



## Spokane Chiropractic & Sports Injury Clinic

### **After massage care is just as important as the massage itself!**

So you just got a massage. You're leaving the spa, or medical office, or wherever you may be. You've been told all sorts of things to do after you leave to keep yourself in tip top condition after your massage, but most of it just went in one ear and out the other. You step into your car, relaxed and sleepy, and decide you are going to take a nap and ignore most of what you have just been told, or what you could hear, at least. "How bad can it be," you wonder, starting the ignition and pulling out of the parking lot.

Stop! Whatever your massage therapist has just told you, he or she has told you for a good reason. Having a massage, especially a deep tissue massage, is a form of passive exercise, as hard as that may be to believe, and you need to take care of yourself as if you have just exercised. You don't want to ruin that relaxed high you're on right now, do you? Since you were too relaxed to hear or listen, let me give you some information and rules to follow.

1. **Drink Lots Of Water, Especially For The Next 24 Hours** - this is perhaps the most important rule of all. Rehydration is key to a healthy body, especially after a massage. Since massage promotes lymphatic movement, drinking water and hydrating yourself is key to moving toxins through the kidneys and out of the body. Drinking water is the best way to do this - and no, water in tea, coffee and soft drinks doesn't count! Don't be surprised if you seem to have an increased urine output, i.e. you are peeing much more. This is also normal.
2. **Take A Bath** - A nice warm bath is very soothing after a massage, particularly with Epsom Salts. Epsom Salts are just Magnesium Sulfate, which is a natural muscle relaxer. They are also wonderful at drawing out toxins in the body, as is massage, so you may get a sort of detoxifying effect which is very beneficial to the body. You can get Epsom Salts at most grocery stores or pharmacies. If you don't have Epsom Salts, don't worry - a nice warm bath will do just fine. Please note that I said warm and not scalding hot! This is important because if you have any inflammation in the muscles the excessive heat can serve to exacerbate the injury. If you have a very sore muscle or injury, try icing the area.
3. **Pay Attention To Your Body's Reaction To The Massage** - You may be sore after the massage. This is normal with Deep Tissue massage, but it can happen with gentle Swedish Massage as well. Sometimes you may not feel the soreness until the next day. Why? Well, as mentioned before, massage is a sort of passive exercise. If you are not one to get massages often, or do not exercise and are not used to using the muscles, then they may respond with soreness. This should only last for a day or perhaps two; anything more indicates that perhaps your therapist worked on you a little too hard. This should be adjusted in the next session. You can help your therapist by stretching before you arrive for your appointment. Remember anything that was particularly painful and report

this to your therapist at your next visit. The therapist should be open to what you are saying and should tailor your visit from the information they receive from you.

4. **Rest** - You may feel tired, as if you want to lie down and take a nap. This is completely normal, and you should listen to your body. If you can, make sure you have nowhere to go and nothing to do after your massage. Massage is not just work on the body; it is work on the mind too. It helps to de-stress and relax you; this in turn may make you feel tired. This is your time to recover your mind and body and it is your body's time to rebalance itself and retune. Don't feel like you SHOULD be doing something. There is nothing worse than hearing a patient say, "Oh, that felt great. Too bad I have to go back to work." or "I think I'll go work out now". Make time for yourself and your body will thank you.
5. **Welcome Different Emotions** - Sometimes, if you have been experiencing lots of stress, you may feel the need to cry after the massage. Alternatively, you may feel elated, on cloud nine, full of energy. Either response is normal. The key is not to try to keep these emotions out. The massage may channel these feelings and multiply them; whichever way, this is what the body needs. I have had people break down on the table before; this is all perfectly natural. Let it come and you will feel that much better afterwards.

As you can see, there aren't that many rules to follow, but it's important that you do! Following the above rules will help you to get so much more benefits out of your massage and your presence of mind will be that much more peaceful and invigorated. Always remember, if you have any questions whatsoever, be sure to call your therapist. We are here for you to help you to heal and to get the most out of your session that you can get. They don't call us therapists for nothing