

POPSUGAR.

I Got the Brazilian Lymphatic Massage Jennifer Aniston Swears By

Jessica Ourisman | August 19, 2022



Image Source: Getty / leezsnow

In an act of synchronicity that I think of as beauty fate, I was offered a Brazilian lymphatic massage, a detoxifying and contouring treatment that had been on my bucket list for months, with celebrity massage therapist Josie Rushing. Rushing — the founder of Brazilious and beloved by stars like Emma Chamberlin, Sophia Bush, Lili Reinhart, and Whitney Port — is based out of Texas but flies to Los Angeles once a month for her celebrity clients. So when a spot opened up in her schedule, I leaped at the opportunity.

"Lymphatic massages are a gentle way of stimulating or encouraging the natural movement of lymph fluid in our body, which carries waste fluid away from tissues," Los Angeles-based board-certified plastic surgeon **Kimberly Lee** says. While famous for its body-contouring effects, I was most excited for the detox. Though the body is designed to self-cleanse, this form of massage

gently encourages the body's natural process by guiding stagnant lymph fluid along the pathway between the nodes.

I like to keep detox in mind for many reasons. As naturopathic doctor Nadia Musavvir points out, we live in a world with far more toxins than the environments we evolved from. My doctor, Kelly McCann MD, MPH, TM, also informed me that I have the relatively common MTHFR genetic mutation that adversely impacts methylation — and thus things like estrogen metabolism, neurotransmitter production, and, you guessed it, detoxification. For months, I had also been exposed to toxic mold that requires a special regimen of binders, supplements, and sessions in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber.

When I fell off my mold-detoxing protocol, I began experiencing clogged pores along my upper neck and jawline that facialist Sora Connor told me looked lymph related and that a full-body lymphatic treatment would be most effective at addressing the underlying cause. This is what set the scene for my early morning massage with Rushing at The Peninsula Beverly Hills.

What Happens During a Brazilian Lymphatic Massage?

I arrived for my massage feeling mildly bloated due to PMS and the aftereffects of dinners and cocktails over the course of the previous month. I knew that this form of massage would be different than the others I have had, with lighter strokes as opposed to deep muscle work. "This form of massage has been popular in Brazil since I was a kid," Rushing says. "I think the first one I ever had was when I was just 12 years old. I would say it's the number-one beauty secret of Brazilian women, right beside the Brazilian wax and Brazilian blowouts."

Unlike a typical massage where you get underneath a sheet on a bed, Rushing had me undress and lie face up on the table with two small towels to cover my chest and groin. I was deeply relaxed throughout and lost all sense of time with a vague awareness of music playing and her essential-oil-infused massage lotion. She massaged my arms, legs, and belly, even having me take deep breaths at certain points of the massage, which helps to propel the lymph fluid in conjunction with the technique.

How Does a Brazilian Lymphatic Massage Work?

"Brazilian lymphatic works on three distinct levels: inside, outside, and with relaxation," Rushing says. "It targets all these tissues with one session only, and sessions are customized to meet each client's body type, issues, and needs." Ideally, you would be able to get a lymphatic massage weekly, but a more realistic aim would be for once a month. Some lymphatic massages use tools like wooden paddles to help the lymph along the pathway, but Rushing's Brazilian technique favors her hands, which she says are the most efficient.

Before getting started, we took pictures so I could see the before and after results. After she massaged both my front and back sides for about an hour, she took my "after" pictures — and the results definitely wowed me. She said that my results would last for about a week but that over time, regular clients tend to experience a compounded effect. When I put on my pants, they actually felt looser. I also immediately had to go pee, which she said was a normal indication that the lymphatic flushing had begun. She then gave me a giant bottle of water to drink, and I felt extra thirsty over the next few days.

Before and After Getting a Brazilian Lymphatic Massage

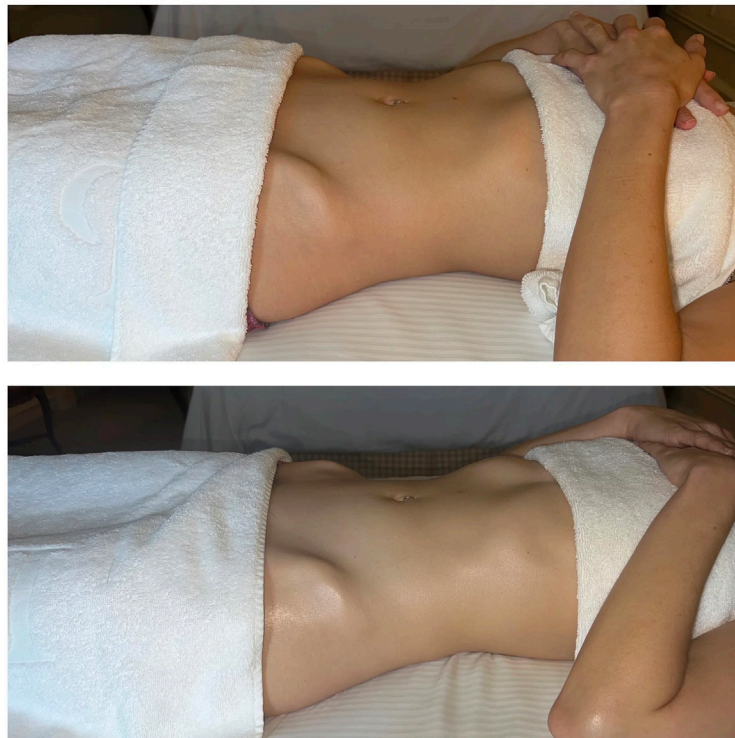


Image Source: Josie Rushing

With visible results immediately noticeable, I needed to know more. So I reached out to the Beverly Hills-based Rahi Sarbaziha, an integrative medical doctor specializing in aesthetics. She says that the lymphatic system plays multiple roles, the most important of which is optimizing the immune system to fight off infection and foreign pathogens in the body. It also impacts the appearance of "swelling" because it absorbs fluid that has leaked from blood vessels into the tissue, as well as larger molecules like fat and hormones that cannot be taken in by the capillaries.

Lymph fluid can easily become stagnant on its journey between the nodes. "[This is because] unlike the cardiovascular system, which is propelled by the heart, the lymphatic system does not have a pump pushing the fluid through," Dr. Sarbaziha says. "It works on a gradient, which means that it moves slower and is prone to stagnation. Lymphatic massage is a great way to push the system forward for optimal function." Thus, the challenge is finding ways to keep sluggish lymph stimulated.

What Are the Benefits of a Brazilian Lymphatic Massage?

Put simply, Dr. Sarbaziha says that your lymphatic system helps to flush your system of toxins and waste — ideally, four to five liters per day. This bolsters your immune system while simultaneously affording a more svelte physique. Yet the practice can be particularly beneficial in a few different instances. "Anyone who feels they have fluid buildup or swelling, who is healing from an infection, or feels fatigued and sluggish [can benefit]," she says. "Or even if you overate and drank alcohol, or feel stressed in the body."

Board-certified celebrity plastic surgeon Ben Talei is also a huge fan of lymphatic drainage massage — whether for a postop patient or simply an allergy sufferer. It is popular post surgery with the clearance of your surgeon. "I love referring my patients for lymphatic massage after surgery," Dr. Talei says. "It's helpful to aid the body by manually massaging out the fluid that collects in the face and body following surgery."

Dr. Talei adds that surgical procedures dismantle the body's innate "drainage" system by severing lymph, which takes months to heal. During this time, excess swelling occurs that can hinder healing and put pressure on sutures. Because lymphatic massage therapists are familiar with the body's natural drainage patterns, he says they are able to use specific techniques to send fluid buildup back into the drainage pathway to drastically reduce swelling. "Less swelling means faster healing and, in some cases, means less scarring [thanks to] decreasing tension around incisions," he says.

Is a Brazilian Lymphatic Massage Worth It?

I definitely think the treatment is worth trying. I have noticed an improvement in my clogged pores on my jawline and upper neck and felt sculpted (and parched) for the week after. It also seems like the perfect type of treatment before or during a vacation you plan to spend poolside. Personally, I cannot wait for my next one.

But don't just take my word for it; the experts I consulted with also unanimously agree that it is worth it. "If you have access to someone who can provide you with lymphatic drainage massage, then I would invest in this service," Dr. Sarbaziha says. If you don't, don't worry —

there are self-massage techniques you can learn from a copy of "The Book of Lymph" by the celebrity-beloved lymphedema expert and massage therapist Lisa Levitt Gainsley. For self-performed lymphatic massage of the face, you can look to facial tools like gua sha or vibrating sculpting bars.

If you do invest in massage or simply want to jumpstart your personal detox journey, Dr. Sarbaziha recommends things like daily green tea, weekly sauna or steam-room sessions, and personalized supplements. And don't forget that moving your body and working out also help to keep lymph moving. These are just a few ways to get the most of your lymphatic detox that can be easily worked into your lifestyle.

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