



Natural Health Practitioners of Canada
Praticiens de la Santé Naturelle du Canada

Massage Therapy

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

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Scope of Practice

Massage therapy is the assessment of the soft tissue and joints of the body and the treatment and prevention of physical dysfunction and pain of the soft tissue and joints by manipulation to develop, maintain, rehabilitate or augment physical function, or relieve pain. Massage therapists may also teach, manage, and conduct research in the science, techniques, and practice of massage therapy.

What are Standards of Practice

The Standards of Practice for a profession describe the specific competencies required in order to achieve the expected outcomes described within the profession's scope of practice. The purpose of the Standards of Practice is to ensure that all competencies for safe, competent, and appropriate practice are identified, ensuring that the public will receive the highest degree of professionalism, safety, and best practices when accessing the profession's services.

The Natural Health Practitioners of Canada (NHPC) has endorsed and developed the Standards of Practice for Massage Therapy, taking into consideration current national competencies in massage therapy education identified in the *Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists at Entry-to-Practice* (FOMTRAC 2016).

The Standards of Practice document will evolve as changes in the profession and practice occur. The current (January 2018) NHPC Massage Therapy Standards of Practice document reflects the changes made from the NHPC's previous Standards of Practice, adopted in 2005.

The Standards of Practice is intended to be generic and was developed to describe the various tasks a massage therapist is required to perform within the scope of practice. How to perform each task is determined by the curriculum competencies developed by massage therapy educational programs.

Why Have Standards of Practice

The Standards of Practice was developed as a means to determine whether a therapist can practice massage therapy at an acceptable level of competency. It serves as a reference tool for:

- massage therapists to better understand their job requirements
- educators to use as objectives in curriculum design
- membership eligibility with the NHPC

- complaints investigation
- discipline hearings
- fitness to practice
- quality assurance
- client relations
- the public to identify and evaluate the adequacy of massage therapy services

Confidentiality

Massage therapists are advised that giving information about a client to any person is considered to be professional misconduct, except as required or allowed by law or to facilitate diagnosis or treatment of a client with the client's permission..

Accountability for Standards

The NHPC has members in every province and territory in Canada. NHPC members must comply with any requirement as defined in any existing privacy legislation in their respective province or territory, as well as with any NHPC bylaw or policy related to the performance of the massage therapist's job.

The legislation in the therapist's jurisdiction will determine how they need to deal with maintaining a clients' personal and health information. Therapists must be aware of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)* federally and their respective provincial/territorial privacy legislations.

The massage therapist is only held accountable to meet a standard if he or she is the person who has performed the task.

Glossary of Terms

A standard of practice consists of three inter-related sub-components:

Conditions: Conditions describe the situation in which the task must be accomplished. This may include any resources, tools, materials, etc. that are given/available.

Task: A task is a description of what a therapist is expected to accomplish.

Standard: A standard is a description of a minimum level of performance the therapist is required to demonstrate in the performance of a task.

A standard is stated in observable and measurable terms. It must be precise and clear to the therapist who is held accountable for accomplishing it. It must also be clear to

the clients and the public, who assess the therapist's ability to accomplish a task as measured by the required standard.

Standards include one or more of the following measures:

- technical Quality
- interpersonal Quality
- safety
- timeliness

Safety: Safety describes the situation in which danger, risk, or injury are mitigated or lessened for the client.

Substitute Decision Maker: A substitute decision maker is an individual who will make health and well-being decisions on behalf of someone who is not capable of doing so.



Communication/Public Health Standards

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Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 1

Prepare the Treatment Area

Conditions

In a treatment area, using disinfecting cleaning materials, massage equipment, freshly laundered linen, towels and a blanket

Task

Prepare the treatment area

Standard

Quality/Technical

- Ensure that the room and equipment surfaces have been cleaned according to the requirements of communicable disease control as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- So that you use only sheets and towels that have been freshly laundered.
- So that the linens, towels and blanket that come in contact with the client have not been used by a prior client.
- So that linen used for draping will allow for full coverage of the client.

Safety

- So that the linens and pillows do not interfere with the client's ability to get on and off the table.
- So that any obstacle or substance that could make the floor slippery is removed from the treatment room to prevent accidental falls.
- So that equipment is properly maintained and that manufacturer's instructions are followed correctly.
- So that the transference of infectious diseases is limited.

Timing

- Prior to the client entering the treatment area.
- After a client who required the use of protective barriers leaves the treatment area.



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 2

Inform the Client of the Fees and Obtain Their Agreement to a Fee Schedule

Conditions

Given a client who has come to you for massage therapy

Task

Inform the client of the fees and obtain their agreement to a fee schedule

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that your fee schedule is posted in a location where clients may see it or provide a copy to the client.
- So that you explain the rates for a massage therapy appointment to the client including what part of the treatment time will be used for taking a health history and assessment/reassessment.
- So that you explain your policy with regard to cancellation of appointments to the client.
- So that you provide the client with an opportunity to ask questions about the rate and fee schedule.
- So that you obtain agreement from the client for any charges that deviate from the set schedule and document them in the clinical notes with the reasons for deviation and agreement indicated.

Timing

- When the client arrives to their first appointment or prior to arrival.



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 3

Wash Your Hands and Any Skin Surface that Will/Has Come in Contact with the Client

Conditions

Given that the treatment area and the client are ready for treatment

Task

Wash your hands and any skin surface that will/has come in contact with the client

Standard

Quality/Technical

- Ensure that you use soap and water or at least a 60% alcohol based hand sanitizer to clean all skin surfaces by washing for a minimum of 20 seconds.

Timing

- Immediately before and immediately after each client treatment.



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 4

Interview the Client to Obtain Their Treatment Goals

Conditions

In a treatment area, given a client who comes to you for massage therapy

Task

Interview the client to obtain their treatment goals

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that your interview questions include:
 - ▲ client's goals for the treatment
 - ▲ limitations to activities of daily life
 - ▲ identification of area(s) client would like to focus on
 - ▲ discovery of contributing factors

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you give the client an opportunity to inform you of any specific area(s) to be treated and to relay any information the client chooses about their treatment goals.
- So that you give the client an opportunity to ask questions.

Timing

- Before the massage begins and at any time during the massage.

Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 5

Risk Identification and Management for an Outbreak of Infectious Diseases

Conditions

Given an infectious disease has been identified as a public health risk by the Chief Medical Officer of Health in the community

Task

Interview the client to determine their risk of exposure to the infectious diseases

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that you are aware of the symptoms of the infectious disease.
- So that you use a screening tool to identify clients at risk of carrying or at risk from exposure, if available.
- So that you use protective barriers if the status of the client is unknown.
- So that you clean the clinic area with approved antiseptic cleansers.
- So that you follow any directive issued by the Province or local public health unit.

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that the client is informed of the reason for screening and precautions.
- So that you provide the client with an opportunity to ask questions.

Safety

- So that clients who are at risk of carrying or at risk from exposure are not treated , unless all surface areas of the clinic area appropriately cleansed and disinfected directly after treatment to reduce spread of the disease.
- So that a client is not discriminated against if they are from an identified at risk population.

Timing

- Prior to the client entering the clinic space, if possible



- Prior to providing treatment



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 6

Obtain, Update, and Record the Client's Health History

Conditions

In a treatment area, given a client who comes to you for massage therapy

Task

Obtain/update and record the client's health history

Standard

Quality/Technical

Health history information must be requested from the client to identify indications and/or contraindications to treatment. Information requested must include, at the minimum:

- date on which health history was taken or updated
- general health status
- client name, address, date of birth, telephone number, occupation, source of referral
- name and address of primary care physician
- current involvement in treatment with other health care practitioner(s)
- current medication(s) and condition(s) they are treating
- timing and nature of injuries or accidents
- timing and nature of surgical procedures
- history of massage therapy
- primary complaint
- location and nature of soft tissue and/or joint discomfort
- vision or hearing loss/loss of sensation
- possible cardiovascular insufficiency, for example:
 - ▲ high blood pressure
 - ▲ low blood pressure
 - ▲ chronic congestive heart failure
 - ▲ heart disease
 - ▲ history of myocardial infarction
 - ▲ phlebitis/varicose veins



- ▲ history of cerebrovascular accident
 - ▲ presence of pacemaker or similar device
 - ▲ family history of cardiovascular difficulties
- possible respiratory insufficiency, for example:
 - ▲ chronic cough
 - ▲ bronchitis
 - ▲ shortness of breath
 - ▲ asthma
 - ▲ emphysema
 - ▲ family history of respiratory difficulties known
- allergies or hypersensitivity reactions
- diabetes, cancer, epilepsy, skin conditions
- arthritis, family history of arthritis
- presence of infectious conditions for example:
 - ▲ infectious skin conditions
 - ▲ infectious respiratory conditions
 - ▲ hepatitis
 - ▲ HIV
 - ▲ herpes
- pregnancy, gynaecological conditions
- other diagnosed diseases or medical conditions, for example: digestive conditions, haemophilia, osteoporosis, mental illness etc.
- presence of internal pins, wires, artificial joints, or special equipment
- history of headaches or migraines

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you inform the client of the need to inform you of any change in their health status.
- So that you inform the client of the reason why an accurate health history is needed before massage begins.
- So that you provide the client with an opportunity to ask questions to better understand health history questions being asked.
- So that you inform the client that all client information is confidential and written authorization will be obtained prior to release of information.
- So that you inform the client that all client information is confidential within the limits identified in the Confidentiality Statement in the Introduction.
- So that any infectious diseases are recognized and routine (universal) and additional precautions are taken.



Timing

- Before initial treatment begins
- After a client absence of one year from the last treatment
- Every year, at a minimum

Safety

- So that you inquire as to any allergies and/or sensitivity to hydrotherapy additives and lubricants that the client may have.
- So that you recognize any contraindications for massage therapy or massage therapy technique(s).



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 7

Consent

Conditions

Given that the assessment/reassessment or treatment is ready to begin

Task

Obtain the client's consent to perform the assessment/reassessment or treatment

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the treatment is consistent with the massage therapy Scope of Practice and NHPC policies
- So that consent is obtained voluntarily
- So that consent is not obtained through misrepresentation or fraud

Quality/Interpersonal

- So you tell the client the nature and purpose of the proposed assessment/reassessment and/or treatment including the areas of the body involved.
- So that you inform the client of any risks, benefits, possible complications, and any contraindications of the assessment/reassessment and/or treatment.
- So that you inform the client that assessment/reassessment or treatment will be stopped or modified at any time, at their request.
- So that you tell the client that you will be checking periodically to determine the client's level of comfort.
- So that you give the client an opportunity to ask any questions.
- In the event of a finding of incapacity or the need for a substitute decision maker, refer to the current legislation and NHPC policies.

Timing

- Before beginning the assessment/reassessment and/or treatment
- So that you record informed consent in the client's clinical record as soon as possible, within 24 hours of treatment.



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 8

Determine the Client's Condition by Conducting Assessment/Re-Assessment

Conditions

Given information about a client's treatment goals, their health history, the client's consent, and/or that on-going treatment is taking place and a scheduled reassessment is due

Task

Determine the client's condition by using history and observation to formulate a clinical impression and conduct (if required) a differential assessment and/or re-assessment to confirm the clinical impression

Standard

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you discontinue the assessment if requested by the client.
- So that you follow Communication/Public Health Standards 11 and 12 if undressing or undraping is required prior to, during, or following conducting the assessment/re-assessment.

Quality/Technical Safety

- So that you refer the client to other health care professionals for conditions that you cannot assess or if the need for referral is indicated in the assessment or re-assessment, for example:
 - ▲ severe unremitting pain
 - ▲ severe pain with no history of injury
- The assessment must include an examination of the following (if indicated):
 - ▲ any acute/sub-acute and chronic conditions and/or any acute or chronic pain, so that it is described as to location, type, duration, origin, pattern, triggering phenomena, intensity, and quality
 - ▲ central nervous system lesions and/or conditions
 - ▲ peripheral nervous system lesions and/or conditions



- ▲ range of motion of joints and muscles (active, passive, and resisting) without forcing movements beyond the client's current abilities
- ▲ flexibility of the soft tissues so that you identify any limitations to movement
- So that the assessment included evidence of tenderness, tension, temperature, tone and texture.
- So that all testing is done bi-laterally.
- So that you identify any physical conditions that are treatable by massage therapy.
- So that you identify any physical conditions that may preclude general or local massage therapy treatment, or require treatment adaptation.
- So that the assessment must include the identification of potential risks associated with massage treatment in the presence of a contraindication.
- So that the effectiveness or completion of the treatment plan can be determined, based on the original goal of treatment.
- So that a decision can be made to continue, modify/change, or stop the treatment plan.
- So that the results of the assessment/re-assessment are recorded in the client's health record as soon as possible, within 24 hours of assessment/re-assessment.



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 9

Determine if Massage Therapy Treatment is Indicated

Conditions

Given the client's completed health history and your assessment of the client's condition

Task

Determine if massage therapy treatment is indicated

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that if there is a contraindication to massage therapy, you refer the client to another qualified health care professional or that you modify the treatment so that the client is not put at risk.
- So that any referral that is made is documented in the client's health record.



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 10

Treatment and Treatment Plans

Explain the Initial Treatment to the Client

Conditions

Given that massage therapy treatment is indicated

Task

Explain the initial treatment to the client

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the treatment is consistent with the massage therapy Scope of Practice and NHPC policies.
- So you obtain any changes in the client's wishes regarding consent before each treatment and follow such changes.

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that the client is given an opportunity to ask any questions.

Timing

- Before beginning the treatment

Develop and Record an On-Going Treatment Plan

Conditions

Given that on-going massage therapy treatment is indicated, and given the client's request for treatment and your assessment of the client's condition

Task

Develop and record an on-going treatment plan

Standard

Quality/Technical

- The plan must include: goals, type, and focus of treatment(s), areas of the body to be treated, anticipated frequency and duration of treatments, anticipated client responses to treatment, schedule for re-assessment of the client's condition, and/or recommended remedial exercises and/or hydrotherapy.
- So that the plan is consistent with the massage therapy scope of practice and NHPC policies.

Timing

- After the first massage treatment and update whenever treatment plan is altered

Inform the Client of Any Change in the Treatment Plan

Conditions

Given that the client informed you of changes in their wishes, their physical condition or health status, and/or you identified a change in the client's condition and/or a lack of client response to treatment, requiring a change in the treatment plan

Task

Inform the client of change in treatment plan

Standard

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you ask the client if they have any questions.
- So that you answer the client's questions and/or refer them to another health care professional for questions that are not within your area of expertise.

Quality/Technical

- So that the information you convey to the client includes what the changes to the treatment plan are, and why.



- So that you obtain and record consent from the client for all changes in treatment.

Timing

- Before continuing with massage treatment
- Record changes to treatment plan within 24 hours of the treatment



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 11

Pre/Post Treatment Protocol

Conditions

Given a client who has given consent to proceed with treatment

Instruct the Client

Task

Instruct client on undressing/dressing procedures

Standard

Quality/Technical & Interpersonal

- So that you explain to the client the reasons for the removal of clothing.
- So that you instruct the client to remove the clothing and items which they are comfortable removing.
- So that you provide the client with an opportunity to ask questions.
- So that you provide the client an opportunity to dress/undress out of the view of the therapist and other people.
- So that you get permission from the client to re-enter the area.
- If the client requires assistance to dress/undress themselves, the following procedures are followed:
 - ▲ so that you inform the client of those pieces of clothing you will need to remove
 - ▲ so that you remove only those pieces of clothing the client wants to remove
 - ▲ so that you inform the client of where you might touch them and why
 - ▲ so that you touch only those areas of the client's body needed to remove the client's clothing
 - ▲ so that you record the client's consent and the assistance provided
 - ▲ so that all efforts are made to maintain the respectful privacy of the client by use of covering while assisting them to dress/undress



Task

Instruct client on treatment positioning and covering

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that you obtain client agreement to the treatment position
- So that the instructions include how the client should position their body for treatment
- So that you advise the client to use of the sheets to cover themselves once they are in position for treatment if they are undressed (See Communication/Public Health Standard 12 regarding undraping)
- If the client requires assistance on or off the massage table:
 - ▲ so that you modify the assistance approach so as to minimize the client's physical discomfort
 - ▲ so that all efforts are made to maintain respectful privacy of the client by use of covering while assisting them in getting on or off the table

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you provide the client with an opportunity to ask questions.

Safety

- So that the instructions include any precautions the client should take to prevent falling off the table.
- So that you prevent the client from falling.

Timing

- Before the client undresses

Conditions

Given that the massage therapy treatment session has been completed

Task

Instruct client on when and how to get off the table



Standard

Quality/Technical & Safety

- So that the instructions include what to do and why.
- So that you ask the client if they need assistance.
- So that you tell the client about the possibility of dizziness and light-headedness as a result of getting off the table too quickly.

Timing

- Before instructing the client to dress

Select Lubricant to be Used, if Needed

Conditions

Given a client positioned for the treatment, the client's health history pertaining to allergies and the client's preference

Task

Select lubricant to be used, if needed

Standard

Quality/Technical and Safety

- So that the lubricant selected is not contraindicated for use due to an allergy or the client's preference.
- So that you ensure contaminant-free dispensing of lubricant.



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 12

Draping

Undrape the Client for Treatment

Conditions

Given the client is positioned for the treatment

Task

Undrape the client for treatment

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the draping is secured.
- So that if the client requests that the draping be rearranged for their comfort, you accommodate the request as long as you are not uncomfortable with any body parts being exposed.
- So that female breasts are not exposed except when being treated in accordance with Technique Standard 15 and 16.
- So that the client's genitalia or gluteal cleft are not exposed.
- Notwithstanding all of the above, it is acceptable for a female client to be so exposed within the circumstances of labour or child delivery, if:
 - ▲ the accommodation is required to effectively deliver massage therapy services requested by the client or her designate
 - ▲ the client or her designate directly request this accommodation
 - ▲ the therapist has ensured that consent is properly obtained with the accommodation recorded, and
 - ▲ all reasonable efforts continue to be made by the therapist to ensure privacy and respect for the client
- Infants may be treated in an undraped fashion with consent of parent or substitute decision maker.



Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you inform the client of what area of the body you will uncover and treat before uncovering.
- So that you enquire as to the client's comfort and adjust support as necessary.

Instruct and/or Assist the Client to Change Position

Conditions

Given that you require that the client change positions during treatment

Task

Instruct and/or assist the client to change position

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that you inform the client on why and how to change position.
- So that the sheets and pillows are secured for client comfort.
- So that you secure the top sheet to ensure the client's body is not exposed at any time.

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you ask the client about their level of comfort after they are in the new position.
- So that you make every effort to maintain respectful privacy of the client by use of covering while assisting them to change position.

Safety

- So that the client does not fall off the massage equipment while changing position.



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 13

Recommend Self-Care

Conditions

Given that the massage treatment has been completed and the client is dressed and that self-care is indicated

Task

Recommend self-care

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that you explain to the client appropriate self-care including its intended effect and possible negative reactions.
- So that the client is informed that if the self-care causes any severe negative reactions, the client is to discontinue its use.
- So that you demonstrate the recommended exercise(s).
- So that you witness that the client understands the self-care and/or exercise correctly.

Safety

- So that the self-care and/or exercise does not put the client at risk.

Timing

- Before the client departs

Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 14

Client Health Record

Establish and Update Clinical Records for Each Client

Conditions

Given a massage therapy client

Task

Establish and update clinical records for the client

Standard

Quality/Technical

- Records must include:
 - ▲ the completed client health history information
 - ▲ record of client's consent to treatment
 - ▲ records of on-going treatment
 - ▲ authorization to contact other health care professionals, when contact is required for treatment
 - ▲ copies of reports pertaining to the client received from other health care professionals
- So that records are confidential and are stored so as not to be accessible to unauthorized individuals.
- So that records are kept for a minimum of 10 years from the client's last visit
- So that if the client was under 18 years old at the time of their last visit, the records are kept for 10 years after the day they turned (or would have turned) 18 (to age 28).

Record the Treatment Provided to the Client

Conditions

Given that a massage session is complete



Task

Record the treatment provided to the client

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that your records include:
 - ▲ date, time and duration of treatment
 - ▲ fee for treatment
 - ▲ results from assessment techniques used by the therapist
 - ▲ summary of techniques used
 - ▲ areas treated
 - ▲ client reactions/feedback to treatment
 - ▲ informed consent from the client/substitute decision maker
 - ▲ used and/or recommended remedial exercises, hydrotherapy applications and/or self-care
 - ▲ updated health history and treatment information as obtained

Timing

- As soon as possible, within 24 hours of treatment



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 15

Use of Personal Protective Equipment During a Treatment

Conditions

- Given a client or a therapist with a recognizable contagious condition that might be spread by contact or inhalation during the massage therapy treatment
- Given a client who requires intra-oral treatment as part of their treatment
- Given a client or therapist with non-intact skin, or open or healing lesions that would be vulnerable in the course of providing massage therapy treatment

Task

Perform the massage therapy treatment:

- without spreading infection
- while using personal protective equipment

Standard

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you explain why the use of gloves, masks or suitable alternative, or other barrier is necessary or recommended.
- So that the client is given an opportunity to ask questions.

Quality/Technical

- So that all requirements of communicable disease control as defined by the *Infection Control for Regulated Professionals* document are met.
- So that the affected area on the client is avoided as much as possible.
- So that the affected area of the therapist's arm, hand, and/or fingers is totally covered to prevent contact.
- So that in the case of an airborne infectious disease both the therapist and the client wear a mask before, during, and after treatment.



Safety

- So that if these options are not possible or available that the treatment be altered, terminated, or postponed.
- So that the risk of allergies has been discussed and identified.

Timing

- Before the treatment begins or as soon as the situation arises during treatment



Communication/Public Health

STANDARD 16

Discharge of a Client

Conditions

If the goals of the treatment plan have been met or cannot be met and/or if the needs of the client are beyond the skill, abilities or scope of practice of the massage therapist and/or if the client is abusive

Task

Discharge the client

Standard

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you explain to the client the reason for the discharge.
- So that the discharge explanation is initiated before or after the final treatment but not during the treatment.
- So that the client is given an opportunity to ask questions.

Quality/Technical

- So that a referral is arranged prior to discharge if necessary or appropriate.
- So that the client files are transferred or stored according to the client's wishes.

Timing

- So that sufficient notice is given to the client.

Technique Standards

STANDARD 1

Introduction to the Standards for Specific Massage Therapy Techniques

There are Standards that apply in general to the performance of massage therapy techniques. These Standards are addressed on this page. These “General” Standards are to be met in the performance of all techniques in massage therapy treatment.

Conditions

Given that the client’s treatment plan includes one or more massage therapy techniques

Task

Perform the technique(s) correctly and in such a way that they are well integrated in the treatment and that the treatment plan is executed with the client’s consent and is consistent with the principles of massage

Standard

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you do not use a technique or continue its use if the client indicates a preference not to use it.
- So that you make the client aware that some techniques may be painful, depending on how they are applied and the condition being treated.
- So that you treat within the client’s pain tolerance, and you give the client the opportunity to inform you of their pain level within a mutually agreed upon range of acceptable pain.

Quality/Technical

- So that four basic principles of massage are applied:
 - ▲ superficial, deep, superficial
 - ▲ general, specific, general
 - ▲ proximal, distal, proximal
 - ▲ peripheral, central, peripheral



Technique Standards

STANDARD 2

Perform a Stroking Technique

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for stroking technique

Task

Perform a stroking technique

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that stroking is performed through the client's covering or directly on the skin.
- So that if the purpose of stroking is to achieve a relaxation effect, the technique is soothing, slow, and even.
- So that if the purpose of stroking is to achieve a stimulating effect, the technique is brisk.

Safety

- So that stroking is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 3

Perform a Rocking or Shaking Technique

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for rocking and/or shaking technique

Task

Perform a rocking or shaking technique

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that you rock to create movement around a joint and shake to move the soft tissue.

Safety

- So that you treat within the client's agreed upon pain tolerance.
- So that you take special precaution, based on your assessment, with any client who is prone to joint subluxation/dislocation or joint disease, inflammation or effusion or compromised integrity of the adjoining soft tissue.
- So that rocking or shaking is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 4

Perform an Effleurage Technique

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for effleurage technique

Task

Perform an effleurage technique

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the direction of movement is generally towards the heart.
- So that the movement is broad and general, and proportional to the part of the body being worked on.

Safety

- So that effleurage is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 5

Perform a Petrissage Technique

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for petrissage technique

Task

Perform a petrissage technique

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the tissues are compressed and released in a rhythmical fashion.
- So that the tissue layers are kneaded and stretched relative to each other.

Safety

- So that petrissage is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 6

Perform a Friction Technique

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for friction therapy

Task

Perform a friction technique

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the tissues are warmed and stretched before the technique is applied.
- So that your fingers do not glide over the client's skin.
- So that friction is performed specifically on the site of an adhesion or lesion.
- So that following the application of friction, the fibres are stretched.

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you inform the client that friction may be painful.
- So that you inquire as to the client's comfort with regard to the level of pressure and pain.
- So that you stop or modify treatment immediately when the client indicates an unexpected increase in pain or positive change in the tissue.

Safety

- So that following the application of a friction technique where inflammation is a response, ice is applied to the friction site following the stretch.
- So that medication history is considered before applying frictions.
- So that friction is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 7

Perform a Vibration Technique

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for vibration technique

Task

Perform a vibration technique

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that when you perform static vibrations your whole hand or part thereof is in continuous contact with the client's body without sliding over the client's skin.
- So that when you perform running vibrations your whole hand or part thereof is in continuous contact with the client's body with a slight glide over the client's skin.

Safety

- So that vibration is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 8

Perform a Tapotement Technique

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for tapotement technique

Task

Perform a tapotement technique

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the technique is percussive and rhythmic.
- So that when you perform light tapotement, your hands are light and springy and do not create force below the skin surface.
- So that when you perform heavy tapotement, your hands are firm and apply force below the skin surface.

Safety

- So that any heavy tapotement technique is not performed over any bony prominence, the kidneys, the abdomen, or any fragile tissue.
- So that tapotement is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 9

Apply Deep Fascial Techniques

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for a deep fascial technique

Task

Perform deep fascial techniques

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the technique engages fascia and results in increased mobility and flexibility of tissue.
- So that the tissues are warmed and stretched before and soothed after the technique is applied.

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you inform the client that deep fascial techniques may be painful.
- So that you inquire as to the client's comfort with regard to the level of pressure and pain.
- So that you stop or modify treatment immediately when the client indicates an unexpected increase in pain or a positive change in the tissue.

Safety

- So that medication history is considered before applying deep fascial techniques.
- So that deep fascial techniques are not used or are modified if a contraindication to these techniques exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 10

Myo-Fascial Trigger Points

Identify Myo-Fascial Trigger Points

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the possibility that trigger points may be present

Task

Identify myo-fascial trigger points

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that trigger points are identified correctly, as indicated by at least two of:
 - ▲ local tenderness within a taut band of muscle
 - ▲ local twitch response and/or a client's report of referred pain
 - ▲ tenderness or autonomic phenomenon pattern

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you stop the assessment of trigger points immediately if the client requests.

Treat Myo-Fascial Trigger Points

Conditions

Given that a trigger point has been identified

Task

Treat myo-fascial trigger points



Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the treatment technique is applied until the client tells you the level of referred pain either decreases or is eliminated.
- So that you discontinue the technique if the referred pain does not diminish.
- So that following the treatment of the trigger point the treated muscle is stretched.

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that the client is informed that the treatment of myo-fascial trigger points may be painful.
- So that you treat within the client's agreed upon pain tolerance.

Safety

- So that treatment of trigger points is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 11

Apply Low-Grade Joint Mobilization (Sustained Grade I or II or Grade I or II Oscillations)

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates a need to maintain joint ROM and/or decrease joint pain

Task

Apply low-grade joint mobilization

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the joint is in a loose-pack position.
- So that the joint is taken up to the elastic barrier but not beyond, within the client's pain tolerance.

Safety

- So that you assess the joint for pain prior to treatment by using a gentle, controlled traction.
- So that you treat the client within their agreed upon pain tolerance.
- So that you perform a gentle traction where possible before doing any gliding movements.
- So that low-grade joint mobilization is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 12

Apply High-Grade Joint Mobilization (Sustained Grade II and or Oscillations III and IV Joint Mobilization)

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates a need to increase inert tissue elongation through joint mobilization

Task

Apply high-grade joint mobilization

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the tissues around the joint are warmed and stretched prior to joint mobilization.
- So that the directions of mobilization are correct for that specific capsular pattern.
- So that the joint is in a loose-pack position.
- So that the joint is taken to the end of its physiological range of motion and then slightly beyond the physiological range of motion, within the client's comfort level.
- So that the accessory movement and physiological movements may be improved.
- So that high velocity low amplitude thrust techniques are not used to the spine.

Safety

- So that you assess the joint for pain prior to treatment by using a gentle, controlled traction.
- So that you treat within the client's agreed upon pain tolerance.
- So that you take special precaution, based on your assessment, with any client who is prone to joint subluxation/dislocation or joint disease, inflammation or effusion, or compromised integrity of the adjoining soft tissue.



- So that high-grade joint mobilization is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 13

Perform a Stretch Technique

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for a stretch technique

Task

Perform a stretch technique

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the soft tissue is lengthened within the client's pain tolerance.
- So that the stretch is held without bouncing until there is a release in the tissue being stretched.

Safety

- So that a stretch technique is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.
- So that you don't stretch an unstable structure or tissue.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 14

Perform an Intra-Oral Treatment

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for intra-oral treatment

Task

Perform intra-oral treatment

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that you never treat past the larynx.

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you set up a non-verbal signal from the client with regard to pain and comfort level.

Safety

- So that you use protective barriers for the entire hand while treating in the mouth.
- So that treatment is discontinued if the client indicates.
- So that intra-oral treatment is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this treatment exists.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 15

Perform Breast Massage

Conditions

Given that the therapist has the requisite knowledge, skills, and training to perform breast massage; breast massage is requested or clinically indicated prior to treatment; draping of the client is discussed prior to treatment and proper draping is used; treatment of the area is discussed with the client in advance; and prior written informed consent is obtained.

Clinical indicators concerning the breast:

- general drainage problems
- pre/post menstrual pain
- breast swelling and/or congestion
- discomforts of pregnancy and/or lactation
- blocked milk ducts (contraindicated if mastitis)
- pre/post-surgery including breast augmentation or reduction
- symptomatic relief of pain
- promotion of good quality scarring and relief of adhered/restrictive/painful scarring
- common benign breast conditions
- assistance with breast health
- discomfort from cancer treatment
- rehabilitation from cancer treatment

Task

Perform breast massage

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that you do not touch the nipple and/or areola.
- So that the breast tissue is uncovered only when it is being treated directly (notwithstanding clause in Communication/Public Health Standard 12 applies).



- So that breast massage is not performed or is modified if a contraindication to this treatment exists.

Safety

- So that vigorous techniques are not used when breast implants are present.
- So that consent was obtained in accordance with Communication/Public Health Standard 7.



Technique Standards

STANDARD 16

Perform Massage to the Chest Wall

Conditions

Given that massage to structures of the chest wall has been requested or clinically indicated prior to treatment, and that the client has consented to the treatment plan

Clinical indicators concerning chest wall musculature, including but not limited to:

- post-mastectomy
- rehabilitation after cancer treatment
- chronic respiratory conditions
- relief of muscular discomfort and/or pain
- supportive treatment of postural rebalancing
- scarring of the tissue of the chest wall

Task

Provide treatment to structures of the chest wall

Standard

Quality/Technical

- So that the chest/breast is uncovered only with the prior and voluntary consent of the client (notwithstanding clause in Communication/Public Health Standard 12 applies).

Safety

- So that structures of the chest wall are not treated or that treatment is modified if contraindications to treatment of this area exist.

Technique Standards

STANDARD 17

Apply Hydrotherapy

Conditions

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates a need to use hydrotherapy

Task

Apply hydrotherapy

Standard

Quality/Technical and Interpersonal

- So that you describe to the client how the hydrotherapy application would be performed, including its intended effect and possible negative reactions.
- So that you provide the client with an opportunity to ask questions.
- So that you regularly observe the client's physical reactions and inquire as to the client's comfort.
- So that the hydrotherapy treatment is pre-tested on a small area (patch test) if there is any concern about the client's ability to tolerate the temperature or type of application.
- So that the size, intensity and duration of treatment is determined according to the client's general health status and indications in the case.
- So that you provide the client with a rest period following large or intense applications.
- So that the equipment manufacturer's specifications are followed correctly and a maintenance log is kept.
- So that the equipment is cleaned and maintained in accordance with the requirements defined by the Infection Control for Regulated Professionals document.

Safety

- So that the applications used are not contraindicated due to the client's condition.
- So that the applications are modified if necessary, due to the client's condition.



- So that you regularly observe the client's response to treatment and remain available for treatment alteration.
- So that if medical history of the client indicates a high risk of any negative reaction, constant supervision is maintained.
- So that if any negative reactions are identified, treatment is modified or stopped.
- So that hygienic conditions are maintained at all times.



Additional Standards

ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUE STANDARD 1

Introduction to the Standards for Specific Additional Massage Therapy Techniques

There are Standards that apply in general to the performance of additional massage therapy techniques. These “General” Standards are to be met in the performance of all additional techniques in a massage therapy treatment. Not all massage therapists will have the training required to perform all or any of these additional techniques.

Massage therapists are responsible for ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform an additional technique safely.

Conditions

Given that the client’s treatment plan includes one or more additional massage therapy techniques

Task

Perform the technique(s) correctly and in such a way that they are well integrated in the treatment, and that the treatment plan is executed with the client’s consent, and all aspects of the modality in use are within the scope of practice

Standard

Quality/Interpersonal

- So that you explain the treatment plan and receive consent in accordance with Communication/Public Health Standards 7 and 10.
- So that you do not use a technique, or continue its use, if the client indicates a preference not to use it.
- So that you make the client aware that some techniques may be painful, depending on how they are applied and the condition being treated.
- So that you treat within the client’s pain tolerance, and you give the client the opportunity to inform you of their pain level within a mutually agreed upon range of acceptable pain.



Quality/Technical

- So that you ensure that you have the necessary knowledge, skill and judgement to use the additional massage therapy technique.
- So that you do not practice the additional massage therapy technique if you do not have the educational qualifications required.

