



Susun S. Weed, Author of

Breast Cancer? Breast Health! the Wise Woman Way

"Here is the information and spirit that that our hearts and breasts have needed for a very long time." - Christiane Northrup, M.D.

This website is a virtual journey through *Breast Cancer? Breast Health! the Wise Woman Way* by Susun S. Weed. This invaluable book is for women who want to maintain breast health and for women diagnosed with breast cancer. This information is shared with understanding that you accept complete responsibility for your own health and well-being. Explore and enjoy!



BREAST SELF-MASSAGE

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Breast self-massage is simple.
Breast self-massage is pleasurable.
Breast self-massage helps prevent cancer as well as detect it.
Breast self-massage helps keep breast skin supple.
Breast self-massage adds resiliency to breast tissue.
Breast self-massage is a way to be intimate with your breasts.
Breast self-massage is a piece of women's wisdom.
Breast self-massage is safe.
Breast self-massage is free.

Many of the women I've talked with say they don't do breast self-exams, though most think they ought to. No one wants to look for (or, heaven forbid, find!) cancer. We've been trained to avoid danger, and looking for cancer sounds like looking for trouble. Our bodies are influenced by what we think, so how can it be safe to spend time every month doing a breast self-exam, worrying if we're about to find a lump? But we feel guilty when we don't.

And what are we supposed to feel when we touch our breasts anyway? They feel full of lumps! Most of us aren't sure how to touch or examine our breasts or what we'd do if we did feel something truly suspicious. Our guilt and confusion make it all even more complex.

Breast self-massage offers a way to let go of this tension and get in touch with yourself. This soothing, nurturing self-massage is a pleasurable and relaxing way to get to know your breasts. It avoids the worry of checking for cancer, while providing an excellent early-warning system should cancer arise. Regular, loving touching of our breasts allows us to recognize normal breast changes without fear, and gives us time to respond thoughtfully to abnormal changes. Breast self-massage is also a

quiet, focused time that allows the Wise Healer Within (see page 83) to alert us to any changes that require our attention.

Infused (not essential) herbal oils are an important element of breast self-massage. When herbs are infused into oil, active plant components are liberated and can be massaged into breast tissue— where they help reverse abnormal cellular changes such as hyperplasia, atypia, precancers, and in situ cancers. It's fast and fun to make your own infused oils (see page 297), or you can buy them (see page 75). But if you don't have any, plain olive oil works fine.

If you already know breast self-exam techniques, let them inform your fingertips during your breast self-massage. If this is all new to you, take a few months to learn about your breasts with self-massage before doing breast self-exam. They complement each other: Let the pleasure of the massage infuse the exam, and let the effectiveness of the exam inform the massage.

When should I do my breast self-massage?

Now. Anytime. All the time. Sure, your breasts are less lumpy at some times of the month. But you can do breast self-massage whenever you want, even if you're lumpy. If the best time for you to pay attention to yourself is when you bleed, because that's when you take time to be alone, then that's the time to do breast self-massage. You could do it every week and get to know how your breasts change with your cycle and with the moon, but most likely you'll do it every month. I like to do my breast self-massage when the moon is new.

How do I do breast self-massage?

First, make or buy some infused herbal oils or ointments. You'll want several, as each offers unique benefits.

Then, create a comfortable, private place where you can lean back: in a warm bath or propped up with cushions in bed. (Protect linens and clothing from oil stains.) Arrange yourself there, bare-breasted, with your infused herbal oils close at hand.

Let your eyelids fall. Put your hands over your heart and hum. Cup your breasts with your hands and hum. Imagine or visualize energy streaming out of your nipples. Allow your breasts and heart to open and flow as you hum.

Open your eyes. Transfer some herbal oil or ointment to your palms. Rub your hands together briskly until they feel warm. Place them on either side of one breast and hum.

Cup your fingers alongside or under your breast, thumbs touching and up as high on the chest as possible. (If your breasts are very large, rest the right breast in the right palm and massage with the left thumb, starting in the armpit and moving toward the center of the chest.) Press in and slide your thumbs down toward the nipple, pressing the breast tissue into your fingers and palms. Stretch your thumbs up toward the collarbone again, but slightly farther apart, press in and slide down.

Continue until your thumbs are as far apart as possible (the middle of your chest and your armpit). Repeat, gradually increasing pressure, but only as long as it feels good. Caution: There is a slight possibility of spreading breast cancer through vigorous massage, rough handling, or very deep pressure.

Transfer more oil or ointment to your palms and rub your hands together. Cup your breast as before, thumbs up and touching. Hum. Repeat the previous pattern, but break up the stroke: Instead of a long, slow, smooth stroke, use your thumbs to make

a lot of overlapping short strokes, gradually moving down the chest. Try various degrees of pressure.

Raise the arm of the breast you're massaging, and put your hand behind you or on your head. If your breast leans to the outside, prop a pillow under that shoulder or lean over. Cover your breast with your free hand and hum.

Dip your fingers into your oil or ointment and, starting in your armpit, press the fingerpads of your first two or three fingers down with enough pressure to hold the skin, and make a small circle. Don't let your fingers slide over the skin. Keep making

little circles (with enough pressure to feel the underlying structures) as you trace an imaginary spiral from your armpit around and around your breast, growing ever smaller until you reach your nipple. (If it is difficult or impossible for you to use your fingerpads, use your palm.) Cover your breast with your hand and hum.

Curl your fingers into your armpit and gently grasp the ridge of lymph-rich tissues and muscles that extend from the shoulder down into the breast. Move up and down this ridge several times, using small squeezes or long glides or little spirals or your own strokes.

As you touch your breasts, imagine or visualize your fingertips emitting healing pink sparkles that embrace and nourish your breasts. Let your fingerpads sink deeply into your breasts. Allow any held distress to be soothed by the balm of the infused herbal oil/ointment. Let overactive energy be calmed by the rhythm of your fingers circling, circling, spiraling, spiraling.

Apply more oil or ointment with your fingerpads, making large gliding circles from midchest to under your breast, up toward the armpit and over and around, again, and again, with a steady rhythm.

When you're done massaging your breast, close your eyes and relax. Hum. Call to your Wise Healer Within as you hum.

Massage your other breast, starting from the beginning: Put your hands over your heart. Hum. Cup your breasts. Hum. (Is there a difference between the breast that has already been massaged and the one that hasn't yet?) Rub your oily hands briskly together; hold either side of your breast and hum. Extend your thumbs and massage as before, including all of the previous strokes and ending with your eyes closed, relaxing deeply and allowing yourself to contact and listen to your Wise Healer Within.

Afterwards . . .

After your breast self-massage, take a moment to record your experience. This will help you learn more quickly what's normal for you. You can draw a map of your breasts to help you remember what you've felt. Try using colors. Write down any messages offered to you by your breasts or your Wise Healer Within. If you like, make up a little song to hum during your massage. The keynote in breast self-massage is pleasure.

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