

## C. Chair Massage

Chair massage, although primarily therapeutic in its focus, is also an excellent marketing tool to enhance your practice and create retention with clients. With massage and its healing components, something should never be ignored, “The Feel Good Factor”.

Since Chair Massage is a brief encounter with a client, make every stroke count. While relaxing the muscles, help them to relax the mind as well, and you’ll make that transition from chair to table and possibly have a client for a lifetime.

### **Relevant classes:**

- 33b Chair Massage: Technique Demo and Practice (3.5 hours)
- 34b Chair Massage: Technique Review and Practice (2 hours)
- 46b Chair Massage: Technique Review and Practice (1.5 hours)
- 60b Chair Massage: Technique Review and Practice (1 hour)
  
- 70b Chair Massage, BMTs, Passive Stretches, and Side-lying Massage(.5 hour)
- 89b Chair Massage, BMTs, Passive Stretches, and Side-lying Massage(2 hours)
- 98b Chair Massage, BMTs, Passive Stretches, and Side-lying Massage(2 hours)

Blank Page

## 33b Chair Massage

### Technique Demo and Practice

**Note:** Once you learn this routine, it should only take about 10 minutes.

**Positioning your Client:** For many of your clients, chair massage is their first time experiencing massage therapy. They might not know exactly what to expect or even how to sit on a massage chair. Simply showing a new client how to get on the massage chair and find a comfortable position will make the client's experience less stressful.

While demonstrating each step, tell the client how to get on the massage chair:

- Stand on the right side of the chair and hold on to the chair frame (just about the chest pad) with both hands for support. Stand close by in case client needs your support.
- Straddle your left leg over the seat and place your left knee on the left kneepad.
- Sit down gradually and rest your right knee on the right kneepad.
- Lean forward into the chest pad.
- Rest your face in the headrest and your forearms on the armrest.

**Making Adjustments:** Once your client is seated, you can make adjustments to the massage chair for a proper fit. For clients who are too short to comfortably reach the headrest, raise the seat height (for those who are very short you may need to use a bolster on top of the seat).

**Knee Problems:** Clients with knee problems may find it more comfortable to place their feet flat on the floor. Raising the seat also reduces stress on the knees, since the client doesn't have to bend their knees as far.

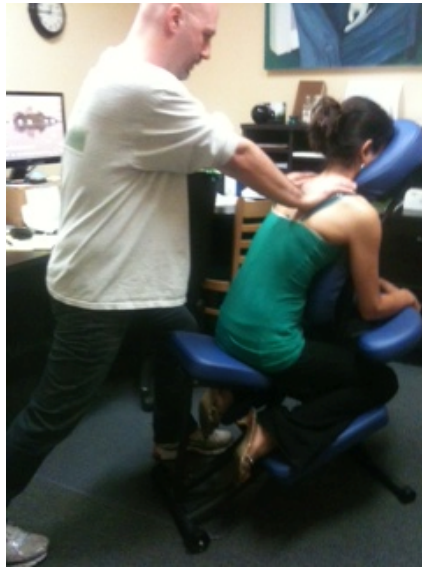
**Headrest Adjustments:** One trick to getting the headrest adjusted just right is to have the clients do it themselves. Simply loosen the adjustment knobs and have the client grab hold of the headrest and move it until they feel comfortable. Then tighten the knobs to secure the headrest in place.

**Prevent Fainting:** Depending on your client's size and shape, positioning of the head and face in the face cradle is important. You want to avoid the padding pressing into the sides of the neck (the carotid arteries). In some rare cases this has resulted in clients fainting.

## 33b Chair Massage

Technique Demo and Practice

**Body Mechanics:** Be mindful of your body mechanics; apply the proper stance and hand position at every interval and section of the body as you work around the chair. This will save you from injury and enhance the client's experience.



Using your body weight (weight transfer) in Upper Lunge position



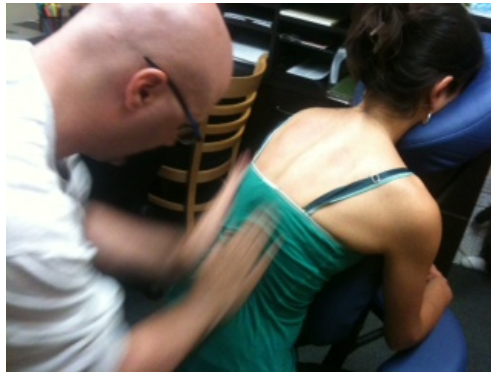
Lower Lunge position (down on one knee)

## 33b Chair Massage

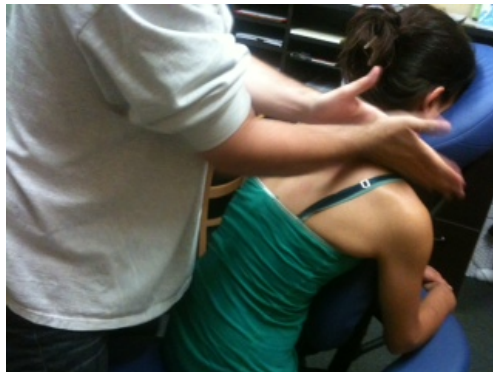
Technique Demo and Practice

### 1. Upper Back and Shoulders (60 to 90 seconds per shoulder)

- Begin session with relaxing but firm rhythmic compressions (using your body weight) up and then down the muscles of the entire back. (Avoid hyperextending wrists; use alternate tools such as forearm, or loose fist.)
- Then apply gliding (effleurage over the clothes) strokes through the lower and upper back to warm and prepare the area.



- Apply palmar friction to the erectors up through the rhomboids.



- Switch to two-handed ulnar friction at the upper traps.

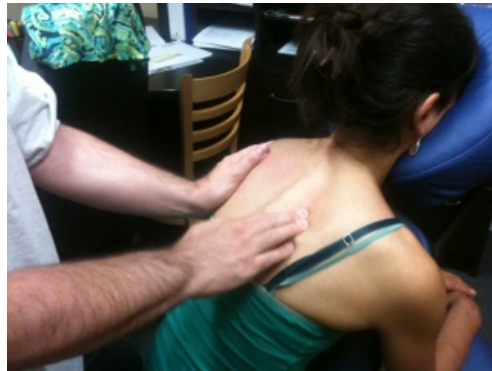
## 33b Chair Massage

Technique Demo and Practice

### 1. Upper Back and Shoulders, continued (60 to 90 seconds per side)



- Address the shoulders with kneading (Trap Bends). Alternate hands to enhance the stroke.



- Apply deep pressure using circular digital strokes moving down the upper traps/rhomboids/upper erectors. As wrist extends while moving down, conclude stroke or drop posture to meet a safe working position.



- Then apply circular digital pressure laterally along the upper trapezius to the end of the shoulder.

## 33b Chair Massage

Technique Demo and Practice

### 2. Shoulder ROM and more focus (60 seconds per side)

- Feel free to move the arm off the armrest during this phase, and create clockwise or counter clockwise ROM of shoulder using both hands depending on client comfort level; one hand holding the upper arm and the other cradling the shoulder/head of the humerus (unless this is contraindicated by the client's condition – always check in with the client).



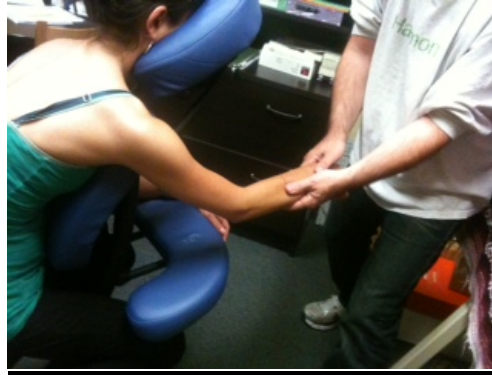
- Ask client to put their arm behind their back with back of hand and wrist angled toward the lower back. Ask them to move the elbow forward (this should allow the scapula to “wing up”).
- Apply circular digital pressure to the rhomboids, middle traps and part of the subscapularis muscle. Once completed ask client to place arm back on armrest and into a relaxed position.

## 33b Chair Massage

Technique Demo and Practice

### 3. Arm, Forearm, and Hand (2.5 minutes per side)

- Standing at the shoulder transition to petrissage of the deltoids and muscles of the upper arm, moving toward the lower arm.



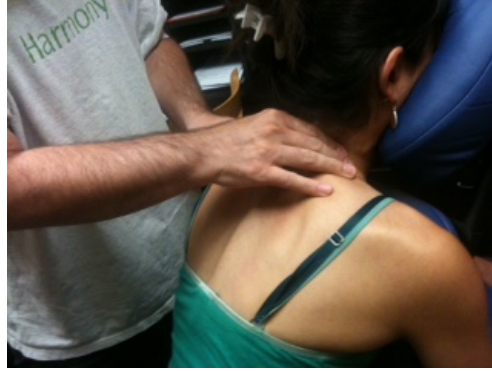
- Standing in front of the chair facing the client, grasp the hand and elevate the arm forward, allowing you to move up from the wrist to the elbow with kneading and alternating circular thumb strokes.
- Stretch the hand, apply petrissage to the thenar and hypothenar muscles of the hand then pull gently on the fingers before rocking the arm lightly and returning the arm to the armrest. Maintain contact with the client as you move to the other arm to repeat this sequence.
- Repeat these steps on the other side of the body:
  - 2. Shoulder ROM and more focus
  - 3. Arm, Forearm, and Hand



## 33b Chair Massage

Technique Demo and Practice

### 4. Neck and Head (60 to 90 seconds total)

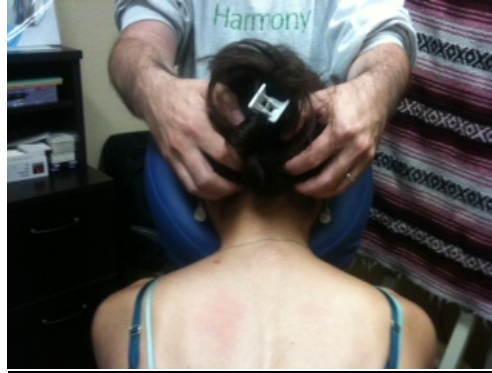


- Once you have completed steps 2 thru 3 on the other side of the body, maintain contact with the body as you move to the neck. Standing beside the client, using light to moderate pressure, knead the muscles along the sides and back of the neck (create a relaxing rhythm), from the shoulder to the base of the skull and below the ears.
- Pay special attention to the sub-occipital muscles at the base of the skull before working into the scalp/cranial muscles.
- Moving to the front of the chair, standing at the clients head, allow the (curled) fingers of each hand to lie across the sub-occipitals below the ridge of the occipital bone. With the pads of the fingers create a rhythmic alternate motion with each hand, moving in a wave-like pattern across the sub-occipitals.

## 33b Chair Massage

Technique Demo and Practice

### 5. Neck and Head, continued (60 to 90 seconds total)



- Apply fingertip and thumb strokes across the scalp from the occiput through to the top of the head. Use a rhythmic alternating motion with the fingers. This can be done to provide extra stimulation to the scalp, as well as invigorating the client, if you should choose to.
- Returning to the back of the chair complete the massage with several long gliding strokes from the lower back to the shoulders; this is your conclusion stroke before helping the client sit up from the chair.
- Allow the clients to orient themselves prior to standing to avoid any dizziness or falls.

### Contraindications and Warnings

- Chair massage should not be performed on a client with health concerns such as uncontrolled high blood pressure, or other illnesses or injuries, which contraindicate massage. These clients should be referred to their primary care physician. Always obtain a signed release from the client, acknowledging that there are no health concerns that would contraindicate massage.

# Chair Massage: Technique Review and Practice

34b, 46b, 60b, 70b, 89b, 98b

## **Erector Spinae**

- Bilateral rhythmic loose fist compressions
- Bilateral effleurage
- Bilateral palmar superficial friction
- Unilateral circular deep friction with fingertips

## **Shoulders**

- Unilateral ulnar friction
- Bilateral alternating kneading
- Unilateral circular deep friction with fingertips

## **Unilateral glenohumeral Joint**

- Joint mobilization

## **Unilateral rhomboids, middle trapezius, and subscapularis**

- Place the client's hand behind their back
- Circular deep friction with fingertips
- Return the client's arm to the arm rest

## **Unilateral deltoids, biceps, and triceps**

- Kneading

## **Unilateral forearms**

- Grasp the hand and elevate the arm forward
- Kneading
- Alternating thumb strokes

## **Unilateral hand**

- Stretch and knead the thenar and hypothenar muscles
- Gently pull on the fingers
- Lightly rock the arm and return it to the armrest

## **Bilateral posterolateral neck**

- Kneading (progress from light to moderate as the area softens)

## **Bilateral deep suboccipitals**

- Face the client head on from the front of the chair
- Lateral to medial rhythmic wave-like pressure

## **Bilateral scalp**

- Face the client head on from the front of the chair
- Fingertip zig-zag friction back to front, side to side

## **Bilateral erector spinae**

- Several long gliding strokes from the lower back to the shoulders

Blank Page