



# What Would You Do?

## Chapter 3

an online resource  
created to accompany

### ***Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy:***

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**this resource links to:**

**Chapter 3, pages 86 & 92**





## What Would You Do?

### Chapter 3

[from page 86]

*Your 38-week pregnant client comes into your office breathing heavily, red-faced, and sweaty from the 90-degree heat outside. You notice that her feet and ankles are very swollen, but all else seems normal with her pregnancy. When you return to the room, she's on the table, wearing only her underpants; all supports except her head pillow and the cover sheet are pushed aside. She comments gratefully about cooling off. How will you handle positioning and draping this client for her session?*

Below is one possible response:

First, I would acknowledge how hot she is and offer her a cool washcloth and a drink of water. I would reduce the room temperature via fan or thermostat if possible. Then I would explain to her the safety and comfort reasons that make it important that we use the supports that I placed on the table before she got on. I would reassure her that I will change to my coolest sheets and pillowcases, and that we can keep her lower legs and feet uncovered throughout the session. We could also use just a breast drape so that her belly would be uncovered too.

If she is now amenable, I would position her properly on her side with the sheets draped as promised. With a refreshed washcloth in place on her neck or forehead, I would begin with gentle relaxation and passive movements and help her to slow her breathing down, settle in and get comfortable. I would check in with her throughout to see how she feels



and if she wants a refreshed washcloth or more water, particularly when we change from one side to the other.



[from page 92]

*Fifteen minutes or so into a session, you feel your back and neck tiring and beginning to ache. You realize that your client's upper body, where you need to work, is not lined up with the back of the table; instead, it is at an angle so that you need to reach far in order to work on her mid-back. Your client seems to be almost asleep. What measures can you take to attend to your body mechanics with the minimum disturbance to your client?*

Below is one possible response:

I have learned over the years that it is better for both my client and me if I pay close attention to positioning and make the necessary adjustments before I start my work. Getting my client close to the edge of the table before I get all the supports in place and she settles in is the first step. If I forget to ask her to move back or she moves during the massage, I softly check in with her verbally to see how she is doing. I would then tell her I can do better work if she shifts back toward me. After doing so, I fine-tune my support system as well. It usually won't take long for her to doze off again, and, in the end, we are both more likely to be pain-free. Another option, if it truly relieves my back strain, is to work from the front side of the table, modifying my work for this more unusual position.

In addition, I need to check in with myself, to see if I am working from my legs; bending at the hip joint, not the waist; aligning my lower belly behind my working tool; and all of the other checkpoints I use to ensure I am using my body effectively. One or more of these factors might be more the source of my achy back and neck than her position on the table.