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# Off the Table

June 2022

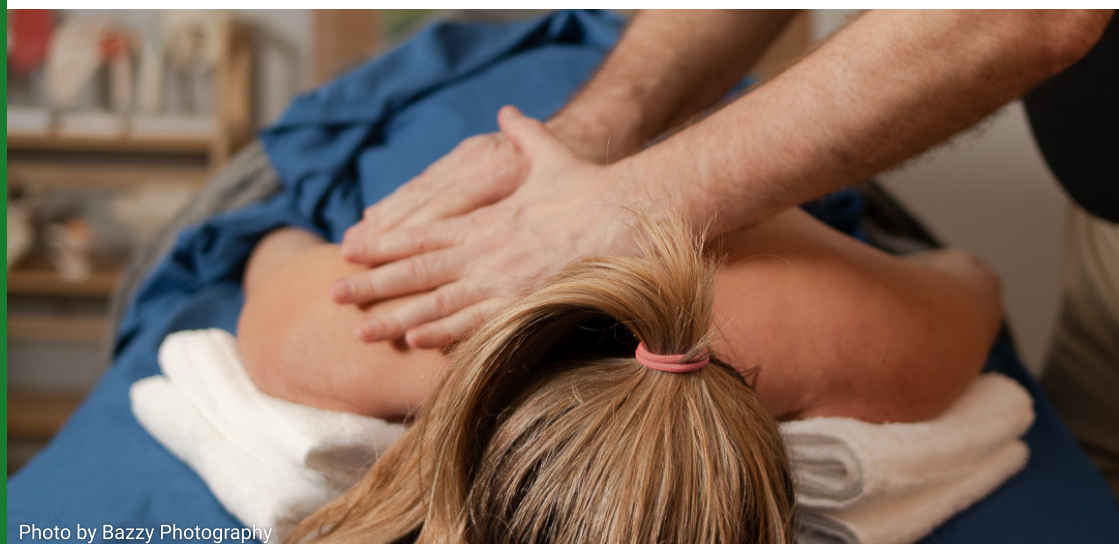


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## Six Ways to Get More Out of Your Massage

By Kevin Smith

Can you get more out of your massage? Probably. Whether you're new to using massage for your healthcare or you have no idea how many you've received in your life, there's a good chance at least one of these tips can improve your experience.

**Tip #1: Only help when asked.** Just as stretching cannot be effective on a muscle that is in use, neither can most massage strokes. If you are helping or resisting without your therapist asking you to do so, you aren't receiving the full benefit of your massage.

This tip also applies to draping. Your therapist needs to know your arm or leg is only moving where he or she moves it; if you decide to help during draping, there is not only a risk of accidental exposure, but you could actually injure your therapist with the unexpected weight shift or by accidentally hitting/kicking him or her.

Of course, most of us are trained from an early age to help out where we can, but for a better, safer massage, try resisting this urge unless asked to help and see how much better you feel at the end.

**Tip #2.** This tip sounds like common sense, but you'd be sur-

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## Six Tips to Get More Out of Your Massage (cont.)

Continued from page 1

prised how often it gets overlooked; **tell your therapist everything you hope to get worked on before your massage begins.**

Some of us can and will figure out missed information by what we feel, but not everyone has the experience to do that. Even if your therapist does have that skill, we're usually on a schedule and have a plan for your massage based on what you've told us. If you leave out information until we find it, or wait until halfway through your time (or later) to ask for special work on another area, it's probable that something won't get addressed as well as you needed during your massage.

Now, if you honestly forgot about it beforehand and you're quite a ways into your session, a great approach is to go ahead and mention it, but ask for the therapist to jot it in your notes for next time if he or she can't get to it today.

Just remember that every piece of information you give your therapist is essential in planning your session and giving you the best experience possible from your massage.

**Tip #3. Be ready for your massage.** In other words, to the best of your ability and control, finish everything beforehand that might disrupt your enjoyment of the massage. This only takes a little bit of planning and time management, but using the bathroom, making important phone calls (and turning it off during your massage), writing out your To-Do or shopping list, and so on before your session will allow you to fully engage in your massage without your brain (or kidneys) keeping you in a state of mild stress during your session – or worse, having to interrupt or cut short your massage.

**Tip #4. Do the homecare.** We as therapists will do our best to help your body move back into a state of pain-free balance, but we're not there every night to correct the imbalances you've created throughout the day; you are. That's why we suggest small changes in habits, corrective exercises, and targeted stretching. These are the things that will give you a more permanent solution to the issues that brought you in for a massage. It's important to understand that what we do as therapists is not "fix" you; rather,



Photo by Bazy Photography

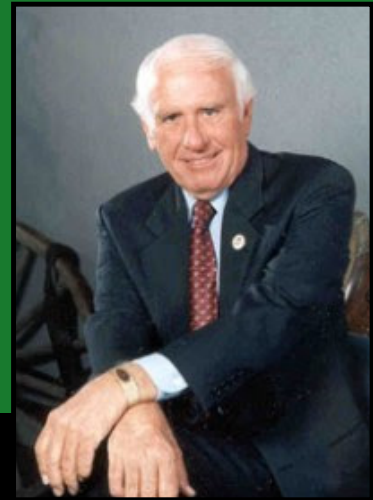
we help your body be ready to use those tools which enable it to make its own corrections. If you're looking for more permanent changes, you'll see much greater improvement with the homecare.

**Tip #5. Come early. This tip might not only give you more out of your massage, but actually give you more massage:** If it happens that your therapist can take you early, there's a little more flexibility to give you those extra bonus minutes you may need to top off your session.

Along the same lines, give yourself the reputation of quickly vacating the room when your session is done so the therapist will never have reason to doubt giving you extra time. If your therapist knows you're not going to delay him or her from getting the room sanitized and ready for the next client, you're going to be someone more likely to get a few extra minutes tacked on to your sessions.

**Tip #6. Always have your next appointment booked.** We all know regular massage is much more beneficial than waiting until your body is screaming for one, but let's face it; it's easier to remember to cancel an appointment than it is to remember to set one. So book your appointment before you leave your massage place, even if you have to change it in ten minutes, and reschedule appointments rather than cancelling them. You'll find maintaining massage as part of your healthcare regimen much simpler.

# "Take care of your body...



## It's the only place you have to live."

~ Jim Rohn ~

## Using Endorphins to Decrease Pain Without Drugs

By Kevin Smith

Among your many brain chemicals are neurotransmitters called endorphins, which are incredibly designed to – among other tasks – decrease your perception of pain, all without risk of drug dependence.

Dr. Melissa Stoppler, writing in an article for [medicinenet.com](http://medicinenet.com), states, "Stress and pain are the two most common factors leading to the release of endorphins," and that this release is not consistent between individuals; the same activity or pain does not release the same level of endorphins from person to person. So the trick is finding the endorphin release that works best for you.

Fortunately, there are quite a few ways to increase your endorphin release. Prolonged, continuous (not necessarily strenuous) exercise is one way. Eating dark chocolate or spicy chili peppers are another. A couple small studies show that inhaling the aroma of Lavender or other "euphoric" essential oils can do it as well. Other

sources of release include music, sunshine, and laughter. A quick online search will reveal more, but human touch is the last I will mention here. Hold hands, dance, get a massage – all things that release endorphins and help you Feel Better.



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# What's a Safe Way to Stretch Your Neck?

By Kevin Smith

The neck has a number of ligaments connecting the vertebrae at various points and the joints themselves place limits on normal range of motion so, although possible, it is very difficult to self-injure your neck by stretching. To be safe, if you've had a recent traumatic event to your head or neck (diving, fender-bender, etc.), don't do it without a doctor's approval and an X-ray. And in all cases, be sure your stretches are gentle, slow, and PAIN-FREE. Never stretch into pain.

One of my favorite neck stretches is this. 1) Sit upright on a stool or the edge of a chair. 2) Reach one hand over your head and grab the seat's edge with the other. 3) First, tilt your head to engage the stretch and then, gently pull with both hands for two seconds or less to stretch both ends of the

muscle. Repeat as needed.

Tilt your head in different directions and adjust your hand placement to target different muscles; you know which ones need it and this is an easy way to find the stretch you need.

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## How Did My Elite Massage Get its Name? And Other Questions. A Brief Interview with the Owner.



### Who are you?

"My name is Kevin Smith and I'm an orthopedic massage therapist. I grew up in the Lansing and Battle Creek areas of Michigan and have lived in Texas since 2016."

### How did you get started in massage?

"After 25+ years as a professional musician, I was looking for something new. During a random conversation over lunch with a friend about thumb wrestling and being unable to remember ever losing a match (because of strong fingers from playing piano most of my life), she slapped the table and proclaimed, 'You should be a massage therapist!'"

"Honest; that's how it started. Soon after finishing massage school, I came across a video of James Waslaski getting incredible, pain-free results with his clients using orthopedic massage. James eventually became a mentor and I am honored to be one of his teaching assistants now."

### What is orthopedic massage?

"It's a modality that focuses on the soft tissue of the joints, such as your joint capsules, ligaments, and tendons. To oversimplify a little, I specifically strive to balance the body's tissues, putting things back in their neutral positions – which tends to alleviate a lot of pain sources (pinched nerves, trigger points, etc.) The results are usually pretty significant and best of all, it's designed to be a pain-free approach."

### How did My Elite Massage get its name?

"After some online research, I was planning to call the business, 'Elite Massage.'"

"I promptly went to register [elitemassage.com](http://elitemassage.com) and was given a \$2,000 price tag. Adding the word 'My' at the beginning brought the cost down to just \$8.99/mo. – a much more reasonable startup fee for a small business and only a minor tweak to the name – which I actually liked better! "