

The Panasonic Massage Lounger

A View from an Acupressure Massage Therapy Expert

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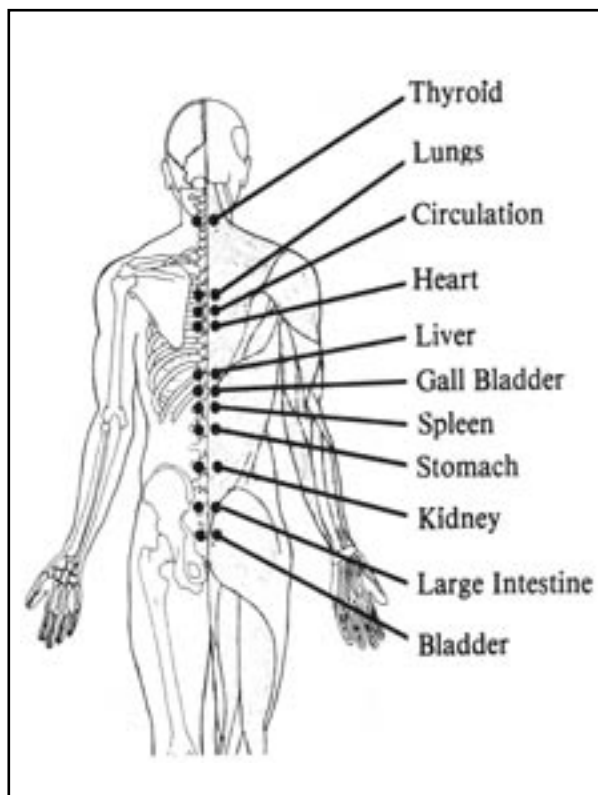
Based on my thirty years of experience in the massage therapy field and my survey of products in the marketplace, I endorse Panasonic's massage chairs enthusiastically. The Panasonic massage lounger gives an excellent acupressure massage – similar to being worked on by a skilled massage therapist. The Panasonic chair is preferable to any other equipment I have tried, due to its sophisticated technology. Let me explain why I recommend this product so highly.

I was introduced to the Panasonic massage lounger in 1984; a time when the precision of Japanese products was often surpassing what was made in the U.S. Having just published my Bum Back Book, I was introduced to the massage lounger by a friend. Panasonic had just launched the product in the U.S., and very few people knew about it.

I was immediately impressed by how realistic the acupressure massage felt. I found that the rubber rollers are contoured to resemble the surface of a thumb and have a density similar to the padding at the fingertips. Clearly, someone in product development was not only paying attention to details, but knew acupressure point therapeutics. Since this early model, Panasonic has done remarkable things to improve how the product delivers a truly great massage experience. Before you can fully appreciate what the chair does, you have to know a bit about acupressure.

How Acupressure Back Massage Works

Acupressure uses different qualities of touch that vary from light to firm pressure. Many people have heard of acupuncture with needles, which use the same points. There are approximately 365 traditional acupressure points taught at the Acupressure Institute. Nearly 100 points are located on the back and neck. When these points are stimulated properly, an increase of blood circulation and energy flow result. A substantial body of literature supports the benefits of both acupuncture and acupressure. The existence of acupressure points has actually been scientifically verified by measuring greater electrical conductivity at these points. Acupressure, the older of the two Chinese traditions, has been largely neglected. Yet many different styles of finger pressure, such as shiatsu massage developed in Japan, utilize the same basic acupuncture principles and are less invasive than acupuncture.



The Panasonic massage chair is designed to stimulate a series of acupressure points along the spine. Traditional Chinese medicine believes that pressing on these back points can send beneficial signals to corresponding organs and associated areas. Based on my assessment, the rollers on the Panasonic chair stimulate these acupressure points and thus can help stretch and loosen stiff and tense muscles. This can temporarily reduce minor muscular back pain, and temporarily increase blood circulation and oxygen capacity of blood where the pressure is being applied. In addition, the effective nature of the Panasonic massage may help in the release of endorphins, providing temporary relief of pain and a reduction in mental stress and tension in the same way that an acupressure massage would.

To be sure, if you have any medical problems, particularly problems involving your back, you should first see your doctor for medical advice and diagnosis. When you do, ask if you could benefit from using an acupressure massage lounger. Your doctor may find that using the Panasonic massage chair temporarily relaxes those tight muscles and compliments the doctor's treatment. The chair, however, should not be used as a replacement for medical advice or treatment. If you have a health problem, be sure to consult your doctor.

There are many styles of acupressure and massage, using different techniques, ranging from deep tissue that strongly stimulate the body's muscles and tissues, to more gentle massage strokes. Shiatsu, from Japan, is known for its firm pressure that releases deep muscular tension. In contrast, Swedish massage uses long continuous strokes. Although a skilled massage therapist may know how to give both styles, few can integrate these techniques into a personal, unique, individualized treatment.

Swede-Atsu & Real Pro Chairs



Panasonic's high-tech massage chairs, not only give both eastern and western styles, but have the capability of mixing Swedish massage and Shiatsu into 47 flowing variations of these bodywork techniques, called the "Swede-atsu Technology". The controls allow two heads or four heads to focus in one spot for deep tissue, or

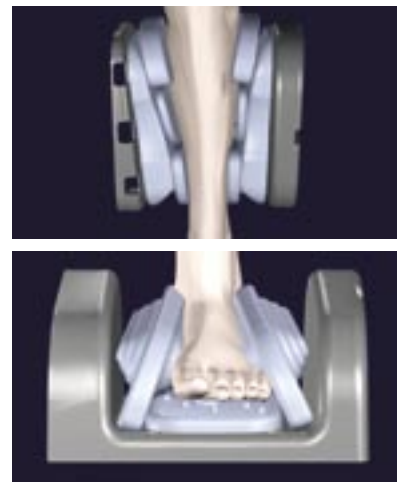
move along the back – up to 30” along the full-length of the spine. In replicating Shiatsu and Swedish massage, the chair offers varieties of kneading, pressing, stroking, and tapping, along with a full range of intensity and a speed control to adjust for personal preferences.

Part of the pleasure of receiving a professional massage from a qualified massage therapist is the continuous process of letting go—just receiving and not having to lift a finger. The Panasonic Swede-atsu chair is capable of providing both deep eastern Shiatsu massage and the kneading strokes of Swedish massage while the recipient holds a remote control to individualize the treatment. Panasonic engineers created the Real Pro massage chair with four complete programmed massage treatments, whereby the recipient does not have to lift a finger (other than to push the start button). This amazing massage chair has a special feature that effectively massages the top of your shoulders, kneading deeply into your trapezoid muscles, right where most people store the majority of their tension. In addition, the Real Pro chair provides the option to program up to five individualized massages for three different people. This personalized, contoured experience maximizes your enjoyment with customized speed control of your favorite massage techniques.



The comprehensive pre-programmed massage routines take you through spinal stretching and several massage strokes that knead the muscles. While you're receiving these massage techniques, the Real Pro chair can stretch out your spine and open up your spinal disks better than a regular massage session on the table. Since you're lying on the chair, the rollers gently arch your body into an S-curve. Panasonic models also offer three unique tapping techniques to increase blood circulation. The seat on the Real Pro chair massages and stimulates acupuncture points on your thighs and buttocks.

The Real Pro chair also has 22 air bags and rollers designed to relax chronic muscular tension in your legs. The fast, grasping motion of the calf air bags is like fluffing a pillow, treating acute tension that may have built up during the day or after a playing a sport. The, long slow squeezing action provides a steady, relaxing massage for more chronic leg tension. Both fast and slow motions help promote blood circulation in your legs and feet.



The self-program feature of the Real Pro chair allows you to create your own tailored massage experience. You can customize the intensity of the massage program and choose how much time is spent on each area of your back and neck. The more bars on the remote you assign to any one area, the more intense the massage will become.

Guidance Using the Chair

When the chair is turned off, you should be able to sit in it without feeling the massage rollers or nodes, and can thus use the chair to relax in. If you have a tight, aching back, I suggest that you start out with the chair upright to give you less pressure, unless you are accustomed to receiving deep massage. For the first several weeks, use the chair only ten to fifteen minutes maximum a day. The chair automatically shuts off after fifteen minutes to prevent overuse, which is a safety measure if you ever fall asleep while it is giving you a massage. Be sure to increase the intensity of the pressure and the amount of time you use the chair, gradually. If you feel sore the next day, you went over your limit.

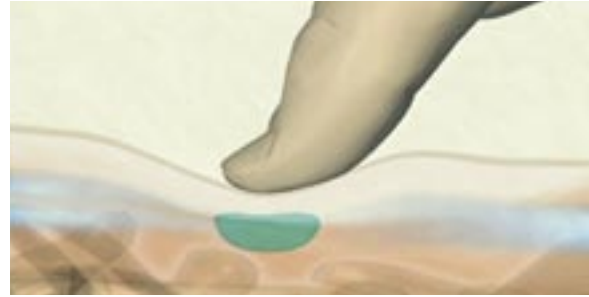
You can also adjust the pressure so it feels therapeutic. If you have minor pain when using the chair, adjust the pressure so that it hurts good, not bad. A professional, deep tissue massage relaxes and stimulates without pressing on body areas that can hurt and bruise unnecessarily.

Allow yourself to relax with your eyes closed for the amount of time that you use the chair. For example, if you use the chair for ten minutes, be sure to relax deeply for ten minutes immediately afterwards. If you feel unstable or somewhat dizzy or out of kilter after receiving a massage, your body needs more deep relaxation time to integrate the therapeutic effects. Learn to follow and respect your body's limits. By relaxing immediately after receiving treatment, you will feel refreshed, present and stable.

Use the remote control to direct the chair when kneading your back wherever it's tight. If you want deeper pressure, use the electronic controls to recline the chair further. If you want even more pressure, flip over the back pad, uncovering the rollers. The more you recline, the more weight you are putting on the massage heads. This is another way to control the pressure that the chair produces.

You can increase or decrease the pressure applied in specific areas using the intensity control on the remote, which electronically adjusts how far the rollers come out. If you are tense in an area where you want deeper massage, you can increase the pressure. If an area is sore, you may want to decrease the pressure.

Since their early models, Panasonic has greatly increased the degree to which their chairs recline and how far the massage heads can protrude. If you fully recline with the heads a full 4 inches out, you will have a very powerful massage -- one that is best to build up to gradually. Similar types of chairs cover less than half the amount of therapeutic points on the shoulders, back, and waist. The kneading offered by Panasonic is especially therapeutic for relieving tension in these areas. I have tried other massage chairs that did not massage the shoulders adequately due to the placement and motion of the massage heads. The Panasonic Real Pro chair is designed to knead into the shoulder and back muscles, without causing discomfort or pain by massaging bone.



The remote also enables you to adjust the width of the rollers for stimulating various points and tight muscles. When you find a particularly tight point, you can use the remote to stop immediately on that exact spot. Other manufacturers' chairs have a delayed response and some of the remotes are so confusing you won't understand what the chairs do. The Panasonic remote is clear and simple enough to allow you to individualize your massage easily.

Muscles respond better to movements when they are done slowly. With the Real Pro chair, you can also adjust the speed of the rollers. The slower speeds enable your muscles to relax and respond to the beneficial movement of the massage. Faster speeds with a lighter, surface massage further maximize circulation. Athletes and people with muscular bodies may prefer a faster, active massage. With speed control, you can experience a variety of smooth kneading for easing stiffness and tension while achieving a deep sense of well-being.

There are also four different types of kneading you can choose from to relax a tight muscular area completely. In addition to surface Swedish kneading and an interesting wave kneading, Panasonic has two versions of "V-style" kneading. Inward compression releases constriction and tension in muscles, one of the basic techniques of acupressure. The outward "V" of applied pressure starts narrow and opens outward, to stretch and elongate the muscles, creating resiliency and ultimately greater flexibility.

Based on my experience as a massage teacher and practitioner, I find that Panasonic chairs most closely reproduce what a highly skilled Shiatsu massage therapist does to stimulate the acupressure points. By successfully replicating the kneading of a professional massage therapist, Panasonic chairs can activate 100 acupressure points and thus provide a highly effective

and beneficial massage. A Panasonic massage chair can provide you with an enjoyable form of preventive healthcare in your own home – a daily workout for your neck, shoulders, back, legs and feet using your own personalized treadmill.

I urge you to try the Panasonic massage chair. I have used the chair both personally and for my clients and students at the Acupressure Institute for years. It's a wonderful, therapeutically beneficial product that I believe can help you lead a healthier life.

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Request a free copy of the Acupressure Institute's Healing Resources Catalog to mail order special books, tapes and videos. See Michael Reed Gach's best selling book entitled Acupressure's Potent Points (Bantam Books) presenting self-care for relieving common complaints from A to Z. You will find the Acupressure Institute's Training Programs, workshops, and the Home Study Package on our website: **www.acupressure.com**

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