

The Book of Massage: The Complete Step-By-Step Guide to Eastern and Western Technique

By Lucinda Liddell


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A beautifully illustrated introductory guide to the healing powers of a massage, from traditional massage to shiatsu and reflexology.

The Book of Massage is the classic guide to the relaxing and healing skills of the hands. Featuring both Eastern and Western methods, it presents step-by-step, beautifully illustrated instructions on everything from traditional massage to shiatsu and reflexology. *The Book of Massage* offers easy-to-follow techniques for giving the perfect massage, including advice on creating the right setting and suggestions for using aromatic oils and lotions. Now revised and updated with fresh color photos and drawings throughout, *The Book of Massage* is a simple and comprehensive handbook that reveals how you can experience the myriad benefits of giving and receiving a soothing massage.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

With more than 650,000 copies sold, massage therapist Lucinda Lidell's *Book of Massage* has been updated with new photos and instructional drawings. Not for the prudish, as the subjects in most of the photos are completely in the buff, the book presents an intense, information-packed, step-by-step guide to traditional massage, shiatsu, and reflexology.

No matter which method you choose to focus on (you're advised to choose one at a time), Lidell is thorough in her explanations of the strokes and techniques necessary to give relaxing, therapeutic massage in the privacy of your own home. Detailed drawings, diagrams, and photographs help to further demonstrate how to address each individual body part.

Divided into distinct chapters for each of the three methods, *The Book of Massage* also includes several sections that Lidell stresses are fundamental to all types of massage. The first is "Beginning," with information such as creating the right atmosphere (a warm room and soft lighting), applying oil, and finding a comfortable position. Additionally, Lidell suggests that everyone should review sections on the human touch and anatomy, both of which oddly come at the end of the book.

As thorough as *The Book of Massage* may be, do not expect to walk away from it an expert. As with any skill worth learning, giving good massage takes time, study, and practice, practice, practice. --Bree Altman

About the Author

Lucinda Lidell is a well-known healer and professional masseuse. She has contributed to many books on massage and natural healing, as well as the original *Sivananda Companion to Yoga* and *The Sensual Body*. She lives in London.

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Chapter 1

Beginning

Care and sensitivity, a little time and energy, and a good pair of hands -- this is all that's needed to begin practising massage. But no matter which of the touch therapies you choose to learn, there are certain important guidelines for treatment that apply to all three.

Firstly, it is worth taking the trouble to set the scene in advance, so that you are well-prepared for the session before you begin -- with the room already warm and snug, cushions, blankets and towels available, and any oil or powder you may need at hand. You will break the flow of the treatment if you have to stop to go in search of another heater, or more oil. And you will defeat the whole object of the exercise if your partner cannot relax because he or she is chilly or uncomfortable. Think about what you will need for your own comfort, too. To give good massage or shiatsu you must be able to move freely, so it is essential to wear loose-fitting clothes. And each time you change position within a treatment session, you must make sure that you feel relaxed, not strained, before carrying on with the treatment. Never make do with a slightly awkward position, thinking that the discomfort will disappear. It won't, and your tension will be transmitted to your partner.

As the giver, your comfort is closely linked to your posture and breathing. Whether you are sitting, kneeling or standing, your body should feel balanced and relaxed. To allow the healing energy to flow freely, keep your back straight rather than stooping or bending, and move from your belly and pelvis, using your whole body to apply pressure, not just your hands or shoulders. If you can breathe fully and let your body "dance" as you move, you will avoid getting tense or tired and will end a treatment with as much energy as when you started.

Central to the success of any touch therapy is your state of mind and attitude to your partner. You should regard each session as a new experience and bring to each one a feeling of genuine caring, consideration and respect. Before giving a treatment, talk to the receiver about what you are going to do and find out if there are any special problems. Encourage your partner to interrupt you during the session if he or she is uncomfortable or if your pressure is too light or too strong. But in general discourage chatting -- you will only dilute the concentration and return from the communication of touch to the overused language of every day. Never attempt to give a treatment if you are upset, angry, or unwell -- for not only will your energy be depleted, but your mood will affect your partner.

It will help you to maintain the right attitude if you can stay "centred" and give your partner your full attention. Many of us spend much of our lives thinking of the past or idly worrying about the future, and miss what is going on in the present moment. For all touch therapies it is essential that you keep your attention on the "here and now", for the healing energy transmitted through your hands will be weakened or deflected by an absent mind. When you are centred, you are guided by your intuition and will more readily sense where the sources of tension or energy imbalance lie in your partner. You will be able to find the right touch for each part of the body, and to differentiate between a "good hurt" and excessive pressure. But if your thoughts do start to drift while you are working, simply bring them gently back and quieten your mind by concentrating on your breathing. Working with your eyes closed may help you to stay in touch with what you are doing and keep your attention in your hands.

Creating a Relaxed Environment

Relaxation is central to any form of massage, and the more you can do to provide a calm, comfortable setting, the more effective your treatment will be. Whatever your home is like, it takes only a little care and preparation to transform part of it into a peaceful massage area. Probably the two most essential requirements are heat and quiet. The room you choose should be draught-free and very warm -- particularly for an oil massage, when the receiver will be naked. You should have a rug or towel available, too, to cover your partner at the end of a session, or during it if he or she feels chilly. And before you start, make sure you have a few small cushions or pillows at hand, to use as padding for your partner or yourself. Choose a time for giving massage when you and your partner can be quiet and undisturbed, so that your concentration remains unbroken. Some people like to play relaxing music in the background, others may find music of any kind intrusive. The lighting in the room should be soft and subdued, as bright lights prevent the eyes relaxing completely. The gentle glow of candlelight is ideal. As a final touch, you can use flowers or incense to add fragrance to the atmosphere.

Working Surfaces

Of the three touch techniques taught in this book, shiatsu is always given on the floor, holistic massage on the floor or on a massage table, and reflexology is given with the receiver sitting or lying back in a chair (see p. 136). For shiatsu, you need more space than for massage -- at least 8 by 6 feet. If your floor is well-carpeted, you need only spread out a folded blanket or sleeping bag for the receiver, covered by a sheet or towel if you are giving an oil massage. But if the floor is hard, you will need extra padding. A large 1- or 2-inch thick foam mattress is best, but if you don't have one, use additional layers of blankets or sleeping bags.

Make sure that the padding extends well beyond the receiver's body, to save your own knees as you move around. If you intend to do a lot of massage, it is worth investing in a massage table. Working on a table is less tiring, for you can easily reach all parts of the body without bending and can move around, without accidentally joggling your partner and interrupting the flow. Don't use a bed or spring mattress -- any pressure you apply will be absorbed by the mattress.

Giving and Receiving

Massage is a two-way flow of touch and response, a mutual exchange of energy. The hands, which both give and receive, and the skin -- these are the instruments of communication. Through your hands you perceive and discover the uniqueness of the person you are touching; through their skin they receive the gift of your touch, the caring contact and movement. In a sense the terms "giver" and "receiver" are deceptive, since any form of touch therapy is a matter of sharing. For the healing power of touch to come through, both partners need to understand their roles in the exchange, both need to give and to be receptive -- the receiver by giving his trust, by surrendering to the giver; the giver by being open and sensitive to the receiver's needs. At its highest level, massage can be a form of meditation, with both participants present in the moment, both focused on the point of contact between them. Practising the exercise below will allow you to experience touch given with focused awareness rather than mechanically.

Focusing Your Awareness

Practising this exercise helps you to understand the experience of both giving and receiving simultaneously. It involves centering your awareness in the different parts of your hands, while you stroke down the legs. You begin by focusing your mind, then let your hands float gently down to make contact with one thigh. Now you press the heels of your hands briefly into your leg, then glide your hands slowly down the leg. Let your awareness remain solely in the heels, but keep your whole hands in touch with the skin. After a few minutes, pause, then repeat the process, transferring your awareness first to the palms of your hands, then to the thumbs, and finally to the fingers. Each time you start by applying pressure with the relevant parts of the hands, then focus your attention on how these parts feel.

The Giver

It is important to be able to move freely when giving massage, so you should wear loose, comfortable clothing. Before you begin a treatment, wash your hands and check that your fingernails are short. Take off your watch and any rings. Ask your partner to remove the necessary jewellery and clothes. If you are giving an oil massage, the receiver should ideally be naked, but you should always respect people's wishes if they feel happier partially clothed. Make the receiver comfortable, with padding under the ankles, abdomen or lower back, if required. And be sure to find a comfortable position before you begin centering yourself (see p. 25). During the treatment, try to keep your body relaxed and your mind focused on what you are doing. Always wash your hands at the end of the session.

The Receiver

To benefit fully from a massage, you need to play an active role in the healing process by paying attention to your partner's touch and keeping your mind from wandering. As soon as you sit or lie down, let yourself melt down into the working surface. Close your eyes and become aware of your breathing and the parts of your body that move as you inhale and exhale. Try to let go of any worries or problems that are on your mind. As you feel the giver's hands, be receptive and simply focus on the sensations engendered by his or her touch. Allow your limbs to be lifted and moved by the giver, surrendering rather than trying to help. Let the giver know if you are particularly enjoying a certain stroke or movement or if you find the pressure of touch too deep; but otherwise refrain from talking.

Centering

Centering is a way of focusing, of gathering your energy into a point so that you can channel it more easily into any activity you choose. It is a state of balance, quietness, strength and presence in the moment. More specifically, centering means focusing on the *hara*, the centre of energy in the abdomen, as is shown opposite. For any form of massage, as for the martial arts, being centred in the *hara* is of primary importance for it enables you to be flexible yet resilient, to work with your intuition rather than your mind. When your energy is channelled, ...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nancy Dabney:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite e-book and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your condition; you can add your knowledge by the e-book entitled The Book of Massage: The Complete Step-By-Step Guide to Eastern and Western Technique. Try to make book The Book of Massage: The Complete Step-By-Step Guide to Eastern and Western Technique as your buddy. It means that it can to get your friend when you really feel alone and beside that course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you. The book makes you far more confidence because you can know every thing by the book. So , let me make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Emile Guzman:

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Derick Heinz:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love The Book of Massage: The Complete Step-By-Step Guide to Eastern and Western Technique, you could enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

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