

Soreness After a Massage

Some people have made comments to me about massages they've gotten with other therapists. Many complained that the therapist used too much pressure and it was painful during the massage. A few have felt sore for a couple of days after and weren't sure if this was normal. Let me explain some possible causes for these situations.

A professional therapist is supposed to ask the client what kind of pressure he/she is in the mood for that day. The therapist normally asks this before the session starts or in the first few seconds as she is spreading the oil or lotion on your skin and doing some warm-up strokes. However, if you see your therapist regularly and always want the same type of pressure each time, your therapist will remember your personal preferences and may not ask each session. However, you may be in a different mood one day or have different goals for your massage session, so do speak up and let your therapist know what pressure you want (light, medium, firm). You can even ask for one type of pressure on your back and a different type on your legs and hips. We appreciate feedback. After all, it's your hour and your money. You should be comfortable with the strokes the therapist is using, so much so that you are able to mentally zone out and won't really pay any attention to what s/he is doing.

Note that more pressure is not always a good thing. The therapist could be bruising tissues or creating microtears under the surface of the skin and not even know it. This can cause soreness for days afterwards. Massage is supposed to be relaxing and therapeutic, not excessively painful! It seems too many therapists are using too much pressure and causing pain in their clients. It is either the result of schools not teaching the correct methods or the therapists deciding on their own to press too hard, but unfortunately, it is too common, and has the negative result of turning people away from massage. Less is more when it comes to massage. A relaxed body is a body ready to begin healing.

Other people have mentioned to me that they've felt dizzy for a few minutes when they get up from the massage table or felt flu-like symptoms during the next several days. Massage of any length can lower one's blood pressure. Before getting up off the table or up from the massage chair, stay still, take 3-4 deep breaths to come back to reality and infuse the brain with fresh oxygen, then get up slowly. If you are on the table try rolling to one side, then push yourself to a sitting position, take a few more deep breaths, then stand up. Don't rush putting on your clothes and getting back to your busy life. Rubbing your palms together will help you feel grounded. Drink lots of water or juice for the rest of the day to flush excess lymph fluid and toxins from the body.