

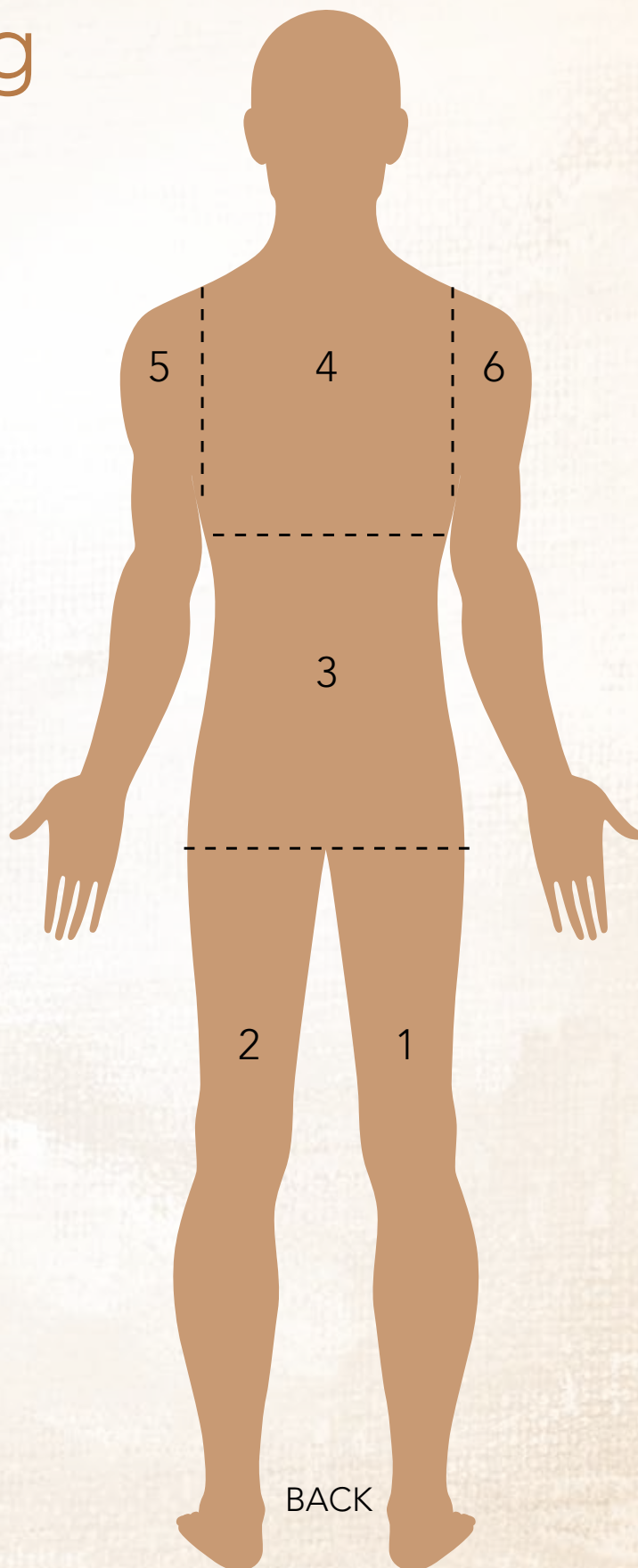
Reading Your *Clients*

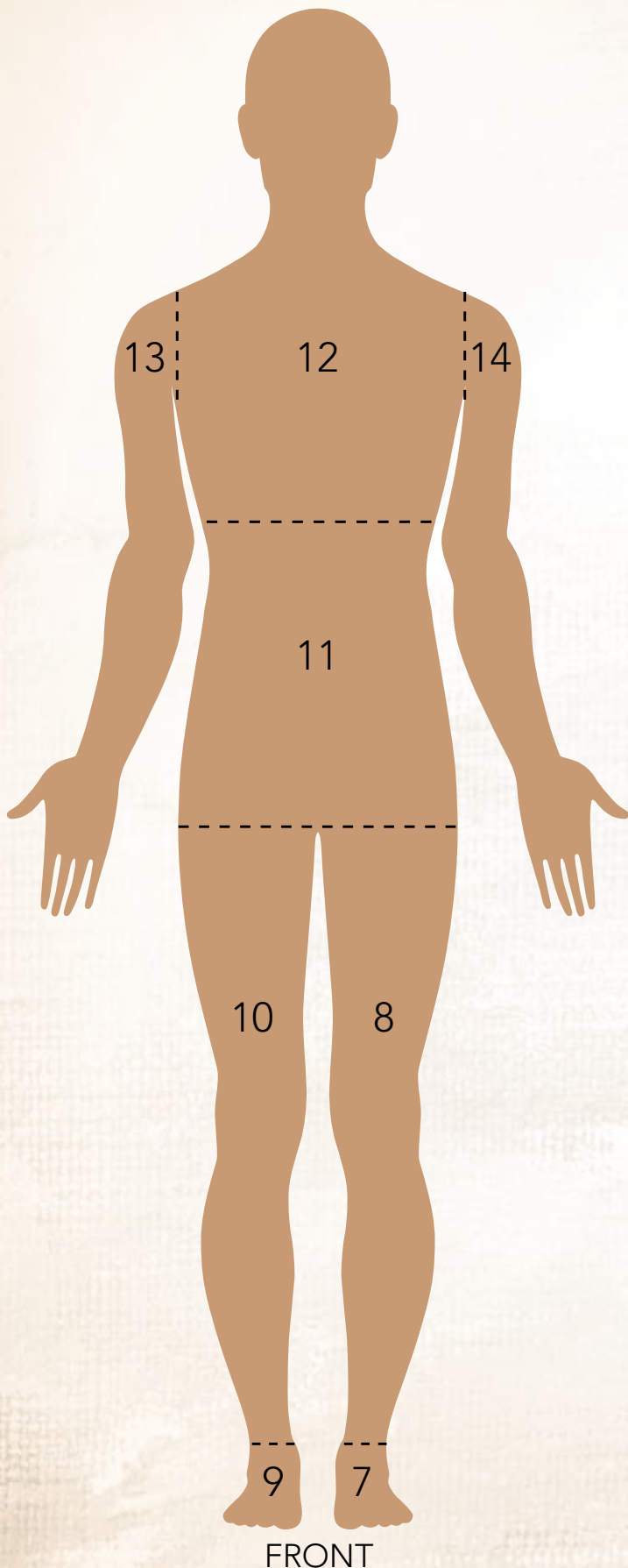
Body Mapping

by Annet King

Walt Whitman wrote, "I sing the body electric," and he was literally right. The body constantly fires out an electromagnetic charge that may be measured by a variety of scientific devices. And in addition, the body speaks in other ways, sending thousands of messages simultaneously, both subtle and overt.

Our task as skin therapists is to train ourselves to perceive and interpret these messages and to master the art and science of client reading and body mapping. We do this by looking, listening, asking, touching and recording. We use our ears, eyes, our fingertips, and our intuition to do it. Of course every professional treatment begins with an in-depth consultation that will not only reveal any contraindications to your planned course of treatment, but will also give you a glimpse into the client's current regimen and expectations. Creating the ultimate personalized experience requires attention to the finer details of "who is inside the skin and what do they really need from me?"





FRONT

Our entire skin constantly broadcasts our current state, reflecting external conditions as well as our own interior “weather.” We all are familiar with reading facial expressions, but the body develops its own vernacular as well. Posture, gesture and gait are the first things to read about the client’s body. If she sits with legs and arms tightly crossed, she may be anxious, angry, or simply cold. A jiggling foot signals anxiety. Does she slump or slouch as she stands, or does she square her shoulders and lift her chest?

Listen and watch her “body English” as she answers questions about her lifestyle, stress levels, sleep patterns and overall health. Then, look for corresponding cues when your client is on your table. Our natural modesty creates some level of tension, but pay attention to her breathing – is it shallow and from the chest or abdominal and becoming slower with relaxation? A client slipping into slumber during the treatment may indicate sleep-deprivation or exhaustion; but eyes wide open and a very tight scalp may also indicate the same! Form your picture of the client’s overall condition and well-being based upon as many kinds of data (verbal, tactile, visual) as possible.

Body mapping requires observing the skin on the body as a series of zones, as well as a collective whole. Incorrect product choices, environmental trauma, over-processed diet, chronic stress, and resulting poor elimination can all manifest as different challenges on the skin. While giving your client a treatment, observe and feel their skin while questioning her about what you observe. Extremely dry, itchy, sensitive skin on the legs and arms can be caused by high foam surfactants, artificial fragrance in body products coupled with low humidity levels in winter and further exacerbated by pantyhose. Sporadic breakouts or rashes on the back and chest may indicate high stress levels, detoxification diets, or trapped cells and sweat from synthetic fibers in gym clothes. A sedentary lifestyle, sluggish circulation, refined foods and too much soda will result in spongy tissues, stagnant lymph and cellulite.

As your client dresses, chart your findings and observations on your body map. Use these notes as the basis for prescriptive product recommendation, any diet and lifestyle advice, and as a basis of comparison for her follow up treatment visit.



A unique understanding of the global skin care market combined with dynamic leadership skills make Annet King an invaluable asset to The International Dermal Institute. King develops, writes, presents, and monitors the success of all classes which comprise the IDI curriculum. King is both CIDESCO, ITEC, and CIBTAC-certified, placing her in the uppermost echelon of world-class skin care professionals. She is regularly sought as a source by journalists to comment on skin care issues, and is a frequent contributor to magazines, websites, and blogs on the subject of creating and operating a successful skin care business, as well as the specific science and art of skin and body care.

