

TARA GOULDING MASSAGE THERAPY - Ph: 0404 096 730

the five minute massage

In this stressed-out world, nothing beats a neck and shoulder massage. A simple shoulder rub or back massage can be incredibly relaxing.

Giving an effective professional-level therapeutic massage is something that requires training and years of practice. However, here are some simple techniques that you can use to perform a short, safe and simple massage.

The massage techniques outlined here are of limited therapeutic value. You won't be able to fix tendinitis or get rid of chronic headaches, but you certainly will be able to help your partner relax a little and release some tension.

Follow these simple steps to give a short, but incredibly relaxing neck and shoulder massage

some simple rules

While most people love and welcome a quick shoulder rub, check with your partner to be sure that they want a massage before starting.

If the person has any severe pain or has had any recent injuries to the neck or shoulder area, don't do this massage.

Instead, suggest they see a massage professional. While the massage may feel good, it could aggravate their condition.

The massage should not be painful. It should feel good. Pain will make your partner tense up and defeats the purpose of the massage. So be sure to check in occasionally to find out if the pressure is comfortable.

Don't massage anything that feels bony. Bones don't relax. They also tend to be very pain sensitive. So everything you massage should feel relatively soft.

don't wreck your body

If you've tried to give someone a massage in the past, you may have found that by the time they felt relaxed your hands and arms ached. Follow these simple principles and you'll be able to give a relaxing massage without feeling like you've wrecked your body:

- Keep your shoulders relaxed
- Keep your back straight and avoid bending excessively
- Relax your hands between each movement
- Use a slow, even pace
- Use your thumbs as little as possible

and now, the techniques...

Here are some techniques for the shoulders and neck. You'll do these techniques while your partner sits upright in a regular chair. They can be done anywhere – in the office or at the kitchen table.

The shoulder muscle is called the "trapezius" muscle. Massage therapists usually just call it the "traps". This is easy to remember because this is where most of us trap our tension. The first technique is a simple compression movement that uses the forearms.

Stand behind your partner and rest your forearms on the top of their shoulders as close to the neck as possible (figure 1). Keep your palms down so the fleshy part of your forearm, not the bony part, lies on the muscle. Let your weight fall straight down onto their shoulders toward their seat. Avoid pushing them forward and be careful that you don't lean on their head. Hold this for several seconds. Slowly lift the arms and move

them down the shoulder one inch. Let your weight fall through your arms again. Repeat this process several times. As soon as you start to feel the bony part of their shoulder under your forearm, stop, bring your forearms to the starting position and repeat the technique again. This forearm



Figure 1

compression technique is simple to do, but feels fabulous.

Now, move to the side of your partner. Feel the tip of the shoulder with your fingers. It will feel hard and bony. Move your fingers toward the neck until you feel some soft muscle

Figure 2



under your fingers. Place your thumbs on that spot (figure 2). Put one thumb on top of the other for reinforcement — each thumb will be doing just half the work.

Press straight down with the thumbs. You'll be pressing on the trapezius muscle again. Press down slowly, then hold the thumbs in the muscle for a couple of seconds and then slowly

ease off the pressure. Move one thumb width towards the neck and repeat the compression. You should be able to do four to six compressions before you reach the neck. Once you reach the neck, move your thumbs back to the starting position and do a second set of compressions to those same points. Move to the other side of your partner and repeat these compressions to the other shoulder.

For this third technique, you'll have to stand behind your partner. Drape one hand over each shoulder (figure 3) as close to the neck as possible. Squeeze the trapezius between the fingertips and the heel of the hand. Keep your thumb beside your index finger so that it stays out of the way. Hold the squeeze for a couple of seconds and then slowly release your grip. Move out one inch toward the shoulders and repeat. You should be able to get three or four squeezes in before you run out of muscle.

Be sure that you have the whole muscle in your hand so that you don't pinch the skin. As well, don't put your fingers too far around the front of the neck. You don't want to choke your partner.

In the back of the neck you have extensor muscles that hold the head upright. Because of poor posture and extended periods of sitting at computers, these muscles can become very tight, tender and achy.

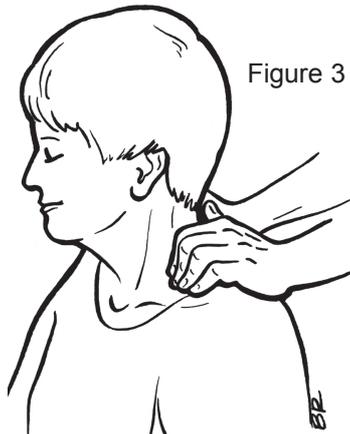


Figure 3

To massage the neck extensors, stand to the side of your partner. If you are standing on the right side, make a C-shape with your left hand. Drape this hand over the back of the neck. Press gently into the sides of the neck with your fingers and thumbs (figure 4).

While maintaining this gentle pressure, do a large circular kneading action with your hand. The movement may remind you of picking a cat up by the back of the neck. This technique is usually referred to as a C-lift or C-scoop.

Do a half-dozen circles in one spot and then move up or down the neck an inch and repeat. Massage along the whole length of the neck. Be careful not to pinch the skin at the back of the neck. Move the skin with the fingers instead of sliding over the skin, so that you don't burn or irritate the skin.

Lastly, you'll do a little kneading to the base of the skull (figure 5). This is where the extensor muscles attach into the head. To do this, cup your hand around the base of the skull. Gently rest your free hand on your partner's forehead to support the head.

Now move the fingers in a small circular motion, pressing into the skull as you knead. Do six to eight little circles.

Again move the skin and hair with your fingers instead of sliding so that you don't pull the hair. Lift the fingers and move them a little closer to the center. Repeat the kneading action. Do several sets like this. To do the other side of the skull, move to the opposite side of your partner.

Finish off your massage with several gentle stroking actions down the head and back. These techniques should take about five minutes to perform. If you want to massage longer, simply do more sets of each technique. If you have any questions or would like more tips on how to give a simple massage, ask your massage therapist.

Figure 4

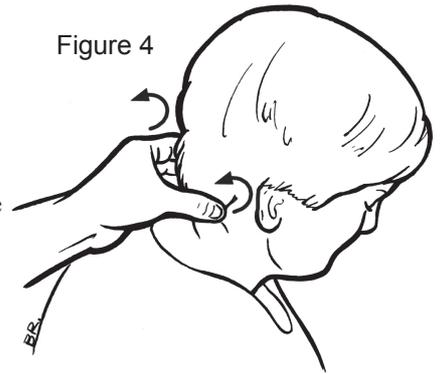
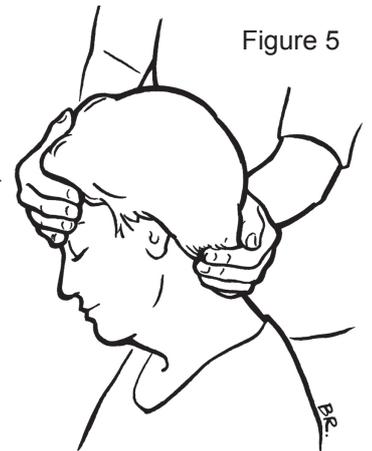


Figure 5



TARA GOULDING MASSAGE THERAPY

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