



ABCs of MASSAGE

With so many massage options on the spa menu, it's easy to get confused. Here, a guide to top techniques with skin care benefits.

By **Sandra Ramani**

If you've ever found yourself staring blankly at a spa menu, overwhelmed by all the massage offerings and unsure of the jargon, we feel your pain.

"Spas try to be informative, but it's easy for the details of what to expect—and the specific therapeutic benefits—to become lost," says Brad Drummer, co-owner of Washington, D.C.'s eco-friendly Nusta Day Spa (nustaspa.com) and massage therapist and teacher with over 20 years' experience.

No matter what style you choose, you'll also enjoy the added benefit of improved skin care. "Massage is great for circulating blood flow to the skin," explains Drummer, "while the motions used in massage help the therapeutic, plant-based oils—many with moisturizing, detoxifying and anti-aging properties—penetrate more deeply into the skin."

To help you find your way, we've compiled this list of popular massage styles, with tips on the various benefits and techniques. →

WATSU A mash-up of the words "water" and "shiatsu," Watsu is an aquatic massage that takes place in a saltwater pool heated to 98 degrees. Featuring a series of stretches and gentle, rhythmic motions as the therapist cradles and pushes the clients weightlessly through the water, Watsu—with its floaty, dream-like feel—is known to create "a womblike experience," explains Abril Gruber, spa director from The Spa at Rancho Valencia, San Diego, CA.

GOOD FOR: "Watsu is perfect for elderly clients, excellent for treating chronic pain, and a wonderful experience for women who are pregnant," Gruber explains. **TRY:** The Watsu service at The Spa at Rancho Valencia (\$165) is popular with mothers-to-be. ranchovalencia.com