



Valentine?

Now YOU Can Become A Massage Expert for Your Valentine! Insider Tips for Giving a Great Massage

Written by Irene Diamond, RT

Sure ... Candy and flowers are nice, but what about giving a massage instead? (Much better for the waistline and the lucky recipient will LOVE YOU for it!)

Score Big Points

- Get Extra Hugs
- Lots More Kisses
- And Much More LOVE

**Here is a simple guide that (even if you have never given a massage before)...
will make you an expert!**

Where to Start?

Even though all positive touch is therapeutic, it is helpful to decide if the intent of your massage will be for Relaxation or Pain Relief. (Your massage will be different based on your intention.)

Once you've chosen your goal for the massage, read below so you can learn how to do it!

Key Points:

LET YOUR HANDS READ THEIR BODY

This means as your fingers and palms move over their skin it's important to use your whole hand and let it follow their curves. Lighten your pressure as you go over bony areas and modify your hand or finger position as you move into smaller areas such as behind the neck or around the hands.

- * Apply enough, but not too much pressure (ask them to tell you if they want more or less pressure – different areas will require different pressure.)
- * Use your entire hand, not just your fingers or thumbs.
- * Apply steady, secure pressure
- * Observe if your partner tenses up their muscles under your pressure (means its too much pressure)
- * Use right amount of lubricant. (If they're hairy, you'll need more lotion)
- * Lubricant can be anything you have or you can buy sweet almond oil, lotion or massage cream or oil.

How To Give A Massage -- What Do You Do?

You can do any combination of light or deep massage depending on the circumstances and your partner's needs.

- * Do you want to relax? Use long, slow light to moderately deep strokes.
- * Do you want to get rid of tight 'knots'? Use fast, short, deeper pressure or find tight spots or 'knots' and press in and hold the pressure constant until you feel the knot release (or release when your thumb gets too tired!)

Light Massage is used with people who want to relax, increase circulation and de-stress. It is also used on athletes who have just recently concluded an athletic activity because their muscles will be fatigued and possibly even have slight muscle tears due to the physical exertion that was extended. It is ok to massage someone immediately after an event and even after surgery, but be aware of their pain levels, inflammation, etc... (When in doubt, ask their doctor if it's ok for them to receive a massage)

Deep Tissue Massage (DTM) is used with people who want you to get in deep to release their knots, spasms, and tight muscles. As long as there is no bruising or swelling it is appropriate for you to use deep pressure but ONLY to the point of a "good hurt". If they are tensing up against you, back off a little and see if they can relax into your pressure. The deeper you go – the slower you need to go so you won't injure your partner!

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When in doubt, don't go deep and just focus on creating a relaxing, nurturing massage. After some practice, when you feel confident to do so, you can apply deeper pressure, but in the beginning just use light pressure!

I recommend you always keep in mind that the amount of pressure you apply should elicit a feeling of contentment, not pain. If your partner feels it is too painful, it actually defeats your intent to relax the tissue.

Insider Secrets To Giving The BEST Massage:

- Start with your partner face down. If you are not using a massage table with a face cradle, have them turn their head to one side.
- Use as many pillows as needed to assure they are comfortable!
- Start slow and move your hands less than you think, don't rush through it.

I always suggest you start massaging the back first, since this is where most people carry their tension. The sooner you can get your partner to feel better and relax, the better (and the easier your job will be!)

Massage Specific Areas of The Body:

Massage The BACK: Stand or sit near their head facing their feet.

With lotion on your hands, apply the lotion to your partner's back.

1. Place both hands on their back with one hand on either side of their spine and start at shoulders and slowly glide down to their hips. (If you're a short person glide as far down as you can reach.)
2. Once you've reached their hips, let your hands go out to the side and pull up along their sides to their arms and then slide out over their shoulders and up towards their neck.
3. Repeat this 4-5 times.
4. Start at their shoulders on one side of their spine and with both of your thumbs make small circles working your way down to their hips. Repeat this 4-5 times.
5. Repeat other side 4-5 times.
6. Repeat number one and two again

The FEET: Stand or sit near their feet. Do everything to one foot and then switch to the other foot...Have your partner lie either face up or down.

Most people will actually want deeper pressure on their feet than you might think, so be sure to check in with them and ask if they want more or less pressure.

1. Lots of squeezes to heel
2. Press 5-6 times into instep
3. Press 5-6 times along 'balls' of foot
4. Place both hands around one ankle, and run fingers around the big anklebones in a circular motion 5-6 times.
5. Squeeze toes starting at base of each toe and gradually work your way out to end of toe.
6. With both hands start on one lower leg and reach up and surround hands around calf and holding tight, gently slide down as you pull on the lower leg, all the way to the tips of the toes.

The NECK: (Face Up) You stand or sit near their head facing them.

1. Gently pull all their hair out of the way and up towards you
2. As you move their head around – do it very slowly and smoothly.
3. Make two fists and alternating hands apply gentle presses using the flat parts of your knuckles into the tops of their shoulders. (The pressure you apply should cause their head to slowly roll from side to side)
4. Gently hold the base of their head and pull VERY SLOWLY towards you. This creates a gentle traction down their neck and even into their back.

5. Slowly massage with both hands at the same time on either side of their neck and shoulders in a kneading motion.

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6. Gently bring their head over to one side and with your thumb or fingers on the opposite side, start at the base of neck and gradually work towards their head using small circular motions. (Always press along the BACK of their neck, not too close to the front of their neck to avoid touching the nerves and arteries. They should tell you if it is uncomfortable.)

7. With hands facing up, cup their neck. With one hand start at the base of neck and gently pull towards head, sliding your palm under their neck towards their hairline. Then use other hand and continue to alternate 5-6 times.

8. You can finish by doing some gentle, slow stretches for their neck and shoulders.

Again, it is important to note that as long as you are not causing pain – Your partner will love you for your efforts and it really is a lot of fun once you get the hang of it!

5 Things NEVER to DO:

- 1) Don't pull their hair by accident with your hands or arms
- 2) Don't have your breath exhale directly onto them
- 3) Don't 'crunch' their ears as you are holding their head.
- 3) NEVER press directly on BONE! (Only press on soft tissue of the muscles.)
- 4) Don't press so hard that your recipient tenses up!
- 5) Only massage the back of neck -- Don't press into the side or front of their neck or any other vulnerable areas.

Ambiance and Environment:

Set up the room with either a massage table (if you have one) or an area where your partner can lie comfortably. Have a blanket to cover them to keep them warm and only expose the area you are massaging.

The room should be warm, with soft lights and relaxing music. Some people like to use candles for a nice effect and even aromatherapy such as incense or scented candles or lotion.

Supplies:

You can do your massage on the bed or floor, but of course the right tools make it easier on your own body and provides a better experience for your partner. If you are interested in purchasing a Massage Table – please email us. (We are working on arranging a discount from the distributors, but in the mean time can give you their contact information.)

Lotions:

You can use any lotion or oil you like, scented or not. We prefer a lotion rather than oil with a nice 'glide' so it is not too slippery. If your lotion is too dry, you will need to keep re-applying cream every few minutes. There is a fabulous cream that is perfect for Valentines Day called [Hot Stuff Massage Cream](#) that has chili pepper and cinnamon it to add a little heat!

(Quick tip: Put the cap back on your bottle each time so it doesn't spill!)

**Enjoy and have fun with learning to give a massage.
With practice and good feed back from your partner, you will begin to feel more comfortable each day.**



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