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# Body Sense

A public education magazine brought to you by ABMP

spring 2019

## Reflexology

*More than a  
Foot Massage*

Does Your Jaw Hurt?  
*How Massage Can Help*

Trapezius Stretch  
*Try It Now*

Set Treatment Goals  
*A Healthy Plan*

KRISTIN ALLEN  
ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS  
U.S.A. HALL OF FAME



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

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Body Sense Editor Karrie Osborn

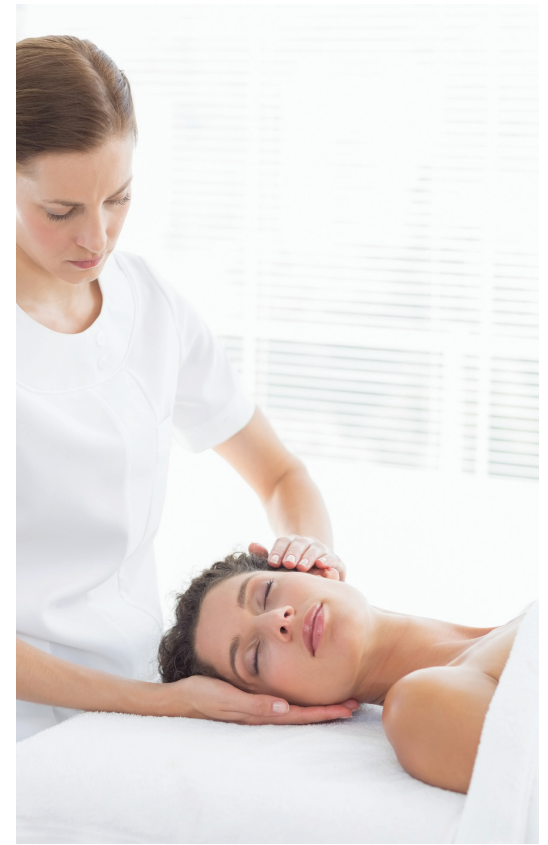
## LITTLE THINGS

On our journey toward health and wellness, often we can see only the big things necessary to get us there. And sometimes that can be daunting. (“My cholesterol is *how* high?” “I need to lose *how* many pounds?” “My anxiety is doing *what* to my body?”) For some people, this is why the journey is never successful.

But we don't have to think *just* big picture when it comes to our health. Sometimes it's easier to focus on the little things—gathering strength from each small stepping stone. The momentum you can gain from these small successes can be paramount to helping you reach your other big-picture goals.

This issue of *Body Sense* is filled with little things you can do to help get on track. Little things like everyday self-care tips to bring extra moments of attention and intention to your day, a simple trapezius stretch that will start to loosen the hardened muscles caused by a 9-to-5 desk job, setting goals with your massage therapist, and the health benefits of taking a stroll through a forest.

We have a tendency to be blinded by the big picture. While important, it can stop us from seeing what we can do different today, right now. Overlooking all the smaller, more attainable moments we have to improve our health is a missed opportunity. So, whether it's doing a few leg squats while brushing your teeth, or diligently checking in on your posture throughout the day, take a moment, bring some intention, and start building an attainable path to wellness on the foundation of these small successes.



70%

The number of massage clients who are very likely to recommend massage to their friends and family.

Who have you told lately?!

Courtesy Harstad Strategic Research, Inc.,  
2019 National Health Care Survey. Associated  
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## Body Sense

massage, bodywork & healthy living

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## Forest Bathing

Imagine being immersed in the quiet sounds of a forest, breathing in the “green” air of the living canopies that protect you. This meditative experience is called forest bathing, and is inspired by Japan’s *shinrin-yoku*, a practice developed in the 1980s that means literally “forest bath.” This experience, considered a cornerstone of preventive health care and healing in Japanese medicine, is more about “being” than “doing.” This intimate exchange with nature has grown into a global wellness practice that promises to rejuvenate, refresh, revive, and relax those who give it a try.

According to the website [www.shinrin-yoku.org](http://www.shinrin-yoku.org), the research-proven benefits of this immersion into nature include reduced stress, a boosted immune system, improved sleep, and accelerated recovery from illness or surgery. Those who practice regular forest bathing claim deeper focus, clearer intuition, increased energy, and an overall improved sense of well-being. And it’s simple to try: find a forest, walk slowly, breathe deeply, open all your senses to the experience, and let yourself be washed in the forest bath.



# BODY SHOP



## NUVOESSENCE ULTRASONIC ESSENTIAL OIL DIFFUSER

According to the American Sleep Association, roughly 50–70 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders. Insomnia can impact the quality of our lives, and although aromatherapy will not cure any sleep disorder, calming oils used before bedtime can help you fall asleep faster. The nuvoEssence includes calming LED colors combined with 100 percent lavender oil for relaxation, or 100 percent eucalyptus oil to stay energized during the day. Two sizes retail for \$39.97 and \$49.97 at [www.nuvoessence.com](http://www.nuvoessence.com).

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## SACRED MUSCLE RELIEF EPSOM SALT SOAK

Enhanced with naturally blended oils including hemp, jojoba, and avocado, this relaxing and restorative bath soak relieves muscle aches and pains, alleviates minor sprains, and relaxes stiff joints. Available for \$20 (6 oz) at [www.hempSacred.com](http://www.hempSacred.com).



# Reflexology

## More Than Just Foot Massage

*Nonthreatening. Gentle, yet robust. Relaxing and therapeutic.* These are the words clients use to describe reflexology, a therapy deep in tradition, but “new” in the realm of Western medicine.

Reflexology is a therapy that uses gentle pressure on a client’s feet to stimulate the body’s own healing process. While most commonly associated with the feet, reflexology is also effective when performed on the hands and ears.

In foot reflexology, the therapist uses body maps that correspond to various points on the feet (see page 8) and applies pressure to those points with the goal of improving function in the body’s corresponding systems and organs, and providing balance to the body overall. According to the Reflexology Association of America, “These techniques stimulate the complex neural pathways linking body systems, supporting the body’s efforts to function optimally.”<sup>1</sup>

Using “micromovement techniques,” like thumb or finger walking, reflexology is different than massage, reports the University of Minnesota’s Center for Spirituality and Healing (CSH). “Where massage therapists work from the outside in, reflexology practitioners see themselves as working from the inside out.”<sup>2</sup>

### FROM PAIN RELIEF TO STRESS RELIEF

Used in hospitals throughout Europe, and considered a form of health care in China, reflexology continues to find advancement here in the West with each new research inquiry.

According to Diana Thompson, a leader in the field of massage and bodywork, reflexology is more than just an alternative approach to relieving symptoms. “With an expanding research base, reflexology meets the integrative demands of combining complementary therapy and conventional medicine and is a viable component of integrative health care.”<sup>3</sup>

Thompson says research shows reflexology positively affects:

- Anxiety and depression
- Circulation
- Dementia
- Edema
- Fatigue and sleep
- Nausea
- Pain
- Stress

Other conditions reflexology has reported success with include migraine headaches, hypertension, and fibromyalgia.

### ANOTHER OPTION

Because of the gentle, noninvasive nature of reflexology, this therapy can safely be used on clients when other therapies might not be appropriate. According to Paula Stone, author of *Therapeutic Reflexology: A Step-by-Step Guide to Professional Competence*, reflexology can be used immediately following an accident, injury, or stroke. “The reflexive action of reflexology offers a means to ease discomfort and support the healing process to the injured area without touching it.”<sup>4</sup>

For cancer patients, for example, reflexology offers an alternative way to find pain relief. Stone offers this anecdote from her own reflexology practice: “One client, a nurse practitioner in her 40s, underwent chemotherapy and radiation for cancer. She requested reflexology to reflexively work the upper chest to relieve pain from a recently inserted stent. Within a few minutes of working the shoulder and upper chest reflexes, all her discomfort subsided and she slept peacefully. Her medical doctor and oncologist fully supported her use of reflexology. The client advocated to her medical team and colleagues how reflexology—more than any other form of bodywork and comfort care—relieved her symptoms of pain, anxiety, and fear.”<sup>5</sup>



## Reflexology Cautions

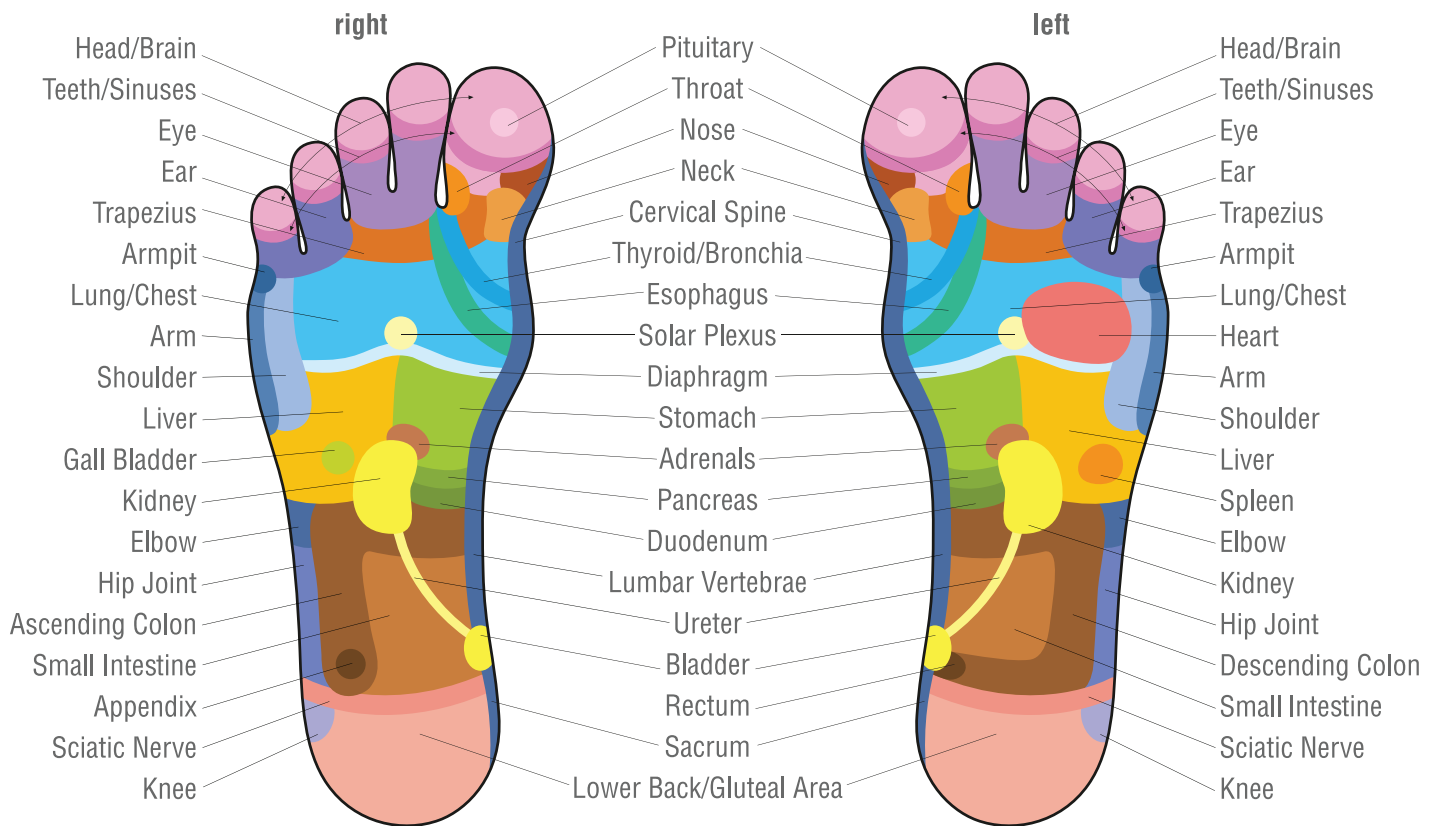
While certain conditions require extra caution with foot reflexology, there are some conditions in which it should not be administered. The University of Minnesota offers these guidelines for when reflexology is contraindicated:

- Blood-clotting issues
- Foot fractures, unhealed wounds, active gout
- High-risk pregnancies

Consult with your health-care provider before receiving foot reflexology if you have:

- Vascular disease





## WHAT REFLEXOLOGY LOOKS LIKE

Reflexology can come in 30-minute increments (usually a good time frame for children, the elderly, and those in a fragile state of health), but can be combined with other forms of massage and bodywork in longer sessions. Aside from differences in training, techniques, and scope of practice, one of the primary differences between massage and reflexology is that clients can remain clothed during a session, since the work focuses specifically on the feet, hands, or ears. Once the client's shoes and socks are removed, some therapists offer a foot bath while the client sits comfortably.

What will clients feel or experience during a reflexology session? Experts say it will vary from "a general feeling of relaxation, to a sense of 'lightness' or tingling in the body, as well as feelings of warmth, a sense of 'opening,' or 'energy moving' from the practitioner's pressure to the specific body area or organ. There is often a physical perception of energy flowing through every organ, valve, gland, or muscle,

as well as a sense of communication between each body system."<sup>6</sup>

While the majority of reflexology work you might receive should feel relaxing and nurturing, some points addressed during a session could prove painful or uncomfortable; be sure to let your therapist know when this occurs. As these points are addressed with pressure, the discomfort should decrease. Ticklish feet? No problem, experts say, as the pressure of the reflexology work should counter any discomfort with ticklishness.

After a reflexology session, clients often come away feeling relaxed and renewed. As with any treatment, the body might take some time to process the work that was just done, and feelings of nausea or sleepiness could occur.

While reflexology and massage share some of the same benefits, they differ on multiple levels. Interested in giving it a try? See if your therapist is certified in reflexology or if they can refer you to someone who is. You can also visit [www.massagetherapy.com](http://www.massagetherapy.com) to find a reflexologist near you.

## Notes

1. Reflexology Association of America, "RAA's Definition of Reflexology," accessed March 2019, [www.reflexology-usa.org/information/raas-definition-of-reflexology](http://www.reflexology-usa.org/information/raas-definition-of-reflexology).
2. University of Minnesota, "How Does Reflexology Work?" accessed March 2019, [www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/reflexology/how-does-reflexology-work](http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/reflexology/how-does-reflexology-work).
3. D. Thompson, "Reflexology Research," *Massage & Bodywork* 26, no. 4 (July/August 2011): 46.
4. P. Stone, "Reflexology & Headaches," *Massage & Bodywork* 26, no 4 (July/August 2011): 37.
5. P. Stone, "Reflexology & Headaches," 38.
6. University of Minnesota, "What Can I Expect in a First Reflexology Visit?" accessed March 2019, [www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/what-can-i-expect-first-reflexology-visit](http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/what-can-i-expect-first-reflexology-visit).



# Everyday Self-Care

## Even the Little Things Can Go a Long Way

By Karrie Osborn

Self-care is everywhere. It's in the massage you just booked, the five minutes of quiet you just claimed for yourself, and even in reading this article. But can you find simple ways to bring even more self-care into your life? Consider the little things.

### WHILE I'M BRUSHING SELF-CARE

Heath and Nicole Reed, co-founders of [Living Metta](#), love finding ways to add self-care into their routines. Heath, who has a history of chronic ankle instability, practices one-legged squats while he's brushing his teeth. When he's flossing, he adds some "tai chi walk"—a medical qigong move that builds strength and power from the ankles to the low back. When Nicole brushes, she also does gentle calf stretches to help wake up and get her body ready for the day. What can you do during your two-minute brush?

### HEAD-AWARE SELF-CARE

Do you sit at a desk hunched over a computer most of your workday? Then you are likely moving toward a forward-head posture if you're not careful. As we lean in to our work, our desk, or our screen, our muscles shorten, and our head becomes dead weight—10 pounds of additional weight for every inch your head sits forward of normal, to be exact. Stop this progression in its tracks! Be aware of where your head is in relation to your shoulders. Teach yourself to check in on your head posture frequently throughout the day. Readjust. Feel what "normal" is supposed to be (the ear should align over the shoulder, which aligns over the hip, which, when standing, aligns over the ankle). Remember what it feels like. Rinse, repeat, and keep that head where it belongs to prevent neck and back pain.

### LOVE YOUR DOORWAY SELF-CARE

Do you hold stress in your shoulders? One of the easiest tips for opening up those tight muscles around your shoulders and neck is a door stretch. There are several variations of this stretch, but the most popular is often called the [goal-post stretch](#), where you place your forearms and palms parallel to the door frame at a 90-degree angle as you lean forward to stretch your pectoral muscles. Every time you get up from your desk, give those tight muscles a good stretch to open you up and counteract the desk-jockey syndrome. 📖

# Jaw Pain

## What is TMJ? And Other Things You Need To Know About This Sore Spot

By Ruth Werner

Do you have TMJ? Let me answer that question: you do. In fact, you have two of them: a left one and a right one. *TMJ* refers to the temporomandibular joint. *TMD* is the label for temporomandibular joint disorders—and that is the focus of our discussion here.

Estimates suggest that some 10 million people in the United States have symptoms of TMJ disorders—this works out to about 1 in every 8 adults. Women are diagnosed 2–9 times more frequently than men. This is such an extreme discrepancy that some researchers consider estrogen receptors in the jaw to be a possible contributing factor for TMD.

People who live with mood disorders (especially anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and depression) or addiction have TMD more often than the general population. And people who have rheumatoid arthritis (RA) are very likely to also have TMD problems: up to 93 percent of people with RA report pain at the jaw.

### WHAT CAUSES TMD?

Here is a short list of possible contributors to jaw pain:

- Trauma, for instance, a car accident or blow to the jaw. Trauma can cause muscle strain or irritation, disk displacement, and chemical damage to structures related to inflammation.
- Jaw use, in the form of bruxism, teeth-clenching, and repetitive activities like gum chewing or playing the violin.
- Occlusion problems. A dysfunctional bite can distort the force that moves through the joint. Research suggests this can be one factor but is usually not alone.
- Hormones. As stated previously, a link exists between estrogen levels and TMD risk. Further, the higher a woman's estrogen levels, the more pain with TMD she is likely to report.
- Psychological factors, especially about stress management, can be contributors and sustainers of TMJ dysfunction. And having a chronic pain syndrome that interferes with both eating and self-expression is especially challenging. It is easy to see how the stress of dealing with TMD can exacerbate symptoms to the point that jaw pain quickly becomes a whole-body problem.





## SYMPTOMS OF TMD

Pain is the number-one symptom of TMD. That pain can be sharp, dull, jabbing, or electrical. It can be at the jaw, in the teeth, and/or in the eyes, ears, and over the back of the head. It is often exacerbated by activity at the mouth—not just eating, but any kind of vocal expression can elicit pain.


In addition to mouth and facial pain, TMD can cause headaches, and trigger points can form in overactive muscles that stabilize the neck and head.

TMD can lead to vertigo, neck pain, arm and shoulder pain, back pain, and changes in how you walk, all ripples of TMJ dysfunction, as the body tries to compensate for problems at this location.

## CAN MASSAGE THERAPY HELP?

Many dental professionals enthusiastically recommend massage therapy as an early intervention for TMJ disorders. Many bodywork clients report that craniosacral therapy has helped their TMD.

If someone has chronic TMJ pain, chances are good they have pain elsewhere too, which could affect the shoulder girdle and the position of the pelvis, as well as how the feet hit the ground—they're all connected.

Let your massage therapist know about your jaw pain, the symptoms associated with it, and how you've been managing your pain. Together, develop a treatment plan that will help you move away from the pain caused by this common ailment. 

*Ruth Werner is a former massage therapist, a writer, and a continuing education provider. She wrote *A Massage Therapist's Guide to Pathology*, (available at [www.booksofdiscovery.com](http://www.booksofdiscovery.com)), now in its sixth edition, which is used in massage schools worldwide.*

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# Stretch the Trapezius

By Christy Cael

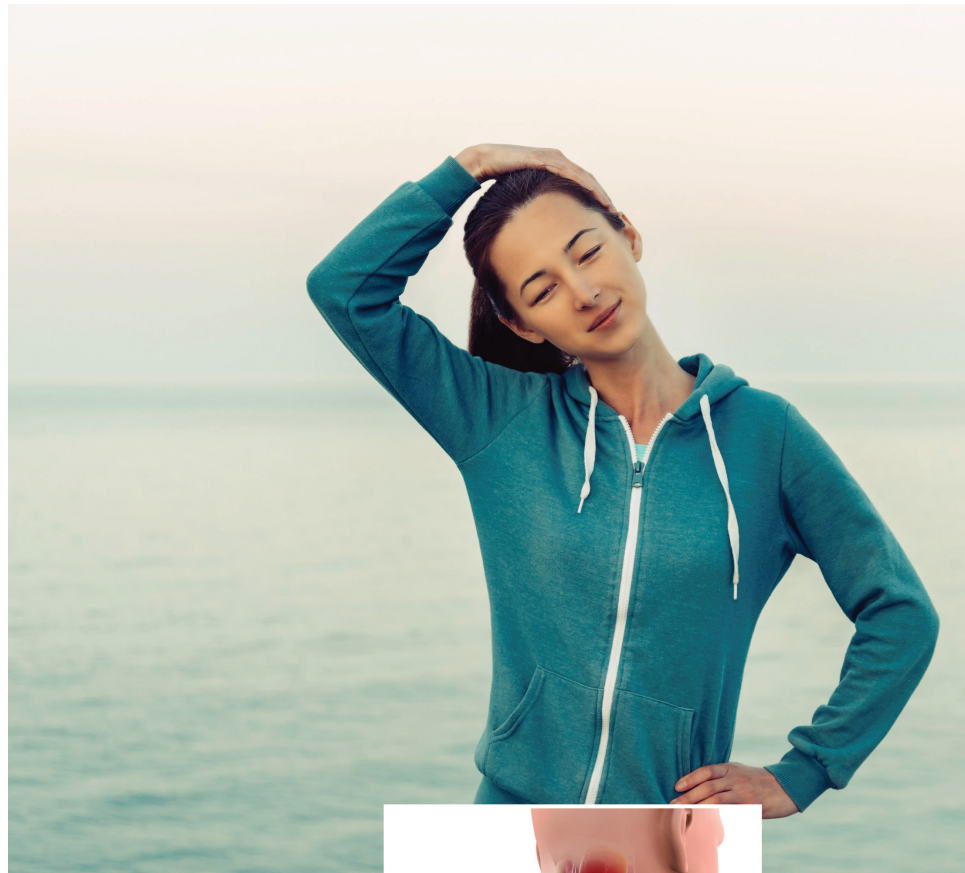
The trapezius is a large, powerful muscle that covers a kite-shaped area, extending from the base of the skull downward over the upper spine and laterally to the clavicle and scapula. The trapezius can be divided into three distinct sections: upper, middle, and lower.

The lower fibers are often weak and underutilized and the upper fibers are often tight and overutilized for lifting, carrying, and pulling, as well as maintaining a forward-head posture. This contributes to what massage therapists commonly see in their clients: elevated shoulders. Additionally, prolonged “kyphotic” posturing, such as occurs with driving and computer work, may lead to further problems. Lengthening of these shortened muscles is essential to relieving pain. Here’s how:

## UPPER TRAPEZIUS STRETCH

1. Begin seated or standing.
2. Inhale as you lift your head up, reaching the crown of your head toward the sky.
3. Exhale and tip your head toward your shoulder.
4. Rest your hand on your head, staying relaxed as you gently pull your head toward your shoulder to increase the stretch.
5. Return to center and repeat on other side. 

*Christy Cael is a licensed massage therapist and certified strength and conditioning specialist. She is the author of Functional Anatomy: Musculoskeletal Anatomy, Kinesiology, and Palpation for Manual Therapists (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2009).*



# A Healthy Plan

## Setting Massage Goals Helps Keep You on Track

By Karrie Osborn



Setting goals is an important way to get the “big things” in life accomplished. But setting goals should not be confined to just your vision board or your five-year plan. Goals are important in all aspects of our lives. Setting goals in the massage therapy room, for example, can be an important tool for progressing you along your health journey.

### WHY A MASSAGE GOAL?

Setting goals helps move us forward. Setting goals for our massage or bodywork treatment plans will do the same.

Whether looking for muscle recovery after a weekend 5K, greater mobility in your neck, reduction of swelling after surgery, or simply a good night’s

sleep, treatment goals can range from medically necessary to Zen-like.

It’s easiest to envision goals we might set as a postsurgery massage client—crafting our recovery from beginning to end, with massage sessions peppered between physical therapy sessions, all taking us toward a “full recovery.” But goals can be profoundly simple as well.


For many massage clients, relaxation is the primary reason for getting massage. That client might say, “I don’t need a goal. I just want to melt into the massage table.” Yet, this client has very explicitly identified his goal: to do nothing but relax. And that is a righteous goal too. There is no right or wrong here—just create a plan toward an outcome.

Your goals can be short term or long term; simple or complex. They can change from session to session, or each be a stepping stone toward the next. What’s important is that your goals be developed and discussed *with* your massage or bodywork therapist. This is a process of partnership, and developing a set

of treatment goals with your therapist will keep you both on the same track.

Some examples of goals include:

- Managing everyday stress
- Keeping you on your feet pain-free during your 8-hour retail shift
- Warding off those cumulative pregnancy aches and pains
- Putting your body back together after childbirth
- Getting more flexibility in your tight shoulders
- Speeding up postsurgical recovery time
- Improving posture
- Finding more efficient body mechanics
- Tuning out for 60 blissful minutes

Setting a therapy goal adds purpose to your session—even if it is just to melt into the table! Talk with your therapist during your intake process and let them know what you’d like to accomplish during your time together. 



Kristin Coverly, LMT, is a massage therapist and educator for Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals.

## This is a silly question to ask, but will I feel differently after different kinds of massage and bodywork?

That's not a silly question at all; it's insightful to realize that bodywork modalities each have their own unique intended outcomes! Hands-on therapies range from very gentle touch for hospital or hospice patients to more specific clinical work to treat an injury or area of pain.

Some styles focus on stretching the body while others may incorporate acupressure point work. Even a therapeutic session where a massage therapist is using a variety of techniques to tailor the work to your needs can leave you feeling either relaxed enough for a nap or energized for a 5K depending on the depth, pace, and intention of the work. Discuss with your practitioner

how you'd like to feel after your session so they can incorporate the bodywork modality that's right for you!



Learn more about the different types of massage and bodywork by visiting the [www.massagetherapy.com](http://www.massagetherapy.com) glossary for an A-Z guide of over 250 modalities.

## I'm trying a new home care product that says it's great for acne, but I'm concerned that it's hurting my acne instead of helping.

Any sort of inflammation can contribute to acne flares for those with acne-prone skin. Overly stimulating treatments, peeling agents that are too strong or used too frequently, excessive extraction, fragrances in products, or stimulating products or treatments can cause inflammation in the follicles. When the follicles are inflamed, the follicle walls swell. This obstructs follicle aeration, which keeps acne bacteria in check, and can cause sudden flares of papules, or what you know as pimples. This is known as an acneogenic reaction or flare. Acneogenic flares are often seen when new home care products are introduced. This may indicate that the product is too rich, too stimulating, or generally inflammatory to sensitive skin. Evaluate your products and make a record of when you have flareups to know what might be a contributing factor.



Mark Lees, PhD, MS, CIDESCO, is a skin care educator, product developer, therapist, and author.





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