

The Four Essentials for Thriving Therapists
Presented by Heath & Nicole Reed
LMTs and Body Intelligence Coaches &
Co-Founders of livingmetta.com ~ 602.751.1201



"Healer heal thyself" - Hippocrates father of Modern Medicine

This course's focus on "thriving" therapists is very intentional. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines thriving as: 1. to grow vigorously: FLOURISH 2. to gain in wealth and possessions: PROSPER 3. to progress toward or realize a goal despite or because of circumstances. Our aim for this course is to equip all therapists, regardless of their circumstances, with the practices that allow you to flourish and prosper.

With 25+ years of practicing, teaching, and coaching others in bodywork, movement therapy, and conscious communication skills, we have discovered four essential keystones to providing effective massage therapy, while likewise supporting a happy and healthy therapist outlook. They are Practical Self-Care, Drama Free Communication, Pain Free Deep Tissue Techniques, and Easy Body Mechanics. Our hope is that you learn and integrate at least one new approach for your professional and personal success. Thanks for your willingness to learn, discover, and grow!

Drama-Free Communication

In addition to helping yourself and your clients feel their best, it is imperative to clearly communicate and respond to clients' goals, feedback, and requests. This includes growing into and owning your role as a healthcare educator. Communication and reassessing at the beginning, end, and throughout the entire length of the session are essential to providing longer lasting beneficial impacts, and assisting clients in internalizing their own ability to actively support their healing between sessions.

Touch Stones for Drama Free Communication

- Stepping out of drama (complaint, criticism, and blame) by taking 100% response-ability (the ability to respond rather than unconsciously reacting)
- Sourcing safety for your clients and yourself (people don't heal if they don't feel safe; and therapists don't thrive if they ignore, push or force through pain)
- Creating clear agreements with clients and developing the resourcefulness to amend agreements that are not working for you or your clients
- Empowering clients to make requests and contribute to the design of the session; are your clients' concerns and feelings being honored, deeply listened to, and addressed?
- Empowering therapists to receive requests as opportunities to collaborate and invitations to explore, grow, and evolve their practice

Practical Self-Care

According to the Associated Bodywork and Massage Professional, MTs only make up .001% of the general population at of 2024. Among the more than 341 million Americans, there are only 321,493 of us. To help counteract the systemic stress and pain engulfing our society, we need healthy and happy massage therapists to support our communities and our families. We're small in number but mighty in impact. We need you. Every connection counts. Practical Self-Care and introduces simple and easy practices to prevent burnout and injuries. We showcase many fast fixes to release stress, relieve aches or pains, and build more physical and psychological resilience. We teach multidisciplinary perspectives of therapeutic yoga, sports medicine, meditation, and physical therapy.

Easy Body Mechanics

Truly embodying the therapeutic relationship means attending to your own needs, as well as those of your clients. In order to sustain a long-term career in bodywork, we **MUST** take care of ourselves: ergonomic body mechanics and utilization of advanced tools, as well as healthy movement, nutrition, and rest habits, and encouraging a positive attitude.

Modifying our Body Mechanics around the table is one of the easiest ways we can feel better during and after our sessions. We want to provide you game changing Pro tips and reminders so you can become more **masterful** in your movements, see more positive results, and feel better and better throughout the longevity of your massage therapy career.

It's not one and done- rather an awareness building practice. Cumulative - and it's completely up to you to make a new a choice when you notice 'bad body mechanics'. Use every session as a learning laboratory to **experiment** and open up to new possibilities, postures, and techniques. The shapes that we model aren't necessarily going to be best for your body depending on your body type and the person you're working on etc. You may have been told previously to do something and maybe it worked before but now it doesn't feel good and that's your clearest sign that it's time to change it. **Find what works for your body.**

Your **body is always giving you feedback.** Are you listening? Your body's sensations are the main signal that provides you feedback about how easy and healthy your body mechanics are or aren't. **When something hurts, change it.** Pain is an ally- giving you valuable information, it's an early warning signal to - Stop IT! Experiencing pain while giving is a request from your body that it's time to **invent** something new and do something different. **Set yourself up for success!** The first thing you want to consider is a position that feels good to you first and then find out if it feels good to the recipient- Usually when it feels good to give, it feels good to receive.

To employ healthy body mechanics, we want to use stances that encourage our spinal alignment. Specifically, we want to align our Head over our Heart over our Hara (center of gravity). Bend your legs rather than your spine. It's better to have burning quads than to have a burning spine. Also, if your hands are moving, you want your legs to be moving; utilize the most powerful muscle group in your body, your quads.

Common Stances

Archer's Stance

Bring your legs in a lunge position and point your feet in the direction you're moving. Bend the outside, front leg to move your pressure forward.



Kickstand

Bring your inside leg forward while your outside leg extends lateral or posterior. To decrease pressure, lean your hip into the table, or to intensify, shift your weight from your hip to your tool.



To become a sustainable bodyworker, minimize finger, thumb, hand, and wrist use, and maximize use of advanced tools, like soft fists, knuckles, forearms, and elbows.

Advanced Tools

Soft Fists may be used to move along the length of a body part or may focus on a specific muscle. Keep your fingers relaxed with no clenching or gripping. Make sure the back of the palm, the wrist, and the forearm are all on the same plane.



Improper use



Proper Use

Knuckles are commonly used to focus on a specific muscle or attachment site and are a great substitute instead of using the thumbs. Nicknamed "Chuck Norris kung fu grip", we use the middle phalangeal segment to apply pressure. Make certain the fingers, back of the palm, wrist, and forearm are all on the same plane.



Improper Use



Proper Use

Forearms are typically used to move along the length of a muscle(s). Use the ulna blade about 1-2" from the elbow. Keep your shoulder above your elbow, and bend your legs to move your forearm. Always push the forearm away, don't pull the forearm towards you.

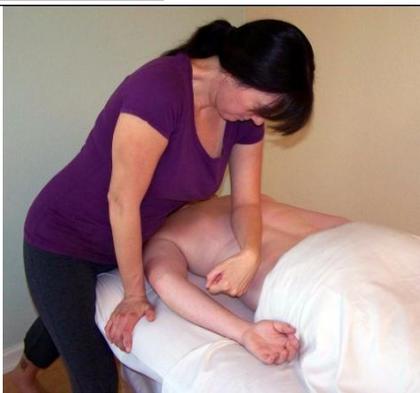


Improper Use



Proper Use

Forearms Continued:



Improper Use



Proper Use

Elbows are typically used to focus on a specific area, such as an attachment site, or adhesion. Bend the elbow to increase intensity, and you may want to use your non-working hand to avoid going over boney protuberances. Keep your shoulder above your elbow, and bend your legs to move your forearm. Always push away, don't pull your arm towards you.



Improper Use



Proper Use

Self Care IS Healthcare!!

Do you take care of yourself as well as you take care of your clients?

This is aided by conscious, aligned movement. We esteem to practice minimal effort and maximum impact at the table, at home and when playing! Find ways to make better friends with your body by moving, challenging, and stretching your body every day! Your future self with thank you for it!! Like any artist, we hope our artwork improves and becomes more graceful as we evolve in our practice.



“Movement is the Physical Acceptance of Change”- Dr. Ida Rolf

Pain free Deep Tissue Techniques



Flattening the Sheets

Bring client's chin to their shoulder and use **your soft hand to hook into the fascia and move it lateral**



Soft Fist Traps

Move soft fist inferior and posterior down 2nd and 3rd head of traps



Knuckle Traps/Supraspinatus 1

Place knuckles on traps and create posterior and inferior motion (remember to press your foot into the ground for added pressure and greater ease)



Knuckle Traps/Supraspinatus 2

Move knuckles from C7 to Acromion

Therapeutic Options:

1. Determine if Knuckle Traps 1 or 2 is more intense to client
2. Perform more intense version as you bring ear to shoulder, and then chin to shoulder
3. Determine which ROM is more intense, and ask client to perform same movement as you perform the more intense stroke version



Release the Pecs

Soft hand, soft fist, or knuckles carves from the sternum to anterior deltoid; below clavicle to anterior deltoid; etc...



Steamroll Deltoid

Bring one or both soft fists together and move from acromion to Deltoid Tuberosity



Myofascial Shoulder/Arm

Support wrist with both hands, gently lean back and hold until you feel a release (usually about holding for 30-90secs)



Forearm Flexors & Extensors

Use forearm to move from wrist ending at the medial or lateral epicondyle

*Repeat sequence on opposite shoulder and arm *



Forearm Quads with Kickstand

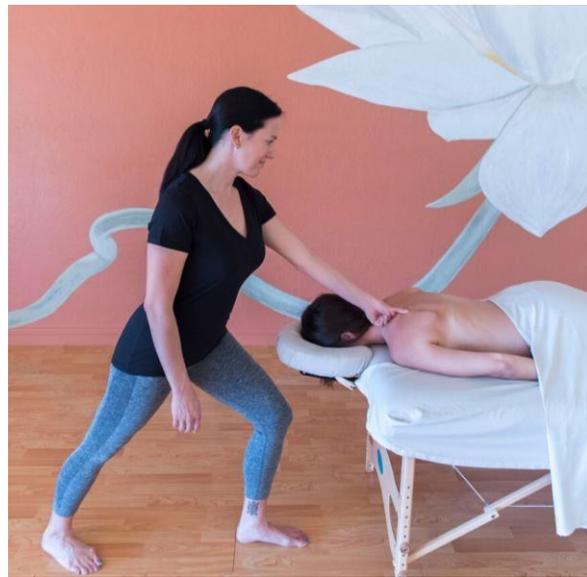
Kick stand position using forearm to travel from knee to ASIS in 3 divisions; medial, lateral and central compartments of Quads



CFM (Call For Motion) Forearm/Fist

Soft Fist or forearm along the entire length of Tibialis Anterior.

For more therapeutic results, ask your client to flex and extend their foot as you travel the length of Tib Anterior.



Soft Fist Upper Traps

Soft fist simultaneously move from Occiput to Acromion



Knuckle Traps

Knuckles hook in and travel from C7 to Acromion, Cervicals to Superior angle of Scapula

-Create a more soothing experience by transitioning bilaterally from knuckles to soft fists moving lateral and medial



Bilateral Soft Fist down Erectors

Bring double soft fists together and glide down erectors. Move back leg beside face-rest to avoid rounding in the back



Forearm or Elbow "L"

1. In kickstand position, move forearm or elbow from same-side iliac crest up erectors to C7



2. Pause over any areas of tension, adhesions, or Trigger Points. Common sites for adhesions include the QL, Rhomboids, and Traps



3. Complete the "L-shape" by continuing from C7 along 2nd or 3rd head of Traps until you reach the acromion

4 Reverse direction by beginning at top of erectors and move inferior until you reach the iliac crest. Complete "L-shape" by bringing forearm medial to lateral above the iliac crest



Steamroller Leg

Use single or double soft fists, or forearms to slowly, deeply move up length of entire leg from the achilles to the iliac crest



Release the Deep Six

Place elbow in the deep hip rotators, support knee as you emphasize a lateral leg drop several times until you feel softening. Repeat on an areas of tension



Quad Stretch Hamstring Glide

Bring the leg back to a neutral position.

Draw the heel toward the seat while forearm gliding up the hamstrings.

Quad Stretch Tib Anterior Glide

Stretch the heel toward the seat while the opposite soft fist works from the ankle toward the knee

*Thank you for sharing your healing presence! You help our dreams come true!!
With loving kindness, Nicole & Heath*

PS, have you heard that we've created a thriving online, self-care community that helps you nourish and flourish in your everyday life? For perpetual refreshment, join our by visiting LivingMetta.com



Stay in Touch & Keep Connecting
info@heathandnicole.com

