
SELF-MASSAGE FOR HEALING



MASSAGE-THERAPY-BENEFITS.NET

Introduction

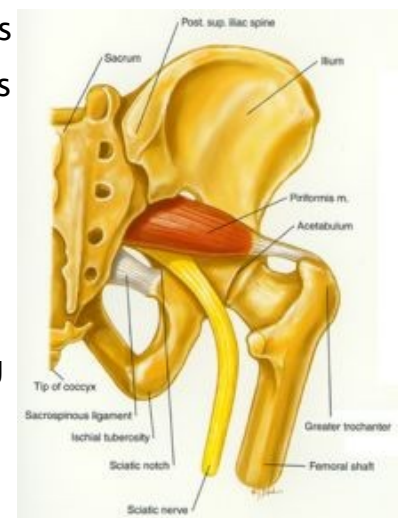
Before I became a massage therapist, I knew little about massage in general, yet alone self-massage. Massaging myself when I was sore and achy never even crossed my mind.


When I entered massage school, I was still largely ignorant about massage and self-massage. As I learned about and read about massage, I started to wonder why this hadn't been part of my life earlier. Massage helps treat so many conditions in a safe way. Why didn't more people use it?

In school we also learned about some self-massage techniques, but these instances of learning were limited. There was no specific class dedicated to learning self-massage. If an instructor happened to think of something, she would mention it in passing, but this information was never emphasized.

When I started my own massage practice. I had a few clients who complained that they couldn't afford to get massage as often as they wanted. Some of these clients had conditions that were not getting better because they could only afford to get massaged once every couple weeks.

I can remember one woman in particular who had recurring low back pain as a result of tension in her piriformis muscle. This is a small muscle that is under your glutes. It is often a contributor to low back pain. Here's a picture of





the piriformis. The yellow thing running under it is the sciatic nerve. The piriformis can press on the sciatic nerve and [sciatica](#).

This woman wanted to get massaged more regularly than she did but she was older and on a fixed income. She couldn't afford to get any more massages in a month than she already did. She said that felt better for a few days after her massage, but by the end of the week her pain would start to come back.

One day after her massage session, I taught her some simple self-massage techniques to help her lower back. One was a way to do [positional release](#) on her piriformis by laying on the floor and letting a chair support her bent leg. To be honest, at the time I still didn't have very much experience as a therapist and what I told her I kind of made up. It was based on my knowledge about muscles and massage techniques, but it wasn't a self-massage technique I had learned anywhere.

When she returned for her massage session a few weeks later, she was delighted. She told me that she'd done the things I'd suggested and that her low back pain hadn't returned. I was pleasantly surprised.

After that incident, I started experimenting with self-massage and teaching my clients the things I learned. The more results I saw, the more encouraged I was to keep learning and sharing my knowledge with others.

I think massage is a great way to facilitate healing. I also think that we need to take responsibility for our health. Getting to know your body and how it works is part of that responsibility. When you are aware of your body and taking an active role in your healing, you'll heal faster and be healthier in general.



Most people do some self-massage naturally. What is one of your first instincts when you have a bad headache? You rub your temples, right? When their neck or shoulders ache most people grab them.

Before you slump down in your chair defeated because I'm giving you one more thing to do in your already hectic day, hear me out. This isn't a chore. It's not one more thing to cram into your already packed schedule, something else to check from your to-do list. This is a way to keep your skin and muscles healthy while easing stress and pampering yourself.

Besides decreasing your stress, self-massage helps **increase circulation, reduces blood pressure, and reduces muscle pain and tension.** It can be useful in managing [fibromyalgia](#), [headaches](#), [arthritis](#), [depression](#), [insomnia](#), and **chronic fatigue.** Self-massage also helps **increase self-esteem and body acceptance.**

Self-massage can also help you become more familiar with your body. When something is wrong you'll notice it more quickly and will be able to pinpoint what is wrong more easily. The better you know your muscles, the better you'll get at massaging away your own aches and pains.

Let's take a look at three forms of self-massage. Each is different and one might suit your lifestyle more than the others. Whatever suits your lifestyle, I recommend making one or all of these methods of self-massage part of your health care routine.



Dry Brushing

Your skin is the largest organ in your body. Most people don't think of the skin as an organ. Most people don't stop to consider all the functions their skin performs. It acts as a barrier protecting our body from germs and disease. It regulates the bodies temperature. Your skin helps in your body detox. One fourth of the toxins your body releases daily are excreted through the skin. One third of the blood getting pumped around your body goes to feeding your skin.

Skin brushing has been practiced for centuries. The Japanese vigorously rub their bodies with a loofah before bathing. Ancient Greeks used spoon-like skin scrapers to remove dirt and improve circulation before bathing. Cherokee Indians brushed their skin with dried corn husks to enhance the skin's beauty. Comanche Indians scrubbed their skin with sand.

Dry skin brushing is an easy and a effective way to improve your health. Here are some of the positive effects it can have on your health:

- **increase circulation**
- **improve digestion**
- **improve lymph flow**
- **decrease cellulite**
- **increase overall skin health**
- **strengthen the immune system**
- **removes dead skin cells**

Who thought that you could get some much benefit from something that only takes 5 minutes a day?



Here's what you need to start your own dry skin brushing routine. You can use a brush that has **natural bristles**, like some type of animal hair or vegetable fiber. Synthetic bristles are too sharp and will irritate the skin. It's best to have a brush with a handle so that you can reach your back with no problem. Some people like to use a loofah to do their dry brushing. That's fine too. That's all you need a brush or loofah and a


naked body.

When you do your dry skin brushing you need to make sure that the brush and your skin are completely dry. **Don't brush any rashes, broken skin, your nipples or genitals.** You should use a small very soft bristled brush on your face.

It's best to do your dry skin brushing right before you shower. No matter what time of the day you dry brush you need to bathe right afterward. This way you'll wash off any toxins on your skin and dead skin.

Start with your feet because the soles of your feet contain many nerve endings that effect other areas of your body. You use firmer pressure when brushing the soles of your feet. For the rest of your body use firm yet gentle strokes. Your skin will flush at first, but as it gets used to brushing it will flush less and less. Dry skin brushing should feel good. It shouldn't hurt.

Remember to always brush toward your heart.

- 
- Brush your soles in a circular motion
 - Brush up your legs on all sides
 - Brush your hands and up your arms
 - Brush your stomach gently in a counterclockwise motion
 - Brush your chest, avoiding the nipples
 - Brush your back and buttock
 - Bathe

Clean your brush at least once a month. Make sure the brush is completely dry before using it. You should have a different brush for each person in your household for hygiene purposes.



Ayurvedic Self-Massage

Abhyanga

You may have heard of Ayurveda. I became interested in it a number of years ago. While I've never studied it formally, I've read a number of books on the subject.

Ayurveda is an ancient Indian healing art. It's the oldest healing art known. Ayurveda originates with the four Veda's or four ancient Holy Books. These four books were written in Sanskrit text and date back five thousand years. Traditional mythology teaches that the information contained in these books was given to people by the creator at the time the world was created. It is believed that the tradition of Ayurveda existed orally before these texts were ever written. Known as the "Mother of Medicine," Ayurveda is believed to have influenced many traditional healing practices from the East. Traditional Chinese Medicine is just one example.

In Ayurveda it's believed that all people contain three forces or doshas. These doshas represent different elements found in nature.

- **Vata** = air and ether
- **Pitta** = fire and water
- **Kapha** = water and earth

You can take a quiz to find out which dosha is most dominant in you at this [site](#).

A person with all three doshas in equal balance is a healthy person. A person with a dosha imbalance is unhealthy. Ayurveda helps you create a healthy lifestyle to balance your doshas. It involves diet, mediation, exercise and self-massage.



Ayurvedic self-massage is called Abhyanga. In Ayurvedic medicine, it's an important part of your daily routine.

This form of self-massage is done with oil. You can use whichever type of oil that is appropriate for your dominate dosha.

- **Vata = Sesame Oil**
- **Pitta = Coconut Oil**
- **Kapha = Olive or Mustard Seed Oil**

Sesame oil is the most commonly used oil for Abhyanga. It is full of antioxidants and has anti-inflammatory properties. Don't use roasted sesame oil. The antioxidants in the oil are destroyed in the roasting process and the smell is strong. You can use any

type of natural [massage oil](#) if you can't find these specific oils. Make sure the whatever oil you use is cold pressed.

Ayurvedic massage calls for the purification of the oil. I usually don't do this, but you may want to try purifying your oil. You can purify up to 1 quart of oil at a time.

Place oil in large pan and heat it to 212 degrees Fahrenheit. Once the oil is heated to that temperature remove it from the heat and let it cool. Please be careful when heating oil. It can be dangerous. Never leave it unattended. My clumsiness is why I don't do it.

Traditionally, Ayurvedic massage oils are infused with herbs and flowers that have medicinal properties. You can purchase Ayurvedic massage oils online.

You can add your favorite [essential oils](#) to the massage oil. Add oils to soothe or energize. **Remember that certain oils aren't good to use with certain conditions.** Check out a list of oils and their benefits on Massage-Therapy-Benefits.net' s [essentials oils page](#).

I put my massage oil in a small squeeze bottle. This helps me control how much I put on my hand more easily. You may want to heat your oil by placing your bottle of oil in a bowl of warm water before your massage. If not, you can just warm it by placing some in the palm of your hand and rubbing your hands together before putting the oil on your body.

Place a towel down where you'll do the massage. For Abhyanga, you should use a generous amount of oil. The towel will get oily so choose a towel that you



Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

