

After the Fact When the Massage is Over

By Darren Buford

Originally published in Body Sense magazine, Spring 2003.
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You've just received a great massage. In fact, it was so good you have to take a minute to collect yourself when the therapist leaves the room. Massage practitioners refer to this time as the "coming back" period or a moment to regain your "connectedness," and most recommend savoring this valuable experience. "These few minutes can be an exquisite interlude during which your cares and concerns seem a million miles away," Steve Capellini writes in *Massage for Dummies*. "Relish it."

After a massage, always take time to let your head clear, drink some water (see "Water: Your Body's Best Friend," page 38) and put your feet on the ground, literally, before leaving your practitioner's place of business. Using caution when getting off the table is sage advice. Not only might your balance be skewed a bit, but your feet, if covered with massage oil, might slip on a slick floor. Also, take your time getting dressed. Allow an extra second or two to make sure you haven't forgotten anything. And don't feel embarrassed to ask your practitioner for help if you need it.

But what to do once you leave the premises? Most practitioners will advise you to avoid any strenuous activities for at least the next few hours. Some forms of bodywork are very much like a workout and may result in a similar-type soreness the day after. Therefore, your massage therapist might suggest you not push yourself farther with an extended workout at the gym.

On the other hand, Joan Budilovsky, author of *The Idiot's Guide to Massage*, says people should use common sense and do what feels natural or best for them. "There are many different types of massage," Budilovsky says. "There is sports massage, massage that can help you energize and vibratory types of massage that can really help you become more focused -- all reducing stress in the process."

Budilovsky relates that she recently gave someone a hot stone massage and they were in another "zone" afterward. "In that instance, it was best for the client to take some time and appreciate that space," she says. "But someone else might be able to go on and do what they want -- whether that means going back to work, back to finances or a trip to the gym." Budilovsky suggests massage can be an integral part of your life at all times, suggesting you don't have to shut down for the remainder of the day: "It all depends on the therapist, the type of massage you're receiving and what your motivations were for getting that massage." Laughing, she adds, "If you want to relax and go into that zone, you won't want to go to a gym afterward."

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