Product Overview

Expert health care practitioners devote more time to educating, leaving patients with a clear understanding of their diagnosis and impairments. The result is an enabled, capable, active participant, owning their condition and rehabilitation. At MassageBlocks.com, our goal is to support this vision; empowering individuals to manage their conditions and free therapists’ time and resources to help more clients.

Massage Blocks perform self deep tissue massage or self myofascial release, and are a perfect complement to the expert practitioner’s practice.

Massage Blocks are a well designed, well engineered set of tools for professionals to integrate into therapy sessions, and send home with patients empowering individuals to manage their condition after formal sessions have ended.

**Neck Kit**

Great for performing suboccipital release. Use the Neck Massage Tool by itself to work the upper back and between the shoulder blades. Place the Neck tool in its base to work the mid neck and base of the skull. Now get really serious and use the combined tool to dig deep into sore shoulder muscles.

**Low Back Kit**

Use the Low Back Massage Tool by itself or in pairs. Place it in its base to accommodate thicker carpet pile, varying anatomy or just because it feels right. The Low Back Kit forces the muscles of the low back to relax by leveraging your own body weight to apply pressure to the deep tissue of the lower back.

**Knot Finder Kit**

The Knot Finder tools are designed to relax muscles that are not in close proximity to the spine. These deep tissue massage tools can be used on any part of the body. Great for targeting Periscapular muscles—Rhomboids & Lower Trapezius (between the shoulder blades). Runners - this set is also great for plantar fasciitis and stretching of the mid-foot and ankle. This set includes a Small, Medium and Large Knot Finder.

**Complete Set**

Everything you need to relax hard to reach muscles from the lower back to the upper neck. The Complete Set includes The Neck Kit, The Lower Back Kit & The Knot Finder Kit.

Guidelines for Use

**Intensity**

The intensity of a MassageBlocks.com tool is controlled by the amount of body weight you align above it. Choosing a smaller tool can increase a session’s intensity. Always start with a small amount of body-weight until you know how you will respond. Then, when comfortable with your response, and relaxed, gradually apply more body-weight to the tool.

**Duration**

Initially begin with short 5 minute daily sessions. Gauge your response. If your pain lessens and relief is gained, increase duration to 10 minutes, or consider adding a second session later in the day. Again gauge your muscles response to 10 minutes. If your tightness decreased, then consider increasing to 12 or 15 minutes / day. If 10 minutes caused soreness, reduce to 5 minutes for 1 to 2 days and then progress to 10 as your tolerance increases. It is normal to feel some soreness in the muscles after the first couple MassageBlock.com sessions. While using the MassageBlocks.com tools you should feel pressure and may feel minor soreness, but you should never feel a worsening of pain. Nor should you experience severe pain or any type of symptoms that radiate into your extremities.

**Frequency**

Massage Blocks can be used every day or anytime your muscles feel sore or tight. When beginning with MassageBlocks.com tools start slowly once per day. It is common for deep tissue massage to produce some minor temporary soreness. However, as your muscles learn to relax, your personal tolerance should build. If you are not feeling pain, you can use Massage Blocks several times per day. For best results be consistent and use them often.

**Response**

You should place only enough pressure onto the tool to create an uncomfortable feeling (some may feel the urge to laugh) but it should not produce pain. If you feel yourself tensing, bracing, or tightening up, you are defeating the purpose. The goal is to provide deep pressure into the muscle to get it to relax. If you use too much pressure, the increased tension in the muscle will prevent expected benefits. Redness in the area is considered normal after the session. Be sure to monitor the area the first couple sessions. If bruising appears, wait a couple days and decrease the amount of body weight you are putting into the tools. Following a MassageBlocks.com session with some targeted gentle stretching allows for further relaxation and decreased soreness.

Be sure to read our Product Warning and List of Red Flags.
Guidelines for Use

Session Progression:
In summary, progress slowly. Build up your tolerance by using the Massage Blocks over several days. Start with a shorter duration and less pressure, then progress either the pressure or duration. Do not progress both parameters from one session to the next. Progress duration first, then after you have added 5 minutes without increasing soreness, increase the amount of body weight levered.

Example 7 Day Progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Day 6</th>
<th>Day 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>Low Pressure</td>
<td>Low Pressure</td>
<td>Moderate Pressure</td>
<td>Moderate Pressure</td>
<td>Moderate Pressure</td>
<td>Higher Pressure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>1x/day</td>
<td>1-2x/day</td>
<td>2x/day</td>
<td>2x/day</td>
<td>2x/day</td>
<td>2-3x/day</td>
<td>1-2x/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Clean

Massage Blocks are waterproof, latex free, and easily cleaned with a soft cloth combined with rubbing(isopropyl) alcohol or soap & water.

We do recommend hand cleaning Massage Blocks. DO NOT clean in the dishwasher, or use chemical cleaners.

For small dirt spots/smudges:
Dab a soft cloth (cloth diapers work great!) in the rubbing alcohol. You can do this by placing the cloth over the open top of the alcohol bottle, then pouring a small amount directly onto the cloth.

For bigger cleanup jobs:
The Blocks may be hand washed in the sink using a sponge, soap and warm water; Or simply rubbed down with a cloth and warm, soapy water.

Demonstration: Tension Headaches (Suboccipital Spasm and Tightness)

Muscles Targeted: Suboccipitals; Semispinalis Capitis

Tools Used: Neck Kit

1. Begin by laying on your back with your knees bent.

2. Place the Neck Kit (without base) just above the point where your neck meets the edge of your skull. These are your suboccipitals. The muscles connect the skull with the top two vertebrae of the neck.

3. Use your hands to support the back of your head as you get comfortable with the pressure. Relax and allow the tool to support the weight of your head. Go slowly, as you relax you may gently increase pressure. Do not fight your body’s natural state of relaxation.

4. The first time you use the Neck Kit support the back of your head (with your hands or a strategically placed set of pillows) allowing your muscles to get used to the pressure. This may produce a headache. However, reproduction of your symptoms is not necessarily a bad sign. Modern pressure therapy understands that this can be a sign that you are targeting the correct soft tissue.

If you do experience a reproduction of your symptoms, stop using the tools until your symptoms abate. In your next session reduce the pressure and duration. Reproduction of tension type pain at the base or back of your skull can be expected when starting treatment. As muscles relax, the tension should dissipate. With consistent use, you should notice a reduction in your symptoms.

5. To increase the pressure add the Neck Kit’s base.

Remember: Massage Blocks are intended to be used on the soft tissues surrounding your spine and never directly over your spinous process (bony points down the center of your spine).

Be sure to read our Product Warning and List of Red Flags
Demonstration: Low Back Muscle Tension

Muscles Targeted: Multifidus, Erector Spinae
Tools Used: Low Back Kit

To perform this method you will need to lay on your back with your knees bent and your hips slightly lifted off the floor. If you are not comfortable performing this position or if you feel this may cause too much discomfort you can try the same method standing, placing the Block against a wall, and leaning back against the Block.

1. Begin by laying on your back with knees bent.

2. Hold the Low Back Kit (without it’s base) as indicated to the right.

3. Lift your hips off the floor, so as to create enough space to slide the Low Back Kit into place.

4. Place the Low Back Kit at the base of your spine so that the valley straddles the spine.

   **Remember:** Massage Blocks are intended to be used on the soft tissues surrounding your spine and never directly over your spinous process (bony points down the center of your spine).

5. As you place your hands below your hips you should be able to support your weight. You may also use your arms and feet to lift your weight from the floor to reduce the pressure until you become comfortable with the sensation. Go slowly. As you relax, you may slowly increase pressure.
   - You may gently rock your pelvis forward or backward to increase or decrease the pressure and target specific areas.
   - Slowly rock your knees side to side a few inches (5 cm) to help isolate and relax the muscles of your lower back.

   **It is important that you relax while in this position, focus on taking deep breaths and exhaling completely.**

   **Be sure to read our Product Warning and List of Red Flags**

Demonstration: Mid-Shoulder Muscle Tension

Muscles Targeted: Middle Trapezius, Rhomboids, Thoracic Paraspinals
Tools Used: Knot Finder

1. Begin by laying flat on an open floor.

2. Rotate the shoulder of interest away from the floor, allowing space to place the Massage Block.

3. Align the Knot Finder of your choice between your spine and shoulder blade.

   **Remember:** Massage Blocks are intended to be used on the soft tissues surrounding your spine and never directly over your spinous process (bony points down the center of your spine).

4. Targeting tight or sore muscles, gradually rotate your shoulder back against the Knot Finder, slowly increasing the amount of pressure applied by the tool.

   It is important that you relax while in this position, focus on taking deep breaths and exhaling completely.

5. Gently rotate or twist your torso while leaning into the tool to target specific areas of need.

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Demonstration: Neck and Upper Trapezius (Sitting)

**Muscles Targeted:** Levator Scapulae, Upper Trapezius

**Tools Used:** Neck Kit

1. Begin by sitting in a high back chair.

2. Place the neck kit (with or without it's base) in the mid back region between the shoulder blades so that the two points straddle your spine.

   The Neck Kit’s valley is designed to avoid applying pressure directly to the spinous process (bony structure of your spine). Never place the point of a Massage Block directly below your spine.

3. Lean back with your feet flat on the floor. Slowly apply pressure to your Upper Trapezius.

4. Lean or Rotate your shoulders to either side targeting muscle tension and knots. Work one side for a set period (e.g. 1 – 2 mins), and then work the other for the same period. More details on product use, including recommendations on Intensity, Duration, Frequency and Response can be found in our Guidelines for Use.

5. Position the neck kit so that the two points straddle the mid neck region (not pictured). Use your hands to gently stretch your neck side-to-side. Gently bring one ear toward the shoulder. Relax as you get comfortable with the pressure. Go slowly. As you relax, you may slowly increase pressure.

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**Demonstration: Upper Trapezius Pain**

**Muscles Targeted:** Upper Trapezius

**Tools Used:** Neck Kit

1. Begin by laying on the floor with your knees bent.

2. Turn the Neck Kit 90° so that both points are align in the same direction as your spine. Position the Neck Kit on the floor, so that the bottom point is just above the top inside corner of the shoulder blade.

   Remember: Massage Blocks are intended to be used on the soft tissues surrounding your spine and never directly over your spinous process (bony points down the center of your spine).

3. Start with the majority of your weight on the floor (the side of the back not in contact with the Block). Gradually lean into the tool, placing more of your body weight into the Block, increasing pressure. Go slowly. As you relax you may slowly increase pressure.

4. To add a stretch to your session: Place your hands behind your head to support your head’s weight. Gently move your head side to side, or lift your head away from the ground / move your chin towards your sternum.

5. To add pressure, use the base.

Be sure to read our Product Warning and List of Red Flags
Demonstration: Upper Trapezius Pain & Neck Pain

Muscles Targeted: Levator Scapulae, Upper Trapezius
Tools Used: Neck Kit

1. Begin by laying on the floor with your knees bent.

2. Position the neck kit (without base), on the floor, so that when you lay back, the Block’s two points straddle your spine. You are targeting the muscles between your shoulder blades. Lean back with your feet flat on the floor. Slowly apply pressure to your Upper Trapezius.

   The Neck Kit’s valley is designed to avoid applying pressure directly to the bony structure of your spine. Never place the point of a Massage Block directly below your spine.

3. Now, position the neck kit (with base) so that the two points straddle the mid neck region. Support your head and neck by placing your hands behind your head.

4. Gently relax and allow the force of gravity to apply pressure to the Levator Scapulae.

5. You may rock or lean side to side to gently target specific tight areas.

6. To add a stretch to your session, gently lift the back of your head or move your head side to side.

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Product Warning and List of Red Flags
Always use Massage Blocks as directed and at your own risk.

Stop using Massage Blocks and consult a medical professional if you have:

- increasing pain or a worsening of symptoms, if your pain worsens with time.
- any form of sharp, hot/burning pain or pain which seems to radiate into an extremity.
- new pain and a previous history of cancer.
- pain that increases with rest.
- experienced major trauma (e.g. a significant fall, direct blunt trauma to spine, high velocity injury as in a motor vehicle accident).
- experienced a recent significant trauma which produced pain (e.g. fall, hit by baseball, cycling accident).
- osteoporosis or you have taken medications to increase your bone mass
- had a recent surgery.
- taken corticosteroids for a long period.
- pain which awakens you or affects your sleep.
- weight loss without dieting or unexplained weight loss.
- persistent fever or chills.
- progressive weakness or sensory changes throughout lower extremity.
- recent changes in bowel or bladder Irregularities (incontinence, urinary retention, constipation).
- a loss of sensation or altered sensation throughout inner thighs and groin region (saddle area).

While using Massage Blocks you should feel some pressure and may feel minor soreness, but you should never feel a worsening of pain. Nor should you experience severe pain or any symptoms that radiate into your extremities. If these things happen, stop using Massage Blocks and see a medical professional.

Minor skin redness in the area of focus is expected, be sure to monitor the area for the first couple sessions. If bruising appears the following day wait a couple days and then decrease the amount of body-weight you are putting into the tool. Targeted gentle stretching after a Massage Blocks session allows for further relaxation and decreased soreness. If you have persistent bruising see a medical professional.

This product has not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to treat or cure any disease.

Please see our on-line Knowledge Base for information on how to use the products.
Recommended Reading

For the Professional:
Travell & Simons’ - Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction
   The Trigger Point Manual
   By David G. Simons, MD Janet G. Travell, MD & Lois S. Simons, PT

For the Individual:
The Trigger Point Therapy Workbook:
   Your Self-Treatment Guide for Pain Relief
   By Clair Davies, NCTMB, Amber Davies, NCTMB, David G. Simons, MD

See also a set of introductory demonstrations in our Knowledge Base.