



Click now to
save 10%
ALL KITCHEN
CARTS.COM

10 Embarrassing Massage Questions

By [Cathy Wong](#), About.com Guide Updated November 03, 2006

About.com Health's Disease and Condition content is reviewed by our [Medical Review Board](#)

Free Alternative Medicine Newsletter!

Enter email address

Sign Up

[Discuss](#) in my forum

Do you tip? Are you supposed to be nude? Do you say anything if the pressure's not deep enough? What if you're self-conscious about your body?

Here are the answers to ten massage questions you want to ask, but may be too embarrassed to.

1) Am I supposed to tip my massage therapist?

If you get a massage at a [spa](#) or hotel, a 15% to 20% tip is standard if you were pleased with the services.

On the other hand, there are no real ground rules or norms when it comes to massage in a medical setting. Some massage therapists and massage associations I asked said tipping isn't appropriate in a medical or clinical setting.

If you're not sure, don't be afraid to ask if tipping is customary. You can call ahead to ask if you don't want to do it face to face.

If tipping isn't the norm, you can always show your appreciation by referring friends, family and co-workers to the massage therapist.

2) Am I supposed to take off my underwear when I get a massage?

Many people prefer to keep their panties or briefs on during a massage, while others prefer to be completely nude. It's up to you.

If your problem areas are your lower back, hips, buttocks, or groin, tight-fitting underwear can sometimes get in the way of massage work, but a thong for women or briefs for men should do the trick.

In North America, if you do remove your underwear, licensed massage therapists must ensure that you are always properly covered by a sheet or towel. Only the area being massaged will be uncovered.

3) What if I realize I've drooled during the massage?

Many people fall into a peaceful slumber during the massage but when they wake up, they notice a pool of drool on the pillow or massage table. This is very common. It often happens when people are being massaged while lying face down on the massage table.

Don't be afraid to ask the massage therapist for a tissue.

4) Will the massage therapist be there when I undress?

In North America, the massage therapist will leave the room so that you can remove your clothing and lie on the massage table (usually face down) under the top sheet.

Don't rush or worry that the massage therapist will walk in on you -- the massage therapist always knocks and asks if you are ready before entering the massage room.

5) Should I talk to the massage therapist during the massage?

Although some people prefer to talk throughout the massage, don't feel like you have to make conversation with the massage therapist. After all, you're having a treatment, you're not at a cocktail party!

Feel free to close your eyes and relax, which is what most people do.

Deep tissue massage and sports massage are just some of the [types of massage](#) that require more feedback. The massage therapist often works on deeper layers of muscle and will want to ensure that the pressure is not uncomfortable.

Be sure to speak up if:

- the room is too hot or too cold
- you experience pain
- you have any questions related to the massage
- there's anything you forgot to mention during the consultation

6) What if I get an erection during the massage?

Some men don't get massage therapy because they worry that they'll get an erection. Or they get the massage, but are unable to relax during the massage because of this fear.

But there is no reason to be embarrassed. It's perfectly normal for men to get an erection during a non-sexual, therapeutic massage.

Gentle touch administered to any area of the body can activate the parasympathetic nervous system and cause a partial or full erection. Your massage therapist (male or female) understands this and will generally ignore it.

If you are still worried, you may wish to wear a men's bikini bathing suit during the massage, which provides more support than boxers.

7) How do I know if it's a legitimate massage clinic?

Although you might think massage parlors that offer sensual or erotic massage may look obviously seedy, it can be sometimes be difficult to spot these places.

If you're trying a new clinic or spa, it's a good idea to call first and ask these questions:

- Do you offer therapeutic massage?
- Is the massage therapist certified or licensed?
- Do you require a health questionnaire of your clients?

A licensed massage therapist will not come into contact with your genitals or nipples during the massage.

8) The pressure isn't deep enough, but I don't want to insult the massage therapist's technique. What should I do?

Communicate openly with the massage therapist. Keep in mind however that it's a myth that massage therapy has to hurt to be effective.

Some of the most effective types of massage therapy are gentle and do not involve deep pressure or pain. In fact, *too much* pressure can cause muscles to seize up.

Here is a good rule of thumb -- on a scale of one to 10 where one is no pain and 10 is extremely painful, the pressure should always be less than seven.