

Expanding Your Ability to Palpate
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Canine palpation is an art and gets easier with experience. While experienced massage therapists may already know this knowledge, those newer to the massage industry will quickly learn that palpating muscle tissue is not as easy as it seems. Below are a few examples of exercises that will help expand your ability to palpate the canine.

Paper and Hair & Towel and Rice:

An exercise to learn palpation is to take a hair and place it under a page of a textbook without seeing where you placed it. With your eyes closed, palpate for the hair until you find it and can trace its shape under the page. Next, try to find it under two pages and palpate to locate and trace it. Continue to increase the number of pages placed over the hair until you cannot find it. If this exercise is repeated, the number of pages under which you can locate and trace the hair will gradually increase, and your sensitivity will improve. If that is a little too difficult, you can also start with using a towel and rice - place rice pieces in the towel, with eyes closed and palpate until you feel all the rice. You can also add another layer of towels, similar to the paper and hair exercise. Once you feel comfortable, move back to the paper and hair to expand your ability to palpate.

Intuition:

Another exercise is using internal palpate techniques According to PetMassage Manual, the best ways to do this are, sensing thought core intuition, yielding and redirection of sensed forces (feeling movement in tissues). Watch your reaction of the canine and the canine's reaction to your touch, being empathic to the canine. Furthermore, the canine also does their own palpation by the experience of your touch.

Take it to the next level by practicing on a canine. For skin and superficial fascia - lightly stretch the top layer of skin in one direction without compressing or sliding it. Release and sense how it comes back into place. Then press skin into the superficial fascia - feels thick, spongy and springy. Next, gently explore kneading this layer, lift and roll the skin and superficial fascia in several areas, noticing the differences in their thickness. Now try the muscle tissue - explore tracing the different muscles. Then, follow along the fibers from one end of a limb to the other and contrast palpating muscles along and across the fibers.

In the end, practicing these exercises frequently will elevate your knowledge and expertise of canine palpation. It will give you a greater appreciation for the art and science behind your ability to palpate.