomen).

10, Ankle bolster.

11, Blanket.

12, Various lubricants and hand sanitizers.

13, Top sheet



Draping Materials

Large towels may be used.

Use towels that are soft, warm, and opaque.

These may feel less secure to clients, so provide choices.

Both sheets and towels can be used.

Disposable linens are convenient and sanitary, but don't provide the same warmth and cannot be washed or recycled.

Draping Material Recommendations

Recommended set for one client:

1 twin fitted sheet (table protector)

2 full or twin flat sheets (top and bottom drape)

1 pillowcase or hand towel (face cradle)

Additional pillowcases (body supports)

1 bath-size towel

1 flannel sheet, beach towel, or light blanket for warmth

Twin sheets fit better on the table but are somewhat skimpy. Full sheets have more material, but can be more difficult to maneuver

Use white, pure cotton sheets for clients with sensitive skin.

Soft, pastel colors withstand bleaching, hide lubricant stains, and are more opaque than white.

Ten full sets are needed if laundering; 50 sets are needed with a linen service.

Must be laundered after contact with client

Replace every 1–2 years if used often

By using different colors, the therapist can differentiate quickly between, for instance, the top and bottom drape, making draping procedures smoother and easier.)

Lubricants

Reduce drag on skin during gliding strokes

Scented lubricants not recommended unless therapist receives additional aromatherapy education

Use natural products; no petroleum or talc

Must be dispensed from contamination-free container

Aromatherapy education programs may include the use of essential oils for healing injury and illness, balancing emotions, or beautifying the skin.

Essential oils can also be used for home fragrance, cooking, pet health, and gardening.

Must be dispensed from contamination-free container

A hygienic approach is to use small sterile containers that are filled from a larger container to hold the lubricant for an individual massage



Types of Lubricants

Oils

Vegetable-, mineral-, or petroleum-based

Traditionally used for massage

Easily dispensed

Disadvantages include spills and stains, possible rancidity, and additives that can cause allergic reactions

Creams

Consistency from thick to thin

Oil or water based

Powders

Used with excessive body hair or skin conditions such as acne

Do not inhale (use masks, if necessary)

Using Massage Lubricants

Apply a small amount using a thin, even application; use a towel to remove excess.

More lubricant is used over body hair.

Sometimes the use of any lubricant is contraindicated.

Warm on hands before applying; do not pour directly on client.

Do not use on face or hair.

Additional Equipment

Music

Music is used for distraction or entrainment.

It can be soothing or stimulating; a variety of choices is helpful.

Music helps the therapist pace the session.

For a sound system, considerations might include a remote control, continuous play or CD changer, or quiet on/off and changing mechanisms.)

Massage Environment: General Conditions

Room temperature

Room temperature is ideally between 72° F and 74° F.

Massage cools the client and warms the therapist.

Blankets, lamb's wool, or hot water bottles help warm client.

Wearing loose, comfortable cotton clothing with short sleeves keeps therapist cooler.

The massage produces a vasodilative effect, bringing the blood closer to the surface of the body.. cooling the client

Fresh air and ventilation

Very important

Use a fan pointed away from client if a window is not available

Privacy

Dressing and undressing

Separate room or screened off area

Accessibility for clients with mobility impairments is required.

Lighting

Lighting is important for cleanliness and safety.

Indirect or natural lighting is best.

Use nonflowering foliage rather than scents, flowers, or incense.

Personal hygiene and prevention of body odors are important.

Do not use scented care products heavily.

The massage environment should be nonsmoking.

Warm your hands with water, a hot water bottle, or by rubbing them together.

Typical Massage Room, Home Office, or Clinical Setting

Business and massage area:

Should be kept separate

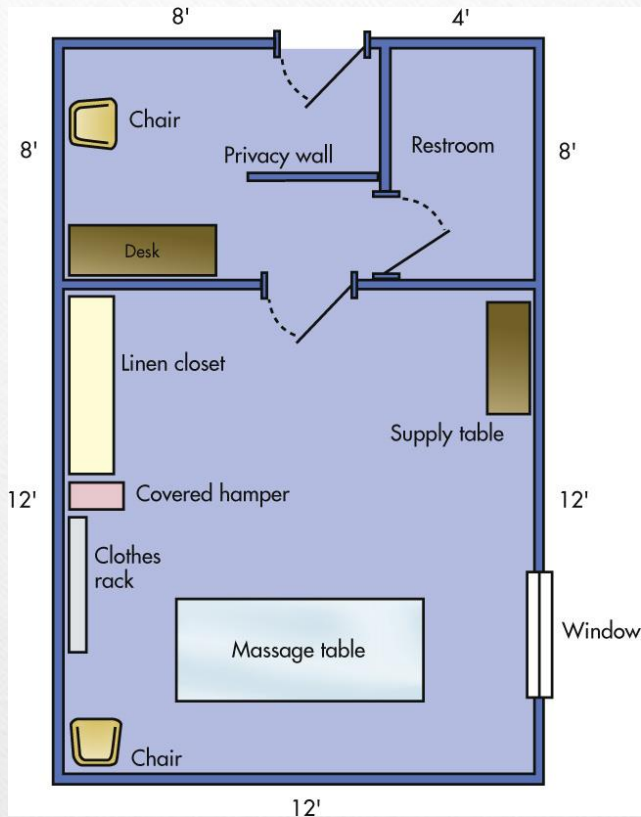
Business area near entrance with appointment desk, phone, and seating and reading material for client

Massage area should contain cabinets and storage for client's belongings, chair, linen hamper, and supply closet

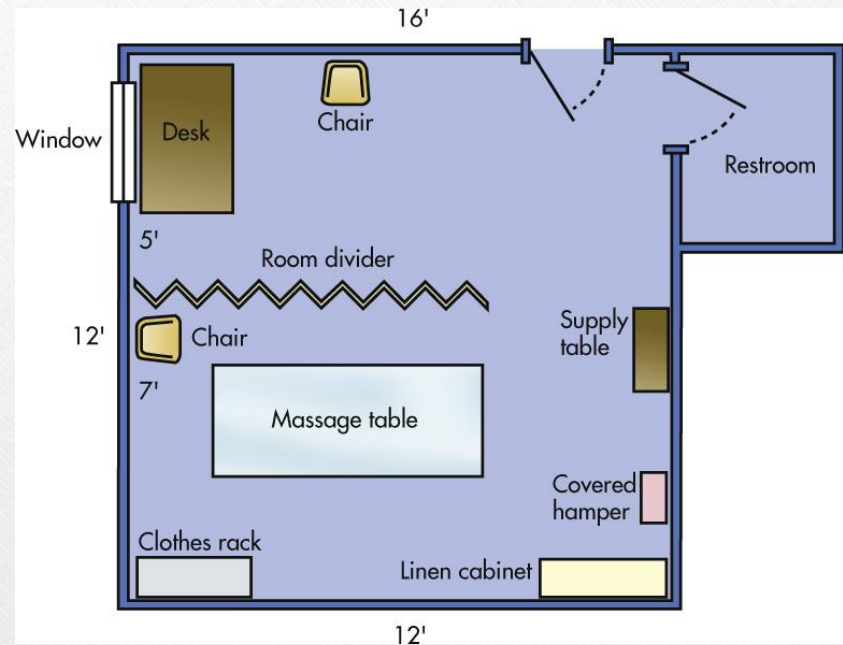
Hand-washing and restroom facilities must be easily accessible with cleanser

When considering the location of the massage area, be mindful of the restroom location and ease of access.

Sample Layouts



*massage office with separate
business office and massage area.*



*massage office with the business
office and massage area in one
room.*

Room Size

Reception area

8 x 8 (64 square feet)

Massage area

10 x 10 minimum (100 square feet)

Combined reception and massage areas

12 x 12 minimum (144 square feet)

A room for massage should be at least 10 × 10 feet (100 square feet), which is the minimum amount of space that allows practitioners to move comfortably around the client on the table and enables them to use proper body mechanics.

Home Office

Check zoning regulations

Private entrance with barrier-free access

Inform clients about pets and keep pets away from massage and business areas

Privacy and boundary issues

The home office is set up to the therapist's specifications with everything the therapist needs, including access to a client's previous record and reference books. Careful attention must be paid to professional boundaries by both the therapist and his or her family.)

Public Environment

Sporting events, demonstrations, corporate offices

Typically shorter session with client fully clothed

Try to create some privacy

Briefcase office separate

Have linens, lubrication available; make hand washing or sanitizing provisions

A public environment means people, and the therapist have a good opportunity to attract new clients, especially by providing a sign-up sheet. There is, however, usually limited privacy

Client's Residence (On-site)

Longer sessions (60–90 min.)

Bring briefcase, table, linens, supports, lubricants, fan, CD or cassette player, music

Challenge to professional boundaries; wear a uniform

For business, avoid conversation areas

Private space (not bedroom) for session

Never lock door; use “Massage in Session” sign

On-site massage is a very convenient service provided to the client, who is able to relax in familiar surroundings. It is the most challenging massage setting in terms of boundaries, and it can present difficulties for the therapist in setting up an area to work.)

Outdoors

Outdoors (sporting events or promotional activities)

Casual but professional

Wear uniform and bring portable office

Weather and insect considerations

Firm, level location for the table or chair

Hand washing or disinfection provisions

An outdoor setting can be a very good way to promote your business to athletes, families, and others, and it tends to be casual and relaxed; however, the setup can be problematic, access to sanitation facilities difficult, and weather and insects a problem.)

Outdoors

*Outdoor sports
massage setting
involving use of a
massage chair.*



On-site massage in an office setting.

Determining a New Client's Expectations

Explain massage limitations, responses, and risks in informed consent procedure.

Ask the client to describe a massage.

Explain different styles of massage.

Never discount another therapist's approach, unless he or she violated a professional code of ethics.

Do not confuse expectation with outcome.

Expectation is an idea about massage determined by what the client has heard, read, or observed. Outcome is what the client can anticipate in response to the proposed plan.)

Ask questions:

How do you want to feel after the massage?

What do you think massage will do for you?

What results do you want from the massage?

Review policies and procedures

Never assume that a client understands the complexities of massage practice. Explain everything in detail in terms the client can understand.

Gender and Age Concerns

Establish boundaries and expectations

Provide a safe, nonsexual environment

Reinforce boundaries as needed

Men and women seem more comfortable with a female therapist.

Male therapists may encounter preconceived ideas.

Alleviate concerns and educate.

Respect the client's feelings; refer if necessary.

Many women are more comfortable having another woman see their bodies and may feel safer, especially if they've had unsafe or abusive experiences. The male partners of women clients may be less uncomfortable or jealous with a female therapist. Men may be uncomfortable with receiving pleasurable, comfort giving, or caring touch from another man.)

Age concerns:

Practitioners under age 25

May experience bias, because older clients may see them as lacking in experience

Younger practitioners may be subjected to peer stress from clients their own age

Regardless of whether gender or age is the issue, it is essential that young massage professionals and massage professionals who are men present themselves as neutral, competent, and ethical.

Acknowledging the situation also can be effective.

Client Feedback

Important concerns include comfort level and quality of any pain sensation.

Feedback helps the therapist adjust application of the massage and to develop professionally.

Feedback difficulties

Client may not have enough body awareness

Hard to say “negative” things

Therapist’s responsibility to develop professional trust

Discuss the importance of client feedback before the session begins.

Use a constructive (enhances service) client-as-teacher approach.

Ease client concerns about giving “negative” feedback.

Questions and reminder statements should be gentle and open-ended.

Practitioner Feedback

Develop communication skills for practitioner feedback.

Ensure feedback is not personalized.

Ensure client accepts feedback as valuable information.

Social conversation is often personal in nature (i.e., involving experiences and feelings), and feedback is defined as a noninvasive and ongoing exchange of information between the client and the professional.)

Examples of feedback:

Do you notice that your breathing is beginning to slow a bit as you relax?

Are you aware that you have a bruise on the back of your calf?

The muscle tension in your shoulder appears greater than before. Can you think of a logical reason?

You seem to tense up when I apply pressure to this area.

I noticed that your skin color improved after the massage.

Client Conversation

Sometimes clients talk quite a bit.

New clients

Early in the session to acclimate and relax

Social interaction

Professional response

Listen respectfully.

Limit conversation to appropriate verbal indications of understanding.

Limiting conversation helps maintain professional boundaries and prevent transference; it keeps the therapist and the client focused on the massage, and leaves more room for feedback.)

The therapist should avoid talking about him- or herself and should not counsel or give unsolicited advice

Premassage Procedures

Orientation process

1. Take the client to the massage area.
2. Explain disrobing and where to place clothes.
3. Demonstrate the massage table, draping and starting position on the table.
4. If using chair or mat, explain proper positioning.
5. Offer music selection.
6. Show client the restroom.

7. Explain any charts.
8. Explain and offer lubricant choices.
9. Explain privacy procedures for disrobing.
10. Explain sanitary precautions.
11. Show “massage in session” sign and explain why door is not locked.
12. Give a general idea of the massage flow.
13. Explain how to properly get on and off the table.
14. Ask the client if she has any questions.

15. Explain that you will be washing your hands and forearms and preparing for the massage while the client gets ready.

16. Tell the client how long you will be gone and that you will knock and announce yourself before entering the room.

The orientation procedure helps alleviate anxiety or confusion, informs the client of any procedural or equipment changes, and decreases the chances of an accident or injury to the client.)

Any modifications that need to be made because of the location and environment of the massage should be taken into consideration.

Focus/Centering

The therapist's preparation for massage can be done in many ways.

Deep breathing and stretches slow the mind and focus the attention into the body.

Look at art or nature; listen to music.

Visualize washing your concerns away when washing your hands.

Focus on the client and not on lists of things that need to be done.

Postmassage Procedures

Helping the client off the massage table:

1. Reach under the client's shoulders and knees.
2. Support the sheet loosely around the client's shoulders and hold it so that it does not slip when the client is lifted.
3. Lift the client's torso off the table while swinging the knees around to the edge of the table. Make sure the client's arm is over your shoulder and not around your neck.

4. In case of dizziness, stabilize the client for a moment after he is in the seated position.
5. Still holding the sheet, help the client to a standing position.
6. Shift the position of the sheet so that the client can hold it securely.

Having a little time on the table after the session helps the client to integrate the changes and sensations and to readjust to a more outward focus in preparation for leaving the office and returning to daily life. Resting on the table helps prevent the client from becoming lightheaded or dizzy.)

In rare instances the client may need help dressing. Let the client do as much as possible. Be matter of fact and deliberate with any assistance.

Clients getting off table alone; remind them:

1. Roll to one side.
2. Use your arms to push up to a seated position.
3. Sit for a minute before getting up.
4. Leave the sheets on the table.
5. Get dressed and return to the business area.

Closing the Session

Make another appointment and collect the fee.

Saying good-bye

- Have a courteous completion; don't linger

- Develop a short, consistent departure routine

After the client has left

- Update records

- Prepare for the next client

- Attend to personal hygiene and self-care

Positioning: Prone

Positioning: placing client to enhance benefits

Prone (shown here)

Side-lying

Supine

Seated



A, Prone. 1, Rolled towel. 2, Face cover. 3, Bottom sheet. 4, Rolled towel at forehead. 5, Top sheet. 6, Support for abdomen or chest. 7, Ankle support. 8, Support for abdomen or chest. 9, Ankle support. 10, Blanket. 11, Bottom sheet. 12, Top sheet. 13, Shoulder support. 14, Fitted sheet.

A supine position, for example, can feel vulnerable to the client. A prone position requires extra supports for some clients and can cause discomfort in the sinuses, though it is a very comfortable position for many for short periods of time. Side-lying allows the therapist access to the lateral part of the client's body. Seated massage affords limited access to some areas of the body, but can be very comfortable for the client

Positioning: Side-lying

B, Side-lying.

1, Towel roll or pillow.

2, Pillow.

3, Knee support (under sheet)

4, Fitted sheet.

5, Blanket.

6, Bottom sheet.

7, Knee/leg bolster. 8, Top sheet. 9, Pillow for arm
and shoulder. 10, Pillow.



Positioning: Supine

C, Supine.

1, Pillow.

2, Knee support.

3, Knee support.

4, Chest towel.



Draping

Two purposes:

To maintain the client's privacy and sense of security

To provide warmth

Skillfully undraping an area to be massaged and purposefully redraping the area is much more professional and less invasive than sliding the hands under the draping materials.

Principles of Draping

All reusable draping material must have been freshly laundered with bleach.

Disposable (single use) linens must be fresh for each client and then disposed of properly.

The genital area is never undraped. The breast area of women is not undraped during routine wellness massage.

Draping methods should keep the client covered in all positions, including the seated position.

Draping materials can be a bit clumsy to use at first. To ensure the modesty of the first few practice clients, have them leave their clothing on.

If the client uses a dressing area away from the massage table, a robe, top sheet, or wrap large enough to cover the body will be needed for the walk to the massage area.

If a wrap or top sheet is used, it can become the top drape once the client is on the table.

Flat Draping Methods

Instruct the client to lie supine, prone, or side-lying between the drapes on the massage table.

The entire body is then covered.

The top drape (and sometimes the bottom drape) is moved in various ways to cover and uncover the area to be massaged.

With flat draping, the top sheet is placed over the client in the same manner that a bed is made, with a bottom sheet and a top sheet.

To ensure the privacy of men, the massage practitioner should avoid smooth, flat draping over the genitals while the client is supine. Loose draping that does not lie flat against the body provides for a visual shield and reduces the client's embarrassment.

Contoured Draping

Contoured draping can be done with two towels or with a sheet and a towel.

The drapes are wrapped and shaped around the client.

For women, a separate chest towel can be used to drape the breast area.

This type of draping is very effective for securely covering and shielding the genital and buttock areas.

Positioning of the drape may feel invasive to the client, but having the client assist in placement of the drapes preserves a sense of modesty.

Alternative to Draping

Swimsuit or shorts and loose shirt

Table or mat must be covered; top drape must be available

Observe all precautions for sanitation, privacy, and respect

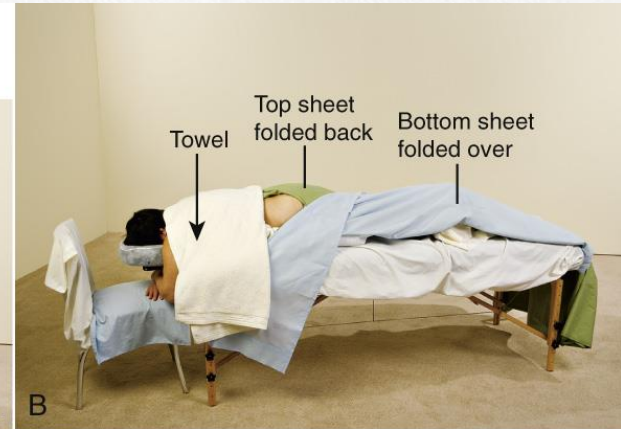
The practitioner should use freshly laundered and sanitized draping material for each client, protect the table or mat surface for every session, not allow the drape to drag on the floor, and prevent his or her clothing and hair from coming in contact with the client.)

Suggested Draping Procedures

A, Prone:
Undraped
back.



B, Draping for
the gluteal area.



C, Prone:
Draping for
the leg.



D, Prone:
Draping for
the arm.



E, Preparing to place the client in the side-lying position: remove the bolster.



F, Lift the top sheet in the middle to allow the client to roll.



G, Side-lying: Draping for the leg.



H, Side-lying: Draping for the back. Use the bottom sheet to fold over the leg and glutes.

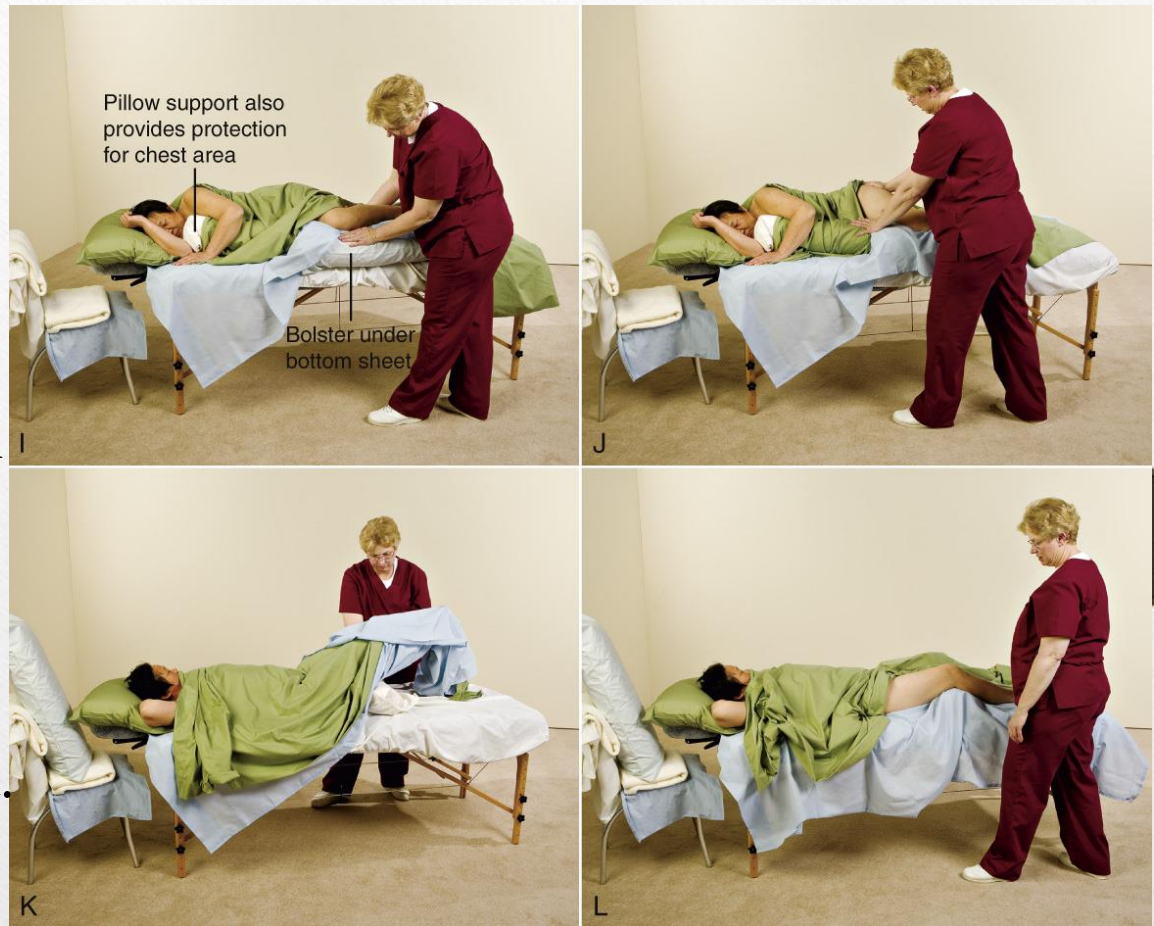


I, Side-lying:
Draping for the
leg.

J, Move the drape
to provide access
to the upper thigh
and gluteal area.

K, Supine: Fold
the bottom sheet
over the top sheet.
Lift to position
the bolster.

L, Supine: Draping
for the leg.



M, Contour the drape to prevent exposure of the groin area.



N, Towel over the top sheet: The client holds the towel while the sheet is moved.



O, Draping for the abdomen. Optional use of a pillowcase to cover the eyes.

P, Redrape and remove the towel.

Q, Help the client from the table.

R, Lift by standing; secure the drape.

S, Working around the female breast. Use the towel to move the breast tissue.

T, Contour the drape around the breast.



U, Working in the groin area. Use a top sheet to slide the drape tightly into the area. For males, this moves the genitals out of the massage area.



V, Use the drape to slide to the top of the pubic bone.



For males, this moves the genitals away from the massage area.

W, Avoid flat draping on males in the supine position. Bunched sheets disguise the genital area.

To Test

Access Code: **TJ9J**

Please write down code. You will be asked for it

Once you have successfully passed the test (70% correct), please email Kim Jackson at kim_hotschool@yahoo.com. We will email you your CE certificate within 7 business days.