Things to consider when giving a massage

Adapted from Ronald Combs

Basics

1. **Room**: temperature, drafts, lighting, hardness of surface, noise.
2. **Hands**: cleanliness, temperature (cold), fingernails (rough edges), jewelry (rings, bracelets, watches).
4. **Contraindications**: varicose veins, skin rash, fungus, injuries.
5. **Massage Oil**: viscosity, temperature, container, scent, fresh or rancid, how quickly it soaks into skin.
6. **Types of Movements**:
   - **Flexion (Fl)** decreasing the angle of a joint.
   - **Extension (Ex)** increasing the angle of a joint.
   - **Circumduction (C)** pivoting a joint in a 360° arc.
   - **Traction (Tr)** stretching at the joint.
   - **Effleurage (Ef)** general preparation of area; promotes circulation; prepares peripheral nerves for deeper manipulations; orients receiver to giver’s touch; helps giver locate tight/tender areas; transition stroke.
   - **Petrissage (P)** more specific than effleurage; helps rid muscles of waste products; eliminates minor contractions (cramps) in muscles; promotes increased circulation.
   - **Friction (Fr)** generally used where tendons or ligaments are more readily exposed; assists in breaking down adhesions.
   - **Tapotement (Ta)** stimulates nerve endings; types: hacking, cupping, slapping, picking, and beating.
   - **Vibration (V)** creates soothing effect.

Basic massage routine

**Head**

1. Deep (Ef) to forehead with heel of palms. Work from center of forehead to temporal area.
2. Deep (Ef) to forehead with thumbs, from center of forehead to temples.
3. (Fr) using light pressure on ridge below brow/above eyes.
4. Light (Ef) to muscle between eyes with thumbs.
5. Thumb (Ef) to temples; massage temples.
6. (Fr) ridge below eyes.
7. (Ef) cheeks with fingers.
8. (Fr) above and below lips.
9. (Ef) under jaw with fingers and thumbs; massage masseter muscles.
10. Fingertip (Ta) over face; massage ears and scalp
11. Final (Ef): three part combo - forehead with palms, cheeks with fingers, chin with fingers and thumbs.
Shoulders and Neck

1. (Ef) center of chest, around shoulders, along neck to base of skull (5x).

2. (Ef) from back of shoulders along neck to base of skull (5x).

3. Modified (Fr) from base of neck to base of skull.

4. Thumb (Ef) along back of neck (avoid spine) to center of upper trapezius muscle, applying slight pressure at that point.

5. Lift head gently.

6. (Ef) muscles along spine in neck using thumb and forefinger.

7. (Fl) neck (chin to chest) - be mindful of comfort.

8. Lateral stretch of neck to both sides, (Ef) extended area (side of neck to shoulders).

9. Rotation of neck to both sides with slight pressure at chin.

10. (Tr) neck lightly.

11. Gently replace head.

12. Repeat first (Ef) from center of chest, around shoulders, along neck to base of spine (2x).

Arms

1. One-handed, alternating (Ef) strokes up (?) length of arm (8x).

2. Two-handed (P) of hand (spreading).

3. (Fr) at wrist and along tendons of fingers.

4. Repeat two-handed spreading (P) of hand.

5. Twist/traction of fingers.

6. Circular thumb massage to palm.

7. Massage palm with yours.

8. (Ef), (Fl), (Ex), (C) fingers.

9. (Fl), (Ex), (C) wrist.

10. Draining (Ef) down forearm (first alternate hands, then use both hands together).

11. Thumb (P) down forearm.

12. (Fr) around elbow.

13. (Ef) upper arm (down/up) moving into...

14. (P) of shoulder area (focus on shoulder).

15. (Tr) at shoulder (180°, 90°, 45° - use body pivoting, reset shoulder, touch palm to shoulder, move arm around circle).

16. (Ef) entire arm (2x), end with nerve strokes.

Chest

1. Trace collar bone with thumb and forefinger (2x).

2. Finger and palm (Ef) over chest, including ribs.

3. Light (Ta) over breast bone.

4. Massage pecs at shoulder (turn/massage).

5. (Ef) center of shoulder (turn/massage).
**Anterior Legs**

1. Two-handed (Ef) up (?) length of leg (8x) - work sides and bottom, using thumb to get top of leg, taking care at kneecap.
2. Spreading/kneading on foot.
3. (Fr) at ankle and along tendons of toes.
4. Twist/traction on toes.
5. Massage sole with palm or knuckles.
6. (Fl) and (Ex) toes.
7. (Ef) to ankle, “foot flapper”.
8. Two-handed (Ef) ankle to knee (1x).
9. Massage back and sides of knee, then around kneecap.
10. Joint manipulations (Bring up knee with foot down, push knee horizontally forward. Bring up foot, push foot horizontally forward. Bring knee/leg around and push across body).
11. Two-handed (Ef) of thigh.
12. (P) thigh.
13. Various (Ta).
14. (Ef) thigh (1x), then (Ef) length of leg (1x).
15. (Tr), (V), then nerve strokes.

**Posterior Legs**

1. Two-handed (Ef) up length of leg (8x).
2. Lift leg.
4. Massage heel and sole.
5. Tense achilles tendon by putting pressure on foot.
6. Finger (Ef) of tensed alllies tendon with thumb and index finger.
7. (Ef) anterior ankle with web of free hand.
8. Lower foot, (Ef) ankle to knee.
9. (P) calf, then (Ta).
10. (Ef) ankle to knee. Massage knee.
11. Joint manipulations at knee (bend knee, moving foot to buttocks, opposite cheek, then outside).
12. (Ef) thigh, then (P), then (Ta).
13. (Ef) thigh (1x), length of leg (2x), nerve strokes.

**Abdomen**

1. Clockwise circular strokes.
2. Pulling (Ef) on opposite side.
3. (P) on opposite side.
4. Pulling (Ef) on opposite side.
5. Clockwise circular strokes while moving to other side.
6. Repeat (Ef), (P), (Ef), circular.
7. (Ta) on hip bone with fleshy part of clenched fist.
8. Rocking.
Back

1. (Ef) along length of back, alternating between thumbs-in and fingers-in stroke, applying pressure both ways (8x).

2. (Ef) down back with two fingers from each hand straddling spine (2x).

3. Short (Ef) using thumbs from spine about 1 inch (2x).

4. (Ef) length of back

5. Move left or right of body.

6. (Ef) Fix thumb to massage traps.

7. Thumb (P) halfway down spine.

8. On opposite side, pulling (Ef), (P), stretching.

9. Shoulder blade massage (arm in lower part of back, shoulder lifted slightly).

10. (Ef) length of back.

11. Repeat on other side.

12. Stretching using palm on one side of back, forearm on other.

13. Forearm (Ef) one side of back and leg (3x). Repeat on other.

14. Forearm flows into (Ef) length of back with pressure lessening with each stroke, until fade to nerve strokes.