

## **Release to Touch**

It is helpful to practice this sequence in a variety of positions. Releasing some muscles to touch can be done in any position, including “slow dance,” walking, and supported standing, but ideal positions for first learning this technique are:

- 3/4 over side-lying, which provides the partner with easy access to mom’s arms, legs, hips, and back while she is fully supported.
- Supported sitting, which allows partner to reach limbs, belly, face, and neck, while maintaining eye contact.

### *Educator’s script*

Moms, take your shoes off and find a comfortable position, so you will feel fully supported as you learn to release-to-touch. Partners, take your place facing her if she is on her side, or, if she is sitting, you may be either in front of her or beside her where you can comfortably reach first her shoulders and arms, then her hips and legs. Try to keep space on both sides of her, as you will have to move around her during this sequence. Partners, rub your hands together briskly to warm them, then gently place both hands – warm and relaxed – on mom’s shoulder nearest you. Hold them there, allowing her time to release her tension toward the warmth of your hands... Both of you take a cleansing breath together as a signal to let go of your tension. Partners, your hands should be loose as they rest on her shoulder... Now, gently but firmly, stroke down her arm with both your hands encircling it... Stroke all the way to the finger tips, “pulling” the tension from her body... Do not allow her hand to fall... Gently place it back where it was, as your hands leave hers... Ask her if she wants more – or less – pressure. Repeat that motion on the same arm, adjusting the pressure to suit her... Hands pause on her shoulder, ... stroke down the arm, ... off the hand. Her arm should now feel very loose and relaxed. Notice the difference in the feeling of relaxation in her two arms.

Now, partners, place your hands on the crest of her hip. Mom, again release to the touch of warm hands as your partner strokes down the top and sides of the leg with both hands... slowly... gently... firmly... all the way to the foot. Pull all her tension out her toes. Ask her about pressure... Adjust it... then repeat stroking the leg from the hip... to the knee... to the ankle... and off the foot.

Move to the opposite side and we will repeat the entire sequence. — Hands pause on her shoulder ... stroke down the arm ... off the hand. Move to the hip. Stroke down the leg ... slowly ... gently ... firmly ... all the way to the foot. Pull all her tension out her toes.

Partners, now move to a position behind mom, so you can comfortably reach her shoulders and head. Place both your hands together at the base of her neck, with your fingers spreading to the tops of her shoulders. Gently press down with the heel of your hands. Mom, release your tension to the pressure of warm hands.

Partners, move your touch to a new point on the top of her shoulders, and press down gently ... firmly.

Before we proceed to the next part of this exercise, you should be aware that some women do not like having their heads touched. So partners, ask if she prefers you to massage her shoulders again or to move on to her head.

Place your hands on her head with your fingers touching and the heels of your hands above her ears. Moms, imagine that your partner's hands are magnets that attract tension and pull it away. Partners, press in very gently with your hands, then just hold slight pressure on her head. Moms, imagine that the magnets are pulling the tension away from your head as your partner's hands V-E-R-Y slowly begin to release pressure,...then barely touch your hair,...then pull away slowly into the space around your head. Your tension has gone with your partners hands. Partners, shake your hands out, then repeat, adjusting again for pressure as she desires.

If you are comfortably situated on your side, your back is open for touch. If you are sitting, lean forward so that your partner may touch and stroke down your back. Partners, when doing long strokes on her back, be sure that one of your hands maintains contact with her body at all times. Begin with the heel of your hand near her left shoulder. Stroke firmly with your open palm all the way down her back and hip. Before you release that hand from her hip, place your other hand near her shoulder, just to the right of your last stroke. When that hand begins to move, release the first hand from her hip. *Slowly* work across her back, hand over hand, stroke after stroke—until you reach her left shoulder. Keep your strokes firm and S-L-O-W.

Now take a few minutes to discuss with one another your reaction to this “release- to- touch” exercise. Did it help you to release tension? Was any of the touch more irritating than relaxing? As the old saying goes, “Different strokes for different folks.” It is important that the two of you communicate your preferences.

*Allow time for partners to discuss with one another, then trade positions.*

This time, reverse roles. Mom, you stroke, press, or massage your partner in a manner to show him or her how you like to be touched. Demonstrate the pressure and the speed you like, then listen to your partner's feedback. You will probably find that you each like different types of touch. In the future you will know how to touch your partner according to their desire, not yours!