

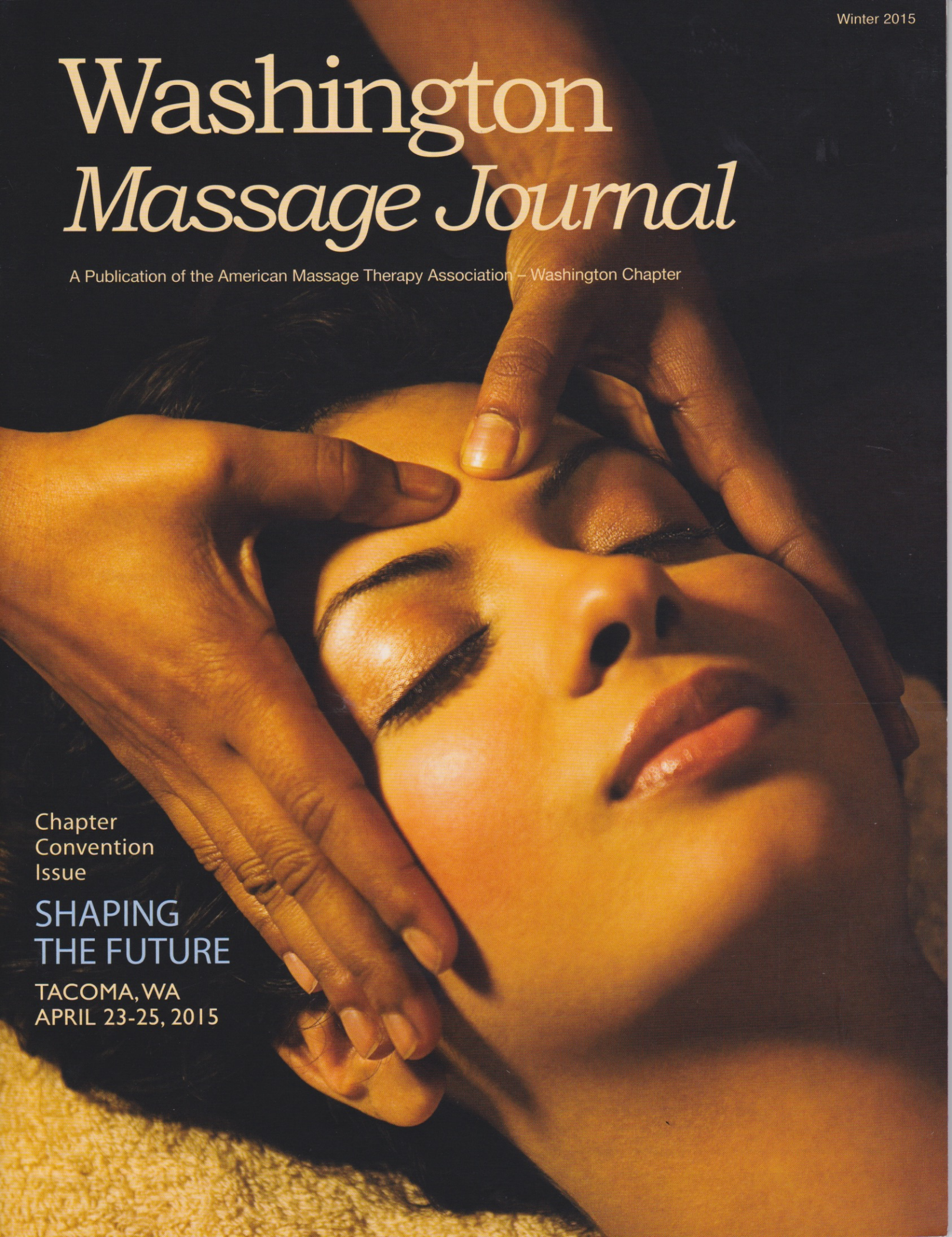
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**SHAPING
THE FUTURE**

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SHAPING THE FUTURE

Fundamentals of Thai Table Massage

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Thai Table Massage is a western adaptation of Traditional Thai Massage, which is practiced on a heated futon on the floor. Both styles are interactive forms of spiritual and energy-based body therapy that combine assisted yoga stretching, acupressure points, rhythmic muscle compression, energy line tracing, synchronized breathing, joint mobilization and meditation.

The Thai Table Massage Difference

Thai Table Massage is very different from other forms of table massage. In addition to using hands, forearms and elbows during a session, Thai Massage practitioners also use their knees and feet to stretch their client.

During a Thai table session, both the practitioner and client are barefoot and wear loose, comfortable clothing to allow for stretching and ROM movements. Draping is unnecessary, and oil and lotion are not needed.

Thai table poses are based on the same principles as Traditional Thai Massage and incorporate similar body mechanics. Approximately 80-85% of traditional floor poses can be adapted to the table.

Is Thai Table Massage Right For You?

To help you decide which form of Thai Massage to practice, consider the following:

- **Knee issues.** Because many Thai poses are practiced in the kneeling position, table adaptations may be better suited for you if you have knee problems.
- **Flexibility/mobility issues.** Use a table if you and/or your clients are unable to comfortably move to and from the floor.
- **Familiarity.** Because most people equate receiving massage with being on a massage table, some clients may feel more comfortable receiving the Thai table version.
- **Introducing Thai Massage to clients.** Because it is very easy to integrate Thai poses into your existing table massage practice, your clients may be more receptive to trying something new.

Massage Table Considerations

A massage table is much narrower than a 5'x7' Thai massage futon, thereby impacting which poses you may successfully do. The wider your working space, the greater the variety of poses you can offer.

- **Table width.** Standard massage table width is 30", but can range from 27"-35". Choose a width that best accommodates the body dimensions of yourself and your clients.
- **Table height.** Position the table slightly lower than you typically do, so that you can comfortably raise and lower your knees to and from the table.
- **Working weight.** Use a table that is strong enough to support the combined weight of both yourself and your client.
- **Table length.** Standard massage table length is 73". If you and your clients are tall, consider a 77" table.



Photo credit: Medbridge.



Four Elements

According to Traditional Thai medicine, the human body is composed of four elements:

- **Earth** – solid (bone, muscle, tendon, ligament, fascia, organs)
- **Water** – liquid (blood, lymph, urine, sweat, saliva)
- **Wind** – movement (digestion, respiration, excretion)
- **Fire** – heat (metabolism, circulation)

The goal of Thai Massage is to balance these elements and improve one's health. Disease occurs when the elements, which are susceptible to the influence of internal and external factors, are out of equilibrium. Internal factors include stress, our emotional state, and the food we consume. External factors include the outside temperature and weather.

Thai Massage focuses on careful application of pressure along energy pathways called *sen* lines. By pressing and stretching muscles, energy blockages are released and health is improved. Examples of blockages include headaches, low back pain and PMS symptoms.

Benefits to Thai Massage Practitioners

Whether you practice Thai Massage on the floor or table, the benefits to you are similar:

- Increased number of "body tools" to use: thumbs, palms, knuckles, forearms, elbows, knees and feet.
- Simultaneous stretching of yourself and clients.
- Use of gravity, leverage, and your body weight.
- Working in several positions: supine, side-lying, prone and seated.
- Preserving your body and prolonging your career.

Finding Sanuk

In the Thai language, *sanuk* means 'joy' or 'striving to achieve happiness in everything you do'. Practicing Thai Massage invokes a sense of playfulness and experimentation. Bring it to your futon or table and create a happier experience for yourself and your clients.

Eric Spivack, LMP, EAMP, RTT

A Taste of Thai Table Massage

Saturday, April 25

8am - Noon or 1:30 - 5:30pm

4 CE Hours

