



### **What is a Hot Stone massage?**

Hot stone massage is a variation on classic massage therapy. Heated smooth, flat stones are placed on key points on the body. The massage therapist may also hold the stones and use them to massage certain areas of the body.

The use of hot stones for healing dates back to ancient times, but it wasn't until Arizona massage therapist Mary Nelson introduced her hot stone massage technique, called LaStone Therapy, that the use of hot stones for massage caught on.

Nelson conducts workshops to train other massage therapists in LaStone. While LaStone continues to be popular, massage therapists and spas have also developed their own versions of the hot stone massage using heated, smooth rocks.

#### **1 Description of the Stones**

The hot stones are usually made of basalt, a type of rock that is rich in iron, so they retain heat.

River rocks are normally used because they are smooth - they are smoothed over time by the river current.

The stones are immersed in water and heated in an electric heater until they are within a certain temperature range. The placement of the stones is usually at specific points on the back, in the palms of the hand, or between the toes but may vary depending on the client's condition.

The heat of the stones warm and relax the muscles, which allows the therapist to apply deeper pressure, if desired.

The warmth of the hot stones improves circulation and calms the nervous system.

Some massage therapists place stones on points that are thought to be energy centers of the body to rebalance the body and mind.



## 2 Benefits of Hot Stone Massage

A common question people have is whether to get hot stone massage vs Swedish massage or a regular massage. Some people find the warmth of the hot stones to be comforting and get this type of massage for relaxation.

Hot stone massage is suited to people who tend to feel chilly or who have cold feet.

It's also suited for people who have muscle tension but prefer a lighter massage. The heat relaxes muscles, allowing the therapist to work the muscles without using deep pressure.

People also get hot stone massage for a variety of health conditions:

- Back pain and aches
- Poor circulation
- Arthritis
- Osteoarthritis
- Stress, anxiety and tension
- Insomnia
- Depression



### 3 How Do the Stones Feel?

The hot stones are never rough. They are always flat and smooth. The hot stones used on the back are about the size of a large egg, only flat.

The stones are heated in an electrical heater that either provides a temperature reading or has an adjustable thermostat control.

The massage therapist always holds the stones first before touching them to your body, which ensures that the temperature will not be too hot. Everyone, however, has their own comfort range. Be sure to speak up if the stones are too hot for you.

Cool marble stones are occasionally used during a treatment, particularly if there is inflammation.



### 4 What Can I Expect During my Hot Stone Massage?

The massage therapist often begins by applying oil to the body, which allows the hot stones to glide smoothly along the muscles. You are lying face down, and the massage therapist often then uses the hot stones to massage the back.

After the hot stones have relaxed the muscles, the massage therapist may put down the stones and use his or her hands to directly massage the skin.

The hot stones may then be placed back on to the body and left for a short period of time.



You are then asked to turn over onto your back. The massage therapist may place small hot stones between your toes or in the palm of your hand and repeats the sequence.

A typical hot stone massage is between 60 and 90 minutes long and ranges between \$50 and \$190.