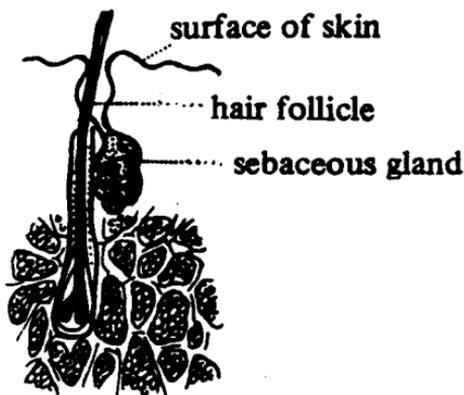
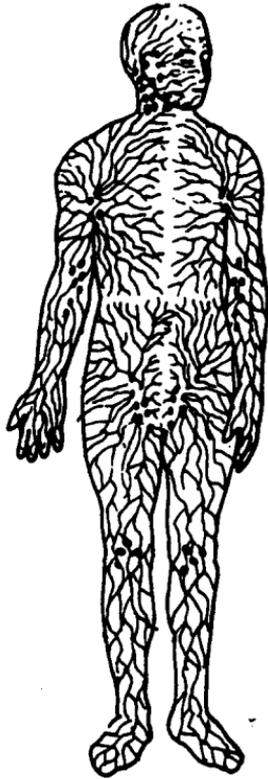


Massage

Ásanas should always be followed by massage, for massage is the ideal finish to the revitalizing practice of asanas. Ásanas stimulate the sebaceous glands which lie under the surface of the skin to secrete their natural oils. These oils are the most perfect skin balm for the human body. The massage returns these beneficial secretions back into the skin, thus keeping it soft and supple. To conserve these natural oils, ásanas should be performed away from sunlight, and a bath should not be taken for thirty minutes after the massage.



Massage also stimulates all the nerve endings at the surface of the body, thus stimulating the entire nervous system, and it harmonizes the "aura" of pranic energy which surrounds the body. It relaxes the muscles to a very low basal muscular tension; it enhances the blood circulation, thus helping to prevent infection in case of injury; and it promotes all-around health.



The Lymphatic System

Massage has one more important benefit which concerns the flow of lymph in the body. Lymph is a vital fluid which purifies the blood, thereby enhancing the health and beauty of the body. This clear fluid fills the spaces in between the cells and the blood capillaries, and acts as a "go-between" for the blood and the tissues. It picks up dead cells and waste matter and then flows back in lymphatic vessels toward the heart. But before the lymph rejoins the blood, the waste matter is filtered out at large lymph nodes, where white cells eat the wastes and carry them to the spleen. There they are broken down into fragments small enough for the kidneys to dispose of.

This purifying lymph is not moved along the lymphatic vessels by the pumping pressure of the heart, for it is a separate

system entirely. Rather it moves in its slow course solely by the action of the muscles. Massage greatly stimulates and facilitates the flow of this lymph and thus the purification of the blood. Special care should be taken to massage the areas of the important lymph nodes—neck, armpit, groin and knee. In the massage on the following pages, these areas are emphasized.

At the end, the feet are carefully massaged. Many of the body's nerves have nerve endings in the feet, and thus massaging the feet stimulates the flow of nerve energy throughout the internal organs (see Foot Chart, page 92). In this way, the massage completes the stimulation of the internal organs, blood, lymph, glands, and the relaxation of the skin and muscles, and prepares for the deep relaxation of the Dead Pose.

MASSAGE TECHNIQUE

(1) Massage up the forehead and over the top of the head, and down the back of the head with the palms, three times.



(1)



(2)

(2) With the tips of the fingers, massage out a across the eyebrows, three times.

(3) With the pointer finger press down in the crease between the top of the eyeball and eyebrow. (Pressure on this spot stimulates the vagus nerve to slow down the heart; thus it calms and relaxes the body and prepares for the deep relaxation pose.) Continue pressing with the fingers, moving with the fingers, moving them across the top of the eyes, down the temples and around the ears. Repeat three times.



(3)

(4) Twist the pointer finger gently into the ears. (Fingernails must be short for this.).



(4)

(5) Rub hands together briskly until they become slightly warm. Close the eyes and press the base of the palms gently over the closed eyes. Relax completely and breathe deeply. Do this three times.*



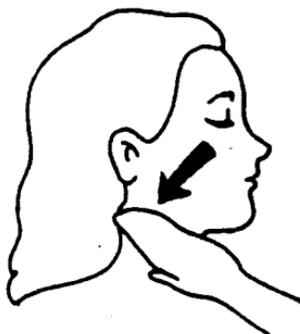
(5)



(6)

(6) With the outside edge of the palms, massage from the sides toward the tip of the nose. Do it three times.

(7) With the tips of the fingers, massage under the eyes and down the sides of the face: then turn the hands sideways and massage across the sides of the head to the back of the neck, finally massage the neck from the front to the back with the palms. Repeat three times.



(7)

* This is very good for the eyes, especially for eyestrain. Those with poor eyesight should frequently "palm" their eyes in this way, and also rotate the eyes slowly in all directions - left and right, up and down, diagonally and rotating in clockwise and counter-clockwise circles, always relaxing and "palming" the eyes after each exercise.

(8) Massage "moustache" area from center to sides of the lips with the tips of the fingers, three times



(8)



(9)

(9) Massage down the cheeks, starting by massaging the upper sides of the face with the heels of the palm, then sliding the hands down while massaging, so the tips of the fingers meet at the chin. Repeat three times.

(10) With the two thumbs, massage up inside the jaw starting under the chin and outward toward the sides of the face, three times. (This massages the lymph nodes and salivary glands in the neck.)



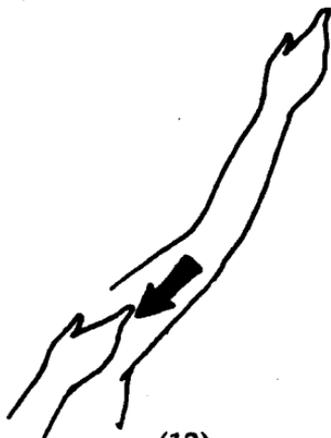
(10)



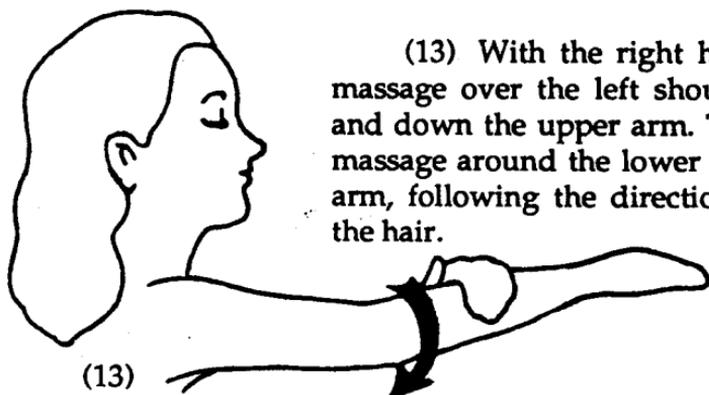
(11)

(11) With the two heels of the hands pressed against the center of the neck, massage outward to the sides of the neck. (This pressure on the center of the neck affects the vagus nerve and lowers the blood pressure and the heartbeat as in (3), thus relaxing the body very effectively.) Repeat three times.

(12) Raise the left arm and massage down the left armpit with the fingers, three times. (This massages the lymph nodes under the arm.)



(12)



(13)

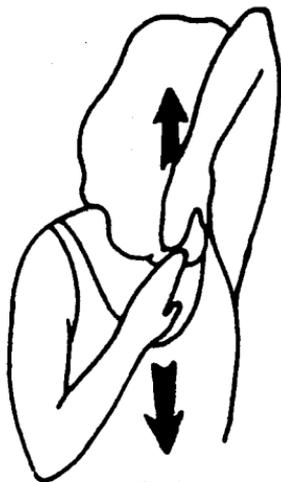
(13) With the right hand, massage over the left shoulder and down the upper arm. Then massage around the lower forearm, following the direction of the hair.

(14) Massage the top of the left hand, and the palm; rotate around each finger. (Do not pull them out or crack them.)



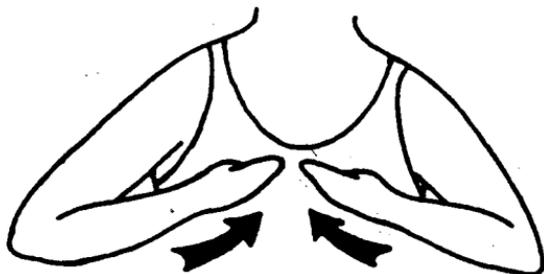
(14)

(15) Repeat 11, 12, and 13 with the right arm.



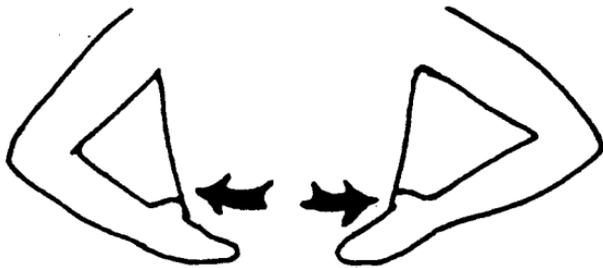
(16)

(16) Reaching up over the right shoulder with the right arm, and down behind the back with the left arm, bring the two hands together in the midback (as close together as possible). Now massage upward with the right hand and downward with the left hand, thus massaging the spine. Do three times. Reverse the hands and repeat.



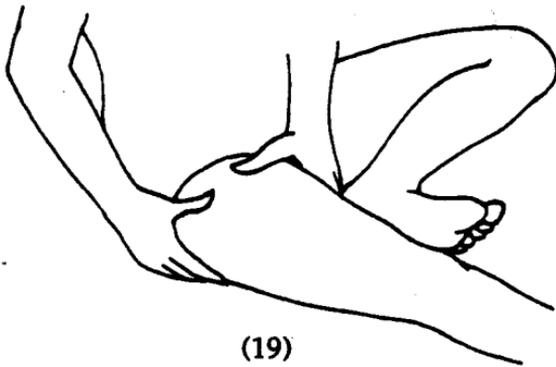
(17)

(17) Massage the chest, by rubbing in toward the heart with both hands.



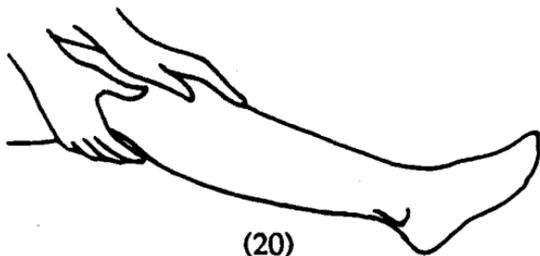
(18)

(18) Exhaling, place thumbs at the sides of the body and fingertips at the base of the rib cage, and massage out to the sides of the body with the fingertips, three times. In this way, exhaling and massaging out to the sides, work down the front of the body until you have massaged the trunk of the body from the waist all the way down to the legs. This massages all the internal organs.

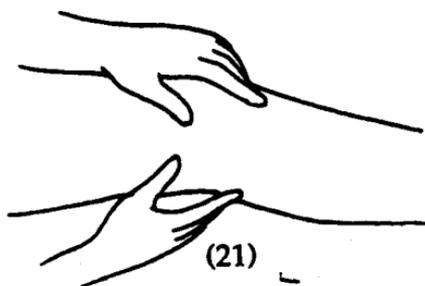


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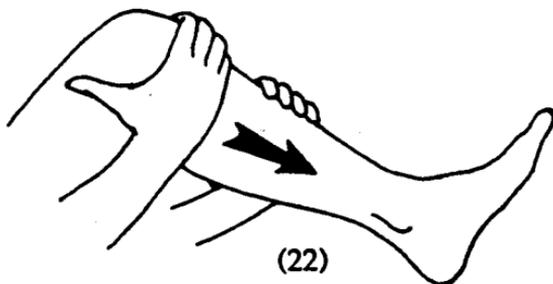
(19) Encircle both hands around the joint of the body where the left leg meets the trunk, and massage this juncture. (Many lymph nodes are located here.)



(20) Massage down the left thigh, three times. Follow the direction of the hair growth.



(21) Place the right palm over kneecap, and curl fingers around the kneecap. Place left hand under kneecap and massage with a combined motion of these two hands, wiggling the kneecap around. This, and all the joint massages, helps prevent arthritis and rheumatism in the joints; it also massages the lymph nodes located at the knee.



(22) Massage down the calf, following the direction of the hair growth.



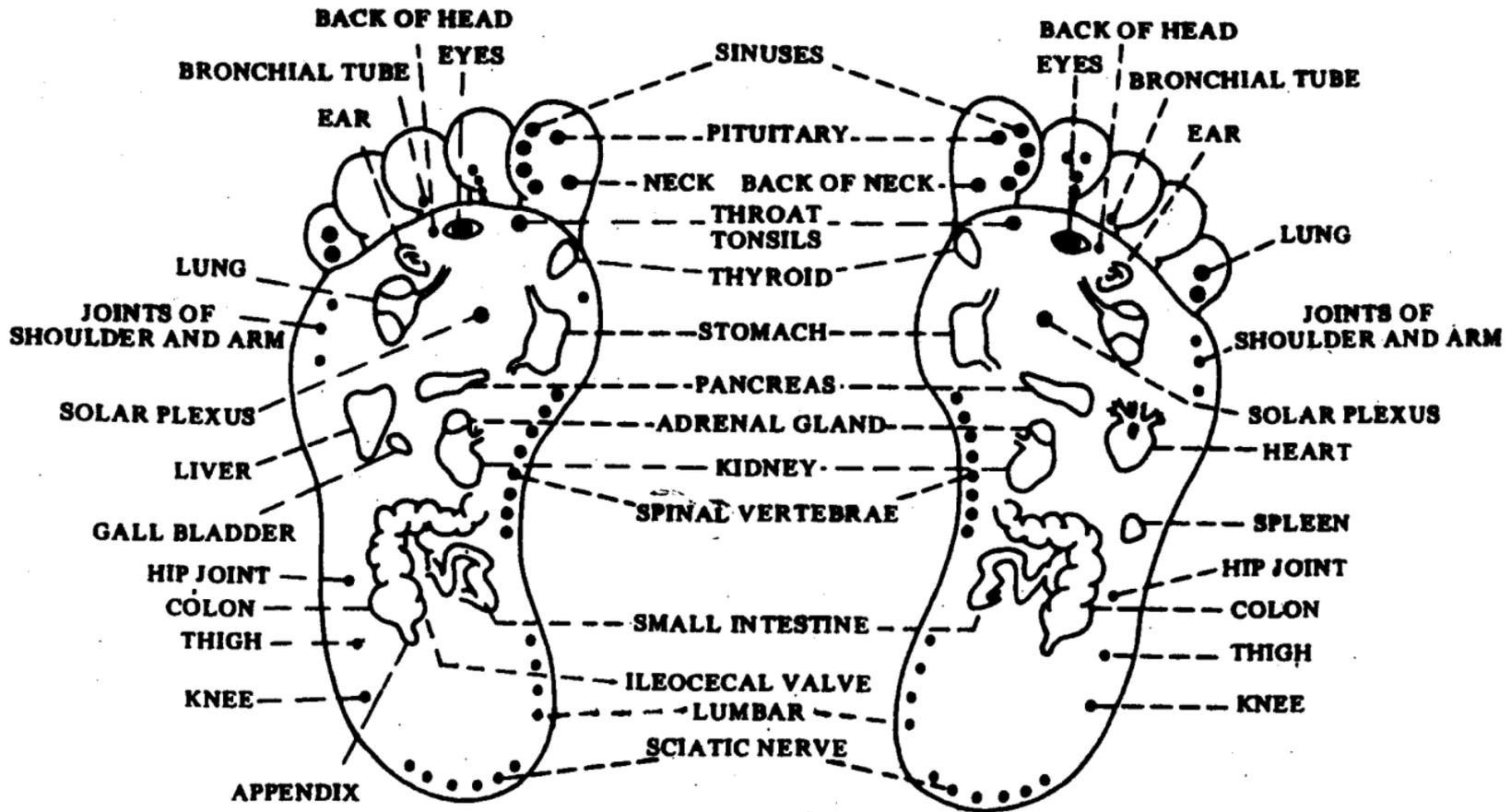
(23) Massage left ankle: encircle the ankle with the fingers so that the thumbs meet at the ankle bone on the inside of the foot. Rub around protruding ankle bone.



(24) Massage left foot, top and sole, with the thumbs.

Gently twist and squeeze each toe. Stretch toes apart and massage in between the toes. Press your fingers in at the juncture of the toes and foot. Knead foot with thumbs, massaging sensitive areas with a gentle circular motion. Make knuckles with your fist, and press the knuckles on the outside edge of the foot, drawing them down from the toe to the heel firmly, three times ... then from the center of the foot to the heel, three times. Slap the foot with the palm, gently. Rub the sole of the foot.

(25) Repeat with the right leg.



Foot Chart