

Phenomenal News

Phenomenal Healing Massage & Bodywork

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FREE

How to give a phenomenal massage:

Every day is Valentine's day but maybe today can be extra special!



Most people (*cough cough* women) look forward to a day filled with flowers, chocolate and pampering. What if today and any other day, you offered a loved one a home massage? Don't know how to give one? Here are a few tips to remember:

Be firm but gentle

People get confused about pressure in two opposite ways. Some feel if their partner is smaller than they are, they need a lighter pressure. This is okay but sometimes the partner may feel a bit frustrated.

Then there's others that live by the "no pain, no gain" method. This is a myth. Massage should be pleasant. If your partner is clenching their jaw or tensing their muscles to get through your pressure, you're doing more damage than good. *Communication is key.* Start light and build up to a firm pressure and ask your partner how the pressure is.

Sloooooow doooooown

There are occasions where someone might want a fast-paced & vigorous



massage. But unless your partner is getting warmed up for a race or ballroom dancing competition, this is probably not one of them.

You're not going to miss some key muscle if you take your time. If you seem relaxed, your partner is going to relax too. So take a deep breath, put your hands out, and make each stroke last.

If you meet a bone, leave it alone

There is one exception to the firm pressure rule, and that is bones. You don't need to be an anatomist to recognize the ones that stick out, like knees, elbows, ribs and spines. With little padding between them and the skin, these areas can be quick to bruise or feel painful.

If you find your hands arriving at one of these bony landmarks (yes, that's actually what massage therapists call them, it's like reading a topographical map), you have two options: turn around and go back the way you came, or skim over them using gentle pressure and keep going with your massage .

Practice good body mechanics

If massage shouldn't be painful for your partner, it also shouldn't be painful for you. If you are hunched over, if your wrists are bent at an awkward angle, if you are using your thumbs or fingers in ways they weren't designed to work, you will end up regretting the day you ever offered to give a massage.

Use bigger muscles in place of small ones whenever you can. Use your back to provide pressure instead of your



arms, and your arms instead of your fingers. Whenever possible, push instead of pulling.

When you move to a new part of your partner's body, adjust your entire position not just your hand placement. It may feel strange at first, but imagine if you tried to shovel snow by standing in one place and using just your arms to move the shovel from one side to the other. If that image seems ridiculous, you already understand why proper body mechanics is so important.

Communicate, communicate

Really, you probably don't need to talk to a massage therapist to learn that open communication between you and your partner is key. It's especially true in a situation like a massage, where one of you is more vulnerable than the other.



As the massage giver, it's important to check in regularly: How does this feel? Would you like more or less pressure? The same goes for communicating your own needs. If you're getting tired, or thirsty, or really need to leave for work, say something. Don't leave your partner feeling guilty about enjoying a massage because you made a unilateral decision to sacrifice your needs for theirs.

Learn from the pros

As with any skill, one of the best ways to learn to give a massage is by watching the people who are already great at it. Getting regular professional massage and taking a couples massage class are both helpful. YouTube is a fantastic source of tutorials for beginners. [Swedish massage](#) is a great place to start—or you can focus on an area like the [neck and shoulders](#).

If you follow these guidelines, you're going to be fine

You may not be winning any championships, but massage isn't a competition. If you can give a caring, relaxing massage without hurting your partner or yourself, you're way ahead of the curve on this one. And if you feel like you need more than that ... well, give me a call and I'll see you on the table.

Ruth Armand