

Hot Stone Massage



Made Easy

– by Mariah Hunter

What is Hot Stone Massage?

Hot Stone Massage is an ancient healing art originating over 2000 years ago in Ancient India and China. This unique form of massage incorporates smooth, heated stones into a massage session. Basalt stones are used, as the minerals in basalt absorb and retain heat the longest of any type of stone.

Hot Stone Massage is a deeply soothing, relaxing form of massage. The heat helps tight muscles release. This ancient practice has recently been revived, and is growing in popularity in healing spas across the world today.

How Stones Work

There are two ways to use heated stones in a massage. The first way is to use them as stationary placement stones to warm the tissues.

This brings the client's attention to the warmed body part, and has a calming effect on their mind. Tension is melted away with the liquid heat sensation from the warmed stones.

The second way to use hot stones in massage is to actually massage the clients with them.



The heat of the stones warms and relaxes the muscles very quickly and easily. This allows practitioners to access deeper tissues in a shorter amount of time and with less effort than conventional massage.

Hot stones are unique in that they add a grounding and balancing element to your massage. Heated stones energize the practitioner, and relax the client at the same time.

What is Basalt, and Why is it so Good for Hot Stone Massage?

Basalt is a type of igneous rock that is formed from cooled molten lava. It is grey in color. Basalt is known for its superior heat retention characteristics. Mono-colored dark basalt stones hold heat the longest.

Sedimentary stones on the other hand, such as pink, white, yellow, green and brown river stones, heat at varying rates depending on their composition, and do not hold heat for nearly as long as basalt. I have tested this myself, and stand by this conclusion. Basalt comes in various shades of grey, and quickly turns dark lustrous black when wetted with water or massage oil.

See the photo below that shows basalt stones before and after being seasoned with massage oil.



For health reasons, the stones I send to you will not be pre-seasoned. They will be cleaned, sorted and labeled according to their function, and they will be medium to dark grey in color.

Seasoning your stones is a great way to get to know them, to feel the shapes and different sizes. The stones naturally absorb the oil used to season them and become darker with each use.

What stone shapes are ideal for Hot Stone Massage?

The best stones for massage are smooth, rounded stones, that are not pitted, jagged or cracked.

The most beautiful stone shapes are round or oval pieces, of even thickness. This is what I like to build my hot stone sets out of.

The thickness and size of the stones will vary depending on their use. Thicker stones hold more heat than smaller, thinner stones.

Listed below are the types of stones I put in my hot stone massage sets. They are differentiated here by use: stones used for massage, and placement stones.

Massage Stones

The most ideal stones for massaging with are fairly thick: 1-2 inches thick, and 2-4 inches in diameter.

You will want to use larger, thicker stones for massage because they hold heat longer than smaller thinner ones.

The stones lose their heat more quickly the more they are in contact with other surfaces. The heat is absorbed by the clients' tissues. Thicker stones will need to be re-heated less often than thinner stones.

My large massage stones are 4 inches diameter and look like this:



My medium massage stones are 3 inches diameter and look like this:



My small massage stones are 2 to 2.5 inches diameter and look like this:



Facial stones are used for massaging the facial muscles under the cheekbone, and along the jaw and on the forehead. They also can be used as placement stones for the third eye or on the sinuses directly under the cheekbone.



My specialty massage stones such as trigger-point or acupressure stones have a rounded point at one end for deep tissue work:



Round neck stones are my most favorite stones of all. These stones are round, like a golf ball, and are used to massage the curve of the neck down to the upper trapezoid muscles.



Placement Stones

Placement stones are stones that remain stationary on the client, while other parts of the body are being worked on.

There are two ways to use placement stones – under the body (the client lies down on them) and on top of the body.

Stones for Under the Body

One kind of placement stone that the client lies down on is the spinal layout stones. These are thin oval paired stones that are placed on the massage table about 1.5 inches apart in a vertical line. The stones are positioned to line up with the erector muscles that run down each side of the client's spine.



Spinal layout stones are flat, and can be up to 1.5 inches thick. They do not need to be extremely thin, as the stones will sink into the massage table when the client lays down on them.

It is important however that the spinal layout stones have a consistent thickness so they are not poking into the client's back.

It is important to get positioning of the stones correct so that the client's spine is not resting on the stones.

Check in with the client to ensure positioning is ok, and that the temperature of the stones is comfortable. If the stones are too hot, place a thin towel or pillowcase over the stones as a barrier between the stones and the client's skin.

Please note – placement stones need to be cooler than massage stones, because they remain in contact with the client's skin for longer periods of time.

A quick stroke with a hot massage stone is pleasing, but if you were to keep that hot massage stone in place instead of moving it, the heat would become unbearable and could even burn the client.

So placement stones are dipped briefly in cool water before they are placed on a client, and it is always a good idea to check in with your client to confirm the temperature is ok for them.

It is also important to note that the skin on the palms of your hands is less sensitive to higher temperatures than the skin on other parts of your body. The small of the back, back of the thigh, or inside of the wrist are more sensitive to heat than the palms of your hands. Also, your hands will become accustomed to the hot water in the heater, and the stones won't seem as hot to you as they will to the client.

So introduce the stones gently to the client, especially if it's a client's first time receiving a hot stone massage. And always check in with them to make sure the temperature is ok.

A second kind of placement stone is a pillow stone. It is usually about 1.5 inches thick, and 4 or 5 inches long, like a cigar. It is placed in the hollow of the client's neck, like a pillow, while they are lying down.



Trapezius stones are long placement stones that are placed along the top of the upper trapezius between the shoulder and the neck.

Thick trapezius stones are meant to rest alongside this muscle, they are wedged in place between the table and the upper trapezius muscle after the client is lying down:



Thin Trapezius stones can be lain down upon, and are placed under the upper trapezius muscles:



The placement of these stones have the effect of relaxing the upper shoulder and back muscles.

Hand placement stones are placed under the palm of the hands while the client is lying on their back. These stones are ideally round on top, like a tennis ball. Their shape allows the hand to rest in a relaxed curved position on top of the stone.



Stones for the Top of the Body

Chakra stones – these stones are placed on top of the chakras and are shaped differently for each body part.

Included in my sets are:

- one flat oval third eye stone for the 6th chakra,
- one round flat stone for the heart,
- one triangular stone for the solar plexus
- two round belly stones for the lower belly.

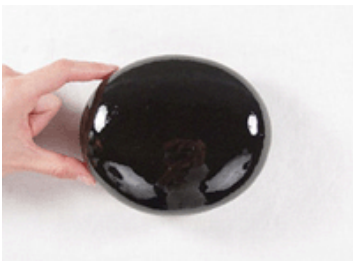


These stones are flat on one side so they don't roll off the body.

Spinal layout stones can also be used on top of the body when the client is lying face down, along with the sacrum stone.



The sacrum stone is usually oval or triangular, and is 4-5 inches in diameter and 1.5 inches or so thick.



The 8 toe stones are small flat thin stones that fit between each of the toes on the foot.



Finger stones are specialty stones that I include in my spa sets, and are placed between the fingers when the client is receiving a manicure or hand treatment.



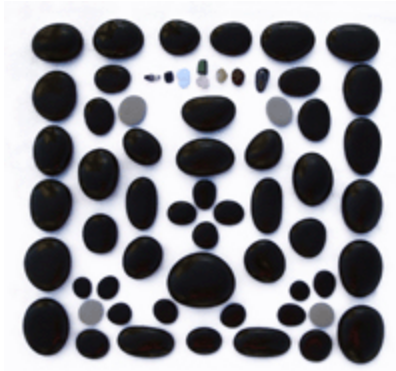
Your placement stones may need to be re-heated at some point in the massage by just popping them back in the stone warmer for 5 - 10 minutes. That is why it is good to have a variety of stones in your set, so you can keep rotating through stones as they lose their heat.

What is the ideal stone set?

This question is best answered by determining your specific needs:

Number of stones

For most therapists, a Standard 64 piece stone set will meet all their hot stone needs. There are plenty of massage and placement stones in this set to give a complete full body hot stone treatment that can last up to 1.5 hours.



Other specialty sets are geared for different use, based on the type of massage that is being given.

Examples of this are the facial sets, which will have fewer stones than a full body set, and contain stones specific to spa treatments such as cold stones.



Pairing of Stones

Stones that are paired with similarly shaped partner stones are ideal. When you massage with the stones, you will be using two at a time – one in each hand. So stones of similar size are helpful to give an equal amount of heat to the client with each hand.

Each of the stones in my stone sets are paired with similarly sized partner stones.

Stone Size

Some practitioners find they like to work with larger stones, as they distribute more heat to the client and have a greater overall effect.

Others find the larger stones too cumbersome to use, and prefer working with smaller, more manageable stones.

Either method works well, however smaller stones will need to be rotated more often as they lose heat more quickly than the larger ones.

My stone sets are customizable, so you can request larger stones if you are a male with large hands, or smaller stones if you have very small hands.

Your comfort is what I want to assure here. I want to give you the best stone set possible, suited specifically to your needs.

If you don't know what your needs are, (such as a massage therapy student new to hot stone massage), I recommend the 56 piece Standard Set.

If you find after using your stone set that you want more of one kind of stone than another, just email me and I can send you additional custom stones to make your perfect set!

Stone Shape

This is mostly up to practitioner preference, as some people prefer flatter stones, and others, more rounded stones.

The stone shape can add to its function by conforming to the body part - ie: triangle shaped placement stone for the solar plexus and sacrum.

Flatter stones tend to lose heat more quickly, so most people prefer to use fuller or thicker stones if possible.

How to Care for Your Stones

When you receive your stones, it is always a good idea to wash them in warm soapy water to ensure they are clean.

It is important to clean your stones after they have been used for massage as well. To do this, take the stones out of the water in the stone heater, and clean them in fresh warm soapy water.

Drain the stone heater of it's water and rinse clean.

If over time your stones seem to feel sluggish, it may be from taking on your clients' energies during the massage. You can revitalize your stones by placing them outdoors - being out in nature helps clean the stones' energies. Overnight at new moon is best, however just leaving them out on the grass for a day or so will make a big difference in their energy.

How to Heat Your Stones



Stones are best heated in water, using an electric stone warmer such as the Spa Pro 18 quart heater.

These heaters are almost the same machine as a turkey roaster. You can get the same use from a turkey roaster and save yourself money from having to buy the spa version.

Heating your stones in water creates a soft heat, one that is easy to work with. Heating stones in an oven is not recommended. The heat is very sharp.

Never ever heat your stones in a microwave!

A lot of people ask if it's ok to use a crockpot for heating the stones, but I do not recommend them. They are deep, not shallow, so your stones are not easily accessible, and you have to be able to access the stones if you are going to be rotating stones through for re-heating. Plus crockpots only have 2 or 3 temperature settings, which I have found are either not warm enough, or too warm to use comfortably with the stones.

Stone Temperature

The ideal working temperature for the stones is 120 – 130 degrees F. You can accurately measure this by using a thermometer placed right in the water. The temperature setting on the heater reflects the temperature of the heater's element, not the temperature of the water.

In time, you will get to know the heat of the water and the stones quite intimately. You will be able to judge by feel what temperature is ideal for the stones, and what is too hot. A good way to check this is by testing the stone temperature on the inside of your wrist – like you would with baby formula. If the stone temperature is ok for the skin on your wrist, it is likely ok for the client. Always check in with the client to confirm the temperature is ok.

Supplies You Will Need for a Hot Stone Massage



- Stone set
- Stone heater
- Massage oil
- Antibacterial soap
- Scrub Brush
- Sheets
- Hand towels
- Water

Optional supplies:

- Thermometer
- Mesh bag to keep small stones separate from larger stones
- Essential oils
- Pillows

Some recommend using a slotted spoon and rubber gloves to get the stones out of the heater, but the water should be only hot enough to heat the stones to a working temperature. If the water and stones are too hot for you to handle with your bare hands, then the temperature is too hot to be comfortable for the client.

Preparing the Stones

Place a white hand towel in the bottom of the stone heater, and fill 2/3 full with water. This should be enough water to cover the stones completely, so they are heated thoroughly and evenly.



Arrange the stones in the heater so you can access them easily. I put my large working stones in the front left, my medium working stones along the back, my small stones in the middle, and placement stones to the right.

You will be rotating your stones through the heater, so they will get moved around some.



Plug in, cover with a lid, and set to 120-130 degrees, or "low."



Use a thermometer in the water to confirm the water temperature. The heater dial setting indicates the temperature of the heater's element, not the temperature of the water inside the heater.

Your stones should be heated up within 15 minutes. Take the cover off after 15 minutes. If you leave the cover on longer than this, the water will be too hot. If by chance the water does get too hot, just pour a bowl full of cold water into the heater and that will cool things down quickly.

Check the water temperature using a thermometer. It should be between 120 and 130 degrees. If the water isn't too hot to handle for your own hands, it should be fine to work with.

Using the Stones

It is important to get feel of the different sized stones, and what they are like to work with in your hands.

Practice massaging with the stones, from the small sized stones to the large ones.

Generally speaking, the larger stones are used for massaging the larger muscles such as the thighs and back. Medium stones are used for massaging the medium sized muscles such as the shoulders and arms. Smaller stones are used for massaging smaller muscles, like the hands or the face.

Placement stones are flat on one side so they will stay in place.

Smaller stones that are being massaged with (used actively) will cool quickly, typically within a few minutes.

Therapists will need to exchange cool stones for newer hot stones frequently. By placing the used and cool stones to one side of the heater, and keeping unused and warmer

stones on the other, therapists will be able to make quick and efficient exchanges as needed.

The larger stones will retain their heat for a longer period of time, some upwards of 20+ minutes.

Hot stones should always be used with oil, even on the face to assist with proper glide, and to avoid trauma to the skin.

When massaging a small area, such as the face, make small movements with the stones in this position. I prefer a spreading movement, as it is more calming than little circles.



Start the vertical midline of the face at the chin, and spread outwards along the jaw towards the ears. Repeat this movement, moving up the face as you go.

When new stones have been retrieved from the heater, I recommend drying them briefly on a hand towel, and then using them on the client.

If the stones are too warm coming out of the heater, dip them briefly in a bowl of cold water. This will take the stone temperature down quite a few degrees in just a second. Stones may also be left out of the water for a few moments to cool, as I like to do for placement stones.

It is also wise to have a bowl of water ready to add to the heater if the stones get too hot. To perform effleurage, hold the stones in the palm of your hands.

For a very claming and soothing effect, I like to start at the end of a limb, like a hand, and do one full upward sweep. At the top of this sweep (shoulder area), I flip the stone in my hand and do one full downward sweep to the end of the fingertips.

Flipping the stone in your hand allows for even heat distribution. The side of the stone that has just been in contact with the client will have cooled some during that stroke. Turning it over will allow the other side of the stone to transfer heat to the client, so the client gets to experience the hottest side of the stone with each stroke.

In other words, when performing your massage strokes, you want to glide up, flip the stone, and glide down. By imagining the stones are part of the hand, therapists achieve greater depth and ease while performing the massage.

Every petrissage technique can be performed holding the stones the same way – in the palm of your hand, not with your fingertips. These include:

- Kneading
- Pickups
- Fanning
- Fulling
- Ringing

For friction and deep stripping techniques, hold the stone between the fingers, not in the palm of the hand.

Use good firm pressure (deeper rather than lighter) and movement during the massage, but avoid letting the stones sit in any one place for extended periods of time to avoid burning the client.

Let the stones do the work, maintaining good form and body mechanics, and the heat will soften and relax the muscles for you.

This will save your body from strain.

Remember to check with the client as to the pressure you are using, and the stone temperature. This can change throughout the massage, as some tissues are more sensitive than others.

The rhythm that is developed will also determine the effect the massage has on the client. Fast strokes tend to stimulate, while longer and slower strokes are more sedating and soothing.

With a slow rhythm, the heat of the stones also has a greater chance to penetrate the superficial tissues and get into the muscle.

Many clients will not notice the stones themselves, but will feel strong hands, and a deep, penetrating, relaxing heat.

When massaging the leg, be careful to avoid pressure on the shins, and avoid contact with the knee.

When massaging the feet, using a spreading technique feels especially good with hot stones.

Performing a Hot Stone Massage

The massage begins with the client in the supine position fully draped or sitting up to allow the therapist to visualize the spinal alignment for stone placement. A bolster or pillow is placed under the knees for support.



8 spinal layout stones are placed in a row on the table, about 1.5 to 2 inches apart. They are lined up to parallel each side of the spine following the erector muscles. This allows the client's spine to be centered between the stones when they lie down, giving relaxing heat therapy to the erector muscles.



A bath towel or pillowcase can be placed over the stones before the client lays down on them to protect the client skin from getting overheated.

Once the client is positioned over the back layout stones, the chakra stones can be placed accordingly, as well as the trapezius stones, hand placement stones and pillow stone.

Chakra Stones:



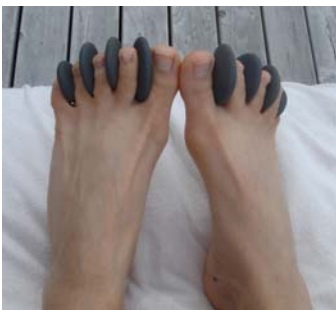
Hand Placement Stone:



Pillow Stone:



Toe Stones:



Trapezius Stones:



Toe stones are usually kept in a bag in the heater, or a fish net, so they don't get lost among the bigger stones. Toe stones are placed between each toe to help improve circulation.

You can wrap a towel around the foot to help these small stones retain their heat for a longer period of time.

Now that all our placement stones have been positioned, it is time to begin the massage.

We will begin at the top of the body, at the face. At this point, it is important to discuss the different aspects of a stone facial massage.

Stones can be used either heated or chilled, depending on your preference. To cool the stones, they are placed in a bowl of ice water, and to heat them, you simply place them in a small bag or net in your stone heater. This is done so that the small stones are not lost on the bottom of your heater, thus making it difficult to retrieve them during the massage.

Whether you have chosen to use heated or chilled stones, never use anything but cold stones over the eyes.

Take 2 cooled facial stones, place one on each eye, and either a hot or cold stone on the chakra point known as 'the third eye'. One recommendation is to wet a cotton eye cloth, place it on the eyes, and then put the cold stone on top of it. This protects the skin from direct contact with the stone, and ensures a widely distributed cool temperature effect.



In facial massage, all strokes should go up and not down, out but not in. If the stones need a little glide, put some oil on the stone, and not directly on the clients skin. Work

around the cheekbones, and place direct pressure on the sinus points, especially if the client is experiencing allergy symptoms or sinus headaches.



Then move along to massage the upper part of the body. Apply a layer of massage oil to the upper chest, shoulders, and neck area.

Then massage with the stones in the same pattern.



I like to work from the neck out to the shoulders and chest area:



And do deep tissue work with the edge of the stone:



Then I work each arm, starting at the fingertips and sweeping up to the shoulder area, and back down again.



Try cupping the stones in the palm of your hand for petrissage techniques.

The pattern I follow is 3 full sweeps of an area with the stones, then deeper hands-on massage and petrissage techniques. Then I do a final sweep with the heated stones again for completion, and move onto the next area.

After both arms are finished being worked on, I remove the toe stones from the client, and start my pattern again on the leg. I start at the tips of the toes and sweep up to the tops of the thighs with the heated stones and back down again.





I do deeper tissue petrissage work with and without the stones, then do a final set of full sweeps with the stones for completion.

Repeat this pattern for both legs.

When the front of the body is complete, I remove the placement stones and put them back in the heater.

To remove the spinal layout stones, I gently let the client know that it's time for them to sit up, and I retrieve the stones, towel and bolster from the table.

You may notice redness of the skin, or hyperemia, on the client's back where they have been laying on the stones. This is normal, and will fade after the treatment when skin cools down. The red color is caused by increased circulation to the area.



If the client has discomfort associated with these marks, that is not normal. If ever the client says the stones are too hot for them, then cool the stones down by dipping them briefly in cold water. Each person has a different temperature tolerance level, so it is important to get feedback from each client on what temperature is best for them.

Once the spinal layout stones are removed, the client can then lie back down, in preparation to turn over.

Turning a Client Over

To turn a client over, all that is required is a discreet draping technique. I stand on one side of the table and hold the sheet up on the far side of the table. I ask the client to turn over, and move into position so their head is comfortably resting in the face rest. Then I lay the sheet back down over the client and start my placements.

I place a bolster under the client's ankles, and freshly heated stones on the client's back.



You can use a towel or pillow case between the stones and the skin as a precautionary measure. If you are unsure, check in with the client to confirm they are still comfortable.

Next I place sacrum stone, and then move onto massaging the back of the body, starting at the tips of the toes, and following my pattern upwards to the top of the thighs.



I also work the bottoms of the feet using contour and acupressure stones, for deep tissue work without straining my thumbs. Let the stones do the work for you.

Then leave a large placement stone resting on the sole of the foot. You can wrap the foot in a towel to keep the stone in place, which also helps to retain the heat of the stone. This foot stone feels great to the client!



After completing the back of both legs, I move up to the client's back.

First I remove the sacrum stone, then I apply a layer of oil to the back:



Then I start massaging with the stones. It is important to introduce the stones to the client from the top of the back, near the shoulders and neck area, rather than the small of the back. The small of the back is much more sensitive to heat than the trapezius muscles, so start there. Then work your way downwards.



After an few initial sweeps with the stones from the top, you can move to sweeping from the bottom – up:



Then you can try using the stones on their edges...



or try wringing with them...



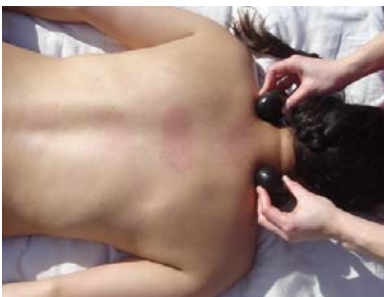
or cupping...



or as a deep tissue tool, using your thumb to landmark...



or use round neck stones to massage the neck...



Personally, I do not massage the arms when I am working the back of the body, I divide my time between the backs of the legs, the muscles of the back, neck and shoulders.

Then I finish off with a hands-on scalp massage, and compressions down the back of the body.



Contact

Hot Stone Massage has the unique challenge of being in and out of physical contact with the client, as you move back and forth to the stone heater for freshly heated stones. It is difficult to maintain continuous contact with the client while you are retrieving new stones. I overcome this by leaving the heated stones on the body while I go get hot stones.

Since the heated stones don't really feel like stones to the client (they actually feel like warm hands) it's as if your hands are still on their body while you go get new stones. When I return with the freshly heated stones, I remove the cooled stones to the side of the massage table and begin my massaging with the new stones.

The weight and warmth of the stones provide a sense of contact, even if you are not physically touching the body.

Another trick is to uncover the next body part that will be receiving treatment prior to gathering the stones for use. This will ensure a smooth transition from the heater to the client and lets the client know which area will be treated next.

Cleaning Up

At the end of each massage, and at the end of the day, clean the stones with warm soapy water. Dirty stones will feel oily, have more drag to them, and will feel sluggish. Just like washing your hands and arms in cold water after doing a massage will clean any energy off that you may have picked up from the client, washing the stones will clear the energy for them, too.

Discard the water from the heating pan, and scrub the pan with an antibacterial soap.

**Do not let the stones sit in the water overnight.

Additional Information

10 Tips for a successful stone massage:

1. Creams and gels stain the stones and leave a film in the water. Use only oil during the massage.
2. Use a liberal amount of oil and apply it with your hands before starting a Hot Stone Massage.
3. Keep a towel handy to wipe excess moisture off the stones.
4. Never place a stone straight from the heater onto the clients skin. Always check the stone temperature with your hands, and flip the stone as you make your way towards the client.

5. Always inform your client when you are about to place the first stone. Do not surprise them with the weight, or heat of the stone.
6. Stationary stones should have a towel between them and the client. The exception to this is the cold stones, which should not be left in place for more than 10-15 minutes. Remember that the cold will help disguise any potential damage that is occurring, so check your clients comfort level and the area that is being treated.
7. Stones that have been placed can be kept warmer longer if they are covered once positioned.
8. Have your client remove all of their jewelry. Do not place a hot stone on the belly of a client that has a metal belly ring as it will heat up quickly and burn them.
9. Start with the stones at one end of the roaster, and as you use a stone, move it to the opposite end. This assures that you are using fresh hot stones, and not the same ones every time you exchange them.
10. You can keep your oil in the heater to warm it and add to the soothing experience for the client.

Additional Uses for Stones

Consider new ways to use warmed stones in your massage or aesthetics business. You can easily implement them into:

- chair massage
- table massage
- reiki sessions
- facials
- manicures
- pedicures and
- body wraps

Mobile Hot Stone Massage

Instead of carrying a roaster around with you, try using moist heat pads to heat your stones. I have successfully used Thermophores to heat the stones when mobile, and they worked like a charm!

You can even preheat the stones with the moist heat pads before you leave and put them in an insulated bag so they stay warm along the way.

You can also get an electric plug-in adaptor for your cigarette lighter in your car, and heat the stones up while en-route.

Hot Stone Chair Massage

Here's an idea that very few people are capitalizing on. Be on the leading edge in the corporate chair massage industry and offer heated stone chair massage. Clients feel the heat of the stones right through their clothing, as long as you work slowly, using a press and hold movement with the stones vs. light effleurage.

Place two warmed stones under their hands on the armrest so they can rest their palms on top of the stones. These stones may feel so good, your clients won't want to give them back!

Hot Stone Facials

First create a head wrap with a small towel to keep client's hair out of the way.



Then position warmed placement stones – trapezius stones, chakra stones, optional hand placement stones, and toe stones.



Spread a very small amount of oil on the face in preparation for the stone massage:



Then begin spreading with the stones, from the midline of the face out towards the edges. Start at the chin, then move out along the jaw line towards the ear:



Move up the face, and spread along the cheekbones out to the edges of the face:



Then work from the middle of the forehead out to the temples:



Now try working with the edges of the stones, hand over hand:



Or do compression points along the eyebrows:



Or try drawing circles around the eye sockets with the edges of the stones:



You can use the stones as placement stones on the third eye, and on the sinuses:



The stones can be used on the upper chest, shoulders & neck in this sweeping motion:



Try holding the stones for a few moments on the temples. It feels GREAT to the client!



Hot Stone Manicures

An easy way to incorporate hot stones into your manicures is to use large hand placement stones like this:



Or to use small finger stones like this:



Hot Stone Pedicures

Try using hot stones in your pedicures as placement stones under the feet:



Or use toe cosies...



Alternate Massage Routine

This is an alternate massage routine that I use. It has the client starting out lying face down, so that their sinuses are drained by the end of the massage treatment.

Lay the client on their front, head resting comfortable in the face rest. I often will use a drop of orange essential oil, or eucalyptus essential oil on the towel hanging from the face rest. This helps relax the client and prevent their sinuses from clogging up.

Place WARM (not hot) spinal layout stones along either side of their spine and on their sacrum to heat these areas, and begin the massage at the feet and work your way up the body.

The pattern:

Start out by applying a layer of oil directly to the body part being worked, then gradually incorporate the warmed stones into the effleurage strokes – moving quickly at first because the stones are hot, and then using slower strokes as the stones lose heat.

Make sure to turn the stones in your hands as you massage in order to distribute the heat evenly.

Do three sets of sweeps with the stones, then hands on petrissage work, then a final sweep again with the stones.

Work both legs, then remove the placement stones from the back and massage the back and neck using the same pattern.

Then ask the client to turn over, and sit up while you place the spinal layout stones on the table, to line up with the muscles along either side of the spine.

After they lie down, I put hand stones, pillow stone, trapezius stones, toe stones and chakra stones in place.

I start massaging at the feet, and work my way up the legs, to the arms, shoulders, neck, and face.

Contraindications for giving a Hot Stone Massage:

- Any condition where the client has a loss of sensation, including Neuropathy, Diabetes, Peripheral Vascular Disorder, High Blood Pressure or is post-surgery, injury, or trauma where nerves have been affected.
- Pregnancy, due to the rise in body temperature.
- Cardiac Patients.
- Anyone taking medications that have side effects to heat.
- Anyone on Chemotherapy or radiation treatments.
- Anyone with a depressed immune system, including clients with Lupus, Epstein Barr, Mononucleosis, HIV / AIDS, or Cancer.
- Geriatric clients; keep the heat around 120 degrees – any higher may be too hot for the elderly.
- Clients with Burns, Psoriasis, Skin Cancer, Burns, Dermatitis, Eczema, Acne, Shingles, Herpes, or any acute skin condition.
- Any condition in which massage in general is contraindicated.
- Above all, follow the simple rule:
When in doubt – DON'T!

Please remember to take precautions when using hot stones. Listen to your clients – if the stones are too hot, add cold water to the heater, allow the stones to sit outside the water for a moment, or dip them in cool water before using them on your client.