

Massage Etiquette by Brad L. Surette, BA, RMT

As the Lead Therapist for Massage Addict in Clayton Park I have the fortune of hearing many comments, suggestions, ideas, and feedback from our Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs). As part and parcel I also hear many tales of woe, heart-ache, anger, frustration and despair.

Whether you are a newcomer to massage or a seasoned client I would like to present some basic massage therapy etiquette tips that could potentially improve the relationship between you and your RMT.

Title of Respect. In the province of Nova Scotia your RMT is required to have graduated from a twenty-two hundred hour recognized college diploma program.

After two intensive years of study please be aware that your RMT may find it disrespectful to be referred to as a masseuse or a masseur.

In Canada, the word masseuse or masseur can carry a very negative connotation. This is a term often used to describe a prostitute working in a massage parlor. As far as I know prostitutes do not require 2200 hours of training and there are none working at Massage Addict. Therefore, please use the term Registered Massage Therapist or RMT.



Hygiene. Please shower if you're dirty or sweaty BEFORE coming to a massage therapy appointment. Please, please, please!



Your RMT will be working in close proximity to your body and proper hygiene is appreciated. Coming from the gym and/or apologizing for the way your feet smell does not make it any less disrespectful to your RMT.

Many of our clients and some of our therapists have sensitivities to scents. We try to maintain a scent-free policy so we ask that you do not wear heavy perfumes or colognes to your appointment. For the same reason, please refrain from smoking for thirty minutes prior to your next massage therapy appointment.



Illness. Please notify your RMT if there are any current conditions that could be passed on to them or to other clients (flu, common cold, chicken pox, warts, etc.). If you are sick, stay home. Massage promotes circulation and thus has the potential to spread infection when you are ill.

Medications. Please tell your RMT about any other medical conditions you have. They could be important or pertain to the treatment - no matter how seemingly insignificant they are. The same goes for any medications you are taking. Some medications such as blood thinners can make certain types of massage or hydrotherapy applications contraindicated. Also, pain analgesics may allow you to feel great while getting the massage but could result in you experiencing bruises the next day.

Hair. Please put your hair up if you have long hair. We are RMTs, not hairdressers, and although we do try our best, it is not our responsibility to keep oil out of your hair. We often advise you to take a warm shower or bath after your treatment. This is to your benefit as it increases the relaxation response and prevents stiffness the following day. It also gives you an opportunity to wash out any oil or lotion that found its way into your hair.



Apparel. Please wear underwear or do not wear underwear. The underwear "thingy" is a common question and/or concern but please know that the choice is yours. It is always up to

the client what he or she chooses to wear during a massage. Undressing to your comfort level is encouraged but please be advised that better results can be achieved through direct skin contact. For example, if you want your glutes worked on it is far easier to access the area with no underwear. As the RMT performs the treatment, he or she will only reveal that body part being worked on so rest assured your RMT will show you professionalism and respect.



Volume. Please turn off your cell phone and speak quietly especially while in the hallway, and entering or exiting the treatment rooms. Try to remember that everyone is there to relax; loud conversations are not acceptable, nor is the ringing of a phone.

Feedback. Please let your RMT know if you're uncomfortable with anything during your treatment - the pressure, the music, the temperature etc. Your RMT will try to make an adjustment. After your treatment is completed giving honest feedback to the RMT, the owner, or the front office staff lets us know your visit was as expected or what we can do to improve your next experience.

Appointments. Please do not cancel or skip your appointment without providing at least twenty-four hours notice. If you can't make it, and can't give twenty-four hours notice please call and let us know anyway. Sometimes we have a client cancellation list and can fill the appointment slot with another client in need of treatment.

Tipping. As a final note, many clients ask if tipping is required, expected, or even frowned upon. Although you are not obligated to tip, it will certainly be appreciated by your RMT. Standard tips range from five to ten dollars although it varies depending on the client. If you choose to tip or not to tip, either way please clearly express your satisfaction, or lack thereof, with the experience. - Brad L. Surette, BA, RMT

