

LOVE & LIFE

Diversions: The Art of Sensual Massage

Nothing feels as ab fab as an hour or so of your honey's undivided attention. And nothing will set you on the yellow brick road to relaxation faster than massage. Combine both and you've got an unbeatable combination: Let's just say if you follow our guidelines for a sensual massage, you won't be doing dishes for weeks.

SET THE MOOD

The first step to a truly relaxing and sensual massage is setting the mood. Unplug the phone, get naked (keep your underpants on if it makes you feel more comfortable), and light some beeswax candles (avoid harsh overhead lighting). Make sure the room is warm: You want your lover to chill out, not freeze.

ACCESSORIES

Massage oil is the only required accessory. You can use scented or unscented, or even baby oil in a pinch. If you plan to get busy with a condom later, buy a water-based massage liquid at your friendly neighborhood sex shop (or online if you're a little bit bashful) -- oil can destroy latex. Rub your hands together to warm them and the oil up before touching your partner's bare skin.

Set up a massage workspace by covering your floor or futon mattress with towels -- if you work on the bed, the massage oil will probably ruin your sheets.

THE BASICS

Take turns -- one partner can give a massage one day, and the other can reciprocate a few days later. It works against relaxation if both partners are thinking about their next role. Let the massage recipient revel in sensual delight -- it will be the masseur's turn soon enough.

According to Anne Hooper, author of *Great Sex Guide* (Dorling Kindersley), the most sensitive body parts are: head and neck, ears, sides of the body from armpits to hips, inner thighs, fingers and toes, and genitals. Keep this handy list in mind as you provide some sensual R&R.

HERE'S THE RUB

You can work on several basic massage strokes -- we're sure your partner won't mind. After all, practice makes perfect.

Slide: Lightly slide your hands up and down your partner's body using your entire hand surface. This stroke is great for the arms, legs, back, and chest.

Palm circling: Move your hands in circles on your partner's fleshy parts. Be careful not to massage bones directly -- it doesn't feel very good.

Knead: Grasp your honey's flesh as if you were kneading bread dough. Use on the stomach, legs, booty, arms, hands, and feet.

Roll: Roll the flesh of your sweetie's arms and legs between your hands as if you were rolling clay.

Tapping or hacking: Use your fingertips or the sides of your hands. Alternate hands while making tapping or hacking motions. This is great for the back.

Thumb strokes: Using your thumbs, massage in a circular motion. Work upward and away from the spine when focusing on the back and shoulders.

Fingertip and fingernail circling: Use your fingertips or nails to draw circular shapes all over your partner's skin.

Hair sweep: If you have long hair, sweep it across your partner's body.

THE MASSAGE (IN 10 EASY STEPS)

1. Laying on of hands. The recipient should be lying on their stomach, buck-naked. Warm your hands by rubbing them together and place them on your partner -- one hand on the upper back, one hand on the lower. Leave your hands there for a long moment; this lets your sweetie start on the path to relaxation.
2. Spread the oil. Make sure you've warmed it in your hands first, and use a very small amount.
3. Start rubbing. Rub your hands up and down your sweetie's whole backside. Use the strokes described above until you feel relaxation set in.
4. Legs. Continue onto the legs. Be sure to cover both front and back sides with sensual strokes.
5. Arms and hands. Pay special attention to the hands. Use your thumbs to massage the heels of your honey's hands. Lock fingers and rotate her wrists.
6. Feet. There's a whole school of massage -- reflexology -- devoted solely to these puppies. Spend time really digging into your sweetheart's footies.
7. Front torso. Take care massaging the abdomen. Press deeply, but not so much that it hurts. Ask if what you're doing feels good (and if you're the massage recipient, be honest!).
8. Breasts. Don't ignore your sweetie's breasts: Knead the fleshy parts, and (for both her and him) use your fingertips to massage the nipples. Imagine that your fingers are following the spokes on a bicycle wheel, and let them radiate from the center of the nipple to its edge. Remember to use a light touch!

9. Neck and head. Anyone who's gotten a scalp massage at the hair salon knows how it makes you tingle all over. Use your fingertips and nails to really dig in there.

10. Genitals. If you're going erotic, go all the way. Chances are you'll get a thankful response no matter what you do, but see the books below for more instruction.

Resources:

[Erotic Massage : The Tantric Touch of Love](#)

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0874779626/theknot> by Kenneth Ray Stubbs, Ph.D., with Louise-Andree Saulnier (Tarcher/Putnam)

Great Sex Guide by Anne Hooper (Dorling Kindersley)

[Hot Sex http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/055338032X/theknotthe1weddr/102-0946681-0693613](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/055338032X/theknotthe1weddr/102-0946681-0693613) by Tracey Cox (Bantam)