Hygiene: It’s Personal

Developing good hygiene habits early in your career is essential for the health of you, your clients and your massage practice.

• **Working with your hands works up quite a sweat!** Keep deodorant on hand and reapply as needed, or pack a spare clean shirt and change halfway through your work day.

• **Many people are sensitive to scents.** Use unscented lotions, deodorants, soaps, hair products and laundry detergents whenever possible, and do not wear any perfume, cologne or fragrance oil to work.

• **Long hair should be pulled back** or kept out of your face so it doesn’t distract you or your client while performing a massage. Wear a sweat band as needed so you don’t drip sweat on your client.

• **Keep your nails trimmed short,** well groomed and unpolished. Keep nail files handy; trim hangnails and smooth any rough edges on fingers (calluses). No fake nails! Fake nails harbor all sorts of bacteria and germs.

• **Make sure to completely cover any open cuts** or wounds on your hands or forearms. You may choose to wear gloves during the massage. This will minimize the transmission of any infectious bacteria. Inform your client of any wound dressings you are wearing.

• **Make sure your breath is fresh.** Keep a toothbrush and toothpaste on hand, use mouthwash or mints throughout the day. Avoid gum, as popping and chewing gum can distract your client during a massage session.

• **Dress comfortably yet professionally.** Make sure your clothes fit properly, are in good repair and that you’re wearing short sleeves.

• **Remove jewelry and piercings** except for post earrings. These are a huge source of bacteria as well as a safety factor.

• **Wash your hands regularly** throughout the day, before and after each client session and before and after you touch your computer or phone.

• **If you’re sick, stay home!** Give the same advice to your clients, too. Have portable tissue packs and cough drops on hand in case you need to turn a client away as a “get well soon” gift.

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A clean, organized practice is memorable to clients and keeps them coming back for more!

- **Use fresh linens** with each client, every time. This includes towels, base and top sheets, blankets, and face cradle covers. Have a covered hamper or bin in your treatment room for used linens and make sure to wash your hands after touching used linens and before touching clean ones.

- **Wash all your linens** in hot water and dry them thoroughly on high heat. Check the dryer as soon as you can after the cycle finishes. If linens are still damp to the touch, set the dryer for another cycle. Do not let them sit damp in the dryer.

- **Sanitize your massage table** and let it air dry. Disinfect doorknobs, face cradle, and other commonly touched surfaces in your treatment room between each client. Don’t forget about your pens, stereo, light dimmers or switches, and coat or clothing hooks, too.

- **Sanitize all chairs or stools** and any other surface that the client has sat on. Many clients sit down on a chair unclothed to get dressed.

- **Keep all linen, oil and lotion bottles, face cradles and other sanitized equipment off the floor.**

- **Don’t keep food or beverages** in your treatment room.

- **Sanitize lotion bottles and dispensers after every client session.** These items get touched a lot in the course of a massage session and need the same hygienic care as any other item in your treatment room.

- **Consider investing in an air purifier** for your treatment room to improve the indoor air quality for both you and your clients. Open your treatment room door periodically throughout the day to allow fresh air to circulate.

- **Empty your treatment room trash can** at least once a day. Don’t forget to change the trash bag or liner, too.

- **Clean the floor and walls of your treatment room** at least once a week. Keep an alcohol based solution on hand in case something spills on the floor. Dust artwork, vent covers, corners and baseboards to make sure any hair and dust is removed. Lift garbage cans and other moveable items to clean under them, not around them.