

Hygiene: It's Personal

Developing good hygiene habits early in your career is essential for the health of you, your clients and your massage practice.

- **Working with your hands works up quite a sweat!** Keep deodorant on hand and reapply as needed, or pack a spare clean shirt and change halfway through your work day.
- **Many people are sensitive to scents.** Use unscented lotions, deodorants, soaps, hair products and laundry detergents whenever possible, and do not wear any perfume, cologne or fragrance oil to work.
- **Long hair should be pulled back** or kept out of your face so it doesn't distract you or your client while performing a massage. Wear a sweat band as needed so you don't drip sweat on your client.
- **Keep your nails trimmed short**, well groomed and unpolished. Keep nail files handy; trim hangnails and smooth any rough edges on fingers (calluses). No fake nails! Fake nails harbor all sorts of bacteria and germs.
- **Make sure to completely cover any open cuts** or wounds on your hands or forearms. You may choose to wear gloves during the massage. This will minimize the transmission of any infectious bacteria. Inform your client of any wound dressings you are wearing.
- **Make sure your breath is fresh.** Keep a toothbrush and toothpaste on hand, use mouthwash or mints throughout the day. Avoid gum, as popping and chewing gum can distract your client during a massage session.
- **Dress comfortably yet professionally.** Make sure your clothes fit properly, are in good repair and that you're wearing short sleeves.
- **Remove jewelry and piercings** except for post earrings. These are a huge source of bacteria as well as a safety factor.
- **Wash your hands regularly** throughout the day, before and after each client session and before and after you touch your computer or phone.
- **If you're sick, stay home!** Give the same advice to your clients, too. Have portable tissue packs and cough drops on hand in case you need to turn a client away as a "get well soon" gift.

