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A man with short, dark hair is shown in profile, looking out towards the right. He is wearing a grey t-shirt. The background is a soft-focus view of the ocean under a clear sky.

# Body Sense

A public education magazine brought to you by ABMP

summer 2021

## Breath as a Healing Tool

A Return to Massage

Massage for Dementia

What is Lymph Massage?

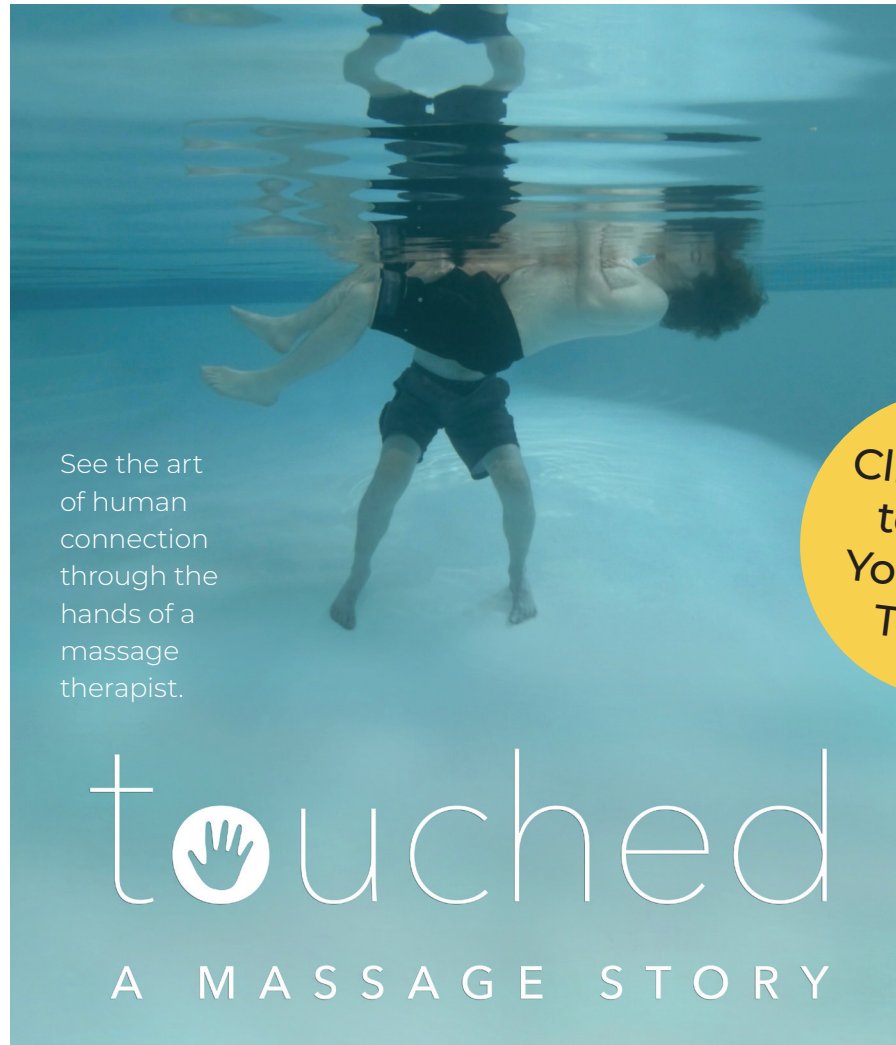


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# *Touched: A Massage Story*

by filmmaker Chandler Toffa and featuring ABMP massage therapist Jonathan Grassi



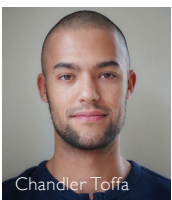
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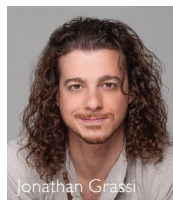
Tuesday

**June 22, 2021 • 5:00 p.m. MT**

4:00 p.m. PT | 6:00 p.m. CT | 7:00 p.m. ET



Chandler Toffa



Jonathan Grassi

Submit questions during the movie and have them answered by Jonathan and Chandler during a live Q&A session after the show.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

KARRIE OSBORN, EDITOR  
KARRIE@ABMP.COM



# Don't Forget to Just Do It!

As consumers of massage, your appetite for self-care exceeds most and you have a greater understanding of the importance of healthy habits than the majority of Americans. So, I know I'm preaching to the choir when I talk to you about wearing sunscreen. And I'm likely only one of many you hear this advice from: You hear it from your primary care provider, your esthetician, your dermatologist, your mother.

Which leads me to ask: You hear it, but are you heeding it?

I was shocked to learn that in a recent survey of consumers, 61 percent of males and 50 percent of females reported they rarely or never wear sunscreen. That number astounds me, especially after the decades of education we've been given on the subject. Here in Colorado, with our thin air and high elevation, not wearing sunscreen is a deadly sin . . . literally.

Knowing what we know about sun damage and skin cancer, it's hard to understand why someone wouldn't follow the guidance. But then I remember my own experience, when earlier this year, after months of being stuck indoors, I neglected to do a good job applying sunscreen to my face on a bright spring day. I know I was

"tricked" by the cool temperatures (despite the bright sun), and by my own false sense of security that my makeup had enough SPF to protect me for my five hours outdoors (turns out, my foundation only has SPF 4, not nearly enough to protect against any sun exposure).

The next morning, I saw the damage I had done. My forehead and scalp were brightly pink, tender, and slightly swollen from the injury and assault from the sun. For days, as I slathered myself in vitamin C creams, I wondered how I could be so irresponsible to let this happen? Why had I let my guard down?

As my aging skin slowly healed, I looked at the wrinkles that weren't there only days earlier, the "age" spots that immediately darkened, and the sunburn recovery that took longer than in years past. It made me sad, but it also motivated me to re-up my sun-care diligence. Yes, we're only human, but let's work hard not to let our guard down with something as important as our skin's health. Don't become complacent and tire of hearing the message to wear your sunscreen . . . at the least, it will save you some wrinkles; at most, it might save your life.

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## Body Sense

massage, bodywork & healthy living

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### Massage Helps Ease Aggression and Other Symptoms in Dementia Patients

In a review article published in the November/December 2020 issue of *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, researchers examined the role of massage therapy in attenuating aggression and related behavioral disorders in patients with dementia.

The review authors state an “essential feature of dementia is a significant decline in a patient’s cognitive ability, and communicating among patients through language becomes virtually ineffective. Scientists have examined

techniques to maintain communication with patients with dementia at a basic level, such as through gentle touch in the form of massage.”

The review examined studies that implemented massage therapy, either alone or in conjunction with other nonpharmacological interventions such as aromatherapy or calming music, as a treatment for dementia-related behavioral disorders.

The authors conclude: “The employment of massage therapy—either alone or in combination with aromatherapy or calming music—can significantly decrease agitation, aggression, stress, and anxiety in patients with dementia. Moreover, massage therapy can also be beneficial for nursing personnel involved in taking care of patients with dementia. The combination of massage with aromatherapy seems to impart the most significant results in patients with dementia.” [Read the full study online.](#)



# Lentil and Wild Rice Salad

This salad is packed with plants, protein-rich beans, and plenty of heart-healthy fiber:

- 4 medium shallots, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup olive oil, divided
- 1 cup wild rice blend
- 1 cup brown lentils
- 4 cups vegetable broth or water
- ½ cup slivered almonds
- 6 ounces arugula leaves
- ½ cup mint leaves, torn
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- Sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper

Peel and slice shallots as thinly as possible. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a medium pan over medium-low heat. Add the shallots and a pinch of salt. Stir often, until shallots are caramelized and browned, about 30–45 minutes. While the shallots are cooking, make the rice. In a medium saucepan with a lid, combine rice, lentils, and broth or water. (If using water, add ½ teaspoon salt.) Bring everything to a full boil, then lower heat enough to maintain a slow, steady simmer. Cook until rice and lentils are tender and liquid is absorbed, about 45 minutes. Turn off heat, and let stand for a few minutes.

While the lentils are cooking, sauté the slivered almonds over medium heat, stirring for 2–3 minutes until almonds are lightly browned.

Assemble the salad. Place the arugula and 1 cup of the rice/lentil mixture, almonds, and mint leaves together in a salad bowl and lightly toss. Transfer to individual bowls/platter and top with the remaining rice/lentils and pomegranate seeds. Whisk together the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and drizzle over the salad. Garnish with flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper.

2 SERVINGS





# The Impact of Breath on the Body

4 Techniques to Try at Home  
By Cindy Williams





You breathe every second of every day, but likely without placing your attention on it. It just happens. This life-giving force has the power to heal, but often goes under the radar instead of being given the acknowledgment it deserves. Breath work is a tool in your massage therapist's toolbox, which they may employ during your massage sessions. This tool is versatile enough that you can also use breath exercises at home to facilitate the repair of stressed tissues.

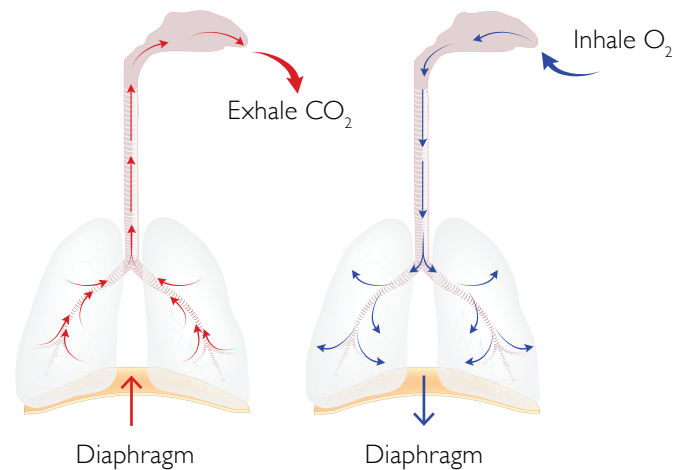
Here is a quick look at the vast and profound benefits of this simple practice on a few of the key systems of the body, as well as an overview of some simple breath techniques you can utilize at home.

## ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF BREATH: A SIMPLE VIEW

Breath is the movement of air into and out of the lungs. The primary function of breath on a physiological level is the exchange of gases in order to sustain life processes in the body by giving oxygen to the organs and tissues, and removing waste gas. The exchange happens in the lungs as well as in the capillaries throughout the body.

Breath requires the movement of two cavities of the body—thoracic and abdominal. Both change shape in the process of breathing. When you inhale, the diaphragm flattens, and ribs lift and expand to make room for air to be drawn into the lungs by a suction force. Simultaneously, the abdominal cavity descends down and forward, causing the abdomen to swell outward. When the thoracic cavity increases in volume with air, the space of the abdominal cavity has to shift in order to make room, so when an inhale causes the belly to expand, it's a surefire sign that it is deep rather than shallow.

While exhalation is primarily passive, when you exhale (especially consciously), abdominal muscles push the abdominal cavity back toward



center and up. The diaphragm releases, ribs release, and the rib cage narrows. Air is released (and can be consciously pushed) out of the body. The actions of these muscles in the processes of inhalation and exhalation are collectively known as the respiratory pump.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Research into the physiological effects of deep breathing have illuminated significant effects on the respiratory, cardiovascular, lymphatic, and autonomic nervous systems. While an entire article could be written on each of these, let's simply explore a few of the effects of breathing on these systems of the body.

### Deep, Conscious Breathing

Deep and conscious breathing increases oxygen to the brain, which supports the most vital system of our body—our central nervous system. Deep, conscious breathing also:

- Affects the balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the blood, therefore affecting the balance of the “nutrients in/waste out” process that takes place in all cells of the body.
- Assists to balance the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. Sympathetic response shallows and speeds the breath and prepares for action. Parasympathetic response induces calm and restoration.





- Stimulates neurological sensors (called baroreceptors) on the wall of the descending aorta. When pressure is applied during exhalation, baroreceptors are signaled, which prompts the hypothalamus (responsible for heart rate and blood pressure). The tension tells the system less pressure is needed, and blood pressure and heart rate can be lowered. This is one reason conscious exhalation breathing patterns create a calming response.
- Conversely, stimulates an increase in heart rate on inhalation, which can be invigorating to someone who is sedentary due to factors such as obesity or depression. This is one reason conscious inhalation breathing patterns create an invigorating response.
- Engages muscle actions that create a pull (a stimulus) to the cranial and sacral parasympathetic nerves and induce a calming response.

- Employs the respiratory pump to support venous flow back to the heart (which can have a hard time on its own thanks to gravity and insufficient muscle contraction in people who are more sedentary).
- Creates a positive external force on lymphatic trunks, deep lymphatic ducts, and the cisterna chyli, which influence movement of lymph through the cleansing process.
- Creates more movement in the accessory muscles of breathing (scalenes, sternocleidomastoid, pectoralis minor) that are commonly already locked into a dysfunctional place due to poor posture, therefore supporting the hands-on work of your massage therapist in supporting healthy change and unwinding constriction.

These bullet points only scratch the surface of the physiological effects of deep breathing. Additionally, the breath is intimately connected to the mind and emotional state. When the breath is agitated, the mind is agitated, and the body follows. But that is a story of its own for another day.



## PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING

Following are four breathing exercises that are easy to incorporate into a pre-meditation routine, a post-exercise workout, or any time you need a “slow-down” break.

### BASIC DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

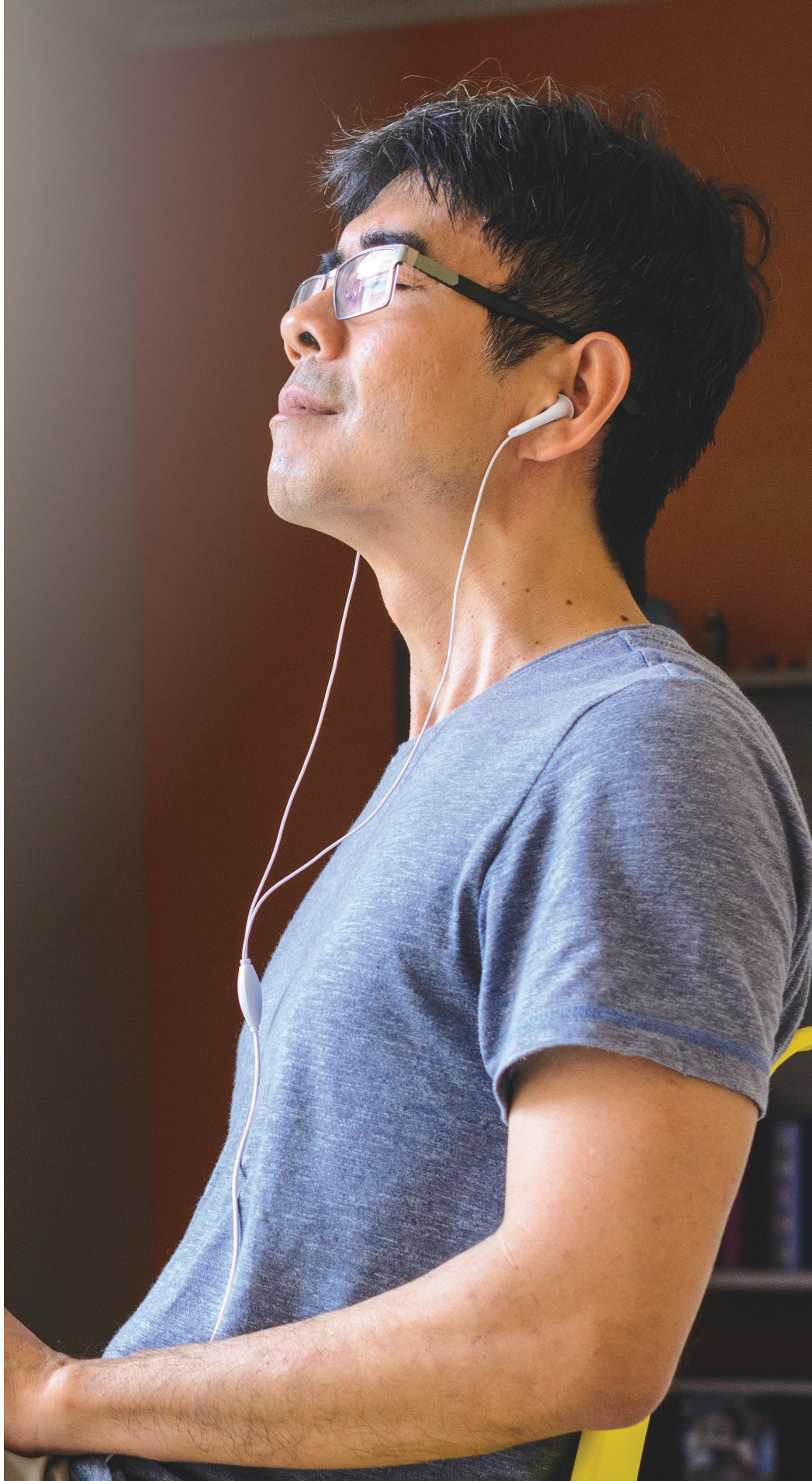
It's good to start at the beginning. This breath practice encourages you to breathe deeply, creating a grounded, centered, present energy.

1. Before you begin, exhale fully.
2. Next, inhale deeply through the nose, directing the breath into the belly so that it moves outward like a buddha belly on the inhale and deflates on the exhale.
3. At the top of the inhale, retain the breath for 3–5 seconds.
4. Then, exhale.
5. Repeat.

### SQUARE (OR BOX) BREATHING

This technique, known as *sama vritti pranayama* in Sanskrit (*sama vritti* means “same or equal fluctuations”), is excellent for bringing balance or equanimity to the body and mind.

1. Begin by breathing slowly in and out through the nose, directing the breath into the belly so that it moves outward like a buddha belly on the inhale and deflates on the exhale.
2. After two or three simple breaths—and at the end of an exhale—inhale to a count of four seconds.
3. At the top of the inhale, hold your breath for four seconds.
4. Now, exhale to a count of four.
5. At the bottom of the exhale, hold your breath for four seconds.
6. Repeat 5–10 rounds or until you feel the exercise is complete.





#### EXHALE-CRUNCH BREATHING

This technique stimulates the cisterna chyli, which supports lymph movement from the lower extremities. This exercise is typically done while lying down; it can even be incorporated into your massage session, while you're lying face-up on the table.


1. Begin by taking slow, deep breaths into the belly.
2. On your exhale, “huff” the air out (as if you are blowing out birthday candles) while simultaneously lifting your head and shoulders off the table in a slight abdominal crunch.
3. Release and return back to the floor on the inhale.
4. Repeat up to three times.

#### HA BREATHING

This is a Hawaiian breathing technique used for increasing vital energy while relaxed, as well as enhancing healing work during bodywork sessions. It can be done seated or lying down. The key to this technique is to make the exhale twice as long as the inhale.

1. Begin breathing slowly in and out through the nose, directing the breath into the belly so that it moves outward like a buddha belly on the inhale and deflates on the exhale.
2. After two or three simple breaths and at the end of an exhale, inhale to a count of four seconds.
3. Allow a short pause.
4. Exhale through the mouth while making an extended sound—“Haaaaaa”—to a count of eight.
5. Allow a short pause.
6. Repeat 3–5 rounds.

#### JUST BREATHE

It is reported the average human uses only 25 percent of their breath capacity. By simply supporting improvement in the efficiency and capacity of your breath, you can begin to heal all areas of your physical body. Movement, by way of the breath, supports life. 

*Since 2000, Cindy Williams, LMT, has been actively involved in the massage profession as a practitioner, school administrator, instructor, curriculum developer, and mentor. She maintains a private practice as a massage and yoga instructor. Contact her at [cynthialynn@massagetherapy.com](mailto:cynthialynn@massagetherapy.com).*



#### Resources

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# Welcome Back

## Considerations for Clients Returning to Massage Therapy

By Kristin Coverly

You've booked your first post-pandemic massage session! Now what?

While you're probably looking forward to your session with a mix of excitement and anticipation, throwing a bit of awareness into the mix will set you up for a successful reentry to bodywork. Specifically, this means creating an awareness of what you really need and want from the session and what your body is ready for.

### YOUR MENTAL CHECKLIST

#### 1. CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF


Do an emotional and physical check-in before your session. How would you describe your current state of wellness and what are your needs and wants for your bodywork session?

My guess is, what you want from your upcoming session will be different than what you asked for at your last pre-pandemic session. The events, emotions, and experiences of the past year may have you wanting a session focused more on stress relief than deep-pressure muscle work.

#### 2. TAKE IT SLOW WHEN YOU RETURN

Speaking of deep-pressure muscle work, be aware that your physical body may not be ready for the same level of pressure you received in previous sessions. You may want to ask your practitioner to start with a lighter pressure to see how your body responds. Too much too soon after so long may have the opposite effect than what you're looking for and leave you feeling sore and disappointed.

#### 3. BE OPEN TO THE OUTCOME

Lastly, embrace the awareness that your response to your session may not be what you think it will be. Your body may only be ready to tolerate light touch. Or it might be ready for deep pressure. You won't know until you're receiving the work. Communicate with your therapist throughout the session to adjust as needed. You may cry. Or laugh. You may let out a deep sigh of relief. And you just might do all three! If you let yourself be open to how the session—and your physical and emotional responses to it—unfolds, it will be a wonderful return to bodywork. 

*Kristin Coverly, LMT, is a massage therapist and the director of professional education for Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals.*



# What is Lymphatic Massage?








Our lymph system picks up fluids and waste products from the spaces between the cells and then filters and cleans them. Like the roots of a tree, the lymph system starts as tiny vessels—only a single-cell wide—that eventually branch into larger and larger tubes that carry these fluids back to the blood stream. This network of delicate vessels and lymph nodes is the primary structure of the immune system. The lymph nodes act as check points along the pathways of the vessels. They filter the fluid (called lymph) and serve as the home for lymphocytes—little cells that attack and destroy foreign bacteria and viruses and even abnormal cells, like cancer cells.

Lymphatic massage may help the lymph system do its job better. By using very light pressure in a rhythmic, circular motion, a massage therapist can stimulate the lymph system to work more efficiently. Massage therapists versed in lymphatic drainage therapy, an advanced form of lymphatic massage, can identify the rhythm, direction, and quality of the lymphatic flow and remap drainage pathways.

Lymph massage can benefit just about everyone. If you're feeling tired and low on energy, or if you've been sick and feeling like your body is fighting to get back on track, lymph massage would likely serve you well.

In addition, athletes, surgical patients, and fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue sufferers may want to consider lymphatic massage. Because it's so gentle, it is well tolerated by these patients who are often experiencing sore trigger points throughout the body. By encouraging lymph flow, this gentle form of bodywork can help restore immune function and improve vitality. 



# Q&A



**Kristin Coverly, LMT, is a massage therapist and the director of professional education for Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals.**

## **During my last session, I told my massage therapist about some pain I was feeling in my knee, and she spent more time working on my gluteus muscles than the muscles by my knee. Why?**

I can understand why that might feel a bit confusing or counterintuitive! I'm happy to assure you that working on other areas of the body can be an effective strategy to get to the root of the problem and help the area where you're feeling pain. The two most common reasons a massage therapist will work on areas other than where you feel pain are: compensation and referred pain. Let's start with compensation. When our body is out of perfect alignment—imagine the bodies on an anatomy chart, that's perfect alignment—there may be muscles that are tight and bones that aren't lining up exactly how they're supposed to. And that song from kindergarten was right: the hip bone is connected to the thigh bone! If your pelvis is tilted forward, backward, is higher on one side than the other—from an injury, or even the way you sit, stand, or walk—that will impact the alignment of the bones it connects to above and below it and the gluteus muscles will be tight or overly stretched. When that happens, you'll compensate for the misalignment and adjust the way you walk, which then impacts the alignment of your knee, ankle, and foot and may cause pain in those areas. Working the gluteus muscles may help restore alignment to the hip region, which helps alleviate the pain in your knee.

Another reason your practitioner might work on your gluteus muscles to address your knee pain is referred pain from trigger points. Trigger points feel like hard lumps in your muscle fibers and often, when pressure is directly applied to them, they cause a pain sensation in another area of the body. They've been studied extensively and there are charts to show the referral pain patterns. A trigger point in the gluteus minimus muscle will cause a pain sensation in the knee. If, through her assessment, your practitioner feels compensation or referred pain are contributing to your knee pain, she'll work on your gluteus muscle to help resolve the issue. If you're curious, feel free to ask your practitioner about the treatment choices she's making so you can learn more!







## **I went in for my first facial about a month ago and the esthetician asked me to get undressed from the waist up. It felt a little weird to be that exposed for a face treatment. Is that normal?**

Yes. Everything about the situation is normal. It is normal for the esthetician to ask you to get undressed from the waist up for a facial treatment, but it is also normal for you to feel like this might be a little too exposing.

What is the purpose of changing into that little white smock? While it is true that most of your facial treatments will be focused on the face, there are several complementary steps of a facial that include the neck and décolleté. For example, it's common to apply cleanser, exfoliants and chemical peels, masks, moisturizers, and serums to the entire area (not just the face)—especially if significant signs of aging or acne are present. Your esthetician will also usually treat you to a relaxing massage around the neck, shoulders, décolleté, and even the upper back. Asking you to change into alternative dressings prevents excess product from getting onto your clothing and allows for proper delivery of these treatments.

That said, if you would prefer to stay dressed in your regular clothes, it is absolutely OK. You don't have to explain yourself. Just let your esthetician know you would prefer not to change, and they will adjust your treatment as needed. They may explain they will need to leave out certain steps (e.g., massage, etc.), and you can simply inform them you understand but would like to proceed without getting changed. There is no need to go into detail, and this is not an uncommon request. Your esthetician will likely tuck a towel or two into the collar of your shirt to prevent water and products from touching your clothes, but then you are good to go for the rest of your treatment.



**Emily Morgan is a licensed esthetician in the states of Massachusetts and Colorado.**



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