

Esalen® Massage Practitioner Level I

Curriculum and Schedule

Esalen® Massage 175-Hour Training

I. Overview and Course Content

The 175-hour Esalen® Massage Level I Certification is designed to guide students to the Esalen massage Level I *practitioner*. The skills and knowledge base taught in this training are divided into the following categories

1. Esalen Massage Skills
2. Legacy and theoretical foundations
3. Self-awareness and communication skills
4. Applied anatomy/physiology/kinesiology
5. Business practice and organization skills
6. Professional ethics
7. Movement practices/meditation/self care

The intent of this course is to train practitioners to be competent in practicing Esalen Massage, and to meet core curriculum requirements. This curriculum supports the practice of Esalen Massage throughout the world by training practitioners who offer excellent work while adhering to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct.

II. Structure in Terms of Hours per Subject

This is a 4-week, 27-day program. Five days consist of approximately 7.5– 8.5 classroom hours; one with 5.5 hours with one and one half day free within a 7 day period. In this training, the total number of supervised classroom hours is 175 hours. Following is a specific description of hours spent on different knowledge areas:

- Esalen Massage skills, history, and theoretical foundations (**100 hours**)
 - The experience of presence
 - Opening and closing a massage session
 - The client interview
 - Adequately draping clients and the primacy of safety
 - Understanding the pause, the long strokes, body mechanics, and the integrating function of awareness
 - Detail work on the back body
 - Detail work on the front body

- Assisted movement in the massage context
- Stretching in the massage context
- Contraindications
- Permission and Use of the registered mark Esalen.
- Working with special cases
 - § First time recipients
 - § Clients with injuries/disabilities/special needs
 - § Pregnancy massage
 - § Geriatric Massage

Core Curriculum – 75 hours

- **Communication Skills (6 hours)**
 - Basic understanding of Gestalt Process and Communication skills
 - § Gestalt Language
 - § Differentiating thinking from feeling
 - § Basic communication skills including listening
 - § Office skills and communication
 - How to deal with conflict/misunderstanding when it arises within the client/practitioner relationship
 - Communicating the ethical boundaries of the professional relationship.
- **Organizational Skill: documenting, Network Building, and Business Practices (6 hours)**
 - How to document sessions: Subjective client description, objective, action, outcome.
 - How to build a practice through introductory presentations
 - Advertising, and promotional material/strategies
 - Building a network of referrals through relationships with other professionals and related businesses
 - § Chiropractic offices
 - § Spas
 - § Health related retail businesses
 - Designing a website and presenting oneself professionally
- **Applied anatomy and physiology/pathology (20 hours)**
 - Integrating anatomical knowledge of a given area of the body into one's massage work
 - Applying relevant anatomical/physiological information into the overall flow and structure of a session with a given client
 - Understanding how tissue changes in relation to touch
 - Recognizing pathological conditions that contraindicate touch and/or massage
- **Pathology, Contraindications (18 hours)**
- **Professional Ethics (5 hours)**
 - Understanding Transference and Counter Transference

- Understanding appropriate boundaries within the client/practitioner relationship
- Learning how to deal with difficult clients
- Sound business practice
- confidentiality
- **Movement Practices/Kinesiology (20 hours)**
 - Moving the body through yoga, chi-gong, expressive movement, etc.
 - Relating those practices to movement around the table, while working
 - Using meditation to improve focus, concentration and presence while working
- **Medical protocol and hygiene (5 hours)**
- **Total 175 hours. Structure and focus in Each Week**

Note: Each day, morning meditation and movement practices of different types will be explored. At some point in the day, a group sharing will happen, according to the flow of the teaching.

Week #1: 7:00 -13:30 Monday - Saturday; 15:30 - 18:30 Monday - Friday.

1. Developing the social fabric of the group, so that a palpable bond of trust is apparent between the students, and between students and teachers
2. A properly bonded social fabric supports the second focus of week #1, introducing students to fundamental principles and techniques of Esalen Massage.

Specific areas of focus:

- a. Group bonding activities
- b. Introduction to presence-based touch
- c. Opening a massage: Understanding the basic relational processes at work in any massage/therapeutic relationship
- d. Understanding what differentiates and distinguishes Esalen massage from other massage modalities
- e. Introduction to the long lengthening stroke, front and back. Theoretical understanding of the long stroke or seamlessness in a massage
- f. Draping
- g. Utilizing proper body mechanics
- h. Introduction to the anatomy and physiology of touch, the significance of the skin, and its fundamental relationship to the long stroke

Week #2: 7:00 -13:30 Monday - Saturday; 15:30 - 18:30 Monday - Friday.

1. Adding depth (teaching students to apply more pressure, while utilizing appropriate body mechanics)
2. Adding detail (e.g. specific detail work around the scapula) to their basic massage technique, front and back
3. The importance of detail and integration: addressing the whole body and person.
4. Students are introduced to basic principles of communication in Gestalt Process.

Specific areas of focus:

- a. Utilizing depth on the back body to add appropriate depth, integrating the forearm work in and out of long, flowing strokes with the hands

- b. Utilizing proper body mechanics
- c. Detail work on the front and back (e.g. shoulder; could be other body parts according to teachers' discretion)
- d. Draping
- e. Introduction to effective communication skills;
- f. First full body trade (end of week #2)
- g. Anatomy of the Spine and soft tissue structures of the back, applied to massage practice, and techniques.
- h. Pathology and contra-indications

Week #3: 7:00 -13:30 Monday - Saturday; 15:30 - 18:30 Monday - Friday.

1. Adding more depth and detail to more areas of the body, blending in and out of long, integrating strokes
 2. More time spent on full body practice, giving and receiving feedback
 3. 1st "touch-ins" (students give short, 10 minute sessions to teachers, enabling teachers to feel the students' quality of touch)
 4. Refining students' understanding and capabilities in giving a professional, full body massage, from client intake (interview), to getting the clients up and off the table in a timely manner (75-90 minutes)
 5. Teacher evaluation massages will begin toward the middle/end of this week.
 6. A continued look at "specialized" moves will also be a focus.
 7. A gestalt session will take place on Saturday after Touch Ins.

Specific areas of focus will be:

- a. Supervised full body massage practice
- b. Discussion of the entire professional session, from beginning to end, within a given time structure
- c. Specialized moves
- d. Evaluation Massages
- e. Anatomy of the knee, thigh, and hip
- f. Final gestalt process session with external facilitator
- g. Adding more depth and detail to students work (e.g. feet, hands, or various body parts, according to teacher discretion)
- h. Utilizing proper body mechanics
- i. Draping
- j. Supervised full body massage practice
- k. Practicing communication skills through giving and receiving feedback
- l. First "touch-ins" with teachers; students receive feedback regarding quality of touch.
- m.. Anatomy of the shoulder, arm and hand, with applications to massage practice and techniques learned

Week #4: 7:00 -13:30 Monday - Friday ; 15:30 - 18:30 Monday - Friday.

1. Students will be introduced to their 1st “professional” massage situation, as we invite members of the community mid-week (Wednesday, or at teachers discretion) to receive massages from students.
2. The subject of interviewing a client to determine the client’s state/needs will be a primary focus.
3. Further supervised practice
4. A “specialized move” (an advanced technique, not necessarily, rather discretionarily blended into a massage, i.e. “the frog”), and it’s proper utilization
- 5, The final week of this program focuses on helping students continue to develop their massage skills, based upon their performance in the evaluations.
6. Individual attention will be given to each student.
7. **Final Curriculum Additions:**
 - a. Pregnancy massage
 - b. Professional ethics and business practices (building a massage business)
 - c. Some students may be asked to re-evaluate.
 - d. An important group process point will be finding an integrated closing, which takes a few days, and should begin at the very latest mid-week. This tends to minimize “post-group depression” and issues that often arise after a group of this length.

Specific areas of focus:

- a. Further supervised full body massage practice
- b. Utilizing proper body mechanics
- c. Draping
- d. Adding more depth and detail, and 1 “specialized move” (e.g. the frog or the spinal twist)
- e. Community massages
- f. Processing of community massage experience, including a discussion of the nuances of the professional setting
- g. Anatomy foot and lower leg, with applications to massage practice and techniques learned
- h. More pathology and contraindications
- i. Final supervised, full-body massage practice sessions, working on areas illuminated through the evaluation process (some students will be asked to do another evaluation session) Assessment re interpersonal safety and communication, fluidity, attention to appropriate detail, stretches, demonstration of the massage material taught. Students will be given a written report.
- j. Pregnancy massage
- k. Professional ethics, and business practices
- l. A detailed explanation of the certification process (30 massage reports; Certification application; Time constraints)

m) Group process exercises designed to help students in beginning the transition out of the group, and back home

IV. Desired Outcomes and Methods of Assessment

The desired outcome of the 175 hr. Esalen Massage Practitioner Certification is to train participants to the level of practitioner status. This entails:

1. Being able to give a professional, full body massage, from receiving clients at one's door, to completing the session, and ushering the client out the door, within 90 minutes
2. Demonstrating knowledge of professional ethics; understanding the fundamental components of building a practice from scratch: Advertising, networking, self-promoting through public presentation, promotional materials (cards, website, written materials).

Methods of assessing students' progress are:

1. Teacher in class supervision
2. Peer assessment through student-to-student feedback
3. Completion of written assignments
 - a. Practice session reports during training
 - b. Essay "What is Esalen Massage?"
 - c. 30 body reports after conclusion of training
4. Evaluation sessions on teachers with feedback.
5. Feedback from community massage sessions
6. Question/answer sessions and group discussion

V. Primary Teaching Methods

This training will be composed of both theoretical as well as practical/experiential elements. Specific methods used:

1. Lecture/demonstration
2. Question/answer, and group discussion
3. Verbal interaction and assessment between faculty and students, as well as peer-to-peer discussion
4. Written assignments with faculty assessment
5. Completion of 30 body reports with faculty assessment

VI. Reference Material

- 1) Trail Guide to the Body, Third Edition
By Andrew Biel, *Books of Discovery-Publisher 2005*
- 2) Atlas of Anatomy
By Schuenke, Schulte, and Schumacher, *Thieme-Publisher 2006*
- 3) Job's Body
By Deane Juhan, *Station Hill-Publisher 1987*

4) Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin
By Ashley Montagu, *Harper and Row-Publisher 1986*

Syllabus for

The 175 Hr. Esalen Massage Certification Program

Course Rationale:

The 175-Hour Professional Certificate in Esalen® Massage Course offers a comprehensive training for students of the healing arts interested in the Esalen approach to healing through touch. We introduce the fundamental and philosophical concepts of Esalen Massage, adding appropriate protocols and detail work as the program progresses. The ability to give a full-body Esalen Massage by the end of this program will be a primary focus.

Main Course Content:

- Ø Understanding the signature *Long Stroke* in Esalen Massage, and its integrating function.
- Ø Learning proper body mechanics, such that gravitational energy rather than muscular energy is the source of our work and professional injuries are minimized.
- Ø Understanding Esalen Massage as a touch-based practice of awareness capable of awakening self-organizing processes in the bodies of our clients, supporting their healing, growth and development.
- Ø Understanding personal and professional boundaries and the importance of boundaries in the field of massage.
- Ø Developing our own practice of self-care, grounding and centering, such that these qualities are transmitted to our clients every time we touch.
- Ø Learning relevant anatomy and physiology.
- Ø Communication skills.
- Ø Long-term case management skills.
- Ø Contra-indications.

Educational Goals:

By the end of this workshop students will have learned:

- Ø To give a full-body Esalen Massage, emphasizing the *Long-Stroke* and its integrating function.
- Ø Methods for *grounding, centering and self-care* through an emphasis on body-mechanics and different movement practices. Our focus on the well-being of the practitioner is designed to support the development of life-practices for each participant leading to professional longevity and personal well-being.
- Ø The integration of these techniques into one's own unique approach to the Esalen style.
- Ø To use subjective, and objective observational skills to assess client's needs, and develop short and long-term treatment plans based upon our assessments.
- Ø To understand contra-indications to treatment.
- Ø To develop appropriate communication skills in dealing with each client's needs as they arise.

Teaching Methods, and Methods of Assessment:

Students will be taught through a combination of lecture, demonstration, direct supervision of techniques taught, while students practice, and class discussion.

Grounding and centering skills will be taught through highly experiential movement practices hatha yoga, tai-chi, qi gung, conscious dance, Feldenkrais, Continuum, and sensory awareness (Charlotte Selver).

Students' progress will be assessed through direct supervision, student and peer feedback, and question/answer sessions.

Recommended Reading:

Job's Body: A Handbook for Bodyworkers _____ Dean Juhan

The Listening Heart
OMB

David Steindl-Rast,

A Natural History of The Senses

Ackerman

Recommended Viewing:

The Esalen Massage DVD -

Esalen Healing Arts Faculty

Touching Essence, Volume I & II

Ellen Watson