

SELF CARE MASSAGE TECHNIQUES

Self care massage encourages the abdominal organs back to their proper position as well as improving the flow of blood, lymph, nerve impulses, and chu'lel. This in turn enhances the body's natural healing ability, thus optimizing hemodynamics and homeostasis.

All the self care techniques are therapeutic, applied only to yourself, and intended for use in conjunction with treatments that you will receive from a trained Arvigo practitioner. These techniques provide benefit to both women and men and are performed identically except where noted in the handout "Self Care for Men and Women."

Self care techniques for men and women encourage the abdominal organs into proper position and improve flow of blood, lymph, nerve impulses, and ch'ulel. Proper positioning and improved flow enhance your body's natural healing abilities and bring balance to the upper and lower abdomen. Self care techniques are for you to use in conjunction with treatments from an Arvigo practitioner. This handout reinforces what your practitioner taught you during your session. Your practitioner may give you some supplementary guidance, which you should record in the "Notes" section at the end.

Preparation

- ▶ Empty your bladder.
- ▶ Create a quiet place to relax for five to ten minutes.
- ▶ Perform self care through loose clothing, a sheet, or on bare skin with or without oil.
- ▶ Lie on your back and place pillows under your head and your knees (if desired).
- ▶ Elevate your hips by placing a pillow under your pelvis if you have a prolapse.

Note: Breath is important. For best results, stroke when you exhale.

Lower Abdomen Pelvis Massage

There are three positions: center, right, and left sides.

Center Position:

- ▶ Bring your hands together with fingers together, slightly bent and relaxed. (See the illustration at right.)
- ▶ Place your fingers on the indent where the pubic bones meet in the middle of your pelvis, with palms gently resting on your belly.
- ▶ Slide your fingers off the pubic bone onto the soft tissue of your belly.

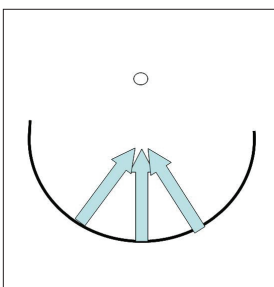
- ▶ Apply comfortable pressure into the soft tissue and with consistent pressure, slowly move your fingertips toward your navel, stopping halfway between the pubic bone and navel.
- ▶ Lift your hands and return them to the pubic bone indent and repeat the stroke.
- ▶ Do this a total of three times.

Side Position(s):

- ▶ Move to the right or left side of your pelvis to feel another small indent where the hip and pelvic bones meet. Place your fingers here to begin your side strokes.
- ▶ Keeping fingers together, slightly bent and relaxed, slide off the bone and apply comfortable pressure into the soft tissue space of the lower abdomen. Maintain consistent pressure while you slowly stroke toward the navel. Stop at the same place you did for the center position.



Lower Abs
30 strokes



- ▶ Perform this stroke three times.
- ▶ Now move to the other side of your pelvis and repeat the side strokes there on your lower abdomen.
- ▶ Return to the indent in the center of the pelvis, where you began, and repeat the entire process for two more rounds.

Finish the lower abdomen work with three strokes up the center for a total of thirty strokes.

Note: A woman with a properly positioned uterus will feel a deep, open space above the pubic bone and a similar amount of open space on each side of the lower abdomen.

Upper Abdomen Massage

As with the lower abdomen, there are three positions: center and two sides.

Hand position: “M” for Maya Hands: Curl your fingers, bringing the backs of your hands to form the “Maya M.”

Center Position:

Place your fingertips just below your breastbone and move slowly and firmly to your navel (working with your breath).

Perform this stroke three times.

Side Positions:

- ▶ Begin with the “M” hand position on one side of your upper abdomen just below your rib cage.
- ▶ Stroke your fingertips diagonally toward your navel.
- ▶ Perform this stroke three times.
- ▶ Repeat on the other side of your upper abdomen.
- ▶ Return to center.
- ▶ Repeat entire process twice more for a total of thirty strokes.

Zigzags:

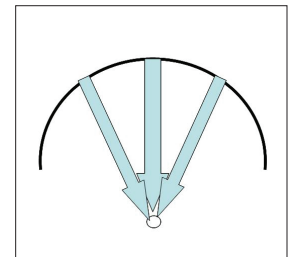
- ▶ Begin in the center just below the breastbone.
- ▶ Applying comfortable pressure, gently and slowly massage with a zigzag stroke down to just above your navel.
- ▶ Zigzag back to the sternum with lighter pressure.
- ▶ Perform this stroke three times.

Keyhole:

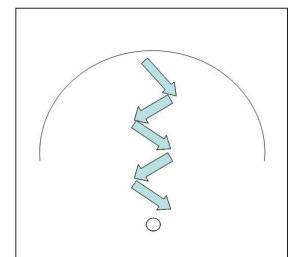
- ▶ Massage with deep circles around your navel.
- ▶ Work in a clockwise direction.
- ▶ Spend as much time here as comfortable.
- ▶ You don’t have to work out all the tension at one time.

Note: Hand positions vary where tension is present.

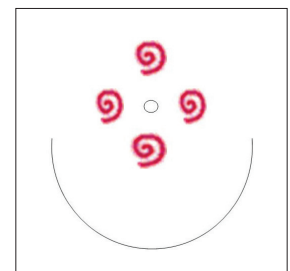
Upper Abs
30 strokes



Zigzags
(down and up)



Gardening for Potatoes
Keyhole



Lymphatic Strokes

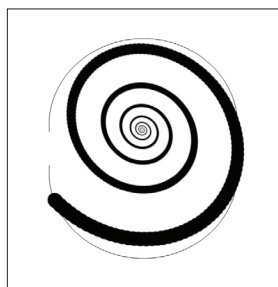
Upper Abdomen:

- ▶ Apply light touch with hands and fingers flat on your skin, pressure the weight of a nickel.
- ▶ Make small sweeping motions between your ribs a little below your breastbone.
- ▶ Place one hand on either side of your pelvis just above your hips; make light, sweeping motions.
- ▶ Move up the center of your body toward your heart, continuing with sets of sweeping motions. Begin each set lower on your legs.

- ▶ The final set starts on your legs as far as you can comfortably reach.
- ▶ Movements are from the sides of the legs upward to the center and your heart.

Note: Spend extra time over the lymph glands where your groin meets your thighs if needed.

Closing the Gate



Closing the Gate:

Hand position: spiral out and spiral in.

- ▶ Using both hands together, flat on your abdomen, spiral lightly around your navel in a clockwise direction.
- ▶ As you progress, make your spiral bigger and bigger, reaching the sides of your abdomen, bottom of your ribs, and top of your pubis.
- ▶ Keeping the clockwise direction, gradually close the spiral, getting smaller and smaller, until your hands are resting on your navel.
- ▶ Perform this stroke three times.

After Self Care

Drink plenty of water. Good hydration supports the healing process.

Honor your experience. Reflect on any changes you note, responding as necessary to gain the most benefit from your experience.

As you gain experience with self care, seek a balance between comfortable pressure and relaxed hands. If thumbs or pinky fingers stick out rigidly, relax your hands a little more. Some people find that resting their elbows on the bed for some of the strokes helps relax their hands more. As you feel comfortable with self care, consider varying things a bit, paying attention to whether doing so improves your result. If not, go back to the standard routine above.

Cautions: Following the guidance of a qualified practitioner to practice these techniques is safe, but there are times when they should be either modified or discontinued altogether. Be aware of the following cautions and, as always, consult your practitioner if you have questions.

Menses: During and five days prior to menses do not deeply massage the uterus. You may massage over the groin and upper abdomen. During menses, it may be helpful to apply gentle and superficial massage over the uterus.

Pregnancy: Do not perform the lower abdominal or lymphatic work during the first twenty weeks of pregnancy. Self care massage can be adapted after the twentieth week of pregnancy. Consult with your practitioner for Pregnancy Self Care Guidelines.

Abdominal Surgery: Abdominal surgery typically requires from six to eight weeks for tissue to fully heal after the procedure. Consult with your physician or primary health care provider to determine when you are able to perform or receive abdominal massage.

Medications: Pain medications or other substances may mask your response to this modality.

Intrauterine Device: Do not perform self care if you have an IUD (intrauterine device) in place, except as may be instructed by your Arvigo practitioner.

Acute Pain or Infection: Do not perform self care if you have acute abdominal/pelvic pain or infection.

Emotional Releases: Emotional response may occur during self care. Your practitioner is available to support you and refer you for professional support if indicated.

Intense Pain: If your self care massage appears to generate intense abdominal pain or discomfort, then stop the massage immediately and inform your practitioner or seek medical intervention.

Pessary: If you have a pessary in place, remove it prior to self care massage.

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disorder (GERD) or Hiatal Hernia: If either of these conditions is present, proceed slowly with light pressure.

Hernia Repair: If you have had a hernia repair, consult with your Arvigo practitioner before massaging over the repaired area.

Fertility Technology: You should discontinue self care if you are pursuing fertility enhancement through a method of assisted reproductive technology, except as advised by your Arvigo practitioner.

Notes: