



CHAPTER

16

*Introduction to the
Foundation of Thai Massage*

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The Using of the Manual: *“Ancient Thai Massage Healing with Prana”*

This book is a manual for students of Thai massage and interested readers in general. However, chapter 17: “Hands On: The Foundation of Thai Massage” is intended for students studying Level 1: Foundation of Thai Massage at the Thai Massage School of Chiang Mai and Thai Massage School of Thailand (TMC).

The hands on, practical part learning at TMC is a detailed demonstrations. Students follow the manual while the teacher demonstrates each sequence exactly as in the manual. The lines and points are shown along with explanations of hand and seating positions. Students observe and take notes. Then the students practice under the closed supervision of the teacher. The teacher will correct any mistakes and prevent students from performing dangerous movements that may harm themselves and the receivers. At the end of the day, the teacher will go over the positions and sequences that the students may not fully comprehend.

Though the instruction in this chapter is very clear and detailed, interested readers should not do self-learning but seek guidance from the real source. Thai Massage School of Chiang Mai and Thai Massage School Thailand have accredited teachers teaching TMC’s curriculum

like this course all over the world. Please check TMC Global for Government Certified Teacher (GCT) graduated from TMC at <http://www.tmc.school.com/courses.php#affiliation>

The terminology and words used in chapter 17 are instructional and simple to make it brief and easy to follow, which may not be completely grammatically perfect. The names of the lines and hand positions are actual Thai massage terms which can be easily understood by the layperson rather than using anatomical terms which may confuse both learners and teachers.

Self-Care for the Practitioner

Practitioners or givers should be sure to take good care of themselves before giving or learning massage. Advice on good preparation for Thai massage can be found in chapter 13. Other tips regarding care are the following:

Care of Thumbs, Hands, Wrists and Knees

Thai massage requires using proper hand position and body movement in order to achieve a smooth flow and right pressure. New learners may complain of sore thumbs while perform-

ing. When this occurs, the practitioner needs to reduce the pressure on the thumbs and use alternative positions such as finger circle, lower palm press, elbow (with training) and arm roll instead.

Soak hands in warm water at the end of the day's practice. This helps improve circulation and reduce soreness. Try to strengthen the thumbs and hands with exercise. There are several exercises that can be done in a Thai way to achieve results. For example, squeezing a candle wax ball, closing and opening hand grip in a pail of rice seeds, and floor lifting exercises. For modern form of exercise, squeezing hand ball is the common exercise and easy to do anywhere.

Knees are the sorest part for people who are unfamiliar with sitting on the floor and working at floor level. Therefore, unnecessary knee-walking should be avoided. Get up and walk around the recipient to change side of the massage. Do not step over the recipient body at any time. This is an insult for Thais. Some positions which cause knee discomfort can be adjusted to suit the receiver's limitations. Many sitting positions which practitioners feel uncomfortable with, can be revised to suit individual limitations. Be sure, however, that it still looks good and is polite. Daily knee exercises as part of the class practice is helpful.

Body Movement

Thai massage works well with movement and rhythm. These movements are part of the body mechanics. Thai massage teachers would encourage students to “rock” the body and “lean forward” when applying certain positions. The experienced Thai massage practitioners gently rock the body while performing massage

to increase pressure or to enhance smooth flow of the transitions.

One of the recipients described this rocking movement as “being cradled in the arms of a mother.”



Practitioner leans the body forward while pressing down and back when releases

Students need to learn the art of body mechanics to protect themselves from over stretching and to enhance effective pressure. Students need to observe the teacher's movements in addition to sequence transitions. Body mechanics techniques are important and should be formally taught in a Thai massage course.

Recipient and the Legal Issues

As a protocol for a massage session, the recipient must give consent to the giver before the session begins. The practitioner must interview the recipient to gather necessary health information to avoid any contraindications, and briefly inform receiver of the massage plan before commencing.

The practitioner needs to prepare the consent form and the health information form. The content of the consent form varies according to each country's laws related to massage services. The sample form at Table 16–1 at the end of this chapter is merely an example of basic health information. Individuals should study one's own legal regulations.