

Breast Massage

by Debra Curties, RMT
Curties-Overzet Publications.
New Brunswick, Canada, 1999.
Softcover, 208 pages.

Reviewed by Carole Osborne-Sheets, LMT

In this book, veteran Massage Therapist and instructor Debra Curties explores one of the most controversial, ignored, yet needed areas of massage therapy education and treatment.

With careful study of this book, Massage Therapists can finally learn a professional, researched approach to breast massage. Curties' opening letter to students and therapists immediately reveals the sensitivity, directness and thoroughness with which she tackles her subject. Then, before any technical information, she includes many client anecdotes to communicate the work's compelling personal concerns and benefits.

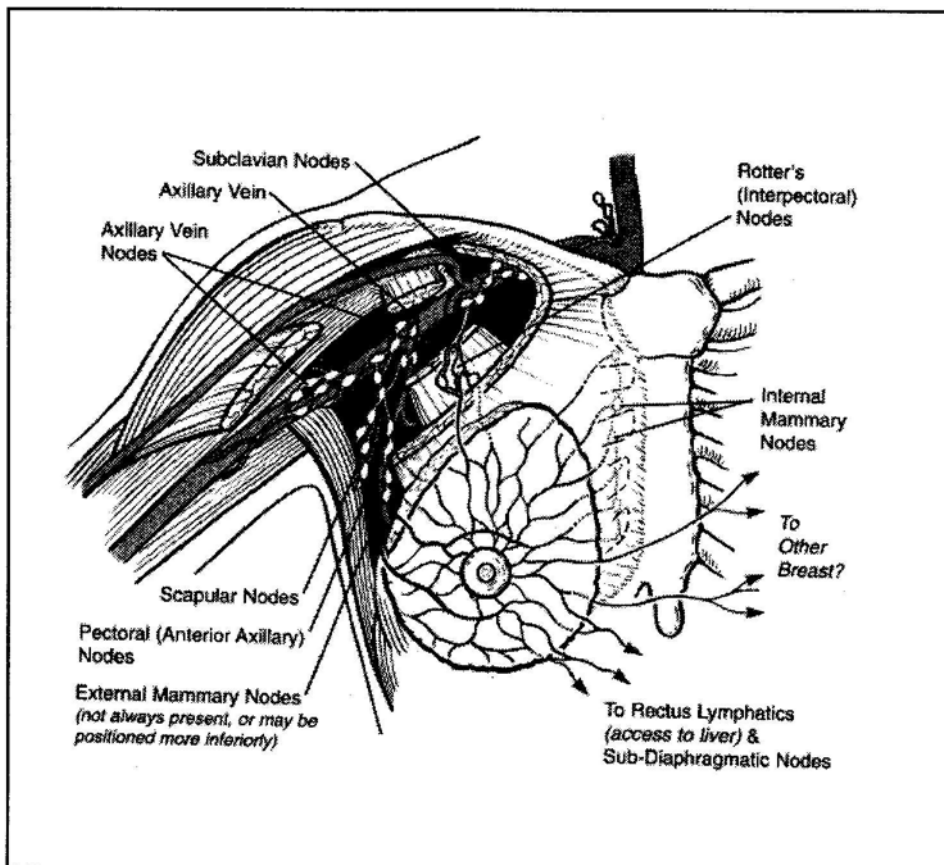
Following a well-illustrated explanation of breast anatomy, function and changes is a chapter rich in explanations and photographs of benign and malignant breast conditions. These two chapters offer therapists vital information to help recognize normal cyclical and age-related breast changes, and to distinguish the feel and appearance of these changes from ominous conditions, especially cancer.

While not diagnostic in purpose, this clinical knowledge can help therapists support clients to seek medical evaluation without undue alarm. Therapists encountering the approximate two per cent of women who have breast implants will appreciate the sections on types of implants, post-surgical issues, and health and comfort considerations for massage therapy clients, whether they receive breast massage or not.

The issue of whether to massage breasts or not receives detailed consideration in an extensive chapter on issues, decision-making and guidelines for therapists. It's here that Curties' extensive experience in teaching as well as performing breast massage is most evident.

She sensitively acknowledges the many objections to breast massage felt by both therapists and clients, leading to reluctance or avoidance of breast massage, often with the knowledge of its potential benefits. She offers meaningful guidance for protecting both client and practitioner, achieving informed consent and directing male practitioners.

Typical scenarios, role plays and examples of therapists' interactions with clients provide practical pointers in negotiating the often overly sensitive concerns of both. Photographs offer many draping options for comfortably and professionally performing breast massage.



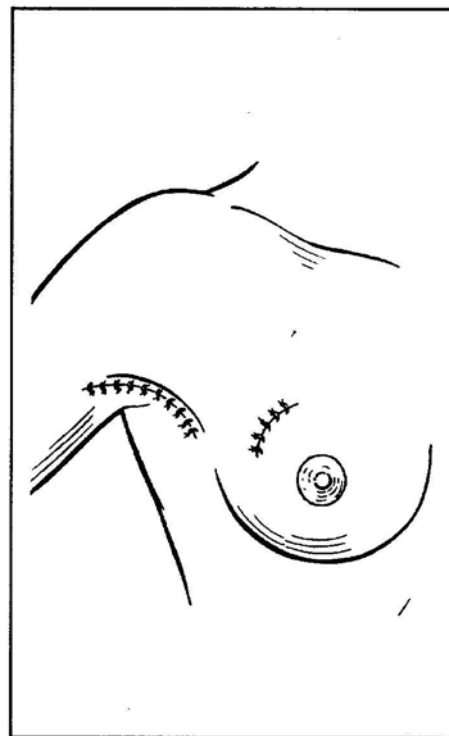
Contraindications and other safety guidelines are also detailed.

Curties' final chapter teaches primarily modifications of petrissage strokes, to enhance circulation and drainage of the largely lymphatic breast tissue. Many photographs show preliminary stimulation of lymphatic channels, relaxation of neighbouring muscles and breast treatment.

Therapists and clients may both benefit from the self-massage instruction included. A special section guides therapists' work with pregnant and lactating women, and post-mastectomy, -augmentation, and -reduction clients.

This is a multi-levelled resource for Massage Therapists with the potential to move breast massage from under-utilized, fearful disuse into therapists' professional repertoire of health-enhancing, preventive touch interventions. It is a ground-breaking textbook, sure to be an essential reference for the many Massage Therapists seeking guidance in this work or unsure or apprehensive about how to incorporate it into their offerings.

Reviewed by Carole Osborne-Sheets, author of Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy as well as Deep Tissue Sculpting. Carole can be reached at (858) 748-8827 or www.bodytherapyassociates.com.



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