



TANTRIC MASSAGE

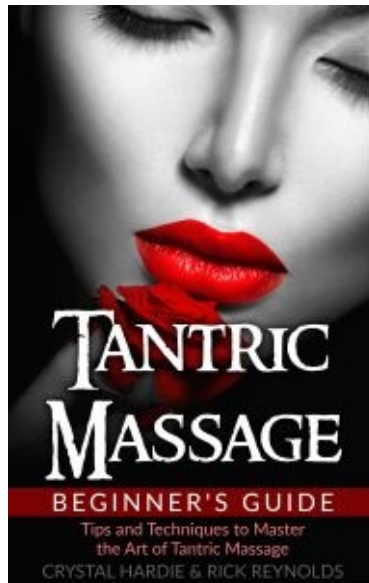
BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Tips and Techniques to Master
the Art of Tantric Massage

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TANTRIC MASSAGE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Tips and Techniques to Master the Art
of Tantric Massage



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Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1: Massage's Ancient Past](#)

[Chapter 2: From Galen to Hysteria](#)

[Chapter 3: Touch as Communicative Superpower](#)

[Chapter 4: Body, Mind and Spirit](#)

[Chapter 5: Some Basic Rules of Touch](#)

[Chapter 6: Tantra – Worshipping Yoni and Lingam](#)

[Chapter 7: The Japanese Art of Nuru](#)

[Chapter 8: Male Erogenous Zones](#)

[Chapter 9: Female Erogenous Zones](#)

[Chapter 10: Tactile Neptune](#)

[Chapter 11: Some Handy Helpers](#)

[Chapter 12: And the Academy Award for Tactile Eroticist in a Leading Role Goes to...](#)

[Chapter 13: The Prostate Gospel](#)

Chapter 14: Oils and Lubes for Silky Smooth Moves

Conclusion

Introduction

Most of us (barring all mishaps and acts of God) have two hands. On each of these two hands are four fingers and two thumbs (which are opposable, miraculously – a factor which differentiates homo sapiens from all those other monkeys).

Look at your hands. They have a story. Maybe that story is a life of washing dishes. Maybe it's one of fixing the motors in cars, or trains, or planes. Maybe the story your hands tell that of a life of relative ease. No calluses, no rough edges and no scars, the unblemished hands of the privileged are a story, too.

Whatever story your hands tell, as you examine them, with their veins and ligaments, their myriad bones and childhood scars, your hands can also speak. They can speak when they touch the body of another. They can tell tales of jasmine-scented voyages, regarding the distant stars, as you float down the Nile River. They can speak of raucous gin joints, rhythm and blues pounding out their open doors into the back alley night. High rise love affairs behind the closed doors of the fine hotels of New York; stillness and blessed isolation in the wilds of Montana. Your hands, when they touch the body of another person, are invested with a language only they can speak. I don't just mean hands, in general. I mean your hands.

If you're an adult who's had any kind of life at all, you'll remember the thrill of the first touch of a lover's hand, touching your hand, your arm (ever so suggestively), your thigh, your face. Regardless of where that first touch landed, the electrical shock of connection is one we never forget, long after the relationship is over. We never forget that first contact and how it transported us, driving us forward on the erotic journey we were embarking on.

That's the power of touch.

No matter where or who you are, regardless of your sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or sex, the universal power of touch cannot be denied. We are all slaves to it. We all crave it. But the terrible thing is that our sensitivity to that power seems to diminish with age and experience, as we become jaded and inured to it. We lose our ability to sense the electricity of the connection we

once felt when touched by one we desired, as we grow thicker skins against the uncertainties of life and love. Instead of being an esteemed teacher, experience encapsulates the wounds we sustain along the way. It becomes almost a prophylactic against the sense and the emotions that accompany it.

How can we regain our ability to feel the psychosexual charge of touch? How can we reclaim it, to experience anew a deeper level of our inherent sexual natures? Many of us may have stopped believing in love. But surely not so many have stopped believing in pleasure and its ability to take us out of ourselves? Are we no longer truly interested in one another on level of the senses and in fully abandoning ourselves to the joy that can be manifested there?

We may have convinced ourselves that's the case, but personally, I think the proposition has denied us the basic human right of pleasure. To be specific, sexual pleasure is a human right that we seem to have taken a post-modern, reductionist approach to. This approach has created in us a kind of psychosexual gap that cries out to be filled with a renaissance in our ability to feel in a holistic way; the way that tells those we touch (physically) who we are. Not a caricature of ourselves, but the raw truth of who we are in both a physical and emotional sense, simultaneously.

Someone once said, "God has no hands but ours". The internet's wilds having muddied the waters as to who actually said it notwithstanding, the saying itself is an interesting place to start in a discussion about physical touch and its primary role in human sexuality. Without touch and its power to open us to others and to experience them and ourselves as fully human, we are reduced to the free-floating consciousness of Ray Kurzweiler (*The Age of Spiritual Machines*). But we are our bodies. Our bodies, in fact, define us. Without them, we cannot touch. We cannot experience the world and the world, sadly, cannot experience us.

Perhaps this all sounds like an unnecessary intellectualization of the practice of sensual massage, but there I will take issue. My thesis here is that touch is a defining feature of the human ability to love. We reach out our hands to touch another and find in that touch, deep connection. It may not last more than a night. It may last a lifetime. But in the moment that we touch another, there is the truth about what we are as animal beings who speak and reason. Touch is a

faculty. It is a logic contained in the senses. It is a language contained in nerves and responses and psychological understanding. In the complexities realized in the faculty of touch is a fundamental truth about what it means to be human.

And so I offer you this book as an exploration of the art of touch, from the standpoint of human sexuality. The stories our hands tell are profoundly personal and endlessly complex. As we speak to each other with our hands, we form profound connections that we can remember forever, regardless of how long they endure in terms of the temporal. A single night's events can form us as people for the rest of our lives. Touch shared between two for a lifetime can be that single night multiplied to its ultimate expression. Touch is an eternally potent means of sexual connection between us as sexual beings and reclaiming it as the cornerstone of our sexuality is the gateway to joy.

Let's talk about touch and how it's been expressed between people through the ages, its psychological ramifications and its role in our sexuality. Let's find out how to be more actively engaged with this sense in our lovemaking and how we can make it more central. You and whomever you love deserve it, because touch is a foundational sense. We have five such senses, but touch is the scented, gilt gateway to the others. It's through touch and its vibrant ability to speak, that we're able to connect with our lovers on the most intimate and profound level. If we're conscious of what our touch is saying to those we share our love with physically, we're already much better and more present lovers and love is all about presence.

Our hands are a story within themselves. We can teach them to speak with eloquence well beyond words, understood on the most primal level – the root of human sexuality - but not its apex. Far above the primal level of survival, need and demand, is a pinnacle that may only be reached through telling one another the stories hands bear in their veins, flesh and bones.

The story of touch as embodied in the history and practice of sensual massage, all over the world, is the story of humanity reaching out to itself. It's the story of human sexuality reaching beyond social mores and regulations to something infinitely more human; to our shared passion and our desire to know one another as fully as we're able to.

Chapter 1: Massage's Ancient Past

The practice of therapeutic massage is a long one and can be traced back to pre-history and the global tradition of Shamanism. Shamans, in a wide variety of cultures, were the first practitioners of medicine and part of their practice was massage. The people of early cultures believed, in general, that illness of all kinds originated in the spirit realm. Not having the benefit of biological understanding in this nascent layer of human history, the ancients looked beyond their limited understanding of the physical world. Applying practical knowledge of medicinal plants, herbs and other substances believed to contain healing properties, ancient Shamans employed massage as a means of restoring spiritual balance in the patient.

Shamanic practices continue in our times, in places as diverse as Australia, the Ukraine, parts of North America and the Philippines, with massage continuing to be a cornerstone of Shamanic medicine. Lomi Lomi, for example, is a form of Shamanic massage practiced in Hawaii, where Shamans are known as “Kahunas”. The traditional use of massage as an agent of healing (and also, sexual pleasure) has been passed down the line of Kahunas, stretching back into pre-history. Similar traditions are found throughout Pacific Island cultures, including on Fiji and Tonga.

Massage is known to have been practiced, also, in Ancient Egypt, from at least 2691 BCE (Old Kingdom). The Egyptians were great proponents of essential oils and their use to treat a wide variety of illnesses. Lovers of rich scents and sensuality, The Egyptians shared the practice of massage with the Babylonians.

Through New Kingdom Egypt, scenes of massage being practiced can be seen on a variety of Egyptian monuments, and include therapeutic descriptions of these procedures. Probably the most notable description of massage can be found in the Kahun Medical Papyrus, which dates from the reign of Amenhotep III (1386 – 1351 BCE). The papyrus describes the treatment of swelling in the lower legs of pregnant women with massage therapy.

Origins of Sensual Massage

Dating back between five and seven thousands years, the spiritual practice of Tantra is the classical siting of the practice of sensual massage. I'm using the word sensual here in the place of the word sexual to impart the connection between the senses and our physical responses. That is the core of this book's mission – to guide people toward an enhanced sensuality as the defining feature of their sexuality.

Ancient Tantra is the fully realized expression of this mission, in terms of holding up sexuality as one of life's most important experiential wonders. Tantra, in fact, views sexuality as an expression of the human spirit and as a means of embodied, or carnal worship. In the West, we tend to see Tantra as an oddity (even though Tantric practice has inflamed a great deal of public curiosity in recent years). Western sexuality (which we'll discuss shortly) tends to be compartmentalized and segmented off from what the West sees as "propriety". There is a puritanical attitude toward sexuality that permeates Western thinking on matters sensual and that thinking extends to touch. Therapeutic massage, particularly, has had a hard time breaking through that attitude. Now firmly entrenched as a valid facet of complementary medicine, those days are gone, but the Western attitude toward touch and sensuality remains.

It's difficult for those of us in the West to conceptualize a system of spirituality in which sex is so fundamental and in which it's seen as a profound act of worship. We tend to think of worship as something done in community, in a public house of worship. But the Pagan people of the Ancient Near East combined these two worlds and openly practiced sexual worship in their Temples (something which got them summarily banned from the Roman Empire by Theodosius in the 4th Century, as Christianity became the state religion).

But Tantra is something of a compromise. Tantra is a way for loving couples to see the divine in one another and in so doing, to reach upward and outward, transcending the physical, while engaging it. There is something extraordinarily sophisticated about this seemingly esoteric (and yet, intrinsically practical concept). That sophistication, which appears as Tantra in both Buddhism and Hinduism, also extends to the ancient practice of Tantric massage.

Tantra posits that divine union of the yoni (female genitalia) and lingam (male genitalia), is the holiest of all acts. Buddhist and Hindu temples all over Asia and the subcontinent feature statuary representing the yoni and lingam conjoined in this holy union. But Tantra further counsels the practice of a form of genital massage in which the partners worship each other. The extreme intimacy of this form of massage will be discussed in a later chapter and it will become clear just how deeply spiritual this form of erotic massage is. In *being* physical, it *transcends* the physical. This, to me, represents a transcendence of more than the material, in favor of the ethereal. It represents their union, suggesting that there is no distinction between those two states. That's an important point for the purpose of this book and one that speaks to its mission. Please keep it in mind, as you read.

To be succinct – being spiritual doesn't mean *not* being physical and vice versa. The two are part of the same complex of being human and not mutually exclusive. In divorcing ourselves from the idea they are, we've already become more sensually, sexually and erotically tuned human beings. That lies at the center of the locus classicus of erotic massage – Tantra.

But massage, in a sensual context, is an intimate act, which suggests a therapeutic end. That end can be healing of physical, spiritual or emotional wounds. The power of touch, when practiced intentionally as part of the sexual experience transcends the physical. It has a deep resonance on the level of the human heart and soul.

Chapter 2: From Galen to Hysteria

Probably one of the most famous doctors in recorded history, the Ancient Roman doctor, Galen, (129 – 161 CE), specifically prescribed genital massage for women as a cure for “hysteria”. “Hysteria”, in those times (and until very recently) was considered a disease peculiar to women and occasioned by sexual deprivation. Galen prescribed for this condition intimate massage, using Artemisia, marjoram and iris oil. The technique and prescribed massage agents were to be used, apparently, until such time as the woman patient climaxed. She would thus be relieved of her “hysteria”.

The history of female genital massage in the West is, in fact, driven by the idea what women are hysterical by virtue of their wombs. The Greek word for this part of women’s reproductive organs is “hystera”. The Latin word “hystericus” (from the Greek “hysterikos”) means “of the womb”. And so, from the very earliest efforts of medicine to apprehend the mechanics of reproduction, the female anatomy has been, to a point, pathologically, inherently dysfunctional. It doesn’t take a lot of imagination to figure out how this may have impacted our Western ideas about sex, in general and women’s sexuality, in particular. In terms of male sexuality, the terminology was never applied, but Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms are said to be closely related to what was once believed to be an exclusively female condition.

Even today, the removal of women’s reproductive organs is called a “hysterectomy”. The procedure was once sometimes used as a means of curing what was called “female hysteria”, the symptoms of which included “causing trouble” and displaying a robust sexuality. Some women identified as suffering from the condition were even sent to sanitariums, to spend the rest of their lives incarcerated and labeled as insane.

As time went by and doctors came to understand more about the nature of female sexuality, Galen’s prescription for “hysteria” again came into play. The general medical consensus, by the 17th Century, advanced the theory that female hysteria could be cured by the manual stimulation of her genitals. It was, in fact, the British physician Nathaniel Highmore who suggested this was the case. And so the practice of therapeutic masturbation as practiced by licensed professionals was born. Women all over Europe and beyond were to become patients, seeking

a cure for their hysterical, feminine challenges. Imagine living in such a world? Imagine living in the world of physician George Taylor, who in 1859 declared that fully one quarter of all women suffered from hysteria.

Strange as it is to imagine, no one seemed to be able to connect manual stimulation with female eroticism. It needs to be understood, in our modern, enlightened context, that women have (until very recently) been regarded as sexless containers for babies and the vehicles of male sexual release. Indeed, it's only very recently that we've come to understand the female orgasm as being equally necessary for women's sexual health as it is for men's. So huge was the chasm in understanding of women as experiencing a sex drive and orgasms that medical practitioners prescribing manual stimulation referred to the resulting response in female patients as "paroxysm". Female hysteria, due to the male misunderstanding about the sexual nature of women, was really nothing so complicated as sexual frustration. Now imagine living in a world in which clinical professionals claimed there was no such thing as female orgasm! I was once told something similar, but the girl telling me was sixteen and not the sharpest knife in the drawer. She certainly hadn't been to medical school and apparently, hadn't been paying attention in biology class.

Jane Avril was a woman living in exactly such a world. Immortalized by the artist, Toulouse Lautrec, Avril would go on to become a principal dancer with the famous Moulin Rouge, in Paris. But as a young woman, she was under the care of France's imminent expert on female hysteria, Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot. Known as the "Napoleon of neuroses", Charcot is also remembered for his pioneering work in Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis, but it's for his work in the realm of female hysteria that he is remembered for the purposes of this book.

Interestingly, Dr. Charcot was also a proponent of hypnotism (known in the mid-19th Century as mesmerism). Charcot believed that hysterics were those most prone to being hypnotized. As a neurologist, Charcot believed (until not long before the end of his life), that hysteria was a genetically transmitted disease and further, that hypnosis offered hope for his patients at the Salpetriere Hospital. While he descried the popularization of mesmerism against its scientific value, Charcot was also criticized by contemporaries for his unorthodox ideas. All the same, Dr. Charcot's association of female hysteria with hypnosis stands as one

of the stranger moments in the historical siting of female sexuality in the realm of pathology. This did not stop others from following in his footsteps and created an entire branch of medicine dedicated to female hysteria, which prescribed clinical masturbation for its treatment.

Good Vibrations – The Age of Self-Help

Everyone knows about vibrators and many reading will have used one at some point in their lives, either on their own, or with a partner. It's estimated that one-third of American women own one. But did you know that the vibrator was once a clinical tool, used by physicians in the treatment of female hysteria?

The early 19th Century witnessed doctor's offices flooded by women who had been convinced by popular scuttlebutt that they were suffering from female hysteria. (In retrospect, it's interesting to speculate that word got around that respectable women in polite society might visit their physicians to obtain what they were not getting at home. That word spread like wildfire). This steady stream of women seeking socially sanctioned orgasms was at least partially responsible for raising the profile of medical doctors, viewed at the time with suspicion and distrust. Women, then, are largely responsible for establishing the medical profession's contemporary status and all for want of an orgasm.

Physicians everywhere, experiencing the Victorian version of masturbatory carpal tunnel syndrome, nursed fatigued wrists and hands and sought a solution to the manual exhaustion occasioned by their daily clinical exertions. It was in answer to this pressing crisis in the medical community that the personal vibrator came into being. As electricity revolutionized society at the end of the 19th Century, so the vibrator revolutionized the practice of physician-assisted orgasm.

In 1880, the English doctor, Joseph Mortimer Granville invented the first personal massage device. Arriving on the consumer market fully ten years before the iron and the toaster, it was the vibrator that was to most profoundly change the world. With the arrival of electricity in the homes of more and more people, physicians were soon to lose their clinical monopoly on the practice of manual stimulation. By the dawn of the 20th Century, women's magazines everywhere began to advertise these miraculous devices and soon, women's orgasms were (quite literally) put in their own hands.

Of course, due to the social mores of the early 20th Century, the purpose of the contraption needed to be somewhat veiled and the moniker "personal massager" was that most widely used to describe it. This veil was soon to be rent asunder, though, with the arrival of motion pictures. With motion pictures came

pornography and with pornography came the knowledge of men everywhere as to the purpose of that object in the bedside table drawer; that personal massager so prized by the women in their lives. Soon, it became difficult to obtain a vibrator. In some places, they were even banned. This situation persisted until the 1970s, when vibrators were liberated from the dark fringes of polite society and once again became the sexual salvation of women everywhere.

Today, though, women almost everywhere are now fully in charge of their sexuality and their orgasms. They are known, both socially and clinically, as human beings with all the same sexual drives and desires enjoyed (and wrestled with) by their male counterparts. But arriving at that freedom and that understanding was a process that took thousands of years. Along the way, the cultural deposit of misinterpretations about women's sexuality remained and, in the West, that's part of our problem. It's part of our puritanical legacy and part of the enduring reason the two sexes so often seem to be at odds with each other, instead of being engaged in the process of enjoying each other on a deep and mutually satisfying level.

But the act of touching one another can change that. Perhaps the busy hands of 19th Century doctors were onto something. It's undeniable that the service of clinical masturbation was sought out by women everywhere. Being touched in the doctor's office was filling a gap the men in their lives very obviously weren't. We all need to be touched and this example is quite instructive in that regard, but sexual touch is not always centered on the genitals.

Using our hands as messengers of mutual understanding and appreciation and telling one another our stories through the sense of touch can build a bridge between men and women. That bridge can span the cultural deposit that casts women as either sexless or wanton sirens, luring men to their deaths. It can similarly span the cultural deposit that casts men as violent monsters and help them to speak the truth of their own sensuality, without the words that so many men find difficult to put together, at times.

Massage is an avenue of understanding which is diverse, evocative and endlessly eloquent. It is ungendered: neither male nor female. It transcends culture and all that comes with it, through the medium of touch. In the next chapter, we'll look at touch as a communicative superpower and explore some interesting research

findings that have revealed just how powerful it is.

Chapter 3: Touch as Communicative Superpower

Our hands are our most powerful communicative tools. They can speak volumes with the subtlest contact. They can impart more than our words, at times and are there to speak on our behalf when words fail us. Let's explore the communicative superpower of touch.

Haptic Communication

As fetuses, touch is the very first sense we develop. As our first and most powerful sense, it's incredibly important that we arrive at an understanding of its communicative efficacy. It is, in fact, our most effective and reliable communication tool. Human babies can't see clearly, or understand the meaning of the sounds they hear, but they know what they touch and they know the meaning of the touch of their mothers. Touch, then, is our first and most primal means of reaching out to one another.

There's a reason we speak of "losing touch" with people. When friends drop out of our lives due to neglect, the busyness of life, or circumstance, we have lost our ability to be physically near them. We can no longer reach out and touch them as we could when they were in physical proximity to us. That's how important it is to us that we touch each other. Without words, a touch can speak volumes.

"Haptics" is a Greek word, meaning "I touch". Closely related to the practice of "proxemics" (which examines the role of space in non-verbal communication), haptics is the therapeutic use of touch as a communicative medium. By allowing ourselves to be touched by others, intimacy is implicit. It needn't be spoken. When we're touched by those we'd rather kept their hands to themselves, expressing that preference can also be unspoken. Pushing a hand away, slapping it, or pulling away from the touch, are ways of saying, "don't touch me".

We tend to believe in empirical truths, but faith is a very real thing, for some. Most of us, though, need to touch the truth and experience its concrete reality to truly believe. Faith is a romantic notion we need a material case to be made for. Without our sense of touch, we have no way of understanding pain or pleasure. We have no way of experiencing textures, like those of fabrics. Touch provides us with important information about the world around us.

Our bodies are covered with skin. As the largest organ in our body, it's also what tells us what kind of day it is. Do I need a coat? You can look out the window and see the sun shining, but until you walk out the door, can you be sure whether the sun is warm enough to allow you to walk around without that extra, protective layer of clothing? Our skin tells us what we need in terms of

protection from the elements. When we're exposed to the sun for too long, it begins to burn. When exposed to the cold, it develops "goose bumps" and becomes dry. Our skin is laden with receptive nerves that act as a sensory network to provide us with the information we need to live in the world and interpret its conditions.

What's more evocative of comfort than a hug? The "free hugs" movement acknowledges our need for this comfort, standing on busy streets in isolating city streets with signs that offer the most primal means of offering comfort, the people involved in this movement hug complete strangers. They know the power of touch. They understand how deeply communicative it is and how desperately human beings crave it. They also understand the nature of the modern city – filled with people, shoulder to shoulder, completely detached from one another.

What's more indicative of disapproval than a slap across the face? It is a symbol of rebuke as old as humanity. We say that someone's actions, when rude or dismissive, can be like a "slap in the face" to us. The shock of the palm of someone's hand connecting with one's face is a type of violent, non-verbal communication so powerful, we use it as a metaphor to describe socially aberrant behaviors directed at us.

Touch amplifies any message we care to send. At times, it can work against us, if we misread cues from others about what's permissible. It's doubtless, though, that touch is the superpower of the senses, packing an emotional, somatic (bodily) punch that words and other communicative tools don't share.

The Communicative Power of Touch

Matthew Hertenstein, a DePauw University psychologist, conducted a series of studies, examining the communicative power of touch, in 2009. His series of studies called on volunteers to describe to other volunteers (who were blindfolded for the studies), an emotion, using only touch. In a society that has become diffident about touch, even anxious, Hertenstein's study showed that the blindfolded volunteers were able to identify the emotions being conveyed with 78% accuracy. In a world which Hertenstein describes as "touch-phobic", this is an incredible result. Even he was surprised by the studies' findings, which were conducted in nations as diverse as Turkey and Pakistan. In Spain, Hertenstein found that his subjects were more adept at interpreting the language of touch than those in the US study were, but that generally speaking, human beings all over the world have an innate ability to both convey and interpret emotional messages transmitted by touch alone.

Hertenstein's studies also found that touch was capable of conveying multiple emotional messages more effectively than facial expressions, or vocal pitch and tone. To touch another person, physicality proximity is required and so using touch as a communicative tool also suggests an emotional bonding effect as a type of bonus.

What Hertenstein makes abundantly clear is that touch is a human superpower we are becoming more and more reluctant to use. His suggestion that we're increasingly "touch-phobic" is certainly not far from the truth, as contact with other people has become laden with social complications concerning personal autonomy, legal implications and even a reluctance to indulge in emotional displays. But touch is something we should be employing more in our personal relationships, whether those are romantic, familial or social. The power of touch to draw us closer to one another and create the conditions in which communication is enhanced is not to be underestimated, as Hertenstein's studies demonstrate. His suggestion that our withdrawal from touch as a primary mode of communication should give us pause. It's our primary sense; the first we know. If we divorce ourselves from it, where are we? More importantly – what are we?

Are we Kurzweiler's disembodied intelligences, floating around immaterially?

That's quite a post-human suggestion and not one I particularly relish.

So if a volunteer in a clinical study can communicate an emotion to a blindfolded stranger with touch alone, how much more potent is your superpower when engaged in tactile communication with your lover? That's what sex is, basically – tactile communication.

What great tales can you tell with your hands alone? To use your sensual superpower to its most potent degree, though, you will need to engage all of yourself. That means remembering yourself as a whole person – body, mind and spirit. When these realities that make up who are work in concert, the sensual superpower of touch becomes both art and artless, as it flows from you as the product of your truest and most authentic self. When you become more fully integrated as a person, the door to your sexual freedom has been opened. That power is in your hands, but it's also in your mind and your spirit. An integrated human being is one who is sensually attuned, emotionally well and spiritually alive.

Chapter 4: Body, Mind and Spirit

Over many centuries, humanity has struggled to find the unifying thread between what some consider three separate parts of what makes us human. We know that we're all these things and that somehow, they are constituent parts. But coming to know the mind, body and spirit as an integral whole and to conceptualize it as precisely that, has been a challenge for even our greatest philosophers. From ancient Greeks like Plato, to the great Rene Descartes, to modern philosophers like Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Drew Leder, we have struggled to find the unifying thread and to understand ourselves as a whole in which these elements form a whole person, integrated and inseparable from one another.

While all our human experience points to this truth, it's not often that we stop as we're doing all the things we do in the course of a day and ask how we're engaging mind, body and spirit, in concert. As I write, for example, my hands are moving across the keyboard somewhat unconsciously. My mind chooses the words I want to transcribe onto the screen and signals my hands to touch the appropriate keys. As I write, I look inside myself for a tone; a voice with which to speak and impart to you, the reader, what I hope to say. I search for desired pitch to produce the resonance I hope my words will have. I seek the understanding of the reader of the mission of this book, which I write because I have a message to share that I believe is important. I believe that message is important because of the changes I've seen in my own sex life (and life in general) because of it. I want to share it and I want it to help the reader make the same changes in their sex lives.

And so, while I'm not truly engaging with the idea (except to describe it you) as I write, I am engaging mind, body and spirit to do it. The whole of me and what I am, on every level, is at work. The same (and certainly just as profoundly so) is true of sex and its physical expression. The whole of you is involved.

Or is it?

Perhaps it's time to ask yourself that question, or maybe you already have. After all, you're reading this book. The point is that it's a fair question and one that we should all ask ourselves, if we hope to have the kind of sexual experiences we all deserve to have. We want to be transported. We want to connect. We want to feel it all. To do that, we need to be aware of how deeply we're

engaging with our partners and whether, in fact, we're going to them with our whole selves – body, mind and spirit.

Your Brain on Touch

As we read in the previous chapter, the interpretation of touch seems to be something human beings are able to do effortlessly. Empirical proof of this resulted from a study in 2012. MRI scans were used by a team of researchers, seeking to measure activity in the brain when being touched by others. Using an all male heterosexual volunteer corps, researchers displayed to the study's participants, videos of people they claimed were touching them. Specifically, the people shown in these videos were said to be touching study participants on the leg.

But the videos used in the study were not the truth. In every instance, volunteers were being touched by women. Because they were told, however, (in random samplings), that they were being touched by men, volunteers registered displeasure with being touched. It was also found that when participants believed their legs were being touched by women, their responses were far more pronounced. This effect was seen in the primary somatosensory cortex, which is the part of the brain that responds to touch.

Prior to the study, scientists had believed that the primary somatosensory cortex was only capable of interpreting the sensory information in its raw form (i.e.: lightness of touch, or alternatively, firmness). But what the study demonstrated is that interpretation of touch is also informed by social and emotional data, something researchers were surprised to discover. The fact that the PSC can also assign value to touch, in terms of social acceptability, is new information. There is an evaluative element of the PSC, which had been unknown before the study's findings were analyzed, and which has changed the way science understands the brain's sensory perceptions.

Psychologist Michael Spazio (one of the study's leads) noted that these findings have impacted the way scientists view the role of the PSC in interpreting touch. When we're aware of who we're being touched by (or believe to be so aware), we not only interpret the touch objectively, but subjectively. Depending on our opinion about who is touching us and how appropriate or desirable we believe that touch to be, we evaluate the touch based on social factors, also.

This is illuminating in terms of whom we choose to allow to touch us and how

we respond when touched by one we'd rather not do so. We've all been there. Women especially will recognize the story of the guy who couldn't take no for an answer, or the office leech whose hand rested on the Executive Assistant's arm just a little too long. Our socially and emotionally informed response to touch weeds what's desirable from what's undesirable. While we all need to be touched, because we're all human, our somatosensory brain function evaluates touch in terms of its desirability.

But there are also regional components to touch and how open we are to it. For example, Dr. Peter Andersen, author of *Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions*, had observed distinct cultural differences in terms of touch and its prevalence in various cultures. People residing in warmer climates tend to be more tactile. Those who live in northern climates, less so. The climate itself is part of the reason for this. People who live in warm climates wear less clothing and tend to have more plentiful person-to-person interactions, as the weather permits them, in the absence of prolonged winters. In northern climates, the winters are long and people are (for the most part) confined and therefore, far less socially active. Also key to these differences is the amount of sunlight enjoyed in the region people live. More sunlight elevates mood. Less can lead to depression. Happy people tend to be more open to being touched. But this isn't all. Our ancestry plays a part. The migratory patterns of the various branches of humanity tend to return to the source region. That means that if the branch of humanity we stem from came from a warmer climate, we continue to return to similar climates as we evolve.

There is a part of us that's engineered to understand touch and to use it in order to be understood, ourselves. This amazing facility is rooted deep in our DNA. But in the instance of our sensual superpower, nurture also plays a role. As much as our interpretation of touch can be influenced by our social contexts, so can our tactile natures be enhanced or diminished by where we find ourselves both culturally and regionally.

Touched in the Spirit

Touch also has a deeply spiritual component. We can be touched in our spirits, without being touched physically. Our language betrays this truth. We speak of being “touched” by people and their stories and this spiritual touching can be encountered when we see films that relate grand human themes like love, separation and victory over adversity. We are touched by the actions of people around us when they model kindness and compassion.

Our ability to “feel with” others is a form of spiritual communion that is fundamental to humanity. Empathy and compassion are two of the most ontologically human qualities we’re heir to. When we find ourselves entering into the emotional world of others by virtue of these qualities, we are given the ability to alter the shape of reality because of them. We feel “moved” to reach out to others in compassion and to act on their behalf because they have touched us in the core of our beings; our spirits.

The human spirit and its profound ability to empathize and to take compassionate action is an intrinsic part of our lives as sensing beings. It’s the part of us that is so intimately attached to our physical senses that it’s difficult to tell where one begins and the other ends. The physical and spiritual are conjoined in the human mind in ways we’ve always sought to understand, but which we all know through our emotional responses, driven by our communal spirit. In the realm of the spirit, there are common themes that touch us. These themes transcend all perceived barriers and are fundamental icons that join us together. The great psychotherapist Carl Jung catalogued these iconic entities, which are humanity’s emotional and psychological legacy.

When we are moved to tears, because we’ve been touched by music, film, art, or the written word, we are responding with our whole selves. Our spirit having been touched, as our mind has processed the foundational emotion or theme being expressed, our bodies respond by producing the fruit of tears. Tears, when this occurs, are a physical response to an emotional reality, born in the spirit of common human nature. Having been touched by what has no hands to touch us with (only thematic resonance), our tears are physical signs that contact has been made with something beyond ourselves. That something is known in us, even when we’re unable to name exactly what it is. The truth is, though, that all

human experience is common. While that's not so in detail, it is in terms of larger themes. Our life cycles, from birth to death are common human legacy. When we recognize the common nature of shared human experience, we are touched and moved. We've made contact.

Integration Exercise

In order to contemplate and come to a more finely-tuned understanding of how your body, mind and spirit work together, forming a complex of experience, I'd like readers to consider the following exercise.

Choose a piece of music that has touched you deeply in the past. With or without headphones, lay down somewhere comfortable, where you won't be disturbed or distracted. If you can lie on the floor, this is ideal, as you'll be able to feel the vibrations of the bass line in the music.

Listen as actively as you can. What is it about the music that touches you? Is it the words (if there are vocals), or is it the musical motifs? Is it a memory the music connects you with? Take hold of the reason this music touches you.

Feel the vibrations of the music, as you immerse yourself in it. The bass line, in particular, will resonate through your whole body, but there are other components of music that are almost palpable in their vibrational quality. Can you feel these in your body? What is the sensation? What other sensation does it remind you of?

As you listen, listen with your whole self. Let the primary question you're asking yourself be: what is the site of the touch? Is it your mind, your body, or your spirit? If you listen with great intention, it will become clear to you that it's all three, in concert. What will also become apparent is that they are responding simultaneously to what you're feeling, hearing, processing intellectually and sensing in your spiritual core.

Integrating mind, body and spirit is a process fundamental to the effective use of massage as an agent of your sexuality. Sex is more than physical. It is intellectual and spiritual, also. It is your whole self, speaking with another person in the most intimate form of human engagement there is. By being mindful of bringing the fullness of who you are to your partner, while either giving or receiving massage, you will become much more acutely attuned to your communicative quality and the quality of the interpretation your partner is experiencing. Awareness is the birthplace of all human encounters. Self-awareness is the intersection at which you meet others (especially your lover) at

a much deeper level.

Sensual massage, as we've seen in an earlier chapter, has quite a checkered past. The varied nature of the practice and its social context have changed a great deal over time. Certainly the status of women and the changes women's socio-sexual status has undergone, have transformed it. Sensual massage also operates on many levels, from the commercial, to the personal, to the spiritual. Sometimes, these three intersect and sometimes the boundaries between them are starkly defined.

But sensual massage is an ancient practice and that's because human beings not only long to be touched, but because touch is our superpower. It's our most powerful communicative tool. To some degree, each and every one of us is born with the ability to not only interpret touch, but to evaluate it. When approached as more than a means to an end, sensual massage can form a physical, spiritual and intellectual bridge between partners. It can also act as a therapeutic tool, liberating people to their sexual truths. Perhaps the doctors of 19th Century Europe enjoyed having such monolithic power over the sexuality of their women patients. I can certainly imagine that at least some of them did. It's instructive to consider that the hunger to be touched not only legitimized the medical profession, but also led to the birth of the vibrator and the democratization of the female orgasm.

And that, my friends, is very powerful indeed.

In the next chapter, we'll start our journey through the many worlds of sensual massage. These span the earth in myriad forms, standing as emblems of the primal human quest for touch. From Tantra to Nuru, to eroticism as personal therapeutic path, to vibrators and water massage, we're going on a tactile journey around the world to peek our heads through the doors of those secret places in which erotic massage is practiced and enjoyed.

Chapter 5: Some Basic Rules of Touch

Hand Care

I'm not generally a very big fan of rules, per se, but when we're touching each other's bodies as we enjoy giving and receiving massage, there are some basic considerations we need to extend to one another to ensure that the experience is the pleasurable and joyful one we desire.

The most basic rule of all concerns the hands. Your hands are your messengers, where sensual massage is concerned. In the days when kings and queens would send forth royal messengers to travel to distant land with news of the realm, these messengers wore fine livery. They were, after all, representing royalty.

The same is true of your hands. If you're to employ your sensual superpower to the best of your ability and to the ultimate pleasure of your partner, then the care of your hands is important.

Take an honest look at them. Are they clean? Are the nails trimmed and free of any sharp or ragged edges, or (God forbid) dirt? Are they reasonably soft to the touch? If you have any nail or finger chewing habits, perhaps it's time to find a way to break them. Hands used to massage the body of your lover need to be presentable. They need to feel good on your lover's body. Imagine massaging the body of your lover with rough hands.

Women with artificial nails, or long, natural nails also need to evaluate how important these are, if they are to pursue sensual massage. There are aspects of sensual massage that long nails are not well suited to, regardless of the sex of the partner involved. If you're serious about integrating sensual massage into your love play, then ask yourself how important those talons are. Perhaps the 1980s need to be put to bed, forever and your long nails need to go the way of the mullet and acid washed jeans.

Getting on the Same Page

If you intend to incorporate sensual massage into the sex life you share with a long term, or existing partner, then it's important you get on the same page about what you're both expecting from it. What aspects of sensual massage appeal to you both? Which type of massage would you like to try first? Are there certain aspects of massage that one or the other of you objects to?

It's important that you both agree on these aspects of sensual massage at the beginning of your exploration. For example, Tantric massage involves digital penetration of both male and female partners. Is everybody OK with that? Is one of you nervous about it? Get those questions out of the way. Some men are very uncomfortable with the idea of being penetrated, or may have never considered attempting it, due to social or cultural prohibitions, or just personal nervousness about what anal penetration involves. Some women are also uncomfortable (if their partners are male) with digital penetration, as they've had unsatisfactory experiences with it in the past.

Discussing the variety of sensual massage possibilities is a must before you "surprise" your partner. Surprises imply consent, which may not be present, so talk about it if you're interested in massage by a third party, or in a therapeutic approach. Maybe one of you wants to visit a masseur or masseuse who offers sensual massage to couples. That's something you both need to agree on before going ahead and booking an appointment. Certainly, having the purveyor of such a service show up at the front door without notice on your partner's birthday may not be well received. Don't assume anything. Talk about your ideas and keep your mind open. Listen to your partner.

For those of you exploring massage as a solo endeavor, seeking out autoerotic solutions, I hope the options I'm outlining in this book speak to you as well. Some of you may have physical challenges that call for different solutions and I hope the ones I've included are helpful to you.

For those of you hoping to explore Tantric massage, I hope you won't stop with the overview I've provided here. I hope that you will approach Tantra with the reverence it deserves, as it's a profoundly spiritual form of sensual massage that commands respect. You will discover that on your own, even if you approach it

on the most superficial level. But you should be aware, if you wish to become more knowledgeable about Tantra as a life practice and spiritual discipline, that there are myriad resources available to guide you on your journey.

Whichever branch or method of sensual massage you choose, whether coupled or solo, I hope you will find this book's recommendations and offerings thought provoking, interesting and helpful and that you'll find in these pages what you were looking for. Let's get started with ancient Tantra, spiritual sensual massage.

Chapter 6: Tantra – Worshipping Yoni and Lingam

I've briefly outlined the concepts of Tantra as a spiritual practice earlier in this book. Tantric massage, while part of it, is a unique way for people to explore each other, sexually, in a highly intimate way.

Centered on the genitals, Tantric massage calls on each partner to worship the other's genitalia through the act of intimate, sensual massage. In Tantra, both the male and female genitalia are sacred parts of a whole. When joined together, these two parts form the most sacred icon of the east. The sacred union of the male and female genitalia is considered the ultimate act of worship and an act of co-creative, divine embodiment. Representations of this union can be seen in temples throughout Asia. In the West, this may be considered a profanity, but in the East, the union of the male and female genitalia is considered a high expression of religious iconography.

The Sanskrit word for the male genitalia is "lingam". The female genitalia is called "yoni". Whether joined in holy union, or separate, they are both holy. Together, they are an expression of the divine. In the act of intercourse, men and women are engaging in an act of worship that brings them as close to the heart of godhead as human beings can get. This means that our sexuality is inherently sacred, as it's through the act that we reach toward the divine and participate with it in making the love that holds the universe together.

In the Hindu Tantra, the god Shiva is the masculine principle and thus, the god associated with the lingam. Parvati, Shiva's consort and goddess (also known as the Shakti, or enlivening divine principle of Shiva) is the feminine principle, associated with the yoni. The two divine entities form a whole, which is considered the fullness of godhead, which encompasses both male and female. It should also be considered that the goddess Parvati's role as the source of the god Shiva's power speaks of the nature of the yoni, which is the source of all life.

The lingam and yoni also represent apparently opposite forces, or binaries in the cosmic order of things. But these forces are not so much opposite as held in tension. There can be no darkness without light and so the two exist in a tension, or balance. The same is true of the masculine and feminine principles

represented by Shiva/lingam and Parvati/yoni. The god/goddess and their respective genital symbolism has a spiritual as well as a physical life, in Tantra. The same can be said of human sexual engagement, in general (whether or not you see it through a sexual lens).

Moving Beyond Sex

Because we're discussing Tantric massage within the context of sensual/sexual/erotic massage in this book, I will be setting aside the binary gender tension. That's not only because we're not discussing penetrative genital sex in this book, but also because the masculine and feminine principles are embodied not only in the divine, but also in the human being (a reflection of the divine in virtually every world system of Faith).

In truth, we all possess what are traditionally considered masculine and feminine traits. Social constructs of what constitutes masculinity and femininity are shattered by what are perceived to be deviations from these enforced social norms, everywhere you look. We all know people able to transcend the traditional borderlands prescribed by gender constructs and they demonstrate to us what I said at the start of this paragraph – men and women all share both masculine and feminine traits.

In terms of massage, the gender of the partners involved is of little moment and so I want it to be understood by readers that this volume's language (while it may refer to the heterosexual model), is intended to speak to people of all gender identities and sexualities. I believe, also, that's it obvious how little traditional concepts of gender apply in the world of massage. So whether you're reading this as the proud owner of either a yoni or lingam, and whether your partners are of the same or the opposite sex, the non-gendered nature of sensual massage allows me to extend the contents of this volume to everyone who has an interest in the subject.

With that in mind, let's find out more about Tantric massage of the lingam.

Tantric Lingam Massage

Many people are unaware (even many men), that only two-thirds of the penis is on the outside of the body. The other third is hidden inside. This one-third of the penis is only accessible via the anus (somewhat via the perineum, but not to the same degree). I'm sure that hearing this will have some of my male readers feeling a little sad, but all hope is not lost. As some of you will be aware, getting to the rest of the penis can be an intensely rewarding journey of personal and sexual exploration.

As I've said earlier, many men have difficulty with the concept of any penetration of the anus. Even a visit to the proctologist can have them breaking out in hives and clenching the cheeks of their bottoms together in pre-emptive protest. But digital penetration in the service of Tantric lingam massage, excluding the external genitalia (for the most part), can render some of the most powerful orgasms men may experience. There is also the benefit of men being given the opportunity to be in the receptive position, sexually. This is an act of trust that many men have never experienced and one that can truly transform their worldview and perceptions about what it means to be a man. It can also draw them into a much more nuanced understanding of women's experience of the world and gender roles.

Some readers will have difficulty with the whole idea. They will be thinking they're not "gay". Let's get this objection out of the way right now. Being penetrated does not make you gay. It makes you interested in exploring your sexuality as fully as possible. Regardless of your sexual identity, anal penetration is a sexual option that men should feel free to explore, without being hindered by social prohibitions, which mean absolutely nothing, in the great scheme of things.

Getting There

Hidden within the rectum of the male body is the reason why. This is the prostate gland. This small mound, about two inches in length, is found on the anterior (front) wall of the rectum, about four to five inches inside. Separated from the rectum itself by a thin membrane, it's through the stimulation of this gland that men may experience an entirely different quality of orgasm. While

the prostate is being stimulated, the portion of the penis hidden within the male body is also undergoing stimulation it wouldn't normally be able to enjoy.

Those of you who remain resistant may want to think about that for a moment. With the use of sufficient lubrication, digital penetration of the anus can be achieved with minimal discomfort, even if you're a beginner. But exploring lingam massage is an act of trust in another person which some men will find challenging, so it's extremely important that the partner on the giving side of the equation be keenly aware of this. Creating an environment of total relaxation is key to achieving the receiving partner's comfort, especially if this is his first experience of penetration (outside a proctologist's office).

But for those men who feel completely uncomfortable with the prospect of penetration, massage of the sacred spot is an alternative, which can achieve similar results. Massaging this area is also preparation for those who are interested in pursuing sexual continence (retention of semen, allowing for prolonged intercourse), in an expanded experience of Tantric sex. Massaging this area intentionally can be uncomfortable at first, but can also produce extremely pleasurable sensations for the receiving partner, particularly when the penis is massaging simultaneously.

The receiving partner needs to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible. Preceding Tantric massage with gentle, lingering massage of other parts of his body will help achieve this. Use an oil with a pleasant scent, which induces a sense of relaxation and ease. (We'll talk about oils and lubricants in a later chapter). Laying on his back with a pillow under his hips, the receiving partner will be able to see the giving partner at all times, producing a sense of connection, as the massage proceeds. His legs are open, providing access to his genitals, which can be gently massaged, but not to the point of orgasm. That can happen during the lingam massage, but it doesn't have to. The point here is to use the medium of massage as a means of worshipping the receiving partner's lingam. There should be no performance anxiety present in the act, whatsoever. This is about intimacy and connection, not orgasm.

The penis itself can be massaged by gripping it just under the head, with one hand, rubbing up and over the head and down the shaft again, with a gentle but firm twisting motion. As the penis is massaged, it will become erect and then

soften. This process will repeat itself, as you turn to the scrotum, gently tugging and massaging it and then, going back to the lingam itself. Bringing the receiving partner near orgasm will be a pleasurable experience for him, repeating this experience several times will create a relaxed sensation of being catered to and adored.

When the receiving partner is sufficiently relaxed, finding the sacred spot is as easy as locating the small section of skin just under the scrotum and above the anus. Massaging this spot can help the receiving partner learn to delay (or forego) ejaculation and participate in the fullness of Tantric practice. This is a small area (no larger than a standard pea). When it's found, the giving partner should push gently inward. The receiving partner will feel an unaccustomed pressure inside his body, as this spot is stimulated. As this technique is practiced, the man receiving it will become and more accustomed to the sensation of having the spot massaged and will become not only comfortable with it, but also aroused.

Using one hand to massage the sacred spot and the other to massage the lingam, continue allowing the penis to become erect, then soft. As the receiving partner comes close to ejaculation, press on the sacred spot gently. You will find the male partner will experience something he never has in sex, if he's never been given this type of massage before. Tantric massage is a deeply intimate and revelatory experience for men who have never been massaged in this way.

If the receiving partner is also willing to move forward with anal penetration, start slowly, using a large quantity of a lubricant. This can be water-based, silicone, or a hybrid of the two. Gentle penetration should be slow and not forced. The giving partner will find that the finger being used is drawn into the rectum reflexively. There's no need to push. Once inside, the finger should be moved gently and consistently in massaging motion. It should also not be removed until the receiving partner has either ejaculated or asks that it be removed (which he probably won't until he's ejaculated by this method, as it's highly pleasurable and produces extremely strong orgasms), unless you require more lubrication.

Tantric Yoni Massage

There is a huge difference between penetration of the vagina and massage of the vagina. As we've discussed in the section above, on the lingam, the massage of the vagina is not an act of furious "in and out" action. It's massage and this is the first thing those giving this type of a massage to a woman should understand. The yoni is being worshipped in Tantric massage, just as the lingam is. In the same manner, the object of the game is not orgasm. It's massage. If orgasm is what you're after, you'll certainly get it, but the object is intimacy, worship and connecting with your partner on a more profound level.

Like men, some women will view the prospect of genital massage a source of some anxiety, but for entirely different reasons. Penetration of the yoni, for many women, particularly when men are involved, tends toward titillation for the man, more than satisfaction for the woman. Traditional methods of digital penetration can certainly produce orgasm (when done mindfully and with an understanding of female anatomy), but that's not often the case. For a woman to abandon herself to yoni massage, it's important that the giving partner be knowledgeable about what's about to happen. That's first and foremost. Also important is that the receiving woman be made as comfortable and relaxed as possible. Even more than men, women respond to sensual cues like scent and texture. The area you're going to use for Tantric massage should be set up with this in mind. Incense, scented candles and scented massage oil are all aids for producing the desire effect.

Starting your Tantric massage session with a woman as the receiver, demands a more romantic approach. As with intercourse, women like foreplay. They like everything this involves, due to the highly sensual nature of women, so kissing and touching and paying attention to her entire body are all deeply important. Male readers should be particularly aware of this and ensure that they're spending the time required to lead up to massage of the yoni. The receiving woman should be relaxed and aroused by the time the giving partner is ready to proceed.

Getting there

The clitoris is a highly sensitive organ and much larger than it appears to the

naked eye. The part of it we're able to see is only the tip of iceberg. Beneath a woman's labial folds, extending down both sides of the vaginal opening, are the "legs" of the clitoris. It's the tip of the clitoris that most of us associated with female orgasm. But Tantra teaches that the female counterpart to the male sacred spot (which is, in truth, both that pea-sized section of skin we spoke of in the lingam section *and* the prostate gland) is located on the anterior wall of the vagina, about two inches inside.

When the giving partner has established that the receiving partner is ready for yoni massage, it's important that the yoni be liberally lubricated with a product like the one described above. It's also important that the giving partner not head straight to the tip of the clitoris, as (following the extended massage just given to all parts of the woman's body), this will be erect. All the thousands of nerve-endings in the clitoris will be standing at attention and ready for orgasm, but this needs to be kept at bay for as long as possible. Orgasm is not the point. As I have reminded readers throughout – with Tantra, intimacy is the point. The yoni is being worshipped.

As the entrance to the womb, the place from which life springs, the yoni is like the entrance to a sacred temple. Keeping this in mind as you approach that entrance will guide your hands. Start with the labia, gently massaging and stroking them. Occasional attention to the peak of the clitoris can also be given, but don't overdo it before you've even entered the holy of holies. That would be a shame.

When the giving partner senses that the receiving partner is ready, a finger maybe inserted in the vaginal opening. The palm of the hand should be facing up. These will leave the thumb free to gently massage the clitoris, intermittently. Once inside, the sacred spot (which we in the West call the "G-Spot") can be located on the vagina's front wall. This small mound is, like the prostate gland, is concealed behind a membrane. When located, this may be massaged with a stroking motion.

Continuing this movement, while stimulating the peak of the clitoris with the thumb will be intensely pleasurable for the female partner and she may be close to orgasm almost immediately. If that's the case, minimize contact with the clitoral peak and concentrate on the sacred spot. Pay close attention to your

partner's responses and permit her to enjoy the sensation of her yoni being massaged worshipfully and mindfully for as long as possible, before orgasm is reached. She will find the experience to be one unlike any she's ever had before.

Tantric massage can be a deeply fulfilling experience for both men and women. Putting aside common misconceptions about the primacy of orgasm in our sexuality and, instead, enjoying a deeply intimate experience of mutual appreciation through massage can be revelatory. It can also enhance the sexual IQ and responsiveness of both partners. Women will find, with time, that yoni massage facilitates greater comfort with their bodies and greater trust of their partners. They will most probably also find that orgasm is easier to reach and occur more often during sexual intercourse. Men will find, with time, that lingam massage opens them up emotionally (by either method discussed earlier in this chapter) and breaks down some of the barriers and inhibitions some men struggle with. Combined with the ability to delay orgasm afforded by male sacred spot massage, these benefits await those men who are willing to put aside cultural misconceptions about sexuality and discover the rest of their bodies.

Comfort with ourselves is fundamental to comfort with and trust in our partners. Tantric massage can assist people of both sexes and of any sexuality to find new depths in their erotic experience and further, connect to a spiritual element that may have been missing in their sex lives, to date. Loving ourselves and connecting deeply and intimately with our partners can reveal emotional depths and erotic vistas we hadn't imagined. For those who are ready to explore the spiritual side of sex, Tantra is one way to expand the traditional, Western concept of sex and place it in a much more holistic position in our lives.

A Personal Story about Tantric Massage

While no one would consider me a Tantric practitioner, I have explored this massage technique with several of my partners and continue to enjoy it with my current partner. I can attest to the genuinely spiritual nature of the experience, especially if the person you try Tantric massage with for the first time is knowledgeable.

My partner was a deeply spiritual person who was fond of finding new ways to expand life's horizons and Tantra was just another corner of the world to explore. When trying it was first suggested, I was a little intimidated. Let's face it; opening yourself to that level of intimacy is a little intimidating. We weren't a sexually exclusive couple, but my partner assured me that experiencing this level of intimacy did not imply that we were suddenly on the marriage trajectory. Rather, the practice of Tantric massage opens those who practice it to an appreciation of the sacredness of sexuality. This does not imply exclusivity. It implies respect. In fact, I believe that all sexual experience should be approached from the standpoint of respect. Whether you intend to spend the rest of your life with someone, or are having a "one nighter", you are physically engaging with another human being. This should always be kept in mind and respect should be the overriding principle in your sexual ethics agenda.

The great sex guru, Dan Savage, counsels that we should leave all our sex partners better than when we found them. Not being committed to someone doesn't mean you need to be rude. In fact, sexual connection should preclude rudeness, dismissiveness and cruelty of all kinds. What Tantra taught me is that I was able to remove the barriers that sometimes accompany non-committal sex. I was able to stop pretending I needed to protect myself from my partner's emotions (and my own). Part of that was surrendering the ambiguity and uncertainty that sometimes accompany our less than long-term sexual attachments. Tantra's focus on sexual union as sacred brings joy to even the most casual encounter. We are not "meat". We are not inanimate. We are feeling creatures with sexual needs. Those two realities cannot be separated.

My experience of Tantra also taught me that the male and female genitalia are so remarkable and laden with sensation, that they deserve our undivided and worshipful attention. We tend to think of them as means to an end. What our

genitals really are, though, are portals to the divine. They are also agents of understanding and connection. Coming to an understanding of that truth is central to enjoying respectful relationships with all our sex partners, throughout our lives.

Whether you're a man or a woman, Tantric massage can be enormously beneficial, also, for your sense of self-esteem. When we're able to surrender ourselves to intimacy of this profundity and to release our traditional ideas of what it means to be sexual, we can see ourselves with new eyes. I am eternally grateful to the partner who initiated me into this ancient form of massage. The experience has walked with me through my life and informed all my subsequent relationships, enriching them and enriching other areas of my life and world.

It's important for me to note, also, that the practice of lingam massage has helped me to break down personal restrictions based on socially constructed concepts of masculinity. This has led me to a more refined understanding of sexuality and the role that ideas about gender, masculinity and femininity play in our sex lives. These realities can crush people's sense of who they are. The more people in the world that reject them as facades and barriers to sexual happiness and satisfaction there are, the better.

I highly recommend this form to all my readers, for its instructive value, as well as its eroticism. You will find another level of yourself in Tantric massage and a new way of interacting with your partner or partners.

Chapter 7: The Japanese Art of Nuru

When it comes to sensual massage, the East seems to be the birthplace of some of the most erotically-charged forms. Japan is the site of our next exotic exploration, as it's the home and native land of Nuru massage. This island nation is known for an interesting dichotomy between exploratory and taboo sexuality and a reputation for hosting a somewhat rigid society. In some ways, there are parallels between Japan and Victorian England. While straight laced and prim, publicly, the Japanese have a great interest in unusual and pioneering sexual practices. The life like love dolls, for example, originated in Japan. There is a particular style of bondage native to Japan, also, employing complex knots in ropes. Love hotels, designed for mid-day, illicit assignations are yet another erotic brainchild of the Japanese. And so it is that this small nation of binaries gave birth to the practice of Nuru (also known as "slippery" massage, which is what the Japanese word "nuru" means).

Around for generations in Japan, it's only recently that Nuru has become widely known in the West. It's popularity in Japan spread for decades in the relative obscurity of the country's bath houses, but when word got out to the rest of the world, there was no stopping its diffusion to the four corners thereof.

This massage technique employs an all-natural gel developed specifically for use in Nuru, made from brown seaweed. This seaweed is called "nori", is edible and is, in fact, the same type of seaweed used to make sushi. Who knew nori was so versatile? Extraordinarily slippery, this gel has no taste or scent. Its active ingredient is fucoidan, which is often combined with aloe vera, chamomile and other substances to enhance the gel's unique properties. Fucoidan gives the Nuru gel its ultra slippery consistency, making it the smoothest, silkiest, most slippery lubricating agent known in the world of sensual massage.

Nuru is achieved by spreading a generous portion over a large section of both participants' bodies and rubbing them together. The use of the gel makes this technique astonishingly erotic for both partners. Those who practice the technique swear by it and tend to be somewhat evangelistic about its benefits, even opening websites like Nuru Love to spread the good news. Nuru is an entire genre unto itself, also in the pornography industry, with many admirers, all over the world.

Until very recently, Nuru was illegal in the United States, as this type of massage is considered a sexual service. But in Nevada, where the sale of sexual services is legal, one licensed facility has begun to offer the massage style as part of its suite of services, which can be enjoyed by men, women and couples. The Nuru specialty room at this facility includes a waterproof bed made especially for this style of massage, as the gel would require rather a lot of clean up, if using a conventional bed.

Enjoying Nuru

Like all varieties of massage, Nuru can be enjoyed as a couple, as a threesome, or it may even involve more people. It all depends on your supply of Nuru gel and your personal preferences. You'll want to have Nuru gel on hand at all times, once you've experienced the massage. You'll find instructions on how to make your own at the end of this chapter. If you're a single, Nuru professionals may be hard to find, but experiencing it on vacation may be something you'd like to try, especially if you're in Japan (or these days, Las Vegas)

As I've said above, conventional bedding doesn't lend itself to Nuru. It's best to either have a drop cloth set aside especially for your Nuru sessions, or to perform Nuru in the shower, or other location where the Nuru gel will be easy to clean up. A good option for the drop cloth is a padded mattress cover, which is easily removed and thrown in the laundry. I'd advise plastic, but I know how extremely slippery Nuru gel is and we don't want either or both of you to wind up on the floor. Don't laugh! It has been known to happen.

Begin your Nuru session by sharing a bath or shower, sensually washing each other and preparing yourselves for what's to come. The room you've chosen for your session should be nice and warm, as this enhances the experience. If you've chosen the shower, the area will be warm, moist and ready for some slippery Nuru fun after the shower you've shared in preparation. If you're using the bedroom, be sure to turn the thermostat up to make the room a cocoon of warmth and comfort.

The Nuru gel should be warmed prior to use. This may involve heating on the stove, or in the microwave. It might even be fun to place your Nuru gel in a heatproof bowl over a holder designed for diffusing the scent of essential oils. If you can find one the right size, the sight of the gel heating up will add another dimension of anticipation to your sensual experience. As you see the flame from the candle burning and warming the agent of your coming erotic adventure, you can plan how you're going to pleasure each other.

When you're both ready to go (and completely nude, of course), one of you will lay on the bed, as the other straddles. The straddling partner will then pour enough warm Nuru gel on the body of the partner lying down to cover the body

(you can do the other side later, if desired). The straddling partner will then pour the Nuru gel over themselves. You can spread the gel on each other, in preparation, or just let the sliding action of Nuru do the job for you. If you're having your Nuru session in the shower, take turns pouring it on each other.

Now that you're both coated in a nice, warm layer of gel, you can begin. The idea is to glide your body over that of your partner's. Varying the level of contact with different parts of your body, this massage technique is all about the buildup. Highly sensual and erotic, the whole process is driven by the Nuru gel, which has a consistency that can only be described as sublime. As with any other massage technique, Nuru's strength is in the element of surprise and the degree of pressure applied. From the slightest grazing of your body against your partner's to full on grinding, Nuru is exciting and the sensation of the gel heightens the effect, moving the action along at the pace both of your desire.

Whether standing up or lying down, Nuru massage is a technique that demands some imagination. If you're doing Nuru for the first time, you'll probably both be so excited, you'll have trouble holding back, but as you become accustomed to Nuru and the indescribable sensation of the gel on your bodies as they're rubbed together, you'll become proficient at building the erotic excitement. We all know how thrilling the feeling of another person's bare skin is when pressed against our own. Now just add Nuru gel to turbo charge the experience.

Make Your Own Nuru Gel

There are products on the market that are available in powder form, but re-creating Nuru massage gel needn't be a major undertaking in terms of either labor or funds. You can make your very own version of it, which replicates the properties of the hallowed original.

Sodium alginate is found in nori, so it makes sense that you can reproduce a homemade lubricant which will stand in for the much more expensive Nuru gel. This recipe only requires the use of two ingredients, so it's pretty easy to make.

Ingredients

1 teaspoon sodium alginate
1 cup filtered water

In a glass pan (please, do not use a metal pan for this operation), combine ingredients. Set the element to low or medium.

When you see that the sodium alginate has dissolved in the water, remove the mixture from the heat and allow it to cool. Keep this mixture in the refrigerator. If you want to make more, just proportionately increase the amounts of the two ingredients.

I won't lie. Sodium alginate isn't cheap, clocking in at about USD \$50 per pound. The substance resembles household baking soda and a pound renders just over 750 teaspoons. The recipe shown will make approximately a cup and the bag of alginate will make you approximately six gallons of "Nuru gel". While it's still not as cheap as some of us might like it to be, going the home made route is much less expensive than buying the powdered, prefab variety. Of course, you could always seek out a Nuru practitioner and pay for the total package. No bed pad to wash!

Nuru massage is an exotic, erotic adventure for those times when you're looking for a royal treatment type of massage that's exciting for both of you and provides something out of the ordinary. Using your whole body and varying levels of contact and pressure creates an experience like none other.

A Personal Story about Nuru Massage

Nuru massage had been on the edge of my consciousness for some time, when I finally discovered it for myself. My partner of the day had found out that the technique was now available in Las Vegas and was curious. So was I.

So, after some deliberation, we purchased our tickets and jetted off to Sin City (the town that tells no tales). Checking into our hotel on the Strip, we could barely contain ourselves. The following day, we'd take the rental care out to the facility (yes, a bunny ranch, believe it or not) to get our Nuru on. Sure, we could have created our own Nuru experience, but we wanted to be among the first Americans to enjoy it the Vegas way – for pay!

Upon arrival, we were treated to quite a show in the sports bar, where hostesses practiced in the art of Nuru lounged seductively. While they all looked pretty proficient to us, we finally decided on two who seemed to be especially amenable to providing the service to a couple. We invited them for a drink and discovered that one was paying her way through medical school, while the other was supporting a teen, just finishing high school, while caring for any aging parent. Both were highly intelligent and professional. They took great pains to put us both at ease and to explain to us what to expect in our session. They were also very flirtatious with both of us and made what might have been an uncomfortable first time experience genuinely pleasant.

(I want to make clear that what I've said in the previous chapter on Tantra and respect for one's sex partners applies fully to sex professionals. Sex professionals are doing a job. They're providing a service. Respect for what they do is implicit in the fact that you have sought them out to provide that service. Getting paid to provide erotic services is just as valid as getting paid to notarize legal documents. Sex work is just as honorable as any other type of work and if everyone in the world could keep that in mind, it would be a better, happier, more sex-positive world. Sexual ethics encompass every single person you engage in a sexual experience and that includes sex workers).

We found that the hostesses were not only professional, intelligent and compassionate people, but extremely skilled at Nuru. We had an erotic experience we will never forget, as long as we live, with the two hostesses

providing us with all we desired and more. We left the facility sexually satisfied, relaxed and vowing to return (which we did, as a couple and I have, on my own and with two other partners).

Whether you're an open-minded, sexually adventurous couple, or a sexually liberated single, seek out Nuru massage in Las Vegas, or Japan (if you're lucky enough to go). The Vegas facility was clean, pleasant and welcoming. The prices were very fair for the services we paid for and the experience, as a whole, was a peak one I will never forget. The partner I went there with several times is still a very good friend and we're only too happy to recommend the experience to others. We talk about it to this day, very fondly.

But Nuru massage has a cousin in a very similar vein, also native to Japan. This is known as "soapy massage".

Soapy Massage

Soapy massage follows much the same erotic trajectory as Nuru massage, minus the Nuru and plus the soap. That means there's water involved and the best place to pursue soapy massage is in the tub or shower.

Because of the nature of soap, though (which is inherently drying to the skin), I recommend that you use a high quality organic soap, which still features a good lather. The best kind of lather for soap massage is a rich, thick and silky. This type of lather allows your body to glide against that of your partner without friction, much in the same way the Nuru gel does with Nuru massage. Using the wrong kind of soap, however, can reduce the intensity of the experience, so I highly recommend you seek out a superior brand of soap, one that produces long lasting, creamy and silky bubbles. A type of soap that features both effervescent lathering action and silky smooth moisturizing action is what you're looking for.

The soap massage has three stages, beginning with bathing or showering. During this preliminary stage, the two of you can enjoy each other while getting fresh and tasty. This stage is part of the anticipatory tension. Once you're finished bathing, you'll want find an area (whether that's the shower stall, or the bathroom floor), that allows the two of you to take advantage of the sudsy soap you're going to coat each other with. For this segment, you may use an inflatable mattress. Just be prepared for the soapy, watery mess. Don't worry. It's worth it.

The receiving partner may lay face down on the air mattress (if you're using one), while the giving partner lies on top, working the soap with warm water from a basin or tub. Sponges should also be used for this stage of the soap massage, to increase the amount of lather from the soap. The giving partner will lay on the back of the receiving partner and begin to glide and rub the body all over with the soap, using either the hands or a sponge. This, of course, can be achieved in a standing position. When both partners are satisfied, the receiving partner may roll over and face the giving partner. This is the most erotically intense part of the massage.

The giving partner may wrap the legs around the receiving partner to intensify the experience. This is achieved by sliding up and down the receiving partner's

body, as the thighs and buttocks do the job hands might normally do. You can do this standing up, too, with the receiving partner supporting the giving partner and the giving partner bracing the feet against the shower stall, or the wall for leverage). Couples practicing soapy massage can take turns giving and receiving to make sure everyone's happy and ready for what tends to happen right after soapy massage, when both partners are covered in frothy suds and more than ready to get their freak on. Afterwards, a cleansing, sensual shower is in order and perhaps a wind down, consisting of massaging each other with a rich lotion to re-hydrate the skin. You'll want to set aside an entire evening for this one, as its time intensive and ever-so-pleasantly satiating. Afterwards, you'll both fall asleep, completely happy and exhausted!

As with Nuru, or any other type of massage, soapy massage can be found in many places, around the world. While a specialty of some renown in Thailand, the technique is being diffused and practiced in other locations around the world. Facilities that offer soapy massage is usually found where Nuru massage is and welcome women and couples, also. Most of these facilities are happy to help you add a third or fourth person to your massage activities as described above. It's not for everyone, to be sure, but I do highly recommend group activity for massages like this.

Let's move on to sharpening your personal massage skills, by talking about human erogenous zones, what they are, how they work and how you can put them to work for you and the person your hands are speaking to.

Chapter 8: Male Erogenous Zones

There's a rather telling picture making the rounds of the internet featuring various zones where dogs and cats enjoy being touched. On one side, a diagram of a dog is shown, sectioned into areas. On each of the areas is written the word "great". On the other side of the picture, there's a diagram of a cat. The area of the cat just behind the ears is labeled "great", while all other areas are labeled "don't do it".

And here we have a fitting illustration of male erogenous zones. No, I won't say all men are dogs (because that wouldn't be true). I will say, though, that men enjoy being touched pretty well everywhere! There are notable exceptions to this rule, in my experience, but you know what they say about exceptions – they prove the rule.

But men, just like women, have erogenous zones. Erogenous zones are parts of our bodies that respond to touch with arousal. They are like sexual triggers, located all over the body. Some of them may be more sensitive on some men than they are on others, but generally speaking, these "trigger" areas can be counted on to up your massage game considerably.

So where are these magical triggers and how can we best put them to work in pleasuring our male partners with our hands? Let's take a walk around the male anatomy and pin them down.

The Frenulum

While the penis may seem like an obvious starting point for our trek over the manscape, I'm willing to bet you didn't know about the frenulum. If you do, gold star! If you don't, just remember you learn something new every day and if you don't, you may be deceased.

You can find the frenulum just under the glans (head) of the penis. It's that little area on the outward facing surface where the shaft joins the glans and is recognizable as a ridge of skin connecting the two. The head of the penis looks like an upside down heart from this side and that little bit of skin, so it's rumored, is just as sensitive as the clitoris. While not as rich in nerve endings, there are many of them to be found in the frenulum.

To take advantage of this little fellow's powers, all that's required is to avoid it until your male partner is aroused and already enjoying the attention you're paying to his erect penis. Pull back from whatever you're doing and then, hone in on the frenulum, with the tip of your finger, gently stroking it with an upward motion, while cradling his scrotum with your other hand. You can also wrap your hand around the head of his penis, gliding it up over it, as your thumb strokes the frenulum. To reduce the intensity, alternate the action between the glans and the shaft (which is much less sensitive). Watch him go out of his mind.

The Fold at the Top of His Thighs

Surprised? He will be too, as not a lot of guys get to experience stimulation of this erogenous zone. You'll find this fold at the top of his thighs, where they meet his buttocks. While it sounds odd, it's a real thing, believe me. It's one of my personal favorites, also.

Massage your way down his back, until you reach his buttocks. These you should ignore as much as possible to get the full effect from stimulating that little fold. Gently stroking your way down his cheeks, tickling those little dimples on your way down, back off as you arrive at the fold. He'll be waiting for you to touch it. Make him wait a little longer, as you caress and massage his thighs. At this point, he may be attempting to have sex with the mattress, so

don't make him wait too long.

When you reach the fold, gently run your fingers across it, on either side. When you feel him begin to respond, give him a light smack with the palm of your hand. Generally speaking, this will cause him to raise his bottom for another. Alternate sides; switching from the fold to the peak of his buttocks, until he begs for you to stop. Then return to that sweet little fold. Rinse, repeat and let the games begin!

The Scrotal Seam

We all know that the scrotum deserves equal time to the penis, but sometimes it gets left out in the cold in favor of its magnificent next door neighbor, Mr. Happy. That's a mistake. This part of a man's body is very sensitive. That can be a little daunting, because that sensitivity is an evolutionary response to potential damage to this vulnerable part of a man's body. Going after the scrotum with too much enthusiasm can thus spoil the fun. It's important to keep in mind that it's very sensitive and to gauge your male partner's response to what you're doing.

The skin that protects a man's testicles from the world is known as the scrotal sac. Facing outward, the line running down between the two testicles is called the raphe. This particular part of the scrotum is full of erotic sensation and loves to be touched.

To stimulate the scrotal seam, or raphe to maximum effect, I advise the use of a gentle warming gel, or heated oil. You won't need very much of this, but you will need some, as friction tends to reduce sensation and you want him to feel it all. Because so few people pay much attention to the raphe, he will love the fact that you're taking the time to gently stroke it. Before you do so, though, give the scrotum a few little tugs. You can also cradle it gently in your hand, as you ever so carefully manipulated the testicles. The key word here is "gentle". Do not squeeze or yank. You can back off before approaching the raphe and really surprise him with your gentle, butterfly like strokes. Remember to ask him how he's enjoying it and invite feedback. Remember, it's on his body (even if it's pretty swell that you actually know where it is).

Ears

Attentive lovers of men will know this is true. The human ear is a very sensitive place and, when nuzzled (especially if done out of the blue), men will melt like butter on a window ledge someplace in New Orleans. All it takes is a little forethought and a mindful touch to make this erogenous zone come to life.

The lobes of the ears are especially sensitive and taking one of these between your thumb and forefinger and gently massaging and tugging it, can be highly erotic, especially, when you combine manual stimulation of the ear lobes with a trip down the neck.

Neck

Like the ears, the neck is an erogenous zone common to both sexes. Men, while they are loath to admit, find the stimulation of this part of their bodies highly erotic. A gentle (even feather like) touch is called for to derive maximum effect for this area.

Particularly sensitive is the area of the neck directly below both ears and also, behind them. Extending from just under the lobes of the ears to just above the mandibular joint (jaw) and downward, above the collarbone, you'll find a magical area of masculine eroticism. Stimulating this part of his neck, in concert with stimulation of his ears, will make a man putty in your hands. Long, soft, deliberate strokes down the length of this part of his neck is sublime for a man. While they will never tell you themselves, this is a delicious acknowledgement and celebration of male sensuality that all lovers of men should call on with greater frequency.

Feet

It may surprise some of you to hear this, but men have more nerve endings in the soles of their feet than women do. While we traditionally think of the foot massage as something women crave, men have a soft spot for attention to this area of their bodies, too.

In fact, there's a very specific part of the male's foot that responds to touch. This area is located under the third toe from the big piggy, just above the arch. You'll find that pressing on it yields some surprising responses. This is a physiological fact, as this small area of the sole of a man's foot, when pressed, increases blood flow, which has a warming and enlivening effect.

Giving your male lover a foot massage will not only pleasantly surprise him, but imagine his additional surprise when you zero in on that font of pleasure located in that little, secret spot and gently stimulate it. His pleasure will lead to other erotic ports of call in no time flat, as his response will be gratifying beyond anything you'd imagined possible.

Chapter 9: Female Erogenous Zones

Some of the erogenous zones we've covered above for men are common to women, too. There's nothing particularly surprising about this, as both men and women are human animals, with much of the same sexual arousal wiring. The ears and neck are two examples of commonly held erogenous zones. All the same, now we're going to talk about some of the areas found on women's bodies that respond extravagantly to sensual touch.

Women, generally, are more sensually attuned than men. That's not a biological fact. It's a cultural fact. Men tend to be socialized to reject any suggestion that they're suckers for anything that smells nice, or feels nice (except for maybe intercourse and a pair of breasts in their hands). They like to believe they're simple creatures, with few needs.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The fact is that men have just as much sensual IQ as women do. They just need someone to unleash it; coax it out of its socially constructed man cave for men to fully enjoy it. If you're someone who loves men, it's well worth your time to encourage the sensuality of your male lover. It will enhance his sexual experience exponentially and broaden his erotic horizons beyond measure.

If, however, you're someone who loves women, you'll already know how deeply sensual the female of the species is. Scent, sound, touch, taste, sight (even though some claim women aren't "visual", I can attest to the fact such claims are bunk of the highest order) are all the realm of sensual woman. Women take it for granted that their sexual response is tuned to their sensuality. The trick for lovers of women (those of you who aren't women, yourselves) is to acknowledge this fact and give it full play.

Touch, on the sensitive and highly responsive body of a woman, is like playing a musical instrument. Touch her in the right place and feel the magic. Let's talk about women's erogenous zones and how to make that magic happen.

Head

The skin on our heads is packed with nerve endings and stimulating these with your hands can be an erotically charged experience. The nerves here can send signals of relaxation and pleasure through the entire body, if approached with the right strategy.

A woman being a creature of intense sensuality, scalp massage will immediately appeal to any woman alive. You needn't even offer her one. Just caress her head as you kiss her, gently massaging her head just behind the ears, up toward the temples, over the top of her head and down toward the nape of her neck. A gentle (but firm and intentional) scalp massage can be a prelude to the neck and ears. Women's ears and necks are just as erotically attuned as men's are. A relaxing scalp massage will stimulate blood flow, relax her and have her ready for a trip to her ears, neck and points south. Don't spare the horses.

Nipples

While many men enjoy the sexual charge of nipple stimulation, women's nipples are directly linked to their genitalia. This is most likely an evolutionary accommodation arising from breast feeding. Women's brains process the pleasure derived from the stimulation of their breasts and nipples in exactly the same way they do stimulation of the clitoris and vagina. Then again, there's also the fact that women's breasts are beloved of people of all sexualities. Breasts have some kind of magical power to draw the eye and hold it (in thrall), by virtue of their very nature. Jiggly and eminently squeezable, female breasts invite touch and, in fact, cry out for it. This is particularly true of the super sensitive female nipple. Who knows which came first? Nature? Nurture? The fact is breasts are divine!

While many are called, few actually know quite what to do with nipples once they're confronted with them. This is a sad truth for the majestic mammary gland, but one I'm only too willing to help with.

Whatever you do, remember that breasts are not bread dough. Kneading them is for kittens and puppies and not human lovers. Approach your lover's breasts with reverence. Start with the breasts themselves, gently caressing them. You should use a good silicone lube or massage oil for this operation, in order to reduce friction. If the woman is in a sitting position, she will derive even great pleasure from having her breasts massaged.

Moving on to the nipples is a matter of finesse. Circling the aureola (the dark skin surrounding the nipple) with your finger is a good place to start. From there, you can begin to graze the nipples with your fingertips, building arousal and excitement. Taking one and then the other nipple between your thumb and forefinger and gently pulling them will have her climbing the walls. But don't handle nipples as though you were tuning an old-fashioned radio dial. Nipples are flesh. They're not going to get you an FM station.

Massaging both nipples between your thumbs and forefingers, as you alternate between this action and gathering her breasts gently in your hands to caress them will produce a result both you and your partner will find blissfully satisfying.

Belly

There's a reason the belly is the seat of Semitic sensuality. In ancient Babylon, it's recorded that women danced for women in labor by female family members to encourage the delivery of the baby. This practice gave rise to the art of Oriental dance (belly dance), which is still practiced today, all over the world. The rippling, undulating movement of the abdomen and oscillations of the hips speak of female sexuality in such a powerful way that the form is actually banned, or regulated in many parts of the Middle East. Women in charge of their sensual, erotically evocative bodies can be a little scary for some folks. It's often said that women's bodies are dangerous and inappropriate. That's because some people are intimidated by them.

But not you!

That's why we're going to talk about the sexy female belly. We all know that many women are self-conscious about their abdomens, thinking them either too big, or not toned enough, or not airbrushed enough. Generally speaking, a lot of women have a great deal of insecurity about this area of their bodies. So, when women's sex partners pay attention to the belly, as a sensual, erotically charged area, it's very empowering for women who are less than secure in their body image.

Like the nipples, the lower abdomen is a highly sensual area, full of nerve-endings and directly connected to a woman's genitalia. Gentle touch of the lower abdomen, between the belly button and the pubic mound can create a sense of physical anticipation, which will lead rapidly to arousal. While many women may have insecurities about this part of their body, it's doubtless that they also respond extravagantly to partners who give it the attention it so richly deserves. The vagina may even start to contract as the lower abdomen is stroked and massaged.

Partners engaging this part of a woman's anatomy should take their time, circling the belly button with a finger, gently caressing and stroking this sensitive area. Oil, or another lubricant is highly advised to heighten the sensation of having this part of the body attended to, with the fingers stroking and the palms of the hand being employed to warm the belly and heighten

arousal. As the massaging partner moves closer and closer to the woman's genitalia, her excitement will become noticeable.

Thighs

A woman's thighs, like her belly, are highly sensitive. Again, a lot of women can be ambivalent about their thighs and be shy about partners paying an inordinate amount of attention to them. It's up to you, though, as a partner dedicated to bringing even the shyest partner the greatest pleasure to release her from any inhibitions she may suffer from in this regard.

The inner thighs, especially, are a fertile ground of erogenous response. Together with the backs of the knees, those downy inner thighs are one of the most sensitive parts of a woman's body. A gentle, slow approach is highly advised, for that reason. Ignoring the genitalia entirely, starting at the backs of the knees and working upward, by way of those soft, silken thighs is a way to build anticipation and erotic tension. Slow, deliberate strokes, which are feather light, will yield the desired response.

Gentle, deliberate massage of the inner thighs and the delicate backs of the knees (where the skin is very soft) is a great prelude to genital massage. Her arousal will be apparent to partners who take the time to stimulate this erogenous zone.

Inside of the Elbow

There is no part of a woman's body more sensually attuned than the inside of her elbow. The ultra-soft skin here is replete with blood vessels that are very close to the surface. In addition, the fact that this part of the body is protected from the elements for most of its life makes it a reliably sensitive and responsive area.

Even the most delicate touch of the skin in this area can send a woman around the bend. Gently running the fingers up and down the inner crease of the elbow is a prelude to something wonderful. There is not a woman alive who will tell you otherwise. Smart lovers of women know this and take full advantage, taking care to address this incendiary little pocket of sensual pleasure at just the right moment, to elicit the desire effect.

Especially at the beginning of a romantic relationship, attention to this area will have the woman you're courting convinced that you're a student of high sensuality, due to your feather-light ministrations of this delicate patch of skin and nerve endings. Even the slightest touch here can set the scene for expanded explorations of her body, as it's a signal that the person doing the touching is a sexual force to be reckoned with. It's not every day women meet lovers quite that tuned in to what turns them on, so you can call this particular erogenous zone tip my personal gift to you.

Clitoris

In the section on male erogenous zones, I've put the most obvious zone at the beginning of the section. I'm doing the reverse in the section on women's erogenous zones for very good reason. Women, as I've stressed throughout, are sensual beings who demand that they be touched. If you want to experience women's sexuality at its best, then you are beholden to honor the sensual nature of women by acknowledging that nature before heading to the highly intimate parts of her body.

Men and women, in this respect are a little different. While we have many of the same needs and desires, our way of expressing them is quite different. If men truly want to know women at their best (in that carnal, erotic sense), then it's essential they leave this erogenous zone to smolder as they do the grand tour of the great mystery that is the body of a woman. So you see, there is a method to my madness.

The clitoris is small, volatile volcano of nerve endings ready to explode when touched just the right way. It's not to be pinched, or touched with anything but the greatest delicacy. Touching it the wrong way will not only de-sensitize it in terms of sexual response, but can also be rather painful. There are far too many women in this world who have given up on depending on their partners to rub them the right way, as too many of their partners feel threatened by the suggestion that they should probably be doing things a little differently.

Why would anyone not want to get better at something so important? It's beyond me. The pity is, though, that some folks are a little sensitive when it comes to any critique of their sexual knowledge or prowess. Just remember – no one is born knowing everything. Sex is a learning curve for every single one of us.

So let's be clear – the clitoris is to be approached with the utmost respect. It is more sensitive than the glans of the penis and even that little patch of skin under the glans we talked about earlier. It is, in fact, the most sensitive of all human body parts, male or female. The ham fisted need not apply.

It's important to note here that everyone is born to learn. Learning is a big part of being human and part of what makes life interesting. We learn by trial and

error. But as Einstein once so succinctly pointed out – the definition of insanity is to do the same thing repeatedly and expect different results. Are you insane? No! So let's do things a little differently, shall we?

Whatever you're going to do and whatever your approach or technique is, it's absolutely imperative that you use lubrication. The more slippery and long lasting the lubrication, the better. Apply this to the clitoris, by drizzling it and allowing it to run down into the labia and the vagina. Allow the sensation of the lube to penetrate. Make your partner wait a little while as you attend to her inner thighs, working your hands upwards, but avoid contact with the genitalia.

To begin with, you can avoid her genitals altogether. Briefly hover as though you intend to make contact and then move on to the lower abdomen. Repeat on your way back to her thighs, until she is more than ready for contact. With all the lubrication you've prepared her genitals with, it will now be easy to make contact with the clitoris.

As described in the section on Tantric massage, start with the portion that runs down both sides of the vagina, under the labia (lips), gently stroking up and down. The clitoris will become erect as you do this. When you're ready to approach the clitoral peak, do so with the utmost care. You will want to barely touch it as you run your finger tip across it in circles in both directions, as well as in figure eights. If you're gentle and consistent, you'll find that this erogenous zone, combined with massage of the other zones mentioned will elicit a lusty orgasm from your woman love.

The human body is full of surprises, so the erogenous zones listed in these last two chapters can vary between individuals. Some people may have erogenous zones you might never have thought would be subject to erotic response. But the truth is that everyone is different. Knowing your partner and taking the time to explore the body you're coming to a better understanding of is key to being the kind of tactile lover you want to be. Your lover's body is a beautiful world of sensation and discovery, just as yours is. Taking the time to explore each other and to experiment, patiently and attentively, is the key to the bliss of touch, regardless of the lover you're with.

Chapter 10: Tactile Neptune

Neptune is the lord of the oceans. We can only imagine the kind of fun he had, capering in the briny deep with the various sirens and water sprites under his maritime rule. But you and I both know that fun in the water isn't for the gods alone. It's for we lowly humans, too and so this chapter is dedicated to highlighting some of the best sensual massage options you can enjoy using the primal element of water.

Lao Tzu said that water only seemed to be weak, but that it was capable of breaking down the most enduring resistance, due to its relentless nature. Water is, in fact, an element so uniquely suited to massage that the hands aren't even necessary. Water does it all for you, especially if there are jets involved – or specially designed toys. Here, we're going to explore some of the best ways to use water as your co-pilot to create an even more intense massage experience.

We've explored the world of soapy massage and surely, that's a stellar technique. But there are so many options for massage that involve water that it would be remiss of me not to include some of them in this book.

The world of sex toys is perfectly brimming with options you'll find titillating. Some you'll be more interested in than others, but I'm writing this book with everyone in mind and want to offer a reasonably wide array of experiential possibilities under the umbrella "massage". They're all valid and they're all the favorite technique of somebody, somewhere. Aquatic massage is a genre that appeals to a vast array of people.

The beauty of aquatic massage is the relative weightlessness, as well as the slippery nature of water. Contrary to popular belief, lube can be used in water. Silicone-based lubes are tailor made for this type of activity. Using a lube just adds to the slippery fun and ups the erotic quotient. Lube also permits the type of auxiliary activities that massage so often leads to, without everyone having to get out of the warm, sudsy water and towel off. It's so much fun in there! Anyway, why be so cruel as to leave the rubber ducky all alone?

Waterproof Sex Toys

All sex toys are not created equal, because they're not all waterproof. Fun in the tub, shower or Jacuzzi all require the use of toys which won't be ruined by water or (God forbid) electrocute one or both of you. Don't worry! There's a sex toy out there for you!

For a start, don't let the word "waterproof" fool you. Sex toys that aren't described as "submersible" are not going to work if you're in the tub, pool, or lake. You need to know that when you put that device underwater it's not going to be ruined, so that's your first requirement.

One type of water fun sex toy some of my readers might take an interest in is the water filled penis pump. Intended as a male enhancement device, the hydrotherapy penis pump can also be a lot of fun for those who like a little kink with their erotic fun in the water. Having a lover apply this gadget in the midst of your play can be exciting. Let's face it; these things look a little weird. Sort of like the Jetsons meet the Flintstones in a porno movie (with sea nymphs capering about). As the penis is pumped by the device, it also becomes more erect due to the stimulation of the blood vessels. Over time, this effect will be sustained, which also adds girth (at least temporarily). This can be very exciting for both men and their partners in the midst of all the steamy fun. The pumps come in a variety of sizes and pressures. Depending on what the man in question is up to, he may want to start with a beginner's model, which features less intense pressure.

A Personal Aquatic Adventure starring the Penis Pump

Not so long ago, I was on a visit to the East Coast. I always book a hotel with a pool and sauna, as these are key amenities for me, when I need to relax and kick back. I was paddling in the pool one night when I spied a couple poolside. They seemed to be rather enraptured with each other, but I couldn't help noticing the amount of attention they appeared to paying me, as I paddled up and down the length of the indoor pool. They lounged poolside, next to a stand of stately palms kept alive in the depths of winter by the heat provided in the atrium setting. Eventually, it became clear that it wasn't just my imagination. They were openly flirting with me.

I couldn't help but feel flattered, but I knew how these things went. They could be dodgy and sometimes – people are just flirting and that's all they want. So off I went to the sauna. It was empty and so I took the liberty of removing my trunks, sitting naked on the wooden bench. It was not long before the pool would close for the evening and so I felt my indiscretion would go unnoticed.

I'd only been in there a few minutes and had worked up a good glisten, when I felt a gust of cool air as the door to the sauna was opened. Opening my eyes, I saw the couple from the pool settling in on the bench opposite, taking me in as they did so. It was now rather obvious what they were up to. I smiled enigmatically, wondering how this would play out. Little did I know that what was to follow would be one of the more erotically extreme experiences of my life.

It wasn't long before both of them had their swimsuits off. They'd taken my nudity as an invitation, I supposed. Perhaps it was true that I'd been acting from a subconscious intention when I'd ditched the trunks, but their brazenness was refreshing. As we sat opposite each other, all as naked as the day we were born, we began to giggle (a little self-consciously). Then the introductions began and soon, we were talking about home, what we did for a living and what we were doing in town that night.

The comfort level having been established, and the pool area now entirely empty at only 45 minutes before closing time, we agreed that it would be a good idea to shower off and head to the bar for a drink. Two of us were of the same sex. The

other was not. But as both followed me into the change rooms designated for my sex, it became clear that an unexpected evening was about to unfold.

I didn't wait for them. I went straight to the showers and began soaping up. Before long, I felt two sets of hands on me, working the soapy lather into a froth. Then, out of the blue, I felt something lowered over my now erect penis. I looked down at it. What the hell was it?

At its base was a black, rubber accordion-shaped section that looked like a bellows. I also noted that it was full of water. A hand began to pump it rhythmically and I felt a pressure building up around my member; felt it become more erect, until it seemed my head would explode. The hand kept pumping until I begged for mercy and it was removed. It was then down to me to place it on the other erect member present in that steamy shower room and pump it for his benefit.

I will never forget the way my penis felt after that first experience of the penis pump. The water gave the process a sensuality traditional penis pumps aren't known for and the residual effects (sustained and very firm erection – for both parties) was indescribable. I'd never seen myself quite like that and my new friend was impressive, to say the least. His partner had a night of no little happiness due to this effect, I have to say.

So it took us awhile to get to the bar that night, but once we got there, we walked in with incandescent smiles on our faces. That was the night I learned to love the penis pump. I highly recommend that you incorporate it into your own aquatic adventures. Run; don't walk. Buy one for you, your partner, or a friend. You will never regret it!

The Joy of Shower Attachments

If the first thing that comes to your mind is a woman having solo fun with one of these babies, you wouldn't be wrong. But you will have completely missed the ability of a good shower attachment to make bath time way for more fun for men, too. The versatility of these devices is quite astounding and the sensual power of them to make an encounter in the bath or shower a transcendent experience of erotic pleasure, unparalleled.

Vibrators? Who needs 'em when you have a shower attachment?

There are so many to choose from, but seek out one with a variety of pulse intensities that can be easily switched out. You don't want to get stuck on one setting, fumbling for the one you want, in the heat of the moment. You want an attachment that is easy to use (when slippery, especially) and easy to clean. Even the most mundane shower attachment can be scads of fun, when it includes the requisite "pulse" settings. I doubt I need to go into much detail here, as I'm sure almost everyone reading this has experimented with their own.

But beyond the standard attachment, there are now other options out there you will find, I'm sure, quite compelling.

There's an App for That

This one's for couples and solo folks alike, hoping to make shower time even more fun than it already is. Designed specifically for use with a showerhead, all you do is screw it in and you're good to go. The Water Jet Rabbit is quickly becoming one of the most popular sex toys in the world.

Shaped like a conventional vibrator, with the added attraction of the last two inches being angled for G-spot/prostate stimulation, this device is completely submersible and waterproof. Opposite the "business" end is a jet, which delivers a pulsing stream of water to either the clitoris or the shaft of the penis/scrotum (depending on angle). It might even be extrapolated that couples could both get a charge out of the Water Jet Rabbit at the same time, depending on where the business end was housed for the festivities in question. Use your imaginations.

I won't regale you with a full on tale of the Water Jet Rabbit's numerous virtues, but I will tell you this – I bought my current partner one for Christmas. That little buddy has been earning its keep ever since and I don't even need to be there for that to happen. This provides me with some comfort, but I must say there are times when I fear my partner is developing as strong a relationship with her aquatic playmate as she has with me. But it's all right. I can take the competition (and I'm not the jealous type, at all).

While perhaps not as sophisticated as my partner's beloved Water Jet Rabbit, the Colt Shower Shot is also a lot of fun for couples and singles of either sex. Like the WJR, you hook this baby up to your showerhead. This particular device is modeled of a smooth, flexible gel. It also comes with its own hose attachment, which includes a valve for attachment. In the same way as the WJR, this allows water to pass through the device and exit from the tip, while in use, filling it with warm, pulsing water. This is fun for couples that like to have an extra hand on hand deck, as it were.

Rub a Dub Dub, Everyone Loves a Jetted Tub

Sadly, I can't boast that I have one of these in my home. When I travel, though, especially with a partner, or when I feel I might be seeking an away game, I look for hotel rooms that have these. The best of all, of course, is the hot tub, as these are large enough for more than two people and if you're the type of person who enjoys that sort of activity (with or without a partner in tow), there is nothing more erotically exciting. Jetted tubs are especially handy for clitoral stimulation, but be warned. I've never seen a woman last more than a few pulses of the jet, so it's important that you pace yourself when using these. For couples, there's nothing more exciting than anticipating the grand finale with the help of a Jacuzzi jet.

But men shouldn't be shy about employing the power of the jet. The sensation of water pounding against the anus and into the rectum is powerful and whether with a partner, friends, or alone, the Jacuzzi jet is the ne plus ultra of the aquagasm. It's difficult to go wrong.

For group play, a large Jacuzzi offers many jets and endless possibilities for the satisfaction of all concerned. Don't forget to put snacks out! People can get pretty hungry after a turn on the jets.

Chapter 11: Some Handy Helpers

Massage a gift you give yourself and your partner. It's the gift of intentional touch and self-revelation that draws you closer together and closer to the truth about yourself and the people you have sex with. It's a type of intimacy that enhances your sexuality and brings you to its emotional and spiritual heart – that of human connection (which is what sex, whether casual or committed) is all about. It's about connecting with other human beings.

That said, because we're talking about erotic massage in this book, there are times when a little help is called for. It's not that your hands get tired. It's that sometimes the type of erotic adventure you're participating in demands an enhanced intensity. At times like these, calling on sex toys can intensify your pleasure and bring another dimension to your tactile play.

For our purposes, the old-fashioned wand massager is your best bet. This is the one that women used to furtively seek out in the back pages of the Ladies' Home Journal, back in the day. But the wand massager needn't be used as a standalone toy. It can be used in conjunction with other vibrators and toys. But pound for pound, the wand style massager will deliver the type of sensations you're shooting for, when engaged in sensual massage.

Designed for Male Pleasure

Many wands manufactured for use as erotic massagers can also be fitted with a variety of attachments and some of them are quite interesting in terms of upping your massage game and taking it to new heights. One of these is the **Vibra-Cup**. Because of the elastic material it's made of, this add on will fit just about any standard wand vibrator. What's great about it is that it's just for the men. That's right, gentlemen, there are vibrator attachments made with you in mind.

You may want to use the Vibra-Cup on your own, or with your partner. The wonder of it is that one side fits over your massage wand, while the other boasts a three-inch opening into which you slide your personal wand. This pocket is fitted with tactile nubs that will massage the head of your member, as the battery-operated wand vibrates. You won't believe it until you try it! Just add your favorite lube (totally safe, even if you prefer silicone, for this one) for an even more gratifying experience.

But there's a vibrator with an attachment included that my male readers should know about, too. This is the **Hammerhead Vibrating Stroker**. The attachment on this device is made of a flexible, gel-like substance that stretches with you, so it's bound to fit more generously-endowed gentlemen. Make sure you lube up the attachment before turning on the Stroker, as you'll find that this model vibrates both quickly and vigorously. Great for you – not so great for the lube mess create by attempting to lube post-activation. Just like the Vibra-Cup, the Stroker's attachment has nubs built into it to increase your please. The vibrator itself can also be used as part of your massage ritual with a partner, or during your own, solo efforts.

Designed for Female Pleasure

As I've said above, there are some great attachments out there to go with your old school massage wand. The **Lily Pod** is one such item and I can attest to its magical powers, as I've used it with my partners and it's undeniable that it provides a sensation well beyond what your own hands are capable of. It's something to use when you really want to turn up the heat.

This attachment, which is made of soft jelly-like material, actually covers the entire female genitalia. The focus of this attachment is, of course, the clitoris (including the portions which extend down the sides of the vagina, beneath the labial folds). Inside the cup is a series of soft, pliable nubs that massage the genitals all over. Lube can certainly be used (which will only make things more fun), but a woman's natural lubrication is generally enough to get the most from the Lily Pod.

The **Tingle Tip** attachment resembles a tiny hedgehog, curled up in a ball. It's actually quite adorable. Its surface is covered with pliable, tactile nubs, designed to stimulate the clitoris and other parts of the female genitalia. The Tingle Tip is also great for use on other parts of the body, particularly the breasts, so keep the lube handy. Those little nubs, when combined with the vibrations of your massage wand, are nothing short of sublime.

Helpers Anyone Can Enjoy

Remember the last chapter? This little fellow is the sequel. The **Rub My Duckie** is probably the world's most discreet personal massager in the world. That's because it looks exactly like the run-of-the-mill rubber duck we're all so familiar with. Rubber duckie is, in fact "the one" if you're looking for something friends won't smirk at you about after returning to the dinner table from the washroom. They'll never know that this sly little fellow actually does for you. He doesn't just float around in the bathtub looking cheerful!

Nope. The Rub My Duckie has three speeds (all of them fun) and can be used to massage any body part you choose. While you're enjoying your soapy massage session, either alone or with your partner, giggle maniacally to yourself about the fact you're having a little sexy time with a rubber duck. Stranger objects have been used, I can assure you! And why limit your little friend to the water. Ducks enjoy being on dry land just as much and customs won't bat an eye when Rub My Duckie is spied, coasting through the x-ray machine in your carry on.

The next item is pretty special, I have to say. This is the **Fukuoku Black Five Finger** vibrating massage glove and it's got just the right amount of kink to make your erotic fun time a bit of an adventure. This item is available for users who are left or right-handed and is manufactured to fit a medium to large sized hand. There is also a Pink version for those with smaller hands, so never fear. Everyone can join in the fun.

At 45,000 vibrations a minute, this item gives wands and vibrators a real run for their money. It may also seem a little less intrusive for some people than the vibrator option and still provide the added kick of electrically generated vibration. Best of all? This baby is waterproof. Maybe the Fukuoku and Rub My Duckie should be introduced?

The **Samyo Massage Glove** has an audience somewhere, I'm sure. Maybe there are some among my readers. This one uses no batteries, so perhaps the environmentalists reading might have some interest (although the item is made of non-organic materials).

The Samyo is shaped like a colorful teddy bear hand (comes in three cheerful

colors), with pockets for the thumb and little finger and a larger pocket for the three fingers in the middle. What's really excellent about this funny little novelty, though, is that it's fitted with nine metal balls capable of rotating 360 degrees, in any direction. The other side of the glove is also quite interesting, featuring PVC bristles that you can use for any number of textural variations while exploring your sensual massage repertoire.

Now there's some food for thought! Just add lube, a sense of humor and your no doubt lurid imagination and I am more than sure you will discover an appropriate use for the Samyo. But we're not quite done yet. I'm about to go a little "Robo Cop".

The **Fukuoku Power Pack** is just a cut above "kink". With its wristband battery cap and three vibratory finger massagers, this one comes to us from Robo Cop's Kinky Cousin. Good for use either solo or with a partner, the Fukuoku Power Pack is tons of playtime fun. Part of that has to do with the fact that each of the finger massagers is equipped with a different texture imprinted on their latex pads, so whoever's receiving never really knows what's coming at them. Perhaps that's not so for solo users, but you'd probably have to use this a lot to memorize the poll positions. At 25,000 vibrations a minute, you're looking a mighty little gadget that may even bring some Robo Cop role-play into your massage time fun.

And speaking of role-play. That's what our next chapter's all about. Role-play and massage are a natural fit, particularly when you're a sexually frustrated married lady visiting the lusty doctor's surgery for some timely advice.

Chapter 12: And the Academy Award for Tactile Eroticist in a Leading Role Goes to...

Whether we like to admit it or not, we've all engaged in a little role play with our sex partners at one time or another. We've all whispered suggestive little hints in each other's ears to perhaps plant the seed that we're going to transport ourselves elsewhere, intellectually. But those of us who go all the way with role-play and put a little muscle into it are only too happy to tell you that it pays off in spades.

We all loved to play dress up as kids and it seems that more and more adults are interested in rekindling that affection, nowadays. With Hallowe'en having become less about kids and candy and more about who's wearing the sexiest costume, it seems that our childhood love of costumes has made a comeback in many of our lives. Maybe that's because when childhood flees, we wistfully look over our shoulders at its retreating form and lament its departure. The world often tells us to put aside childish things, but how are we to get in touch with our inner child, if we don't dress up like Batman (or Cat woman) every once in a while? A lot of folks go to New Orleans at Mardi Gras just for another stab at Hallowe'en. For them, once a year isn't nearly enough and there's nothing more validating than swimming through a sea of grownups dressed in silly costumes to feel that you're not as weird as some claim you are.

But playing dress up has a very grown up branch known as role-play. For some, this involves taking on the role of a dominant or submissive partner in order to express a desire not modeled outside the bedroom. For others, role-play means complex scenarios in which fantasies are lived out and other, secret lives are lived. We don't leave anything behind but the ordinary. We're still ourselves. We just step outside what that means for a moment of imaginary bliss in a costume, which presents us as someone else. Usually that someone is very, very naughty.

Everyone has a favorite fantasy they'd like to play and massage is a particularly rich context for medical fantasies. Naughty nurses and doctors. Patients with itches to scratch. One can have a lot of fun with these!

Here's a playlist of some of my favorites.

Dr. Feelgood

I've been developing this one for a while, so I've gotten rather good at it, if I do say so myself. The great thing about this particular role-play scenario and most others is that you can do it at various levels. I have everything I need to deliver the goods on a "deluxe" scale, but that's because I've collected the various accouterments over the years, as the game has developed.

When I first took a liking to Dr. Feelgood, I really wasn't as set up for it as I might have liked. For one thing, I didn't have the lab coat. Even if the only lab coat you have is one from a Hallowe'en costume in a bag, at least you'll already have a stethoscope at your disposal. Having the requisite costume makes it so much more fun and allows participants to fully immerse themselves in the fantasy role-play.

Once I started having what I needed to look like a doctor offering his patients "therapeutic massage", I began thinking about other props that might make it even more fun. One of these is a professional chiropractic massager. This baby is not for the dabbler or the faint of heart. If you enjoy the Dr. Feelgood scenario, I strongly advise you get your hands on one of these. They're not cheap, but if this role-play set up works for you, your partner, or your lovers, you will definitely want to shell out. Mine is a full size percussor, as used in chiropractors' offices. It weighs six pounds and has three different heads that vary in flexibility and firmness, as well as a variety of vibrational settings. When you pull this one out of your hat, it's party time!

Whatever you want to do with Dr. Feelgood, you'll want to discuss it ahead of time with "the patient". Your discussion should cover the basics and set up a loose script. This is true of any role-play you engage in. Both partners need to be on board, or there's no point, because someone isn't going to be happy.

My Dr. Feelgood approach follows a simple, but effective script. Of course, there's always room for improvement, but be sure you have a way of telling each other when going off road isn't doing the trick, so you can pull back. Safe words are a great way of making sure you're both on the same page. Saying an agreed upon safe word signals that one or the other of you has gone too far. Establishing and using a safe word can prevent unnecessary misunderstandings.

So before you even set up the framework for the action, get this detail out of the way.

I have a space in my house with a massage table that has been fitted with stirrups and a sub-table that can be pulled out. I also have one of those little, rolling stools doctors use, a curtained partition, a gown for the patient and a small vanity fitted with a sink (which doesn't work, but looks good). I've created this space over time for this and other role-play activity.

Arranging an appointment with my partner, I will wait in this area. Sometimes a receptionist will be present (and sometimes the receptionist will be part of the role play). If that's the case, the receptionist will greet my partner (who will have come from outside the house, as though it were a regular medical appointment) at the front door. My partner will then be ushered into a waiting area, where magazines can be found. I will usually watch the clock for ten minutes after the receptionist advises that my partner has arrived for the appointment.

When ten minutes have elapsed (during which time anticipation will have begun to build), I will appear in the reception area and invite "the patient" into my surgery and indicate the gown that should be exchanged for the patient's street clothes, behind the curtained partition. I will leave, giving the patient enough time to change and then return. The patient will be seated on the massage table.

I will then examine the patient. I even have a blood pressure cuff! During this brief examination, I will discuss with the patient the reason for the appointment and consult a "file", which details medical history. Usually, the patient will complain of pain in the buttocks, thighs, or lower back. You see where I'm going with this.

At this point, I will invite the patient to lie down on the table and don my rubber gloves to begin the examination. From here, things tend to evolve rather naturally, with each of us leading and responding to various comments to get where we intend to go – erotic massage. At some point, I will suggest that a little "medical grade lubrication" may be required to facilitate massage of the afflicted area. Once this starts, it usually happens that the afflicted area spreads to other areas, some of which no real doctor should be getting anywhere near

without express permission.

Sometimes, the roles are reversed and it's me getting the examination (which can sometimes involve the prostate, if I'm in that sort of mood). I will cough, sometimes, as my scrotum is held (and then held some more, etc.). As you can see, one thing leads to another, but that's because my partner and I discuss the scene to be played out in advance and know what to expect of each other.

Remember that you don't need a lot of expensive equipment. That's just me! You can play Dr. Feelgood on any level you want to and you may find yourself becoming a bit of props collector, as you develop the game. Then again, you may prefer the next of my favorite role-play scenarios.

Resort Masseur/Masseuse

This is one I really enjoy doing in the summer months, when I can re-locate my massage table to the back patio (which is private, of course). I like to set the table up in a gazebo, with the curtains drawn and seek to re-create the sort of ambience a good resort professional provides. Candles, soft music, hot rocks, scented oils and fresh, rolled towels are all part of it. A spa feeling is the order of the day and the curtained gazebo helps me create a completely relaxing environment that is out of sight and out of time (as all role play fantasies should be). Inside that gazebo, we could be in the Cayman Islands, Barbados, or even exotic New Jersey. Who cares! We're getting a spa treatment – a very special one.

As with Dr. Feelgood, Mario the resort masseur/Maria the resort masseuse has a sexy receptionist, when called for. Otherwise, Mario appears in a pareo (one of those tropical, wraparound skirts that look just as good on men as on women) and no shirt. Mario is usually also wearing some kind of exotic necklace. Maria appears in a full body pareo, with a flower in her hair. The resort masseur/masseuse then ushers the wealthy client into the gazebo and a private world of heavenly, erotic, sensual massage and prompts the client to disrobe. The masseur/masseuse turns toward preparations at this point, to provide discreet privacy. There is no hint, at this point, that the massage session is going off road and offering “additional services”.

The client is king/queen, of course. A variety of services have been paid for in advance and so these are offered. Hot rocks, half body oil massage, full body oil massage, scalp and hand massage. Whatever the client wants the client gets. Then, out of the blue, the client wants the masseur/masseuse and all hell breaks loose. Someone has an erection and the negotiations begin.

“I'm sorry, sir/madam, but this is not that type of massage facility!” the masseur/masseuse will object righteously.

“But surely you'd like to make a little extra money. I mean it's for a good cause, after all”, the client will purr, grinning lasciviously.

At this point, the client will remove the towel, which has been laid on top of

his/her unmentionables, and offer a “tip”. The masseuse/masseur will continue to object, until the client’s numbers get to the magic one. The client may then ask if the receptionist is also available for a “four hands” massage. If not, the erotic portion of the festivities can commence. Sometimes, this involves appliances that have been hidden by masseur/masseuse for just such occasions. When the client sees these appliances, he or she may remark:

“I knew you were just being coy!”

The masseur/masseuse will smile lustily as the naughty fun gets rolling in the privacy of the spa retreat.

You see, it’s all about imagination and personal preferences. Knowing your partner well is also very helpful when it comes to role-play, as your respective personalities will play out as the scenario does.

The trick to role-play is to ask yourself about opportunities you may have missed because you didn’t feel that indulging the fantasy was appropriate, somehow. The perfect arena to indulge it is, of course, with someone you know and trust. Some of us are quite comfortable with this sort of play with those we don’t know very well. I tend to think, however, that a trusted partner or lover(s) work best with this type of play in the context of a massage-based eroticism. Knowing what the person or people you’re with are excited by and what their limitations (or lack of them) are, creates a cocoon of safety to be who you really are, sexually, without inhibitions.

Random Stranger

Most of us fantasize about this sort of liaison, but rarely do we indulge ourselves. (Well, I do sometimes, as related in the chapter on aquatic adventures). We see people in public we find ourselves attracted to and even flirt with, but the nature of world holds us back. We don't know who we can trust and we fear getting caught doing naughty things in places we're not supposed to do them.

But when you have a willing partner, some of those objections to play with a random stranger can be set aside. Primary among those is the element of danger concerning the character of the stranger in question. You know the person and so, that objection is put to rest. There's still the element of danger inherent in doing something naughty in a (more or less) public space. But there's also an element of excitement that's not be underestimated. For long term lovers and couples, this particular scenario can be enlivening and thrilling.

There are many scenarios that can be indulged in, but one of my favorites is Random Stranger at a hotel bar. Nobody knows either of you, if you've chosen well. Leaving town for this one is a good idea, for that reason. There's much less chance of being recognized, so you and your partner can be random in complete anonymity. What's sexier than that? You begin to flirt over cocktails and before you know it, an invitation has been offered to go upstairs. Pay for play? Who knows? It's your script.

Another good one is random stranger at the movies. You're sitting in a back row, preferably at a matinee of an unpopular film. A random stranger sits near you and you begin to exchange glances. Before you know it, the random stranger is sitting next to you. As the house lights go down, you feel the stranger's hands straying to your thigh, slipping under your skirt, travelling upwards and kneading your thigh as it goes...

Variations on the theme are yours to create. They're all filed away in your "missed opportunities" folder. The Random Stranger fantasy can indulge your tactile obsession with your partner in a new, exciting way and before you know it, you and your Random Stranger's hands will be Russian and Roman all over town!

Chapter 13: The Prostate Gospel

We've talked a little about the prostate in the chapter on Tantric massage. But I'm something of a prostate evangelist, so I'm now going to share with my readers how I came to be that way and why I continue to preach the gospel of the prostate, including here, in this book.

The prostate is a very important little gland. It's so important for the health of men that it can wreak a fair bit of havoc. That's why the feared and much-maligned proctologist exists. That little gland is an important part of the male anatomy and not being aware of its importance can cause catastrophic illness and even death. It's important that men become better acquainted with this part of their bodies and that their female partners be more aware of it and its health, too. Men with male partners probably have little to worry about, but heterosexual men, because of our cultural taboos around anal penetration, should read this chapter carefully.

The prostate is only the size of a walnut and you'll find it between the bladder and the inside position of the penis, just above the anus and in front of the rectum. This little gland is what's responsible for keeping your sperm healthy and frisky, as it secretes a protective fluid that is pushed through the urethra with sperm, upon ejaculation. With the sperm themselves, this fluid is called semen. That's right, some of what men ejaculate comes straight out of that little gland.

When the prostate is unhealthy, it can become enlarged, a condition that's quite common among men over 50. An enlarged prostate can make urination difficult and even painful. Fixing the problem may even require surgery. The prostate can also develop cancer, which is the most common form of cancer among men. These are sobering facts, but you can help to keep your prostate healthy and your partner can help.

My discovery and further exploration began when I succumbed to my Tantric partner's insistence that anal penetration was something I needed to explore. I had the usual reluctance to have a crack at it common to most het (and het-ish) males. But finally, I agreed to explore with her and what I discovered is that I had been missing something really bombastically wonderful for most of my adult life. Because of her guidance, I have a healthy prostate and a much

healthier self-conception of myself as a man. I can honestly say that.

While many of my male readers are grimacing with horror, I'd like you take a moment before reading on and ask yourselves why that is. Why are you horrified? It's a legitimate question and if you're honest with yourself, I think you'll find that disallowing yourselves this experience is counter-productive. The prostate gland is a part of every male body. Ignore it at your own peril. At last I can say I've tried!

Benefits of Prostate Massage

While prostate massage has not been shown to be effective in treating infection in the prostate, it's still practiced widely in the East and is considered to be an effective means of maintaining prostate health, as a preventative practice. Prostate massage can reduce the chances of developing enlargement and even cancer and has been proven to improve erectile function, semen production and circulation in the genitalia. Regular ejaculation can reduce the chances of developing prostate cancer by 33%, if enjoyed at a rate of only 21 ejaculations per month. Prostate massage can also help to prevent the buildup of prostatic fluid in the ducts of the gland, which can lead to infection. In concert with the other benefits, these facts support men opening themselves to the idea of prostate massage as not only a sexual option, but also one that supports their overall health. In fact, prostate massage is a growing area of sexual interest among men of all sexualities. This is due, at least in part, to the increase in reported cases of prostate cancer.

All Men Have Them

With all this in mind, I should point out that prostate massage is also extremely pleasurable. As I've told you in the Tantric sex chapter, massage of the prostate can be achieved by stimulating the perineum (that little patch of skin we spoke of in that chapter). For those men who are timid about attempting anal entry to massage the prostate, this is a good alternative. That said, if that timidity is rooted in some primal fear that anal penetration spells "homosexuality", then I have a few rather pointed questions to ask you.

First of all, why were all men created with this gland and why is it that massage is so effective for the maintenance of male health?

If the prostate is the source of such pleasure (and it is, I can assure you), then why should men feel anything but happy to draw on it as a sexual resource?

Finally, if anal penetration for men is such a horrible taboo then why do so many of us expect women to agree to it? They don't have prostate glands! There is, basically, very little for women in anal sex, except getting her male partner to stop badgering her for it.

I must also point out that the belief that male anal penetration is inherently "gay" is a homophobic proposition. I do hope none of my straight, male readers are afraid of "the Gays", or that they fear that anal penetration may somehow "turn" them. Were either of those true, I'd have to wonder about some of my readers and how far away from the homestead they'd managed to stray during the course of their lives.

Men, you have prostate glands and those walnut-sized particulars of your unique anatomies can bring you a whole new level of enjoyment. So here's the real question – what are you waiting for?

Like you, I had a lot of fears around the idea of male penetration. Being who I am now, I look back on that and laugh to myself a little. Today, I'm not afraid of anything concerning my sexuality and all its myriad expressions. I embrace myself as who I am and that's made me a much healthier, pleasant person. I enjoy my sexuality enormously and I want everyone else to have the same

privilege. Sex is one of the great adventures of life and cutting yourself off from it out of fear of breaking some arcane cultural taboo seems self-defeating to me.

And now another question – why should gay and bisexual men have all the fun?

Getting Started

A loving partner is going to want the best for you, so if you're a man who isn't afraid of his own body, it's time to talk about prostate massage and milking, as part of your new erotic massage regime. That means trusting your partner enough to go on this journey with you. If there's any hint of judgment detected when you broach the subject, then I'm sad to say that you're with the wrong partner.

One of the most important things to remember about getting to know Mr. Prostate is that you need to keep a few things in mind. For one, anything that goes in the anus/rectum needs to be **extremely clean**. Contrary to popular belief, the healthy balance of this part of your body is not going to respond well to the introduction of bacteria that don't belong there.

Any rough edges on the hands of your partner should be addressed. **Nails should be trimmed** and filed to address this, also. If your partner's hands are a work in progress, then perhaps surgical gloves are in order. If you're playing Dr. Feelgood, you'll have a stock of these, anyway! Why not put them to work?

Another thing you need to keep in mind is that **lube is your best friend**. Generous lubrication makes everything possible. Use a good one and don't do this with oil. This should be either a water-based, or a silicone lubricant (unless you're using a toy), or a hybrid of the two (again, unless you're using a toy).

Take it slow. Don't rush and make sure you and your partner have discussed how this operation is going to go down. Have an open, exploratory talk about methods and plan what you're going to do, so that there are no misunderstandings that might impact the quality of your experience. Trouble on the first go around can turn a lot of men off ever trying prostate massage again, so avoid it at all costs.

Start small. Don't head straight to the toy. Don't even start with the middle finger. Start with the pinky and work your way up, as you become more comfortable. This will take a little time, but becoming used to the sensation of penetration deserves as much time as you can give it.

While you may be unfamiliar with the sensation of being penetrated, it should be uncomfortable because of that lack of familiarity and by no means painful. The discomfort, as you become accustomed to how anal penetration feels will be replaced with pleasure in due course. (Due course being when your partner finds Mr. Prostate and begins the massage).

Forcing enter is not necessary. As a matter of fact, the anus will draw objects into it. Gentle insertion will be rapidly followed by the contraction of the anal sphincter and rectum. This contraction will pull the finger or toy into it, of its own accord. Once inside, your partner should know that agitating the finger up and down is not the right thing to do. Rather, the finger, once Mr. Prostate is found, should be gently crooked, in order to provide a gentle massaging action. This can be quite firm, but it should also be gentle and consistent. Your partner should only remove the finger if more lube is required.

Paging Mr. Prostate

Once your partner has either the finger or a prostate massage tool in there, it's time to find the prostate. This small gland can be found four to five inches inside the rectum, on the front wall. Whether or not your partner's fingers are long enough, I suggest the use of a prostate massager (like the Helix, for example). These devices take the guesswork out of prostate massage, as they're designed to provide that service. Their length, angle and shape all facilitate the ideal implement to get the job done. So perhaps you'll want to start with fingers to get used to the sensation of anal penetration. Once you're feeling more comfortable, though, I strongly advise that you use the toy.

For one, the use of a device like the Helix is safer. Available in smooth silicone, you can use the Helix only with a water-based lubricant, as a silicone-based one will degrade the material it's made from. You'll find that a prostate massager is right for any sexual occasion, including those on which you find yourself un-partnered.

Prostate massage can be a deeply satisfying practice for men. When done regularly with a loving partner who desires your total pleasure, or on your own, prostate massage offers men numerous benefits. Cancer prevention and the prevention of the potential enlargement of the gland later in life are two of them. There are also sexual benefits, which include greater sexual continence (staying power).

I highly recommend prostate massage for all men. If you're denying yourself this pleasure because of some arcane sexual taboo, then I suggest you give it some thought and talk it over with your partner. If you're un-partnered, you can explore prostate massage on your own, with the help of the Helix.

The prostate gland is an important part of a man's sexual anatomy and one that deserves your time. Gay and bi guys shouldn't get to have all the fun. Gentlemen of the heterosexual persuasion need prostate love too!

Chapter 14: Oils and Lubes for Silky Smooth Moves

Everyone's on a learning curve in this life, regardless of how clever we believe ourselves to be. The same is true of massage and approaching it the right way. You may think you give the greatest massages of all time (a lot of people swear up and down they do), but there's still more to learn.

Now that we're talking about the mediums we'll use to engage in sensual massage, I guess one of the first things I should say is that you don't need to pour it onto your partner's body. Too much of a good thing is always possible. You should also be sure that the oil is warmed to a comfortable temperature. Some like it warmer than others, so this is something to discuss with your partner.

Body lotion is never to be used for a massage. It absorbs into the skin too quickly and will eventually begin to form "pills", as you work your partner's skin. That is just nasty, I'm sure we can all agree.

Before choosing your oil, make sure that nobody involved is allergic to anything. If they are, choose an oil that precludes the possibility of having to locate the epi-pen in the midst of your sultry massage session. I needn't tell you how great a buzz kill such escapades can be.

Oils should be used for massage, but are not the best lubricants, when it comes to internal use. That's because of the bacteria they tend to encourage. Oil is also not great for condoms, if you're using them. They degrade the latex and may cause breakage. For the intimate portion of your massage, or for massage of the yoni, always use a good intimate lubricant. If you plan on using toys, make sure it's water-based.

Now we've gotten those bullet points out of the way, let's look at some of the top oils for erotic massage.

NaturOli

This is an oil everyone can enjoy. Not heavily scented, the light, fresh aroma of this product will please even the fussiest noses. NaturOli is also light in texture and not overbearingly oily. That means that following a massage, there's no mess to clean up. It's also very good for your skin and completely natural. Allergies are also taken into account in this product's formulation, as it's completely hypoallergenic. There is also a slight warming property, when applied.

Desire Sensual Massage Oil

Nut allergies? Skip this one. It contains almond oil. Almond oil, unless you have an allergy to nuts, is one of the best oils for the skin around. I've been using it for years. One of its properties is helping to maintain skin elasticity, as we get older. That's a bonus! This product also contains grapeseed and jojoba oils, so it's a very rich option, which is also extremely good for the skin. Again, this oil is natural and delicately scented. Most people, male and female, find the scent of vanilla pleasant. Vanilla is also associated with sensuality, which can only make your massage experience even more erotic.

Pura Pleasure Oil

While the two products shown above are first rate, this one is my personal favorite. I love this one, because it does it all. You can use this 2-in-1 product as both a massage oil and a lubricant. It's also edible and we like edible! Pura Pleasure Oil is also organic, which makes you feel socially responsible, while you're enjoying your massage fun. Containing coconut and moringa oils, this is another product that is not overly oily or messy. Its scent is not overpowering, at all and very pleasant. I've never had any complaints about this one and my partners have all gone out and bought their own supply of it, because they liked it so much.

These are my top picks for massage oils, with Pura being number one in my tickle trunk. Because it's a "crossover" product, encompassing the entire body, including the delicate genitals and the anus, it's provides a great bridge to my top three personal lubricants.

Bodywise Liquid Silk

This is the best water-based lubricant in the world, for my money. Once applied, it seems to last forever. Because it contains a tiny bit of silicone, it's not safe for use with toys, which is a pity. Liquid Silk never gets sticky, like some lubes, which is the advantage provided by the small amount of silicone in the formula. It maintains its silky smooth texture for the duration of play and further, will be kind to bedding. No mess, whatsoever. You simply can't beat this product for duration, texture, cleanliness and total pleasure. If you want a sure thing, Liquid Silk is it.

Pink Water

Pink Water is the manufacturer of some of the top lubricants on the market. Its formulas are odorless, flavorless and last forever. It's also 100% water-based, so this is one you can slather your toys with, as well as your condoms. Pink Water even contains aloe, which is soothing and healing and there's nothing you'd want on your genitals more than soothing, healing, gentle aloe.

Swiss Navy

This is a silicone lube. Silicone is great because of its endless staying power, for prolonged encounters. Whether you're playing in the shower, or tub, or lake, silicone lubricants don't wash off in the water. Of course, you can't use your toys, or a condom with this type of lube, so it's not for everyone. Silicone lubricant can also be something of a pain to wash out of your clothes. It's best to leave it to one side until everyone is stripped down and ready to go, for that reason. Swiss Navy is one of the better ones and when I'm engaging in a prolonged massage session which doesn't involve the need for latex, or the use of toys silicon might damage, I like this one.

Uberlube

This selection represents something of a departure in the world of lubes. Also silicon-based, Uberlube can be used on your hair to make it frizz free and keep it soft and shiny. Kill two birds with one stone, with this upmarket product! Super slippery, Uberlube is also easily absorbed into the skin, once playtime is over. Despite its reputation as a luxury item, Uberlube's formula means you don't need to use very much of it, which means more bang for your hard-earned buck. Best of all, Uberlube makes a great massage medium, for all over erotic massage.

Sliquids Naturals Silk

Naturals Silk feels exactly as it sounds – silky and delicious. It's a hybrid of water-based lubricant, silicone-based lubricant and has a cream added to the formula, to create a sensual, smooth, luxurious lubricant that is also hypoallergenic. With neither scent, nor flavor, this is a very nice product to use for extended massage. You can also use this for genital massage. Remember, though – no latex or silicone toys.

For added fun, you may want to explore some of the novelty lubes and sexual liquids available on the market. There's such a wide array on offer that serious massage enthusiasts will want to do their homework and find the most appealing ones. Here, though, I offer you some of my absolute fun time favorites.

Wet Synergy Warming Gel

What could be more fun than a product that warms as you knead your lover with it? This one is extremely long lasting. As it contains silicone, it forms a layer on the skin that allows for extended manipulation, which is exactly what you're after. Wet Synergy lasts seven times longer than many other products on the market. While some warming gels can be a little intense for use on the genitals, that's not true of this product. I've never heard a single complaint about it, from anyone I've used it with.

ID Moments Warming Water-Based Lubricant

This one's water-based, which means super safe, in any scenario, including those that involve toys and condoms. Its warming properties are extremely pleasurable for use on the genitals. A gentle, stimulating warmth is the sensation this product imparts, which certainly moves the action in the right direction. ID moments contains no glycerin or paraben, which makes it an even more attractive option for people who are looking for a no holds barred session that's safe for every possibility which might arise.

Intensify Female Lubricant

Men and women with a new flame in their lives may want to wrap a bottle of this in a pretty bow and take it to their new love as a gift. It's a wonderful product, specifically made with women in mind. While it's especially good for women who've been through menopause and after pregnancy, this lubricant can promote sexual health for any woman. As the name suggests, this warming lubricant intensifies sensation in the female genitals and can be used alone, or with a partner. Intensify is also water-based, which makes it toy safe.

The foregoing selections are only a fraction of what's out there. I counsel everyone I know who's embarking on a more interesting sex life to have a good look around. See what men and women are saying about these products. Visit the local sex shop and talk to the owner. Find the product or products that work best for you and your partner or partners. There's no need to compromise in a world of choice and diversity. Find the right product and enjoy it to the fullest. What the heck! Set aside a special place in your home and create a lube and oil cellar. Why not has the right product on hand for every erotic occasion? I've made it a rule of life, at my house.

Conclusion

I really hope you've enjoyed reading this exploration of the world of sexual massage, its various permutations and facets. As I've become an enthusiast of various types and applications of erotic massage, I've expanded my sexual universe. Not only that, but what I've shared with my partners over the years has been a mutually pleasurable, respectful and satisfying exploration of our bodies, together. Erotic massage has changed me in many ways, especially where my approach to sex and sexuality is concerned. I've developed a genuine appreciation of the human body's unparalleled beauty and unique sensitivity. In fact, erotic massage has made me not only a more intensely sexually attuned person, but also a more emotionally and spiritually attuned one, also. I hope that the approach I've taken here and the information I've shared have served you well and that you'll find in it, a good place to start.

Loving another human being through your sense of touch is an experience well beyond the ordinary, particularly when you bring to the experience curiosity, respect and a mind unhindered by socially imposed taboos about the meaning of sex and sexuality. In using your hands to speak to another on a physical level, you're opening yourself and them up to another experience of sexual connection and what it means. Moving beyond furtive fumbling and hurried intercourse, massage teaches patience, appreciation and provides a unique perspective on your sexuality and that of other people.

While many of us cleave to it, the traditional ideology around the nature of sexually expressed love is problematic. I see love as a fluid prospect that encompasses everyone around us. When expressed sexually, love can be a moment, or a lifetime. Many people feel most comfortable with monogamy. This is generally played out in a series of monogamous relationships. Only very rarely does monogamy endure, because sexual exclusivity is actually a denial of the nature of love, in terms of the human being. This is not the central tenet of this book, but it is something that I've learned through the medium of erotic massage. Erotic massage taught me that I am able to love many people and that my sexuality and the ethical and moral framework I express it in, demands that I view my partners with love and respect. That does not necessarily mean I will limit my sexuality to one other person. For some, monogamy is the only way to live. For others, it's no way to live, at all.

But even in our most fleeting assignations, it's incumbent on us to treat others with the greatest respect and reverence. That means having a code of sexual ethics that is in play every time you get naked with someone. As sex guru Dan Savage has said and which I've noted elsewhere in this book, you should leave all your lovers better than you found them. Be a pleasant memory for everyone you come in contact with. If that memory includes sex, then be an icon of sex for that person and an exemplar of how sex can be shared respectfully and mindfully, whether you're sticking around for good, or not. As I've also made clear, your code of sexual ethics should extend to *absolutely* everyone. That includes those of you who call on the services of sex workers. These professionals are no less worthy of your respect than anyone else. After all, you're the one seeking out their services. If you don't respect what they're doing, then why are you wasting their time? Sex work is the oldest work known to humanity and its venerable status demands your respect. If you can't provide that respect, just as you would for another person you engage sexually, then I suggest you refrain from retaining the services of intimate massage and other sex professionals.

No soup for you!

Having touched a person in the deeply intimate way offered by erotic massage, I can no longer look at that person as a means to an end. I don't approach my sexuality as a predator, looking for a feed. I approach it, rather, as a pilgrim looking for the sacred in other people and that sense of sanctity informs my treatment of others. Emotional honesty is key to this approach and hope that by reading this book, you'll be able to question yourself as to your own emotional honesty in terms of your sexual relationships. We all deserve it. That means you, our sex partners and me.

I've shared with you here some of my own experiences. These have been pivotal learning experiences for me and I hope you'll accept them in that spirit. By including them, I'm not suggesting anyone reading follow suit, necessarily. While you may find that pursuing similar experiences is right for you, many others won't. There's nothing wrong with either of those perspectives. They're just part of the kaleidoscope of human sexual experience. In sharing a part of my life with you, my message is that touch can take you places you'd never

imagined you might go. Touch is the doorway to a richer, more balanced approach to your sexuality. Sensual massage is, in fact, a type of doorway to another world of erotic experience that will inform you as a person and take you well beyond the physical. It will deepen your spirituality, your sense of connection and your understanding of human sexuality as a vastly complex world unto itself. It will enhance all your relationships, but primarily, it will enhance your relationship with yourself. You will find that integrity becomes a word you live by.

By your own two hands, you are able to seek out and find the connection between you and another person. By sharing yourself through the medium of touch, you are employing a powerful, primal sense. Touch is the very first sense that the fetus encounters in the womb. In those cushy, fleshly depths, the sensing human first reaches out to touch an interior world and know itself as part of another. By pursuing erotic massage, you are returning to that place, but with the understanding of a fully developed human being, able to interpret what and who you touch.

This book presents to you a very personal journey. Your journey will be different, no doubt, just as all our journeys are. May yours be filled with great adventure, much love and connection with unforgettable, beautiful people.

May your hands continue to reach out to a world hungry to be touched by compassionate and loving hands.