

# Hand and Foot Massage

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## What is a hand and foot massage?

Hand and foot massage is a way of helping someone to relax and feel better. The caregiver uses light-to-medium pressure or strokes on the person's hand and foot. The movements are not intended to relieve muscle tension as in a massage done by a trained and licensed professional.



## What are the benefits of hand and foot massage?

The main benefit of massage is to comfort the person and help them relax.

## How do I safely use massage?

Hand and foot massage can be done at home, in the hospital, or almost anywhere. Make sure you and the person are both in a comfortable position. You can change the pressure of the massage based on the person's needs and condition, age, and comfort level.

## Are there any risks with a massage?

There are a few risks with hand and foot massage. Hand and foot massage is not recommended for anyone who has wounds, broken bones, cancer, or an IV in the hands and feet.

Deep or firm massage may bruise the skin and is not recommended for anyone who has a bleeding disorder, low blood platelet counts, or is taking blood thinners. **Only use soft, gentle strokes when giving a hand or foot massage.**

If you're not sure if massage is the right choice, talk with a healthcare provider.

### *Getting started with hand and foot massage*

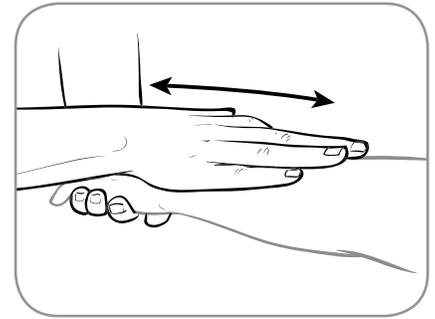
- Make sure the person is sitting or lying comfortably.
- Make sure you are standing or sitting comfortably and there is no strain on your back.
- Turn off electronic devices or other distractions.
- Begin with 2 to 3 comfortable deep breaths. Breathe along with the person to help them, and you, relax.
- Warm your hands before touching the person.
- Use light-to-medium pressure, depending on what feels best for the person.
- Keep skin-to-skin contact with the person as much as possible.
- Use lotions or creams to help your hands glide over the skin. Do not pull the skin.
- Do all movements in sets of 3. (See pages 2 and 3 for instructions.) This helps the person get used to the touch.

## Massage strokes for hands

- Repeat each stroke 3 times.
  - Do it on both hands.
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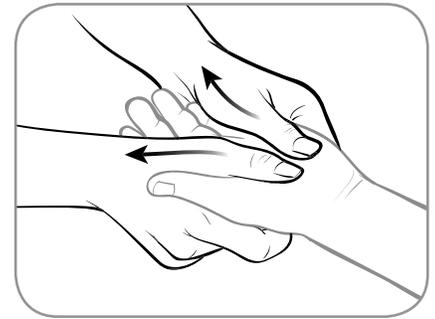
### Forearm stroke

Place one of your hands, palm up, under the palm of the person. Place your other palm on top of their hand. Start at the wrist, and gently glide your top hand up the forearm and back down.



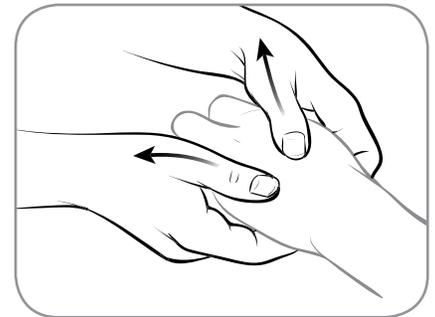
### Palm thumb stroke

Turn the person's hand so it's facing palm up. Using both of your thumbs, stroke the palm from the center to outside of the hand. Work from the top of the palm down to the fingers.



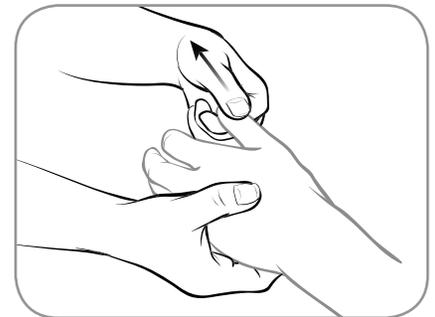
### Back-of-hand thumb stroke

Turn the person's hand over palm down. Work from the wrist to the fingers. Using both of your thumbs, stroke the back of the hand from the center to the outside of the hand.



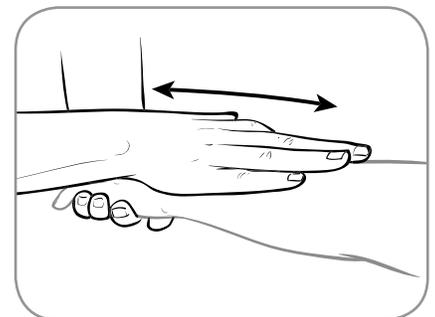
### Finger stretch

Gently grasp the person's thumb between your thumb and first finger. Slide your fingers down to the fingertips with a gentle "pull." Repeat 3 times. Repeat on each finger.



### Repeat forearm stroke

Place one of your hands, palm up, under the palm of the person. Place your other palm on top of their hand. Start at the wrist, and gently glide your top hand up the forearm and back down.

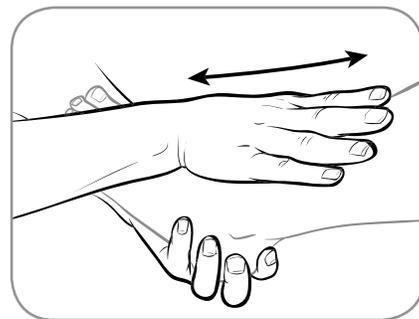


## Massage strokes for feet

- Repeat each stroke 3 times.
  - Do it on both feet.
- .....

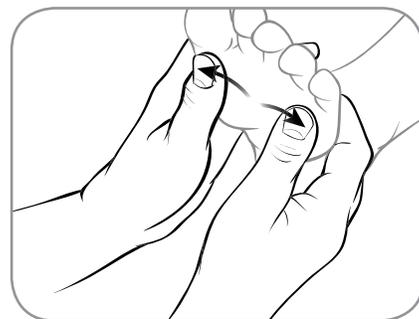
### Lower leg stroke

Place one of your hands, palm up, under the heel of the person's foot. Place your other palm on top of the foot. Start at the ankle, and gently glide your top hand up the lower leg and back down.



### Bottom-of-foot thumb stroke

Flex the person's foot. Use either your thumbs or fingers, depending on the person's position. Stroke the foot, using a gentle "stretching" motion with your thumbs or fingers. Work from the toes to the back of the foot. Start in the center of the foot, and work toward the outside of the foot.



### Top-of-foot thumb stroke

Extend the person's foot slightly. Start at the top of the foot, and move to the toes. With both of your thumbs, stroke the foot with a gentle "stretching" motion. Start in the center of the foot, and work toward the outside of the foot.



### Toe stretch

Gently grasp the person's big toe between your thumb and first finger. Slide your fingers down the toe with a gentle "pull." Repeat 3 times. Repeat on each toe.



### Repeat lower leg stroke

Place one of your hands, palm up, under the heel of the person's foot. Place your other palm on top of the foot. Start at the ankle, and gently glide your top hand up the lower leg and back down.

