

❧ Sitting on Feet to Work the Back ❧

This wonderful technique combines forward compression of the legs, a pumping sensation in the lower abdomen, and breath-coordinated palming and thumb pressure. It is stress-releasing, therapeutic, and delightful to receive. It's also fun for the therapist to do, but it must be done carefully, with great awareness, and for a short period of time without placing unnecessary stress on the receiver. Each time you do it, take a few seconds beforehand for careful preparation and setup.



Setup

The receiver is in prone position, with her arms resting upward and away from the sides of her body. Bring her knees together with your feet, lift her lower legs to an upright position, flatten her soles, and gently sit on her feet while holding her ankles for stability. Now immediately move your feet forward toward the receiver's shoulders until good stability and balance is attained. Take a few test plunges by thrusting your lower body downward and immediately returning upward to the sitting position. Use your core muscles to shift your bodyweight downward and upward. For each test, adjust your feet a bit more forward until you can thrust downward and return upward easily and with excellent balance.

Execution

Straighten your arms, with locked elbows and “butterfly” palms, and position them inside your medial legs. Both your legs should press slightly inward to brace against your arms and to provide support. Now wait for your client to breathe, and just when she is about to exhale, plunge your *hara* forward as you bend your knees downward and take the receiver's feet with you. Your butterfly palms press downward onto the back as the receiver's legs are compressed forward. After the first compression, immediately return to the full sitting position as you release your palm pressure, and then plunge and compress with your palms again in a different spot.

Return to an upright position after each compression, and try to always work with the receiver's breath. Plunge downward as you both exhale, and return to a more upright



position as you both inhale. Continue palming upward as far as you can comfortably reach. After a set of palm presses, begin a thumbing routine. With your arms fully extended and your elbows locked in an open position, place your thumbs in the grooves alongside the spine at the sacrum. Plunge forward, and sink your thumbs downward as you press into the back lines. Use the rounded pads of your thumbs, and return to a more upright position after each thumb press. Move your thumbs upward to a new place, and repeat the plunge and thumb pressure. Continue upward to your maximum range, but this time, don't bring your body back to a sitting position. Keep the receiver's legs in a compressed position, and thumb-walk down to the base of the lower back in alternating fashion; left thumb, right thumb, left thumb, and so on. When you reach the starting position, at the lower back near the sacrum, come to an upright sitting position again, and repeat the same pattern.

Once again, to review: Use simultaneous thumb pressure while you pump the legs and climb upward. Then stop the leg-pumping, remain in a downward position, and alternate your thumbing until you return to the sacrum. Then begin the pattern again on the same back lines, or on other sets of back lines. See the entire sequence in the photos that follow.

To exit this pose, reach back and hold both feet with one hand, and then stand up and walk out of your sitting position. This technique requires a lot of practice, and the first few times you do it, your leg muscles might ache the next day, but it's a wonderful technique to release tension in the back, and it's fun to do. Don't linger very long in this position. Sit on the feet, adjust your legs and your balance properly, do the palming and thumbing techniques, and then get out of this posture and move on to something else.

Reminders

- Make sure the client's legs are relaxed, and bring their knees close to each other.
- Make sure to set yourself up properly before you begin work.
- Support your own bodyweight with your feet. With two people of similar height and weight, you could sit with about 50 percent of your bodyweight. Offset more weight with your feet if you are larger than the receiver, and sit with more bodyweight if you are smaller than the receiver.

- If there is discomfort or stress for either party, immediately stop working in this position.
- Take note of your *hara*, balancing point, and breathing pattern before beginning to work.
- Hold the receiver's feet with one hand when you dismount and stand up. Consider stretching the legs, or flow into another technique as soon as you're standing again. It can be beneficial to put the client in child's pose after using this technique.

