

# fingertips for the client

BY MARYBETTS SINCLAIR



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# HYDROTHERAPY AT HOME

Hydrotherapy treatments can be a relaxing, healing way to extend the benefits of your massage. Treatments you perform at home can help take charge of your own health. Your massage therapist is your partner in healing and can suggest treatments that are well suited to your particular needs. Aches and pains, injuries, muscle tightness, and even joint stiffness can all be soothed with the following treatments.

## EPSOM SALTS FOOTBATHS

Epsom salts footbaths may be helpful for bruises, sprains in the subacute stage, soreness after exercise, soreness after massage, chronically cold feet, edema of pregnancy, or arthritis pain. You will need a water thermometer, a chair, a plastic tub, 2 cups of Epsom salts for an adult (1 cup of Epsom salts for a child), 1 bath towel, and a bath mat.

## PROCEDURE

1. Place a bath mat on the floor in front of the chair.
2. Fill the tub with warm (not hot) water, about 98–102°. Pour the Epsom salts directly under the spigot as soon as you begin filling the tub, to make sure they dissolve completely. If your massage therapist has suggested you add essential oils to your footbath, add them after you have finished filling the tub.
3. When the tub is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, place it on the towel, then sit on the chair and put your feet in the water.
4. Keep your feet in the water for 15–20 minutes.
5. At the end of your footbath, rinse and dry your feet.
6. Apply a moisturizing lotion to your feet and then put on socks.

**Your massage therapist is your partner in healing and can suggest treatments that are well suited to your particular needs.**



## SHOWER EXERCISES

A hot shower and neck-limbering exercises may be helpful for chronically tight muscles, stress, injury, soreness after exercise, muscle spasms, or arthritis pain. These exercises may be performed as frequently as three times a day.

Do not stay in a long, hot shower if you have any of the following conditions: cardiovascular problems, diabetes, hepatitis, lymphedema, multiple sclerosis, seizure disorders, hypothyroid conditions, loss of sensation (lack of feeling), or any condition that might make you unsteady on your feet or unable to tolerate heat, including alcohol or drug use. If pregnant, reduce the temperature of the shower.

You will need a water thermometer, bath towel, and bath mat.

## PROCEDURE

1. Turn on your shower to hot and get in carefully.
2. Adjust the temperature so it is hot, but to your tolerance (about 105–115°). Let the water beat upon your neck for at least three minutes. Move your head as if you were drawing all 26 letters of the alphabet with your nose. This will release muscle tension and make your neck more limber.
3. Stay in the shower for no longer than 10 minutes.
4. Get out of the shower carefully so you do not slip.
5. Dry off and get dressed. Select a shirt that will keep your neck warm. **m&b**

**6** *Marybetts Sinclair, LMT, has been a massage therapist in Oregon for 34 years. She is the author of Modern Hydrotherapy for the Massage Therapist (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2004) For more information, visit [www.marybettssinclair.com](http://www.marybettssinclair.com).*