

Massage Checklist

By Zoe

- Research.** Before setting aside your precious time and dropping your hard earned money on a massage therapy session, do your homework. The last thing you want to do is leave the experience feeling unsatisfied and cranky.
 - Ask your friends and colleagues for referrals.
 - Look up spas in your city that cater to the type of massage you want. Do you like deep tissue, Swedish, Thai massage, or a combination of a few?
 - Read online reviews of the place you're considering.
 - Speak to the therapist on the phone to get a feel for their vibe.
- Make an appointment.** Be mindful of when you schedule your massage. Plan it for a time when you can just chill out afterwards.
- Hydrate.** It's important to stay hydrated all of the time. However, the day before and the day of your appointment be especially mindful. Drink eight to ten glasses of water. When you get a massage, you'll be releasing toxins into your system that have built up. You'll want to flush them out.
- Arrive a few moments early.** You're busy. Life is hectic. Give yourself a few extra moments to compose yourself before the appointment. Plus, you don't want to be late. You want to enjoy every single second of your treatment.
- Undress.** You're working with a professional. It's okay to take off all of your clothing. Your therapist will be massaging your whole body, which includes your thighs, gluteus maximus, and chest. Keep in mind, you'll have a sheet over your body during the process. If you're not comfortable undressing all of the way, that's okay, too. Leave your undergarments on if that's what makes you feel good. This experience is about comfort.
- Communication.** Before the session, your therapist will ask if you have any sensitive areas you would like to address. This is the time to tell him or her about the crick in your neck or the soreness in your feet. They are more than happy to spend a little extra time working out the kinks. If you have had surgery on a body part, and you're not comfortable with massage being applied to that region, speak up. Don't be afraid to talk to your therapist during the session, too. Good therapists will check in about the pressure being applied throughout the session.
- Breathe.** Take big, long, deep breathes throughout the session. Breathing is important. It helps you relax. The more you relax, the better the massage will be, and the better you will feel afterwards.
- Afterwards.** Take your time getting up from the massage table. Your movements should be deliberate and slow. If you move too quickly, you may get lightheaded and dizzy. There's no rush. Keep breathing. Slowly sit up. Get dressed.
- Take it easy.** This isn't the night to go out and get crazy.
 - Go home and curl up with a good book.
 - Cuddle with your cat or dog or partner.
 - Drink a cup of herbal tea, and get a good night's rest.
 - Sleep easy knowing you've just done a really nice thing for your body, mind and spirit.