

Getting Value for Money from Massage.

By David Hall, Qualified Massage Therapist

A massage client of mine now working mainly in the south recently rang me to book in a massage during a planned visit back to Townsville.

"You're the only one who seems to be able to do any good," she said, after trying various other therapists near where she now works.

It was a welcome compliment, but rather misguided - as there are many very well trained, qualified and competent massage therapists, particularly in Townsville, and elsewhere around Australia.

You just need to know what to look or ask for in a massage - or how to assess the therapist during the massage before you decide whether you'll return to him or her.

Here's a few tips.

Firstly, what type of massage do you really want or need?

If you're a little stressed and just want to be pampered or totally relax during a massage, you'll want Swedish - relaxation massage. It's firm but gentle and not painful.

If you've got deep-seated muscular aches and pains, soreness in the joints, you're recovering from a muscular injury, or you want to loosen and gain flexibility in your muscles days ahead of a major sporting event, you'll need a Remedial massage.

This is also known as deep tissue massage and may be painful at times (depending on how tight your muscles are). But despite this, a good therapist should leave you feeling much more relaxed at the end of it - and your muscles should feel looser.

The next day you may feel a bit sore in some areas, but this is only short term for a day or two. If you NEED a remedial/deep tissue massage, check that the therapist does this style when you ring to make the booking.

If you want a massage on the day of a major sporting competition just to warm and stretch your muscles minutes ahead of the event, Sports



massage is what you're looking for.

If you're feeling run down, feel bloated with fluid or know your immune system needs a boost, you'll need a Lymphatic Drainage massage.

Obviously, if you NEED and ask for Remedial massage but only receive a Swedish, you might feel relaxed afterwards, but your muscles won't have received the deep tissue treatment they need and you're likely to feel cheated.

You haven't had your money's worth.

A competent and qualified therapist should be able to explain to what the style of massage should achieve - not just be able to deliver one.

If you're new to massage, how can you tell if your therapist is competent, qualified, experienced and giving value for money?

Indicators.

Apart from directly asking about the therapist's qualifications, there are some general indicators you can look for. It soon becomes obvious if these do not apply.

The therapist should firstly discuss your needs and expectations from the massage, techniques to be used and areas of the body to be massaged.

He/she should also check with you to ensure there are no medical or other factors which would make a massage inadvisable (contra-indications).

In the case of Remedial and Lymphatic Drainage massage, I've always found it useful - and the clients very appreciative - to give a brief overview, before the treatment, of how and why the massage works.

For example, if the client understands WHY the therapist might need to massage muscles in the front of the body in order to fix a muscular problem in the back, they are more likely to relax and be confident in your ability.

What to Expect.

Some therapists simply start on first time massage clients without giving them any idea of what to expect. That's a good way to scare a client off massage if they wake up a bit sore the next day without knowing why.

The therapist should be careful to keep you properly draped at all times and avoid causing you any embarrassment.

A variety of light, firm and/or heavy techniques (depending on the style of massage) will be used in a systematic, sequential and co-ordinated way and which primarily direct blood flow towards the heart.

Any massage - even a very gentle lymphatic - requires fluency and energy, not just a careless movement of hands. A client can easily sense this fluency and energy.

Obviously, if you wish to just lie there and enjoy the massage without conversing, that should be respected.

Patient feedback during a massage is useful, but an experienced therapist can usually assess muscle tone, problem areas and your comfort levels by touch alone.

If you'd like to know more about remedial massage, call one of our qualified therapists today.

