

Stress Relief-Massage

About Massage...

Massage is touch. It is used for many different reasons. The main reason that will be focused on in this handout is massage for stress relief. Simple massage techniques can be used anytime or anywhere in order to relax and relieve stress.

Self-massage

Self-massage is easy to do anytime and anywhere. Taking a minute or even a couple seconds here and there can provide relaxation to your muscles. In order to give yourself a massage you just rub little circles gently across the area being massaged. Here are some examples of areas to self-massage...

- * Hands - using your thumb, apply pressure to the various areas of the palm of the other hand, pull fingers gently away from the hand
- * Forearms - squeeze the forearm, use the thumb to apply deep pressure and make a circular motion on the muscle
- * Head - using both hands, gently apply pressure and make circular motions on the side of the head next to the eyes, apply pressure to the scalp with the fingertips from both hands, make small circles with the fingertips
- * Neck - using the fingertips of each hand, gently massage the neck muscles up and down the side of the neck
- * Shoulders—using both hands, squeeze and release the muscles on top of the shoulders, massage down the upper arm

Simple Seated Partner Massage

This simple massage is used for stress relief. All you need is a partner, a relaxing and quiet atmosphere, and a chair.

Ask about any back problems before you start. Sit the receiver on a chair and lean him or her forward with the elbows resting on the knees. Let them know that you are going to start.

Effleurage: Start by moving both hands, open with fingers and palms touching the back, over the back in a heart shaped motion. These are large motions performed slowly and deliberately.

Petrissage: Place hands on the top of the shoulders. Firmly lift the muscle from the bone and lightly squeeze, then slowly release. Repeat several times. Use this same technique on the outside of the shoulder, too.

Friction: Using only your thumbs (fingers should lightly touch the back only for stabilization), perform deep, circular motions along the sides of the spine. Make sure you are not touching the spine directly. Perform these slowly and deliberately.

Tapotement: Using your fingertips, the sides of your hands or cupped palms, rapidly strike the back. You will go above the shoulder blades and on each side of the spine. Make sure not to hit the shoulder blades or spine directly. Do not slap the back, but perform an intentional strike.

Lastly, end with a light effleurage for a minute or two!



Reminders for Givers and Receivers

Giver...

- Ask your partner about any physical problems they may have.
- Let the receiver know when you are going to touch them.
- Make sure your touching is comfortable.
- Find out if the pressure is too hard or soft.
- Give the receiver your undivided attention.

Receiver...

- Breathe deeply and regularly
- Keep your mind from wandering.
- Don't feel like you need to talk. Conversation is unnecessary because it is time for you to relax.
- Let the giver know what feels good and what doesn't.

If you have not experienced a professional massage, you are encouraged to do so! Take time to experience the ultimate in relaxation!

