

TOP TEN SECRETS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STONE MASSAGE

All content within has been generously supplied to us by
Mary Nelson, founder of

LaStone®

for use in this eBook.

We are grateful for her expertise and insight.

BestMassage

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WARNING:

Natural materials, such as stone, may absorb or retain heat or cold at different rates (depending on various factors), which may not be easily predicted by individuals unfamiliar with their use or application. Care should always be taken to assure that these products are never over heated or cooled, or used in any manner that may cause injury.

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1 - The Stones



KEY POINTS

- Trust your stones - they are there to help you.
- Spend some time getting to know your stones.
- With the exception of a few stones, every stone has a partner. This makes the strokes feel balanced, just as your hands do.
- You must care for your stones every time they are used (see Chapter 8 for more information).
- Whenever you use a hot stone, you will have a cool alternative.
- The heated and chilled stones are developing all the time. We suggest: Basalt and Marble.

Before we even start discussing the stones, there are a few things worth mentioning. The stones are the most important part of a stone therapy treatment. If you know the history and theory behind the treatment, you can be extremely informative, but if you don't know your stones and technique, you are not going to be the best stone therapist you can be.

Getting to know your stones takes time; so don't go off in a tailspin because you don't get it perfect the first time you prepare your set. You will eventually get to know the stones so well that you will be able to sort them in moments - even while talking to people and dealing with other things; this will become second nature. So just chill and enjoy getting to know your new work-pals.

BASALT STONES FOR HEAT

Although different types of stone can be used to deliver heat during a stone therapy treatment, basalt is the most common and very effective. It is a volcanic stone that is found along river bottoms or washed up along the seashore. Something to consider when choosing your basalt is that the best stones for treatment are not 'shaped' stones; but naturally occurring pebbles. Basalt is very dense and dark and by the time we see it, it is extremely smooth. It is also a type of stone clearly suited to being heated and to holding its heat for long periods of time as it releases the heat very slowly. This type of stone also has positive energy and healing properties.

Basalt comes in many different colors; dark grey, green, and black stay hottest. Therefore any of these three colors will work for the hot stone massage. Some of the dark reds/purples will also stay hot.

During her many years of working with basalt stones, Mary found it challenging to find just the right size and shape to do the work. The correct texture and density of the stone is very important in maintaining the temperature needed to do a stone therapy. It is essential to find a stone supplier that offers naturally tumbled stone that is consistent in size and shape. This ensures the stones will indeed hold the heat needed in order to

effectively perform a treatment. They will also feel lovely in your hands and on the body.

MARBLE STONES FOR COOLING

Cold stone is crucial to stone work as it minimizes soreness when working deeper, pulls excess heat away from the body, and helps to strengthen the body on a cellular level. Marble is used for the cool stones because it's less dense than the heated stones and can easily remove heat from the body.

Marble is a metamorphosed limestone that is white or light in color and formed beneath the seabed. Physically, it's thought that marble improves the processing of calcium in the body, stimulates the metabolism, fortifies immunity, and encourages the healing of tissue and bone.

In contrast to basalt, marble is very soft and easy to break or scratch. The marble has to be carefully cut and hand-sanded to just the right size and shape needed to assist in the bodywork that cryotherapy was meant to do for the body - bringing down inflammation and starting the healing process. The marble also has to fit neatly into the therapist's hand, in order to switch from hot to cool in moments. Again it's vital to choose consistent, properly shaped marble stone from a reputable supplier.

2 - The Most Effective Set Configuration

In this section we will explore the sets of stones used in Original Body of LaStone. Keep in mind this is just a starting point or point of reference as you learn to configure a set that works best for you. Your set will vary based on your application.

The most important factors in choosing a set are:

- that the stones have a consistently smooth texture
- that the set included well-paired stones
- that the set offers enough stones to rotate in and out of the heater to maintain the consistent temperature that you need
- and that the set isn't just a collection of round stones, but an on-purpose configuration of useful shapes and sizes.

Mary encourages you to develop your own way of working with the stones. How many stones will you use? Mary personally uses 54 heated stones, 54 chilled stones, as well as 27 crystals. You will begin to get an idea of what stones can be incorporated into bodywork as you work with your stones.

HEATED STONES

There are basalt stones for the neck, the toes, the face, the tummy, the spine, the chakras, and much more. Remember these stones are naturally harvested, therefore even though a set may have the same type of stone; every set is totally unique in shape, color, and energy. Your own set will be individual to you and to your client's needs.

1. Abdomen/Belly and Sacrum Stones: largest placement stones to be used in the sacral, sacrum, and/or solar plexus region. (LaStone name: Grandfather and Grandmother stone)
2. Occipital/ Pillow Stones: extra large, oblong stone that supports the neck in a supine position. (LaStone name: Pillow stone)
3. Hand/ Palm Stones: large stones that may be used to support the hands in a supine and prone position or as placement stones to relax the muscles of the palm. (LaStone name: Hand stone)
4. Worker/ Trigger Point Stones: oblong or pointy shaped stones used in trigger point and deep-tissue work. (LaStone name: Worker stones)
5. Facial & Toe Stones: extra small and very smooth stones used for massaging the face and for placement between the toes. (LaStone name: Facial/ Toe stones)
6. Third Eye: small and very smooth stone used for the brow area of the forehead. (LaStone name: Third Eye stone)
7. Large Effleurage & Chakra: medium to large in size, placement stones to be used in spinal layout, for chakra layout, and for massage on large muscle groups. (LaStone name: Large Effleurage & Chakra)

8. Medium Stones: palm sized stones to be used for effleurage. (LaStone name: (12) Medium stones)
9. Spinal Layout Stones: small stones to be used for spinal layout supporting the curves of the spine. (LaStone name: (12) Spinal Layout stones)

COLD STONES

As noted in Chapter 1, the marble is shaped by hand and is designed to provide a cool alternative for every hot stone used. Each marble stone is carefully crafted to perform a specific task. There are several other specialized shapes available (see table below); however, there are 18 marble stones in a Basic LaStone set. Again, this is simply a reference point for you as you learn about cold stone therapy and how to configure a set that works for you and your clients.

1. Large Round Stone: large oval stone used for stone placement, large muscle groups, and effleurage.
2. Medium Round Stone: medium oval or round stone used for stone placement, medium muscle groups, and effleurage.
3. Single Taper Oblong or Long Wedge Stone: pointy stones used for deep-tissue and trigger-point work.
4. Oval Stones: small oval or round stones used for stone placement, small muscle groups, and effleurage.
5. Sacrum/Belly Stone: largest placement stone to be used in the sacral, sacrum, and/or solar plexus region.
6. Pillow Stone: extra large, oblong stone that supports the neck in a supine position.

Suggestions on how to use the various shape & sizes of cold stones:

Shape	Cold application suggestions
Eye Moon	Place over eyes to reduce swelling, headaches, sinus congestion, puffiness etc. Place over the jaw area for soreness i.e., TMJ challenges Place behind the ears, or on the face for headaches
Oval	Massaging sore muscles, feet or hands. Tucking under or over sore muscles, i.e. a shoulder or hip etc. Aiding digestion in the abdomen area.
Round	Massaging/rolling sore muscles, feet or hands. Tucking under or over sore muscles, i.e. a shoulder or hip etc. Aiding digestion in the abdomen area.
Spheres	Massaging sore muscles, feet or hands. Massaging the face to reduce swelling, headaches, sinus congestion, puffiness etc. Massaging the jaw area for soreness i.e., TMJ Massaging behind the ears and back of neck for headaches and tension.

3 - The Benefits Of Using Hot & Cold Stone Therapy Together

To begin to understand the basic principles of stone therapy, in relationship to temperature(s) and duration of temperatures, it is important for you as the therapist to have a working understanding of alternating temperatures to the body. Neither heat nor less heat (cold) heals the body; only the body heals. Heat and less heat (cold) can increase the body's ability to heal.

GEO-THERMAL-THERAPY

Geo-Thermal-Therapy is the application of either heated or chilled stones to the body for the purpose of changing the physiological responses that are going on in the body to promote healing. During the application of chilled stones the internal body begins to heat itself because the body will always attempt to return to Homeostasis (homeostasis is the "tendency of a system to maintain internal stability, owing to the coordinated response of its parts to any situation or stimulus tending to disturb its normal condition or function". Dictionary.com)

Circulation is rapidly changed with the practice of *Geo-Thermal-Therapy*, if circulation is increased, then so to is nutrition and the way that every cell in the body responds to the experience of the alternating temperatures being applied. It is believed that when you increase the blood flow through the skin, detoxification is increased, supporting the liver, bowels, kidneys, lymphatic and circulatory systems. All of the body's systems continue to respond for seventy-two hours after a treatment, during which healing occurs within the body. When using both heated and chilled stones in a massage, you are accelerating the exchange of blood, lymph, and digestive fluids in the body. When using heated/warm stones throughout the body, you increase the blood flow to these areas. Isolating chilled/cool stones to an inflamed area will facilitate the removal of toxins and inflammation, encouraging a healing response deep within the body's systems.

As with all modalities that promote a chemical response within the body, caution and the full understanding of such a treatment are of the most importance. The power of thermal energy is it heat or less heat (cold) to the body, and the duration of that temperature(s) requires a skillful and knowledgeable therapist. It is so important that you take the time to fully grasp the use of alternating temperatures applied to the body and form a respectful relationship with the power of hot and cold (less heat) philosophies.

Just as important, you must overcome any prejudices you have with cold (less heat) experiences. Without this knowledge and appreciation of heated and chilled temperatures to the body, it will be near to impossible to become successful. Temperatures and the practice of alternating them are potent modalities, which must be respected and used to their fullest potentials. Applied improperly, they can harm; applied with skill, they can promote healing for the individual.

Examples of Heated Stones on Isolated Areas

Isolated area	Body's response
Bladder/uterus	Prolonged application over the pelvic region relaxes the muscles within the bladder/uterus, dilates blood vessels and relieves spasms.
Brain	Long application sedates mental activity.
Bowels	Prolonged application decreases peristalsis and relieves spasms
Heart	Prolonged application over the heart helps to lower blood pressure
Kidneys	Prolonged application relieves pain due to spasms.
Lungs	Prolonged application over the chest and lung area slows respiration
Muscles	Prolonged application softens and relaxes the muscles, allowing for more intense massage work for a longer period of time.
Nervous System	Short application is stimulating.
Pelvis	Short application around the groin, pelvis or inner thigh dilates the blood vessels of the pelvic organs and relaxes this region for deeper work.
Stomach	Long-term application over the stomach or Solar Plexus area after a meal slows down digestion and decreases gastric secretions. Prior to a meal will increase gastric secretions.
Thyroid	Prolonged application over thyroid increases vascular and glandular activity.
Uterus	Short application causes dilation of blood vessels, relaxing the muscles.

Examples of Chilled Stones on Isolated Areas

Isolated area	Body's response
Bladder/uterus	Short application causes contraction of muscles; can be applied to hands or feet to affect the organs.
Brain	Short application stimulates mental activity. Prolonged application in the hands causes constriction of vessels to the brain.
Bowels	A cold application will increase peristaltic movement.
Heart	Prolonged application over the heart causes contraction of the arteries and their furthest branches. Caution: Cold stones applied over the carotid artery decrease blood flow to the brain.
Kidneys	Short application intermittently to sternum will increase urination.
Lungs	Short application at first increases respiration, after a few minutes may deepen and slow down respiration.
Muscles	Short application to isolated muscles increases the range of motion and muscle ability, is stimulating and reduces inflammation
Nasal membranes	Prolonged application in hands can overcome nosebleed.
Nervous System	Short application of cold stones is stimulating.
Pelvis	Prolonged application of cold stones to groin, pelvis or inner thigh constricts the blood vessels of the pelvic organs.
Stomach	Short-term application over the stomach or Solar Plexus area after a meal speeds up digestion and increases gastric secretions. Prior to a meal long-term application will slow down gastric secretions allowing you to go longer between meals.
Thyroid	Prolonged application over thyroid decreases vascular and glandular activity.
Uterus	Short application causes constriction of blood vessels & the muscles. Prolonged application dilates blood vessels; this in turn increases menstrual flow & lessens pain

4 - Treatment Plan Utilizing Hot And Cool Stones

By following some of the basic principles of thermotherapy you will be able to design a treatment that will best suit your client's needs. Remember the results of the treatment and the safety of your client's health depend on two main things:

1. The duration you apply the hot and or cold stone to the body.
 - a. Many who are challenged by their health will not be able to receive a lengthy thermotherapy treatment; adjusting the length of time you expose them to alternating temperatures will help to tonify and strengthen their body without compromising their state of health.
 - b. Mary suggests that you begin with a 30-minute treatment and over a period of time expand on how long you apply alternating temperatures to the body.

2. The temperature of the stones.
 - a. Depending on the client's state of health adjust the two temperatures so that they are closer to body core temperature; allowing the body to accept the alternating temperatures resulting in a gentle thermotherapy experience.
 - b. The application that you apply the hot and cold stones to the body is just as important as the temperatures themselves.

When designing a plan for that day with your client, make sure it is one that will challenge the body, mind and soul but not overdue it! It is so important to take your time tonifying and strengthening the treatment over a period of weeks, it is vital that the client comes away from the treatment feeling revived, energized, relaxed and supported. If they feel sick or in pain from your touch, or the temperatures overworked their internal systems, they may rethink returning the next week. Your goal is to get them to see the *gentle* benefits of receiving ongoing treatments each week in order to tonify and strengthen their body to become healthier and better able to move through their days. If they respond well after a treatment within the 72-hours, then the following week you can slowly increase the time you expose them to temperature each week.

Discussion about using the Treatment plan will be focused around these three conditions: Heart conditions-Lymphatic conditions-Diabetic's conditions; and all the variables that go along with these three conditions, ranging from mild to severe, such as the level of medication, frequency of medical treatments, diet, exercise and so on and so on. Keep in mind we are talking about the above conditions/considerations.

Once the client has filled out the Intake form, Mary begins with the following questions.

1. Does your doctor let you get into a hot tub, bath or shower?
 - a. If no, then time exposure to temperature must be monitored and modified.
 - b. If yes, then modify the time and temperature but not to an extreme.
2. Does your doctor allow you to swim in cold water or drink ice-cold water?
 - a. If no, then time exposure to cool temperature must be well monitored and possibly modified.
3. If a diabetic, then you need to find out if they are on injections or controlled by diet.
 - a. If on injections the treatment plan begins at #1 and never goes above #6.
 - b. For all diabetic individuals never add temperature and Swedish application to the body at the same time.
 - i. You can offer temperature with, Shiatsu, Energy work, Reflexology, or any modality that does not move the blood and lymph too quickly while the temperature is being applied to the body.
4. Once you have an idea of how their body can be challenged, then you can look at the treatment plan and begin to create a treatment that will best support their body today.
5. Always work from the lowest/safest part of the treatment plan and work your way up the scale as you challenge the body to become stronger week by week.

It is necessary for you to pay attention to the muscles in the area you are working in order to know when it is appropriate to change from a hot stone to a cold stone. Pliability of the muscle, coloring on the epidermis and the client's breathing will be key factors informing you when it is time to move from one temperature to the next. Keep in mind that heated stones bring local blood to the area and chilled stones first empty/dump out congestion, inflammation and blocked emotions than if enough chilled stones have been offered to the area a secondary response occurs and healing begins to take place within the underlining tissues, blood and lymph vessels.

When "massaging" with HOT and COLD stone

APPLICATION	TIME	TEMPERATURE	#OF STONES	RESULTS
Short Term	5-15 Seconds	HOT	1-2	Yang, Warm skin, relaxation
Long Term	20+ Seconds	HOT	4-6+	Yin, Pink skin, muscles begin to soften
Short Term	5-10 minutes	COLD	8-10	Yang, Cool skin, congestion moves away from area
Long Term	10+ minutes	COLD	10+	Yin, Oxygenated blood to the area being treated

Stone “placement” of HOT and COLD stone through a pillowcase or two

APPLICATION	TIME	TEMPERATURE	#OF STONES	RESULTS
Short Term	Seconds to 30-minutes	HOT	Spinal Layout	Yin
Long Term	NA	Becomes WARM	Spinal Layout	Neutral, comfortable
Short Term	Seconds to 5-minutes	COLD	Spinal Layout	Yang
Long Term	5-30-minutes	Becomes COOL	Spinal Layout	Yin, comfortable

Stone “placement” of HOT and COLD stone through a towel

APPLICATION	TIME	TEMPERATURE	#OF STONES	RESULTS
Short Term Does not begin right away	1-2 minutes after applying the stone	HOT	Chakra Layout	Yin, comfortable, nurturing
Long Term	NA	HOT then WARM	Chakra Layout	Yin
Short Term Does not begin right away	1-2 minutes after applying the stone	COLD	Chakra Layout	Yin, comfortable, nurturing
Long Term	NA	COLD then COOL	Chakra Layout	Yin

5 - Proper Temperature Control For Safety And Comfort



KEY POINTS

1. Stone treatment uses many different temperatures; you must find a way to be accurate in heating and cooling the stones.
2. You should find out how long all your equipment and stones take to get to the right temperature in order to avoid delay before or during a treatment.
3. Check all electrical equipment regularly for wear and tear

Disclaimer: No procedure, treatment, or suggestion of variable treatment for burns described in this article is prescribed. Only a licensed health professional is qualified for such procedures and or prescriptions.

It is possible, if you are not mindful of your client's special considerations and in full control of your heating unit's temperature, for burns to occur in the Spinal Layout, Chakra Layout and/or tucked stones. You must be fully aware of the actual temperature of the hot water in the heating unit. It is highly unlikely you can cause a burn while massaging with stones, to do this would burn you the therapist as well and the likelihood of that is slim.

THERMOMETERS

There are many different methods of heating and cooling the stones. All should and can be controlled so that the temperature is accurate. Having an accurate thermometer on hand is vital. It allows you to confirm the temperature of your water at any time. The calibration of a given heating unit can vary; therefore only trust a calibrated thermometer to know the exact temperature of the water heating your stones. You can also check the temperature of the chilled unit for your cold stones in this same way. Keep in mind that ice water is 32° Fahrenheit.

HEATING YOUR STONES

- The heating unit BestMassage recommends is the Standard or Deluxe Professional Stone Warmer (available on www.bestmassage.com).
- You must heat your stones in water; this is the only SAFE way in which to be sure of the correct temperature of your stones.
- You can heat your stones in any type of unit that holds enough water to cover the stones.
- You need to use an accurate thermometer to be sure the water temperature does not go over 140 degrees fahrenheit.
- Do not heat them in the Microwave.
- Do not heat them on a hot plate.

- Do not heat them on a heating pad.
- Do not heat them in an oven.

Most heating units have an insert; the units are best used with this insert. Mary wraps a white hand towel around a rubber matt and places this at the bottom of the insert; this will protect the bottom of the heating unit and soften the noise the stones make as you take them in and out of this unit. Place the stones you want hot on top of the hand towel in the heating unit and cover the stones with water, making sure the tops of all the stones are covered with water.

Once you begin to work with the hot stones and pull them in and out of the heating unit the heating unit will cycle on and off maintaining the temperature setting you began the day with, unless you remove more than 75% of the stones from the heater. After placing all the stones back in the heater, allow the heater to bring the water and stone's temperature back to the degree you started with before retrieving stones from the heater. In that case you may need to give the stones about 3-4 minutes to reheat before retrieving them from the hot water.

To test to see if your stones are a safe temperature for you to handle or for your client to receive; hold the stone in your hand for a count of 5-seconds, if the stones feel good to you then it is safe for both of you. If the stones are too hot and the heating unit is set at the temperature that usually maintains the correct temperature for you, make sure there is enough water in the roaster. The less water, the hotter the stones might get. A water temperature of 110-140 degrees allows you to hold the stones comfortably in your hands and be in the range of temperatures to accommodate for any considerations for the receiver with contraindications.

CHILLING YOUR STONES

- The chilled unit can be either a normal refrigerator or you can chill your cold stones on ice.
- The cold stones should not get lower than 25 degrees fahrenheit.

Place the stones you want cold in an ice chest or refrigerator; Mary suggests a dorm size chiller unit. On ice it only takes fifteen minutes to get the stones cold enough to use. It is important to know the temperature of your stones; just as it is to know how hot the basalt stones are. You can use the same type of thermometer for the fridge. If you place your stones over ice, then that is a clear 32 degrees fahrenheit, as long as there is enough ice to be a bed of ice/water and not just some ice in a bowl of water.

Be careful not to stay in one area too long; it is possible to burn someone with cold as well as with heat. Client's responses to the heated and chilled stones are far more positive than when you use hydrocolators, heating pads or ice as in cryotherapy work. Once you finish an application of chilled stones to the body and need to return to warm stones, be mindful that your hands are

cold and will not feel the depth of heat coming from a hot stone. Be careful when applying this fresh hot stone on the client with your cold hands. Mary dips her hands in the hot water for a few seconds to warm them up before using heated stones after she has used cold stones.

6 - Session Flow: How To Spend More Time With Your Clients



KEY POINTS

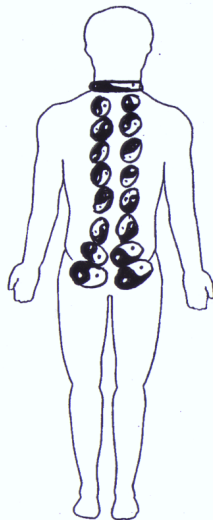
- We place stones in a certain way to save time for our clients - we don't waste valuable treatment time 'looking' for our stones.
- Over the years Mary has revised the way she places stones in the heating unit. This will probably continue to develop and change long into the future, but for now, her recommendation is to place the stones as described here.
- Bear in mind that a common complaint is along the lines of 'my therapist seemed to spend a lot of time looking in the tank, while I was on the table waiting for wonderful stones'.
- As soon as we finish with a stone and go to place it back 'on temperature', we must move efficiently and swiftly. Having a system for your stones aids in this process.

We need to do everything we can to reduce the time off the body. We use stone bags and a 'roaster layout' for this purpose.

THE STONE BAGS

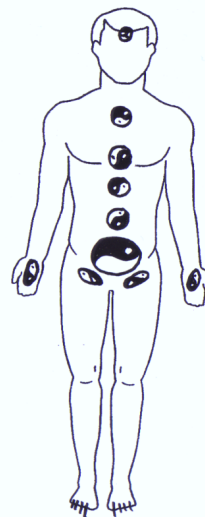
To hold the stones, we use three main bags, and a net. We also have some stones loose in the heater. Here is how it works:

- Bag 1: contains all the stones that go under your client.
- Bag 2: contains all the stones that go on your client.
- Bag 3: contains all the stones for the face, neck, and décolleté.
- The net contains all the toe stones.
- There are also stones in the tank ready and waiting for when the bags have been emptied and placed.



Bag 1 - Spinal Layout

All the stones that go *under* the client at the start of the session.



Bag 2 - Chakra Placement

All the stones that go *on* the client. We do this without leaving the client by having these stones in one bag.

Bag 3 - We normally work on the face without moving away during the sequence. If we do a facial we have all the tools we need on the table next to the client. We therefore put all of the stones we are going to use on the face, neck, shoulders, and front of the chest sequence in one bag. We take this bag to the head of our client and do the whole session with all the stones we need on hand.

Net - The little toe stones are fabulous; they are also small and can hide under the other stones. It's not good to waste valuable time trying to fish out 8 little stones when you're trying to do a great treatment, so we keep them all together in a small white mesh bag.

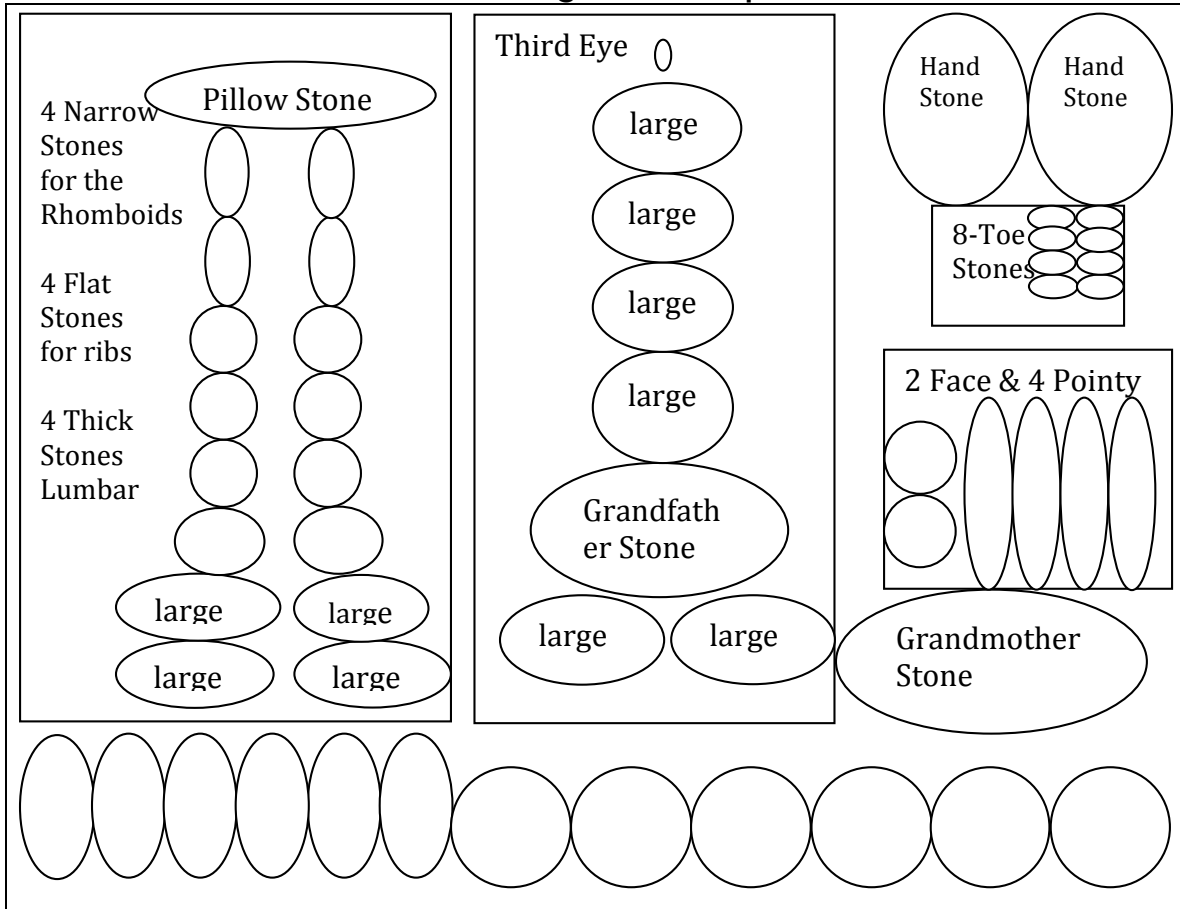
The Loose Stones - Some loose stones are fine to let loose in the tank. They include the belly stone, and medium stones, and the stones used to do the bulk of the effleurage work.

WATER HEATER LAYOUT FOR HOT STONE

Now that we have our stones in their bags, we need to have a system to know where they are in the water heater. Depending on the shape of your heater you could be working with an oblong, a square, or a circle. Whatever the shape of your heater, the best way to layout your stones in the heater is to:

- Place the belly stone in the middle of the tank as you don't need it until later when your client turns over.
- Position the bags in the heater from left to right. (Mary uses red, white, and blue mesh bags like our American Flag). Red/bag 1, white/bag 2, and blue/bag 3. It is then easy to pick them out of the tank from left to right.
- The net goes in wherever you want to put it.
- The loose stones go along the sides.
- As soon as the stones are in the tank, you can pour water to cover them and turn the power on. Always put the water in after you have positioned the stones in your tank - if you do it the other way around you will not know how much water to use.

Hot Stones in Heating Unit for Supine Position



*Note from Mary: It is very important to place your stones in the heating unit in the same position after each time you use them and return them to the heating unit after every use. If you do not follow a system for yourself you will waste precious moments during treatment.

To COOL YOUR STONES

- There are many ways to cool your stones and you will probably change methods depending on the facilities you have on hand. You can use: ice, a fridge, a bowl of 'slush ice', ice-cold water, ice blocks, a sandwich cooler, or a cool box.
- Use any way you can to get your stones as cool as you need for your client. There will be pros and cons to whatever method you use.
- Ice is good and efficient, and even more so with a little water added.
- A refrigerator is a little slower still.
- Slush ice in a bowl is great as it is quite; it needs constant refreshing though and you have to be careful not to get everything wet.
- Ice blocks are good and placing them in an insulated cooler will keep them very cold. They will, however take longer to chill your stones.

- A sandwich cooler or cool box is good; make sure you keep the lid on it. You will probably need a second source of cold to keep the stones cool before use.
- If you have a chiller cabinet in your treatment room, and a good supply of stones, this is great. Beware, however of the noise of the door mechanism or handle disturbing the peace.

You basically need to select a method from the above list of the keeping the stones cool. They don't need to be arranged in any pattern, but you do need to be able to see them. Make sure you put the marble stones against a colored background so that you can see them clearly.

*Note from Mary: Mary chooses to use a fridge to chill her cold stones; if one is not available then she uses ice. However, if you're using say 18-20 chilled stones, you will need to use ice. It takes too long for the marble to re chill in the fridge once you have used them on your client. In a bowl of ice and a little water they will come back to 32 degrees Fahrenheit within minutes and you can use the same stone over and over again.

7 - Treatment And Technique Primer



KEY POINT

- There are 9 rules in LaStone therapy. Trust in them and follow them to the letter. Also bear in mind that one stroke with a stone is equivalent to ten with your hands - the temperature is there, so use it, and don't spend time trying to generate what you already have.

NINE RULES OF LASTONE® THERAPY

Heated Application

1. Introduce the basalt stones to the body with the back of your hands, demonstrating honor and respect for the stones and the client receiving the temperature.
2. Firm pressure with continuous movement to prevent burning the client.
3. Flip the stones every few seconds to prevent burning yourself and offering the warmest side of the stone to the client's body.

Chilled Application

4. Hold the cold stones directly over the isolate area of the body that needs attention.
5. Ask the client to "breathe". Apply firm pressure with **NO MOVEMENT. HOLD AND WAIT** for another breath or two.
6. Flip the stones and **HOLD AND WAIT** for another breath or two; then you can begin to move in an isolated area that requires the reduction of inflammation, congestion or blockages within the systems of the body.

Geo-Thermal-Therapy

7. The use heated stones.
8. The use of chilled stones.
9. The application of alternating temperatures via stones to bring about a chemical response within all systems of the body.

Mary usually starts a massage with the client in the supine position. First resting the client on the stones along the back helps to soften and open up the back muscles and jump-start all the systems in the body via the nervous system. This in turn makes the job of the massage therapist easier. Starting either way won't affect the stones' ability to promote healing and relaxation for the client in all areas of Body-Mind-Soul. Please keep in mind as you read through these techniques, that they are just examples and not a prescribed treatment plan.

THE TECHNIQUES AND LAYOUTS

Effleurage, petrissage, trigger-point, and tucking will get you off to a good start. As soon as you feel ready to move on, try any of the techniques described below, but most importantly, see how you can convert any of your current strokes into a stone stroke. Look at where the effort and pressure is in your traditional stroke, slide a stone into that point between the hand and the client's body and see how easily you can transform, turbo charge, and perfect your technique.

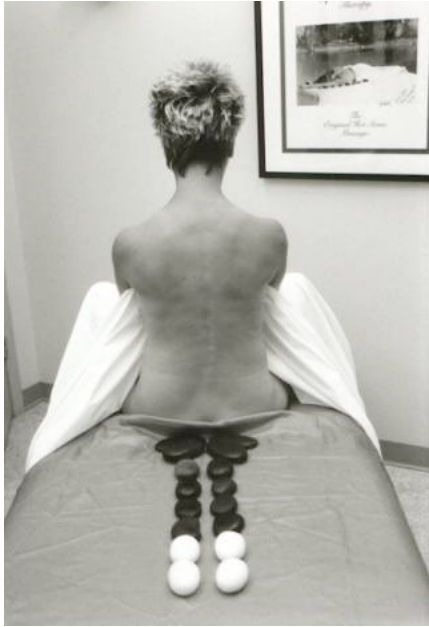
Petrissage: is the kneading, lifting and squeezing of the muscles in a rhythmical pattern. This stroke is best done without the use of stones, since petrissage often causes stones to fall to the floor, an unpleasant experience for the client and the stone. Use petrissage often in your massage to find those deep trigger points or tense muscles, then pick the stones you want to use on those areas and use a different stroke to address them.

Trigger Point Work: applies direct pressure to an isolated area for thirty to ninety seconds (or less if the trigger point releases sooner). This technique has many advantages, not only to the client but for the therapist's body mechanics as well. Using a warm (not hot) or chilled stone, find the trigger point (you may need to ask the client for help here). Apply deep, firm pressure on the area of need, maintaining constant pressure up to ninety seconds if necessary.

The warmth/coolness of the stone and the pressure on the trigger point will assist the muscle in relaxing and giving up the knot it has been holding on to, possibly for years. The results are amazing. There is no strain on the therapist's thumbs and wrists and therefore no tension in your own hands while you help your client feel better. Remember while you are holding a warm or cool stone, your hands and wrists are also healing from the vibration and temperatures of the stones.

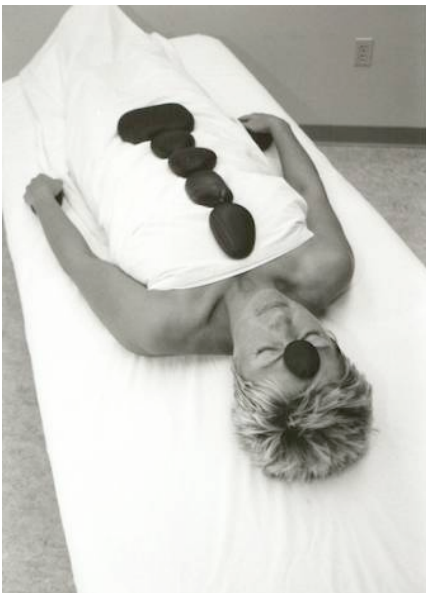
Tucking the Stones: is a distinct way to use the warmth/coolness of the stones to do extra work when you are busy working somewhere else on the client. Just slip warm or cool stones under the client wherever specific work is needed. This will heat or reduce inflammation in the area for you in advance. When the time comes to work that area, it will be ready and willing for release work. After you use a set of stones for a certain job on the body, tuck the still-warm or cool stones under an area of tension. After that deeper work can take place if need be due to the added vibration and temperatures the stones offered to the body in this tucking action. Sometimes tucking the stones relaxes the muscle to the extent that the tension just melts away and your work is done for you. When tucking stones, keep in mind the stones you are tucking. If you will need that particular stone later, you may not choose to tuck it but retrieve another stone from the heating unit or chilled unit for tucking.

A FEW EXAMPLES



Spinal Layout Example -

With heated and chilled stones, large flat and thin stones at the base, moving up in size until the smaller stones are at the top. Place your stones to accommodate your client's spine. With heated and chilled stones experiment with temperature. Refer to the case notes, think about your Geo-Thermal-Therapy and place your temperature. You should always cover the heated stones with fabric.



Supine Position Spinal Layout Example -

Using heated placement stones, placing stones on the center line of the client with temperatures that complement the temperature of the stones used on the spinal layout enables the client to achieve deep relaxation within minutes of the treatment starting. Remember: the temperature and the stones do the work.



Supine Position Tucking Example -

Massage with a stone when it is freshly heated or chilled, and then tuck it when it is warm or cool. If you have worked a stone until it is no longer in the least bit heated or chilled, place it back in the tank for reheating or cooling. Tucking a neutral stone can be uncomfortable.

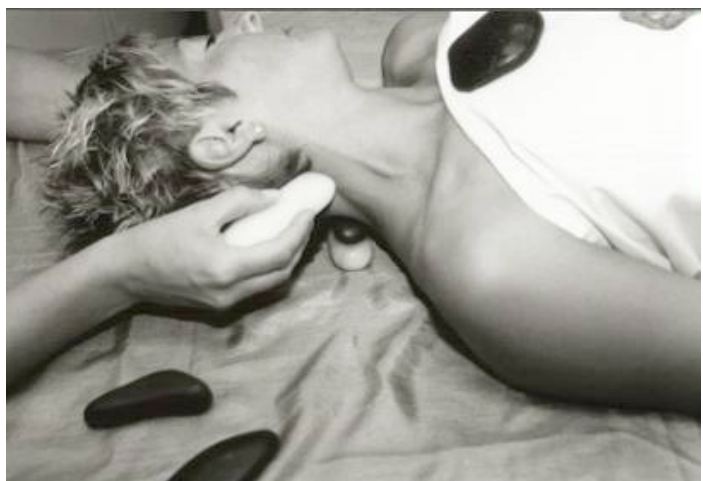


Supine Position Alternating Temperatures with the Stones Example -

Alternate temperature anywhere on the body. Every client is different and every client likes different things. Experiment with temperature. Observe the nine rules and help your client to heal.

Supine Position Massaging with Cold Stone Example -

Finish with a cool stone to go even deeper and make sure all those toxins have flushed through the system.



8 - The Care And Cleaning Of Your Stones

There are wide varieties of opinions on what is the best method for sanitizing your stones between clients and at the end of the day. Over the years Mary has experimented with several methods of sanitation and re-energizing the stones; she opens the door for you to find the one that fits your lifestyle and beliefs.

Understand that the stones you heat in water verses the cold stones might need to be sanitized differently throughout the day; but at the end of the day you can cleanse them the same way. Listed below is what Mary has found to work for the hot water units, the cold stones, and the stones in general that you use in body therapies.

DISINFECTING WIPES

A disposable wipe that offers superior sanitization capabilities with a chlorine sanitizer solution; the pre-moistened disinfecting wipes are said to kill 99.9% of germs including viruses that cause colds and flu and are effective against common bacteria such as Staphylococcus (Staph), Salmonella, and E-coli.

TYPES OF USES

The disinfecting wipes can be used on each stone prior to placing the stone back in the hot water or on the ice/refrigerator. You can also use the disinfecting wipes at the end of the day to clean all your stones, just be mindful that you will need several disinfecting wipes to complete this job; Mary has found that she can use one wipe for every 5-6 stones and then she needs to start with a fresh wipe. If you pay attention you will be able to feel when the disinfecting wipe is no longer cleaning your stones effectively.

CHLORINE-FREE OXIDIZER

Chlorine-Free Oxidizer dissolves instantly and eliminates unwanted impurities, which accumulate in the hot water. Chlorine-free oxidizer increases sanitizer efficiency (Listerine) enhances water clarity and is compatible with bromine, chlorine and most alternative sanitizers. It is odorless.

TYPES OF USES

A) Chlorine-Free Oxidizer for sanitizing your hot stones in the heating unit:

- Pour 1/8 of a teaspoon of the Chlorine-Free Oxidizer in 2 gallons of water (18 quart size heater) at the beginning of each day. Be sure you start with fresh water each day for the heating unit.
- B) Chlorine-Free Oxidizer for sanitizing your cold stones
- Spray oxidizer over the stone and wipe dry before placing cold stones back on ice or in the refrigerator.
- C) Chlorine-Free Oxidizer for cleaning your stones at the end of the day
- At the end of the day spray Chlorine-Free Oxidizer mixture over any stone and wipe dry (1/8 of a teaspoon of the Chlorine-Free Oxidizer in 2 gallons of water).

Tip: Do not touch the dry (powder) oxidizer with your bare hands, if you do rinse your hands off with water.

RUBBING ALCOHOL

Products containing between 60% and 80% alcohol were found more effective than soap in every scientific study available for review. Alcohol solutions not only were found to be more effective at eliminating germs, but require less time than washing with soap and water. Rubbing alcohol can be acutely toxic if ingested and very drying to the skin.

When alcohol is heated it begins to lose its abilities, within 10-minutes of being exposed to heat 80-90% of the alcohol has gone up in steam and 95% is gone in 30-minutes. So putting alcohol in the heating unit is a waste of money, time and energy.

If you choose rubbing alcohol as your choice for sanitation for individual stones (not in the hot water), you can follow the above suggestions for spraying your stones clean and then wiping dry before placing back in the hot water or on ice/refrigerator.

GOOD OLE` SOAP AND WATER

If you choose to wash your stones with soap and water keep in mind that you need to use hot water and actually rub your stone one by one in the soapy water, then rinse in clear cool water and dry them. The more oil residue left on the stones the longer you will need to wash your stones with the warm soapy water. The other substances listed above remove the oil residue from the stones very quickly and do not require you to actually scrub the stones clean. Any soap that you already have on hand will be satisfactory if this is your choice of sanitation for your stones, heater and chilling units.

CHLORINE BLEACH

Mary does not recommend chlorine bleach because it leaves an unpleasant smell in the room and a film on the stones; however, if you do choose this for your choice in sanitation please follow some simple guidelines.

- Use a solution of 1 teaspoon of liquid chlorine bleach to one gallon of warm water.
- You can dip the stones in this solution
- You can spray this solution on the stones
- Wipe dry with a clean cloth

SANITIZE THE HEATING UNIT, CHILLED UNIT AND WORK SURFACES

At the end of the day it is just as important for you to clean all equipment and your work area in addition to sanitizing your stones. Remember to empty the heating unit and ice container (if you use ice) and wash them with your choice of sanitation substance to eliminate oil residue from building up on the sides of the heating unit or chilled unit. After cleaning and drying the units rinse with cool water and dry with a soft cloth. Start every day with fresh clear water for the heating unit and ice if that is your choice for chilling your stones. Mary suggests using a refrigerator set at 27°F for your cold stones.

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

In general all sanitizers work best at temperatures between 75°F and 120°F. Cold temperatures do not kill germs. What cold temperature does to germs is make them slow down. If it gets cold enough the germs will come to a stop, but once warmer temperatures are restored the germs will become active again. This is like hibernation in animals. Germs do reproduce slower depending on the lower the temperature gets. This same reason is why we store food in a refrigerator, to slow the growth of germs. With Viruses the cold will actually make many viruses live longer. If bacteria/germs are put into an environment in which they cannot easily reproduce such as ice/refrigerator, cold temperatures may help the bacteria survive long enough to get transferred to another place; so it is vital that you sanitize your cold stones before you place them back on the ice, or in the refrigerator.

9 - Beyond Bare Hands - Why Stone Massage Is An Integral Part Of Therapy

Many people do not understand the benefits of stone massage and have never experienced the deep healing provided by a session. They have experienced Swedish massage or a similar therapy, but may not know how wonderful and therapeutic a stone massage actually is. The type of stone massage technique that Mary will be discussing is LaStone® which uses both hot and cold stones to bring relief and healing to the body.

Traditional Swedish massage and Shiatsu have a lot to offer. They will accelerate oxygen and nutrients, activate the circulatory system, improve the digestive system, and relax the body.

So if all this is happening in a traditional massage why choose to experience a stone session, what makes a stone massage different than one of these that are listed?

Hydrotherapy or thermotherapy as some refer to it has been floating around the world of healing for thousands of years. Basically it involves the use of water and various temperatures to relieve pain in the treating of illness. In the methodologies of LaStone® therapy it's referred to as ***Geo-thermal therapy*** which is the application of heated and chilled stones to the body for therapeutic purposes.

The main component of hydrotherapy is water in its numerous forms of temperature and it plays an important role in almost all fields of science, including physics, chemistry, and biology. The application of temperature to the body to aid it in the healing process has been recorded as early as ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilizations. In modern times hydrotherapy is a common practice in the physical therapy offices and many hospitals where they are treating arthritis, strains, sprains, burns, musculoskeletal disorders as well as for stroke patients with paralysis and the list goes on for it has a wide range of benefits to support the body in the healing process.

LaStone® is clinically the application of *Geo-Thermal therapy*, to the body using heated stones and alternating with chilled stones to bring about a chemical release within the body's systems.

Many hot stone massages do not alternate between the various degrees of temperature and only offer hot or warm stones to the body; resulting in a relaxing experience and one that is capable of moving some blood around in the local regions where the heated stone were applied. This type of stone massage is suitable for the client who has no health issues, no pain to relieve, and no inflammation to move out of the body and only wants to relax and feel comfortable.

For those who seek ways to make a chemical change within their constitution and begin the healing process then Geo-Thermal is the methodology that can administer such an experience, for the body will journey through multiple

levels of healing as the blood, the lymphatic fluids, and digestive juices all interact with the stones being applied to the body at various degrees in temperature throughout the session.

Adjusting temperatures in bodywork to aid clients in healing has always been beneficial. LaStone® Therapy is a contemporary approach to alternating temperatures in massage, it is a multifaceted technique designed to benefit client and therapist at once. The therapeutic potential of this treatment goes beyond measure. The physiological benefits of alternating hot and cold temperatures to the body have long been scientifically and medically proven.

The many different types of stones used are the medium and the various temperatures are the message. This “vascular gymnastics” that is achieved by the use of alternating hot and cold stones in a massage aids the circulatory system, endocrine system, and digestive systems in *assisting the body in self-healing and goes beyond what bare hands can achieve in the traditional body therapies.*

In a full session heated and chilled stones will line the clients back as they lie face up, both temperatures will rest on their front chakras and you will massage them with heated stones along their arms, legs, hands, feet, face, and back. The placement of the heated and chilled stones will be determined by you as their therapist and your clinical understanding of what each temperature can be offered to the body at that particular moment, taking into consideration any health concerns and personal goals for the outcome of the stone session. At times chilled stones will be applied to the body via the appropriate massage technique if inflammation is present, or arthritis, strains, sprains, and fibromyalgia are challenging your clients well-being. All along heated stones will rest in supportive areas of their body to help keep them warm and allow the body to relax into the therapeutic aspects that cold stones are able to achieve by way of Geo-thermal therapy supporting the body to begin the healing process.

A LaStone® session goes beyond the physical experience of typical massage, and enters deeper dimensions of relaxation, health and well-being, creating a positive approach to Body-Mind-Spirit philosophy. Not only is LaStone® an absolute solution to aiding the client’s bodies to begin the healing process *the therapists themselves are supporting their own hands in healing when holding the stones.* By using alternating temperatures with the stones the strain and injuries to the wrists and thumbs that body therapists experience daily begin to heal and the therapist’s hands become stronger as the inflammation leaves their hands and wrists all the while they are treating their clients with heated and chilled stones. Thus LaStone® goes beyond any traditional therapies for both the therapist and the client benefit from the science and spirit of the stones.

10 - General Tips And Safety Concerns



KEY POINTS

The following are keys that Mary believes all stone therapists must be aware of when offering stone massage:

- A. Always conduct a complete and comprehensive interview with the proper Client Intake Form prior to administering a hot and cold stone massage.
- B. Adjust the various degrees of the stones; hot to warm and cold to cool to accommodate the client health issues.
- C. Adjust the length in time you administer hot and cold stone massage for clients with health issues.
- D. Always check in with your client in regards to how they are doing with the heated and chilled stones, never take for granted that the client is comfortable with the temperature of the stone even if you are.
- E. Clients with a strong constitution can receive heated stones ranging from 110°F to 130°F
- F. Clients with a strong constitution can receive chilled stones ranging from room temperature to 25°F
- G. Clients with health issues need serious consideration and adjustments to the degrees in which the stones are administered to their body and just as importantly how long the treatment is performed. Less temperature and time is vital to their safety and achieving a positive outcome for their health concerns.
- H. Both heated and chilled stones must be applied to the body in such a way that will not shock the client, but promote a chemical response within the body's system.
- I. Heated stones relaxes, sedates the body and mind as well as soften the muscles allowing one to work deeper than without the stones.
- J. Chilled stones begin the healing process deep within all systems of the body if the therapist understands the foundation of thermal therapy; first response is stimulating to the client's internal systems and forces congestion away from the area being massaged, secondary response brings oxygenated blood to the area to begin the healing process and done right is sedating to the body and mind and supports the therapist to work even deeper than with heated stones.

K. The time in which the stone massage is administered is just as important as the temperature, one must fully understand the power of energy as it applies to heated and chilled stones and determine how long to apply heated and chilled stones to the clients body in order to be affective and supportive without compromising the client's health and well being.

L. The pressure and speed in which stones are applied to the body are just as important, no two clients can receive the same stone treatment; health concerns must always be considered and a stone treatment must be altered to fit the client's needs/goals for the day.

M. Along with the above brief guidelines, sanitation, disinfecting and sterilization are key components to being a responsible stone therapist.

A NOTE ABOUT HYDRATION

It is vital that you encourage your clients to drink water before a stone session, preparing their body for the removal of unwanted inflammation and toxicity that might be causing some of their discomfort. This additional intake of water prior to a cold stone therapy session or any massage treatment is so important for the success of the treatment. When we perform Swedish massage, it begins the process of removal of toxins in the body. If the kidneys and liver are in short supply of water, then the body's filtration system will not be able to move out unwanted toxins. The only real way to hydrate the body is with pure water. It is important that the water is of high quality; therefore it may be necessary for you to offer filtered bottled water to your partners.

For more information about
LaStone Therapy or Mary Nelson
please visit...

LaStone®

Web: www.LaStoneTherapy.com
Phone: 520-319-6414

For more information about stone
sets and accessories please visit...

BestMassage

Web: www.BestMassage.com
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