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# Planet Bliss

Meet Sally Morris, the massage therapist with the rejuvenating touch, whose backstage On The Spot team promotes the well-being of artists and crew alike

**T**hanks to many 1970s adult films that invariably matched a moustachioed plumber with a lonely housewife, to the strains of a glockenspiel soundtrack, the subject of massage may conjure up unsavoury thoughts. Fortunately, that has all changed and alternative therapies now form a much needed aspect of relaxation for many who work on the road.



Massage therapist Sally Morris is a firm believer in the many positive benefits of not only massage itself but also of the whole complementary therapy genre. Through her business, On The Spot, she and her team have been dishing out stress-free and tranquil therapeutic sessions in backstage situations around the world for several years.





"At On The Spot we work with both the artists and crew," insists Sally. "My passion lies in helping the people who work hard within the touring industry. I don't mind who I work with; it's not about the glamour for me, but the chance to help someone deal with their problems."

This open and honest approach has seen Morris and her team gain respect, and many accolades within live entertainment. Artists such as James Smith of Foals and Biffy Clyro's James Johnson have become regular clients, with nothing but words of praise for the therapists' magic hands.

"The great thing is that when the client is sitting or lying down for their massage there are no egos, whoever it is that may be in the hands, literally, of someone else. After the session, they feel more relaxed, less stressed and grateful," Morris explains.

"Many artists have said to me over the years, 'you have saved my career,' and it's really nice to have that kind of

feedback. As part of our service, we also give the client a lot of advice about how to look after themselves on a day-to-day basis."

Taking an holistic approach means that it's not just the physical aspects that get addressed, but also the whole mental, emotional and spiritual side of things. Adapting every treatment to suit the personal needs of each client makes the experience far more intimate and productive.

"When we first meet a client, we will sit down and talk to them to find out about their lifestyle, diet, the type of work they do and any recurring pains or health issues. The stresses and strains on the body will be very different for someone who is a lighting operator, compared to a rigger or production manager, because of the different ways they are using their bodies for their work. This information gives us a good idea of how to make sure the session provides the maximum benefit."

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## QUALIFIED

The team that Morris has assembled around her is undoubtedly of the highest quality. Most are qualified instructors and Morris herself is a respected teacher of several techniques. Her main area of speciality is the art of Myofascial Release, a specialised physical and manual therapy used for the effective treatment and rehabilitation of soft tissue, and fascial tension and restrictions.

"One thing we look at before the client gets in the chair or on the couch is their posture which tells us where the restrictions are," says Sally. "They might have a pain in their calf, but it is being generated from their lower back. Quite often, the pain is not where the physical problem is, and the two are not always related."

Another important aspect of the session is the time the client has available – their visit is usually taken during a break in their working day on-site. That they may also be going straight back to work after the session is another factor that requires consideration and Sally explains: "If their job involves a high level of alertness, then we can't get them too relaxed. We will start by getting them as relaxed as possible for a short space of time, then finish off with something a bit more vigorous which will make sure that by the end of the session they are alert and focused."

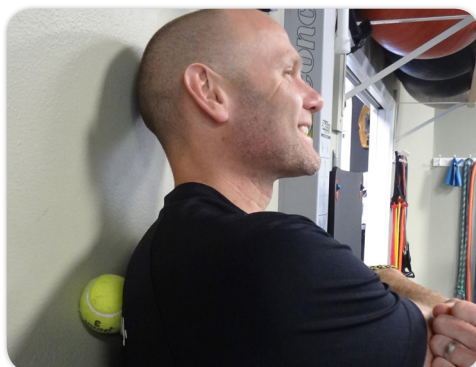


## AFTER CARE

Once a session with On The Spot ends, the after care continues with some advice on how to take care of yourself with, for instance, the aid of a tennis ball. "It's one of the easiest things to carry in your luggage, and if you do take one with you, you effectively have a massage therapist with you at all times," comments Sally, who is based in Essex.

"While you are in your hotel room, place the ball between your back and the wall or floor, and move up and down, this helps to stretch your spine and your back, reducing tension and muscle tightness. It also helps to put





pressure on any trigger points that are particularly sensitive and related to the pain in another part of your body. If you have a headache, it will often be the result of a tight muscle elsewhere in the body, normally the shoulders. Once you apply pressure to the trigger point, it breaks the connection to the pain."

In the modern world of touring, it is not just the guys and girls out on the venue floor that can suffer because of their job; the team in the production office, sitting hunched over a

laptop for hours at a time, can also develop problems.

The shoulders stay in a rounded position for a long period and the back becomes curved in a downward direction, resulting in a head forward posture. Gravity then comes into play and the head moves further forward to the extent that it restricts easy movement of your arms or your head itself. Over time, this can lead to detrimental physical problems.

Sally says: "Sometimes it feels like we are detectives when a client comes to us on the road. We only have a short space of time to identify the problem and to offer a solution. My team has years of experience and along with that comes the gift of intuition which we rely on to help us pinpoint not only the physical problem but also the best course of treatment."

Having experienced an on-tour massage, I understand not only the passion that Ms. Morris obviously has for what she does but also the amazing feeling of contentment and relaxation that follows the session. Sitting in the production office at Wembley Arena, feeling so relaxed that I couldn't move, I remembered On The Spot's mantra, "Freeing bodies, opening hearts, widening smiles," and can confirm that it's absolutely true.

Photography by Fredi Brinkworth & Sally Morris

**Sally Morris returns in our next issue with the first part of her exclusive Load-In series on self-healing techniques**

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