

MASSAGE PRECAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS : a detailed table

Conditions that are not illnesses but require special care :)

What ?	Why not ?	How to massage or not ?	Other observations
Pregnancy	Physical or emotional discomfort, transmission of essences to baby via bloodstream... Although unlikely, miscarriage.	<p>No acupressure, vibrations, nothing painful or that would make the woman jump.</p> <p>Neutral base oil, no essential oils</p> <p>Contra-indicated acupressure points according to Chinese Medicine: <i>Hegu</i> (LI4), <i>Sanyinjiao</i> (Sp6), <i>Taichong</i> (Liv3), <i>Kunlun</i> (B60), <i>Zhiyin</i> (B67), <i>Jianjing</i> (GB21). No massage around the pelvic area or the heels of the feet.</p> <p>Training in massage for pregnant women is a plus, but simple and lovely massages can be given even by non professionals, provided these indications are observed.</p>	<p>The woman lies on her side. Use props (cushions, blankets etc.) for comfort.</p> <p>Global massage generally not recommended before 3 months of pregnancy (higher risk of miscarriage)</p> <p>The woman can ask her doctor if well-being massages are okay for her. In case of a difficult pregnancy, don't go without medical approval.</p>
Old Age	Certain conditions are more likely with old age, check for general health and look them up in the table. Bones are fragile, or suffering from osteoporosis . Skin is fragile.. There is fatigue.	<p>No strong pressure on bones, limbs...</p> <p>Soft and slow</p> <p>No deep tissue work.</p>	<p>Shorter sessions</p> <p>Maybe lying down is not possible or advised, work in relax chair.</p> <p>Use props (cushions, blankets</p>

		<p>Rich, nourishing base oil, little or not concentrated in essential oils.</p> <p>No massage on varicose veins</p> <p>No massage on the neck to avoid dislodging possible blood clot</p>	<p>etc.) for comfort.</p> <p>Beware of fainting and/or disorientation. Take some time before standing up again: move from lying, to sitting a bit, to standing.</p> <p>Don't leave right away, and/or don't leave them alone.</p>
Children			
Baby	Fontanelle (skull) is still open	No pressure on head	
Convalescent person	<p>They probably are weaker</p> <p>Depending on what they had, massage might still have to be postponed (heart attacks, for example) look at condition in the table</p>		Shorter sessions, if anything

Conditions or injuries that require extra precaution and/or partial contra-indication

What ?	Why not ?	How to massage or not	Other Observations
Pathologies or injuries of the bones and skeleton	<p>Further injury</p> <p>Fractures</p>	Depending of the stage of recovery, do not massage site of fracture, or only lightly	Osteoporosis is frequent with old age

<p>Fractures</p> <p>Osteoporosis...</p> <p>Scoliosis (light to severe) and other postural deviations</p> <p>Lumbago, displaced vertebra, herniated disc,</p> <p>Sciatica with origin in spinal cord</p> <p>Spondylosis</p> <p>Arthritis</p>	<p>Pain</p> <p>Compromising important structural compensations</p>	<p>No pressure on limbs and bones whatsoever in case of osteoporosis.</p> <p>In case of long installed illness of skeleton/ spine (spondylosis, severe scoliosis) beware of deep structural work, that could compromise the compensations the body has put in place to live well with the pathology and not be so good. Stay light and refer person to specialist, like an osteopath. Don't improvise yourself a "mechanic".</p> <p>If the person is in great pain, or feels nothing, and their movement are incapacitated, the problem is probably not within well-being massage scope : refer to doctor or other specialist.</p> <p>Unless properly trained, avoid putting pressure on vulnerable sites on the spine according to the person's indications and history.</p> <p>Acute stages (in arthritis for example) are not a good time for massage – best in sub acute, in between episodes.</p>	<p>Some essential oils are said to help with arthritis, like juniper</p>
<p>Pathologies of the muscles, tendons and ligaments</p> <p>Cramps</p>	<p>Further injury</p> <p>Pain</p>	<p>Massage is good for muscles and tendons strains, although, as in tendinitis or CTS, not in acute conditions, but best in sub-acute</p>	<p>Arnica and juniper oils can help</p> <p>Look up the corresponding anatomy so you'll understand the logic of it.</p>

<p>Strains</p> <p>Sciatica with origin in the muscles of buttocks</p> <p>Tendinitis, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS), Tennis Elbow...</p> <p>Fibromyalgia</p>		<p>phases. It is excellent prevention against all these conditions.</p> <p>Always warm up the zone and work progressively, listening to the person's feedback and never take it to the point of distressing pain.</p> <p>Careful with how you move the limbs, go slow stay within capacity / comfort range</p> <p>During cramps, massage the insertions of the muscle, not its actual shorten belly. After or in between episodes of cramps, on the contrary, massage the belly of the muscle.</p> <p>Do not overdo it with fibromyalgia, as the person will be very sensitive to pain and changes, and best to have some training.</p>	<p>Cramps can be clinical signs of other systematic disease not only a problem with muscles. If you have doubts, refer to doctor.</p> <p>If you can't tell or the person can't tell you where the sciatica originates from, it might be best to refer them to a specialist first. It is more serious if it originates in the spinal cord, and may be out of your scope.</p>
<p>Pathologies of the skin</p> <p>Acne, abscesses</p> <p>Warts</p> <p>Psoriasis Dermatitis / Eczema</p> <p>Impetigo, Herpes, Scabies</p>	<p>Propagation and further penetration of the pathogen, if any</p> <p>Further irritation, Pain</p> <p>Oils may cause irritation</p> <p>If contagious, self and cross contamination</p>	<p>Relative on size and scale.</p> <p>It is important to know whether the condition is contagious.</p> <p>Avoid site of pathology.</p> <p>If generalized, or at acute stage, with lesions, blisters, or highly contagious, avoid massage altogether.</p>	<p>Warts spread with blood and skin flakes</p> <p>Psoriasis is not contagious, Dermatitis/ Eczema is not contagious.</p> <p>Dermatitis can be the result of exposure to a poison (as with poison ivy), if so don't do massage until recovery.</p> <p>Impetigo, herpes scabies are highly</p>

<p>Fungal Infections, Athlete's foot (mycosis)</p> <p>Scar tissue</p> <p>Cuts and wounds</p> <p>Hematoma</p>		<p>Mycosis are only a local contra-indication for massage, if limited to small area. If it involves a large area, don't do massage. Always clean thoroughly.</p> <p>Do not massage open wounds or hematoma. You can gently massage scar tissue to help healing once it looks okay.</p>	<p>contagious, and sessions should be avoided altogether until full recovery. Material and sheets will need sterilization and washing at 60° minimum.</p> <p>Fungal infections can spread. Between the toes they can blister and if in the nails, they will become yellow.</p>
<p>Pathologies of the brain, nervous and motor system</p> <p>Parkinson's disease</p> <p>Multiple Sclerosis</p> <p>Alzheimer's disease Cognitive impairment</p> <p>Epilepsy, seizures</p> <p>Headaches/Migraine</p>	<p>Pain</p> <p>Discomfort</p> <p>Disorientation</p> <p>Fatigue</p> <p>Could get worse if done insensitively</p>	<p>Relative to stage, levels of comfort of the person, and medical opinion.</p> <p>Okay between acute phases, in remission, when function is not too impaired.</p> <p>No massage during seizures ! but okay otherwise</p> <p>massage movements away from the head = from head towards feet are preferable</p>	<p>Cognitively impaired persons might not be able to express you their needs or give you feedback as you work – be extra careful and subtle.</p> <p>Massage has been said to bring relief and comfort to the lives of people with such conditions.</p> <p>It's really case by case.</p>
<p>Pathologies of the heart and circulatory system</p> <p>Hypertension Hypo-tension</p>	<p>Exacerbation of symptoms, heart attack</p> <p>Pain</p>	<p>It depends on severity of hypertension - mild conditions can be improved by massage, more serious ones (which require medication) will need</p>	<p>The person might not be aware they have hypertension.</p>

<p>Varicose veins</p> <p>Thrombophlebitis, Deep Vein Thrombosis.</p>	<p>Fainting</p> <p>Dislodging of blood clots, possibly leading to stroke</p>	<p>medical supervision before you know if you can do a massage, and circulatory massage might still not be indicated.</p> <p>Someone who has hypo-tension can faint.</p> <p>Do not massage varicose veins</p> <p>Thrombophlebitis and Deep Vein Thrombosis are strict NO GO.</p>	
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Conditions generally NOT suited for massage

What ?	Why not ?	How to massage or not ?	Other Observations
<p>Intoxication with alcohol and/or other psycho-active substances</p>	<p>Further diffusion/ penetration of the toxic in the tissues</p> <p>Amplification of the effects with possible adverse consequences on body-mind states.</p> <p>You may put the person in danger or you may find yourself having to deal with states that are difficult if you're not prepared.</p>	<p>Best not.</p> <p>See if there is something else you or someone else can do for that person in the moment.</p> <p>Exception: Set and settings are designed for that, the intentions have been discussed and agreed, you are trained or experienced with the use of psychedelics in care.</p>	<p>Understanding the person and the feedback from them while massaging can be more difficult, and so can the work. They might not be able to give you appropriate feedback (and you could hurt them).</p> <p>Judgment is poor, dialogue can be difficult, confusion can appear.</p> <p>Some substances would be considered safer: empathogens like MDMA (bear in mind not all ecstasy pills carry the same empathy powers), or cannabis.</p>

<p>Viral or bacterial infections, contagious conditions, Fever</p>	<p>Further diffusion / penetration / release of pathogens, toxins, in the tissues</p> <p>Cross-contamination</p>	<p>No massages</p> <p>See if there is something else you or someone else can do for that person in the moment.</p> <p>Seek / refer person to doctor</p>	<p>In your practice and communication, make understand that in the best interest for everyone, contagious people are not to make appointments and or should cancel them.</p>
<p>Lice, mites, parasitic infestations (scabies)</p>	<p>Will not worsen the person's condition, but due to very high contagion risks, self and cross-contamination likely and annoying.</p>	<p>Don't do massage, or, do with disposable gloves so as to avoid skin contact. Take extra steps for hygiene of material and in the room after. Clean according to anti parasitic protocol</p>	<p>A masseur's nightmare!</p> <p>Beware of any complaints of itching !</p> <p>The person might not know they have this. The symptoms can be silent during incubation and yet contagion is possible</p>
<p>Infectious viral or bacterial skin conditions : Impetigo, Herpes / Shingles, abscesses ..</p>	<p>Propagation</p> <p>Pain</p> <p>Self and Cross Contamination</p>	<p>Don't do massage, or if you do, avoid site of lesions, and most importantly, take extra steps for hygiene for yourself and the room.</p>	
<p>Pathologies of the heart and circulatory system</p> <p>Severe hypertension</p> <p>Thrombophlebitis, Deep Vein Thrombosis.</p> <p>History of vascular incidents.</p>	<p>Heart attack</p> <p>Dislodging of blood clots, possibly leading to stroke</p>	<p>Severe hypertension is a global contra-indication for circulatory massage except with medical supervision / accord. Mild hypertension is generally okay and improved by massage.</p> <p>Thrombophlebitis and Deep Vein Thrombosis are an absolute NO GO in massage</p> <p>No massage -</p>	<p>Medical supervision is very important here.</p> <p>In doubts, don't do the massage.</p>

Heart attack or stroke in the last 3 to 6 months	Risk of re-occurrence is higher	or local and superficial and not too long	
Recent surgery with global anesthesia in the last 3 months			Seek medical supervision / advice
Cancer	Spreading of cancerous cells through lymphatic system, as circulation is enhanced by massage If bones are affected, risk of fracture	Do not give massage, or limit it to light, caring, comforting touch. Do not actively stimulate circulation. There are oncology massage trainings.	There is a controversy over this, some distinctions are made between the types of cancer, the stages of the illness etc. Seek qualified medical advice.
Advanced Cirrhosis , acute stages of Hepatitis			For chronic hepatitis, massage depends on general health in the moment
Anything acute, sudden, extremely painful, debilitating, incapacitating, undiagnosed... Or, on the contrary, no sensations at all...		...That looks way too far from a state of well-being to still be within your scope... Seek/ refer to someone medically competent	If the person feels something way to strongly or on the contrary, nothing at all, something is not right – postpone massage and seek medical opinion

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