

Introduction to Royal Style Thai Massage

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Traditionally in Thailand it is believed that there are only two fundamentally different styles of Thai Massage – Folk Style (*chaloeyesak*), and Royal Style (*ratchasumnak*). ‘Northern Style’ and ‘Southern Style’ are commonly referred to by *farang* (westerners) as different styles of Thai Massage. However, except for regional variations in techniques, both of these ‘styles’ are in fact the Folk Style practiced in a different manner – with a generally more relaxed approach in the North, and with more gusto in the South.

As the name indicates, Royal Style was developed for treating the King, Queen and the Royal family. Royal Style is consequently practised in a much more polite manner than Folk Style. This is evident in the extra distance that is maintained between giver and receiver, often without compromising the effectiveness of the treatment. Prone position is not used at all.

Royal Style is still used for treatment of the general public, and in some hospitals it is the preferred form because it is possible to achieve major improvements in a short period of time. Chiropractic diagnosis is often carried out before and after ward to check whether the treatment has effectively addressed the issue.

Strong thumb pressure tends to be used in Royal Style, making it particularly suited to receivers that enjoy the stronger treatment that is sometimes necessary to achieve quicker results. The thumbs and hands are trained for strength through a variety of techniques.

The treatment focuses on thumbing the sen lines, occasionally using other fingers on small, delicate areas, and also occasionally some palming techniques. To work on a specific localised issue it is considered a better use of time to work on the relevant acupressure points, rather than the Sen, so in that case there would be accordingly less work on the Sen. During a general, full body treatment which is relatively rare, work on the Sen will be augmented by strong work on a few acupressure points on the sen lines.

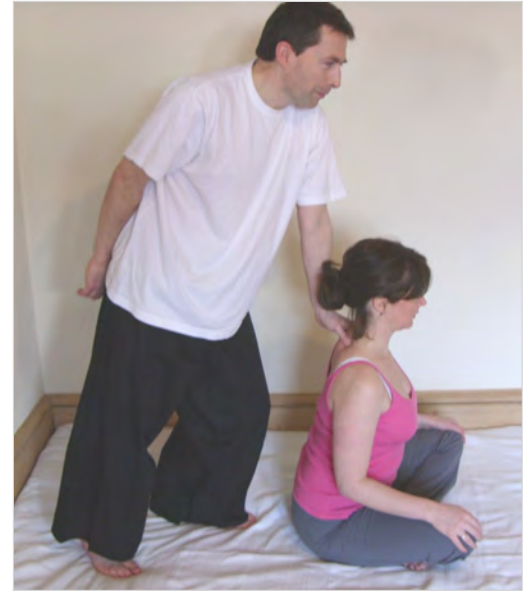


Therapist's body position

Position yourself at a discrete distance away from the receiver. According to tradition, working too closely should be avoided. If your thumbs are strong enough, try to work with one thumb as shown in the photo.



When working on the neck, use two thumbs for greater effect, and work both sides together, (*left*). Working one side at a time is more gentle and comfortable for the receiver, (*below*).



In sitting position, male therapists may work with knees splayed, but traditionally, females should work with knees together as much as possible. Therapists should maintain a certain distance as a sign of respect.

Start by working on the arms. If you have strong thumbs, it is preferable to work in sitting position. Support the receiver's arm on your arm (*below left*). The first point is in the middle of the armpit (*below, right*).





Only a short area on the front of trapezius should be worked. It is better to use one thumb here rather than two, since it can be very tender. A gentle squeeze of the muscle is performed – do not lift the muscle upward and away from the body.

There are four pressure points along the shoulder to the neck. The two points at the neck are closer together than the others. Work with two thumbs if the receiver can take the pressure.



There are five points on the inner arm. The middle point is next to the elbow joint. Work the inner arms while supported on your knee

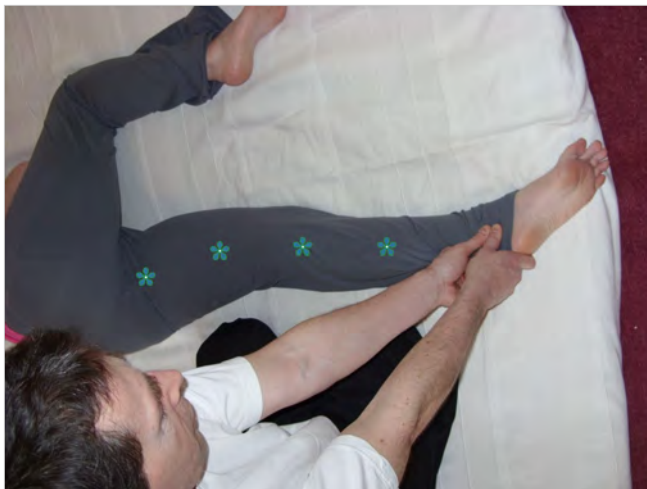
The outer arms should be worked flat on the mat. Maintain distance while working with two thumbs.





The outside upper arm can be treated using only one thumb. It is possible to use two thumbs, but it may be less convenient.

The final point on the outer arm is easy to locate by holding the hand and moving the arm a bit.



There are five points on the central inner leg line. The middle point is at the knee crease, so this should be treated gently with one thumb. The other points are best treated strongly with two thumbs, and can be held for a long time.

Treat the highest point on the leg with the most pressure, but try to make it as comfortable as possible for the receiver.

