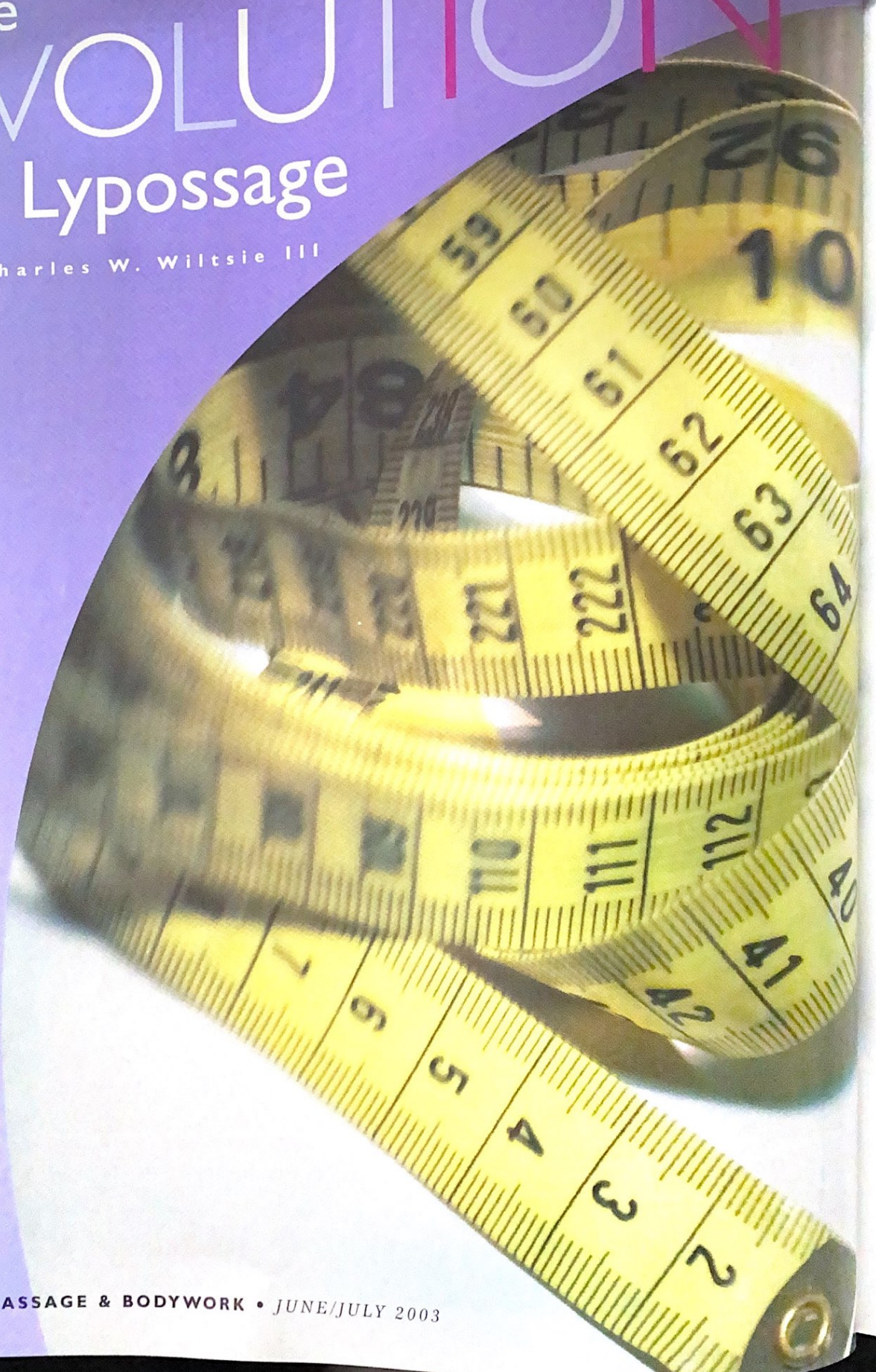
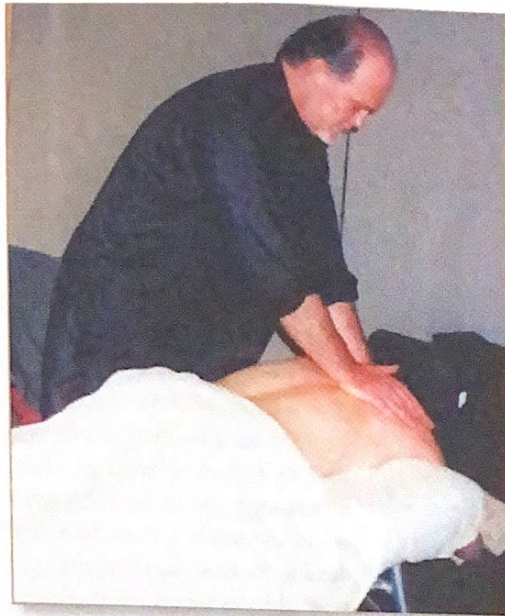


# The EVOLUTION of Lypossage

By Charles W. Wiltsie III



I was teaching a class from my Connecticut-based business when jets pierced the heart of New York on Sept. 11, 2001. Every challenge I had faced until then in developing my modality, Lypossage, seemed small by comparison to the tragic event. Following is the process through which I worked to make the business a reality and how, still to this day, that disastrous September morning affects myself and many others in this industry.



Charles Wiltsie didn't realize he was developing a modality when the Lypossage research started.

From the germ of an idea in 1998, Lypossage is now an internationally known name and massage therapy modality with more than a half dozen trainers, and practitioners that number more than 1,000, in the United States, Canada and Australia.

The February/March 1999 issue of *Massage & Bodywork* included an article about my research, "Deep Tissue Massage: Does Massage Therapy Have An Impact on Body Dimensions in the Hips and Thighs of Women?" I did this study because I was curious about whether or not complex physical therapy (CPT) for lymphoedema would work on healthy women. In other words, would a protocol similar to CPT help a healthy woman lose dimension without losing weight? I also wanted to use this opportunity to draw positive attention to massage therapy and encourage others to do research. I felt that any solid research, even if challenged, would be good for massage therapy. This investigation might add to the rising prestige of the profession as a legitimate, integrated part of the health services landscape.

### The Study

A group of 100 women, ages 35 to 50, were selected for the study based on their healthy lifestyle habits, meaning they could not be obese or sedentary. Women who had given birth within three years of the study and those with contraindications to deep tissue massage were excluded. Each woman committed to 20 minutes of deep tissue massage, three times a week for six weeks.

Target areas were five points between the lower trunk and mid to upper thighs. These parts of the body were chosen because of their relationship to waste elimination. In other words, these parts have a lot of fatty tissue, channels and nodes, and visceral organs that eliminate waste. In addition, they also contain some of the largest muscles in the body. Any effect on the muscle tone in these parts of the body can be clearly measured as can the effects on the elimination of waste from the organs and the other tissue in these parts.

Every fourth session, the targeted areas were photographed using front, right side, back and left side views of the specific areas. The study participants were weighed and measured at each session.

Weigh-in at each session was the control factor. If the study participant's weight fluctuated by more than one half to one pound, the contributing causes were documented. Also, the participant noted when she had her menstrual cycle or any other physical event, such as diarrhea or constipation, that could impact a weight change.

The massage techniques used in the study protocol were tapotment, deep kneading, skin rolling and effleurage, so chosen because they improve muscle tone, stimulate circulation and affect the lymphatic system. These techniques were utilized at specific times during the study period and applied in the same manner to each study participant.

### Results

The results of the study are considered significant, although there are some limitations to be discussed. First, these results are averages. The changes noted for some of these women ranged from more significant than average to less significant. Second, 5 percent of the study participants actually went up in dimension. It should also be noted that for the purposes of this report, I have rounded the numbers up to the nearest inch. Third, the study did not provide documentation regarding variation of age groups and there was no follow-up done after the study period. However, each study participant maintained her weight for the duration of the study.

I concluded that 86 percent of the women lost dimension without losing weight. Specifically, the women lost about 5 inches in five target areas between the navel and the mid-thigh.



In 1998 Charles Wiltsie studied 100 women undergoing his deep tissue modality. They were measured over a period of six weeks.

Photos by Lorette Klier.

The response to these results was amazing. I had more than 1,000 queries from all over the globe asking what this new modality was called, where the treatment could be received and where classes are held if one wanted to learn how to do it.

I was floored by the amount of attention, but I did not have any interest in creating a new protocol. In fact, I had just completed my research in late 1998, having worked on 100 women over one year's time. The research was also at my expense, and I was exhausted. I had accomplished my goal: A paper was published on an interesting topic. At the same time, I was torn. Once I began responding to inquiries from people inside the spa industry, I began to see the commercial application of my research. After a few months of brainstorming, and with the help of some prominent people inside the spa industry, I finally named my protocol and began the process of writing manuals and procedures.

### The Beginning

Lypossage really came into being after the research was published. Peggy Wynne Borgman, owner of Preston Wynne Spa in Saratoga, Calif., was one of the first 1,000 who responded. There were other inquiries from companies such as Aveda and Elizabeth Arden, but Borgman seemed the most genuine, affable, knowledgeable and straightforward. After several e-mail correspondences

and telephone conversations, she suggested I create a marketable "body contouring" program for the day spa industry. She also interviewed me for her book *Four Seasons of Inner and Outer Beauty, Rituals and Recipes for Well-Being Throughout the Year*. Her chapter on body contouring was almost exclusively about Lypossage.

Borgman is a prominent figure in the day spa world. She's the founder of an award-winning spa and is active nationally, through consulting, trade organizations and writing for trade magazines. This new contact encouraged me to begin the process of creating a company whose core would be anti-aging and body contouring — something I didn't know about before I met her. One of the best pieces of advice she gave me was to go to as many spa industry trade shows as possible and read every trade journal I could find about the spa business. She suggested I do this right away. In a sense, I gave myself an intensive crash course on the subjects of body and skin care as well as body contouring. Because I was a massage therapist who was entrenched in the health services market, I knew very little about the personal care business. In fact, my general feeling, at the time, was like many massage therapists: I thought people who worked in the spa industry were subordinate to those who practiced in health services. Part of my self-education helped me re-think my prejudices.

The first trade show I attended was the beginning of my love for the personal care business. It was a convention in Atlantic City, N.J. I had attended and was familiar with massage therapy conventions, most of which were small with an emphasis on health and the "body, mind, spirit connection," carrying strong esoteric undertones. I was not prepared for the spectacle of an Atlantic City spa show.

The first thing I noticed was the booth where the massage therapists were working. It was full of highly energetic practitioners, dressed up with a kind of "techno-trance" music playing as they worked, laughing and having fun. This was a type of therapist I had never seen before. They had the same qualifications as those in health services but chose the spa industry. They were concerned with health, but from a different point of view.

As I walked deeper into the convention hall, I saw displays and demonstrations of all types: Body wraps, facials, salt glows and other exfoliations, massage machines, body contouring machines, muds, breast treatments, neck treatments — everything was done with flair. The classes were high energy too, concentrating on everything from permanent make-up to "how-to-grow-your-business." I now knew I needed to create a business plan. I needed to find out if there was interest in my new, and as yet un-named, modality. I went to more trade shows: Montreal, San Jose, Calif., and Philadelphia. I read magazines like *Day Spa*, *American Spa*, *Les Nouvelles Esthetiques* and *Spa Management*.

Finally, I was ready to name my protocol and start with a business plan. It was also the beginning of the

## lypassage

shrinking of my massage therapy practice. All of the trips to trade shows and the research itself were now taking a financial toll, but I continued to believe this was the direction I should go.

### The Big Plan

This is how my business development progressed:

- **Name the protocol.** I asked my family to help me with the name. My daughter came up with "Reduce Your Caboose." It definitely gives the idea but not a good marketable trademark. After a few weeks of fooling around with words, I merged "lymph" and "lipid" into one word, "lypo." Because the technique is manual, I added the word "massage." Hence, a new name, "Lyppassage," for which I received a trademark.

- **Write the documentation.** I wrote and compiled the protocol and instruction manuals.

- **Create a logo.** With help from a graphic artist and people in the spa industry, several different Lyppassage logos were created. It took a while to settle on one.

- **Create interest within the spa industry.** This is done through word of mouth and press releases. If there is interest, someone from the magazine will call and inquire further. In the case of Lyppassage, the first magazine to publish anything was *Day Spa*. In fact, a couple of pieces were published that included Lyppassage in related body contouring topics. The reason for pursuing this was to see if there was interest inside the trade to learn more. This exposure resulted in additional articles in *American Spa*, *Nails* and *Les Nouvelles Esthetique*, to name a few. Because the response was good, it was time to move to the next step.

- **Create more interest.** I was an ambassador through word of mouth, trade shows, networking, speaking engagements and query follow-ups with people who expressed interest in training in Lyppassage. More importantly, I needed to find a flagship location, a prominent place from which the new modality could be launched and people trained. This happened when I taught Lyppassage in California. It turned out to be a financial loss, but now Lyppassage had its first customers and group of practitioners.

- **Spread the word.** Eventually the next step was to advertise while simultaneously sending out press releases to find new Lyppassage practitioners. Lyppassage was now advertised in *Spa Management* magazine, with full-page ads for one year and an expensive mass mailing that didn't work. Lyppassage joined the Day Spa



The Connecticut offices of Lyppassage are located about 65 miles from New York City.

Association, became a Category A Continuing Education Course toward national certification and created an informational website. Wow, now the money was really beginning to go. The time to write manuals, edit them, teach classes that were losing money, pay for advertising, graphic artists and a webmaster was extensive, plus I had to rent a larger place so I could have enough room to teach when I wasn't traveling. Expenses such as hotels, plane fare,

rental cars and food were costing more money, not to mention my massage practice revenues had dropped to almost zero. When I finally hired massage therapists to cover for me, it became another financial loss. But, I →

### Lyppassage Results by Measurement Dimension Loss/Location

At the end of a six-week period, 86 percent of Lyppassage study participants lost a total of 5 or more inches from the following five physical landmarks. The body points were identified using palpation.

- 1 ¼ inch at the navel
- 2 1½ inches halfway between the navel and the proximal head of the greater trochanter
- 3 ¾ inch at the proximal head of the greater trochanter
- 4 (right leg) 1½ inches at half the distance from the proximal head of the greater trochanter and the suprapatella on the right and left thigh
- 5 (right leg) ½ inch at one quarter of the distance from the proximal head of the greater trochanter and the suprapatella on the right and left thigh
- 4 (left leg) 1½ inches at half the distance from the proximal head of the greater trochanter and the suprapatella on the right and left thigh
- 5 (left leg) ½ inch at one quarter of the distance from the proximal head of the greater trochanter and the suprapatella on the right and left thigh

Since the completion of the initial study in 1998, other studies have been done with a variety of age groups and study periods. The results of these new studies are similar to the initial study and reinforce the original study.

have a tough mind and continued to think the idea was worth pursuing. So, as interest increased from the massage therapists, I proceeded with the next step.

- **Create an infrastructure.** I realized now was a good time to create an infrastructure of trainers and trainer/distributors. These people would train massage therapists in various assigned regions of the United States and, eventually, the world. Workshops for trainers and practitioners began at our Connecticut headquarters. It seemed like a good idea to have trainers who knew their own markets, who could train new practitioners and manage and help them to succeed. But the trainers would not succeed without the proper tools. These tools included marketing materials such as signage, brochures, manuals, instructional video tapes, embroidered polo shirts, embroidered shoulder bags, Lyposage floor foot prints, Lyposage Turkish bath towels and bath robes and other items that would help Lyposage become a household name. The next step was now evident.

- **Launch a line of body products.** There needed to be a line of goods that could be sold to practitioners that were concentric to the Lyposage treatments. These products could be sold over and over again to practitioners who would, in turn, sell these products to their Lyposage clients. In all about 50 products evolved, including Warming Contour Crème, Daily Tone and Firm Gel.

Everything was in place to help the Lyposage brand name become the "trendy" new body contouring experience. This was encouraged by interest from consumer publications. For example, consumer demand began to increase in the United States when a small article was written about Lyposage in *Hers Muscle and Fitness* magazine and through an interview with *Teen* magazine. In Australia, there was another small, favorable article in *Good Medicine* magazine and most recently, another series of articles written in the Dutch publication *Estheticienne, Vakblad Voor Schoonheidsverzorging En Cosmetica*.

### The Unknown

By August of 2001, Lyposage had evolved from an idea to a recognizable spa modality. It had about 1,000 practitioners, two dozen trainers, a Lyposage product line, Lyposage marketing material, a marketing plan, a public relations campaign and a product distribution system ready to take off. It had a trainer's manual that was nearly 260 pages in length, along with new continuing education course offerings in spa etiquette, ethics, advanced spa training and practice building.

Lyposage had been in a dozen trade shows from Las Vegas to Florida, up to New York, Toronto and Montreal and now owned its own trade show booth. And I had faith that, even though I had lost tens of thousands of dollars creating and proliferating this new idea, it would take hold. With the efforts of so many new practitioners I knew there would also be a lot of local and national advertising and press releases. One of the key components of Lyposage training is to teach massage therapists to become expert at practice building and the local practitioners were excellent at doing that. These

Lyposage practitioners became expert at public relations. Many of them were covered by local TV news channels, radio, magazines and newspapers. In short, the collective effort made Lyposage grow at a stellar rate. All this happened in three years and continues to draw attention from large companies.

On Sept. 12, 2001, after meditating, I returned to teach my

class. I had a couple of students. One was a woman with a child at New York University, another a fire fighter from Detroit. I thought to myself about all the money I had invested. My quiet practice no longer existed. My class size had reduced from its normal 20-plus students to just two. I thought of the expansion of my business space to accommodate the volume of people I trained and now: Poof.

Business has never been the same, but it isn't bad, and it is coming back. A lot has changed for Lyposage. We have consolidated our line of mechanizing material and simplified our distribution of products. We have continued to market Lyposage, which is, I'm happy to say, very successful and continuing to draw positive attention. When I began to teach the class again I was reminded by one of the students who remained, that even in hard times people want to be healthy and there is always high fashion, even during war. Lyposage has grown and contracted and grown again. Yet even with the spectacular growth rate of a good idea, you never know. Lyposage is now a permanent part of massage therapy and the health and spa industries. With strong name recognition among consumers, Lyposage now receives more than 300 consumer inquiries a month, and this grows exponentially by 10 percent each month. Just as Afghani women wore make-up under their veils in their quiet rebellion, I guess some American women are doing the same, not letting the world get in the way of their good health and high fashion. **M&B**

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