



Standards of Practice

Adopted September 13, 2008

Amended November 1, 2011



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta

Standards of Practice

Scope of Practice

The Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy is: In their practice, Massage Therapists do one or more of the following: Assess, diagnose and treat the soft tissues and joints of the body, with the intent of producing a therapeutic outcome or providing preventative care; and contribute to the development and improvement of primary and complementary health policy; and teach, manage and conduct research in the science, techniques and practice of Massage Therapy.

What are Standards of Practice

The Massage Therapist Association of Alberta (MTAA) has developed the Standards of Practice for Massage Therapists based on the approved Core Competency guidelines. Through the development and use of these Standards the MTAA continues to display its commitment to serving its members and promoting the highest possible quality of Massage Therapy practice in a safe, competent and ethical manner.

The Standards of Practice are intended to be generic and have been developed to describe the outcomes of the various tasks the therapist is required to perform within the Scope of Practice. The Standards of Practice describe how well a therapist is expected to perform. How to do each task is determined by the minimum competencies taught through the educational institutions.

The Standards of Practice have been adapted to be specific to the MTAA and form a live, dynamic document that will evolve as changes in practice evolve. Special acknowledgement is extended to the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) for their framework.

Why have Standards of Practice

The Standards of Practice have been developed as a tool to determine whether a Massage Therapist can conduct their practice at an acceptable level. These Standards will serve as a reference tool for:

- The therapists to better understand their job requirements
- Educators to address as objectives in curriculum design
- Membership
- Complaints investigation
- Discipline hearings
- Fitness to Practice
- Quality Assurance
- Client relations
- The public, by providing objective standards by which to assess the quality of treatment.

Confidentiality Statement

Massage Therapists are advised that giving information about a client to any person except as required or allowed by law or except to facilitate diagnosis or treatment of a client is considered to be professional misconduct.

Accountability for Standards

The Massage Therapist is only held accountable to meet a Standard if he/she is the person who has performed the task.

Massage therapists are also accountable to the following pieces of legislation:

- *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*
- *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2000*



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Glossary of Terms:

A Standard of Practice consists of three inter-related subcomponents that describe:

Conditions:

Conditions describe the situation in which the task must be accomplished, including 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 one is required to demonstrate in the achievement 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

Section A: Communication/Public Health Standards

Standard 1 Prepare the Treatment Area

Standard 2 Inform the Client of the Fees and Obtain His/Her Agreement to a Fee Schedule

Standard 3 Wash Your Hands and Any Skin Surface that Will/Has Come in Contact with the Client

Standard 4 Interview the Client to Obtain His/Her Treatment Goals

Standard 5 Risk Identification and Management for an Outbreak of Infectious Diseases

Standard 6 Obtain, Update and Record the Client's Health History

Standard 7 Consent

Standard 8 Determine the Client's Condition by Conducting Assessment/Re Assessment

Standard 9 Determine if Massage Therapy Treatment is Indicated

Standard 10 Treatment and Treatment Plans

Standard 11 Pre / Post Treatment Protocol

Standard 12 Draping

Standard 13 Recommend Self Care



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Standard 14 Client Health Record

Standard 15 Use of Personal Protective Equipment During a Treatment

Standard 16 Discharge of a Client

Section B: Technique Standards

Standard 30 Introduction to the Standards for Specific Massage Therapy Techniques

Standard 31 Perform a Stroking Technique

Standard 32 Perform a Rocking or Shaking Technique

Standard 33 Perform an Effleurage Technique

Standard 34 Perform a Petrissage Technique

Standard 35 Perform a Friction Technique

Standard 36 Perform a Vibration Technique

Standard 37 Perform a Tapotement Technique

Standard 38 Apply Deep Fascial Techniques

Standard 39 Myo Fascial Trigger Points

Standard 40 Apply Low Grade Joint Mobilization (Sustained Grade I or II or Grade I or II Oscillations)

Standard 41 Apply High Grade Joint Mobilization (Sustained Grade II and or Oscillations III and IV Joint Mobilization)

Standard 42 Perform a Stretch Technique

Standard 43 Perform an Intra Oral Treatment

Standard 44 Perform Breast Massage

Standard 45 Perform Massage to the Chest Wall

Standard 46 Apply Hydrotherapy

Section C: Additional Techniques Standards

Standard 60 Introduction to the Standards for Specific Additional Massage Therapy Techniques



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Standard 1

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: June 5, 2011

Amended: June 5, 2011

Rescinded:

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.



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Standard 2

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

Inform the Client of the Fees and Obtain His/Her 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 his/her agreement to a fee schedule.

Standard:

Quality / Technical:

- Ensuring that your fee schedule is posted in a location where clients may see it or a copy provided to the client.
- Ensuring 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.
- Ensuring that you explain to the client your policy with regard to cancellation of appointments.
- Providing the client with an opportunity to ask questions about the rate and fee schedule.
- So that any charges that deviate from the set schedule have been agreed to by the client and documented in the clinical notes with the reasons and agreement indicated.

Timing:

- When the client arrives to his/her first appointment or prior to arrival.



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Standard 3

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.

Standards:

Quality / Technical:

- Ensure that soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer is used to clean skin surfaces by washing for a minimum of 10 seconds, including all surfaces.

Timing:

- Immediately before and immediately after each client treatment.



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Standard 4

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

Interview the Client to Obtain His/Her Treatment Goals

Conditions:

In a treatment area, given a client who comes to you for Massage Therapy.

Task:

Interview the client to obtain his/ her 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 his/her 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.



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Standard 5

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 or are treated in isolation with all surface areas of the clinic area cleansed appropriately 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.



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Standard 6

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 cerebro-vascular 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



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- presence of infectious conditions for example:
 - infectious skin conditions
 - infectious respiratory conditions
 - hepatitis
 - HIV
 - herpes
- pregnancy, gynecological conditions
- other diagnosed diseases or medical conditions, for example: digestive conditions,
- hemophilia, 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 his/her 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 disease are recognized and Routine 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 any contraindications for Massage Therapy or Massage Therapy technique(s) are recognized.



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Standard 7

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 MTAA Scope of Practice.
- So that consent is obtained voluntarily.
- So that consent is not obtained through misrepresentation or fraud.

Quality/Interpersonal:

- So that the client is told the nature and purpose of the proposed assessment /reassessment and/or treatment including the areas of the body involved.
- So that the client is informed of any risks, benefits, possible complications and any contraindications of the assessment / reassessment and/or treatment.
- So that the client is informed that assessment / reassessment or treatment will be stopped or modified at any time, at his/her request.
- So that you tell the client that you will be checking periodically to determine the client's level of comfort.
- So that the client is given an opportunity to ask any questions.

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.



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Standard 9

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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

Conditions:

Given information about a client's treatment goals, his/her 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 the Communication / Public Health Standards are followed if undressing or undraping is required prior to, during or following conducting the assessment/reassessment.

Quality / Technical and 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 includes 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 / reassessment are recorded in the clients health record as soon as possible, within 24 hours of assessment / reassessment.



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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.



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Standard 10

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 MTAA Scope of Practice.
- So that any changes in the client's wishes regarding consent are obtained before each treatment and are followed.

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 reassessment of the client's condition, and/or recommended remedial exercises and/or hydrotherapy.
- So that the plan is consistent with the MTAA Scope of Practice.

Timing:

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



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Inform the Client of Any Change in the Treatment Plan

Conditions:

Given that the client informed you of changes in his/her wishes, his/her 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 client of change in treatment plan.

Standard:

Quality / Interpersonal

- So that you ask the client if he/she has any questions.
- So that you answer the client's questions and/or refer him/her to another health care professional for questions that are not within your area of expertise.

Quality / Technical:

- So that the information conveyed 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.



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Standard 11

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 he / she is 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 him/her 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 respectful privacy of the client by use of covering, while assisting him/her 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 his /her body for treatment.
- So that the client is advised as to use of the sheets to cover him/herself once he/she is in position for treatment, if he/she is undressed. (Please see Communication / Public Health Standard 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.



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- So that all efforts are made to maintain respectful privacy of the client by use of covering, while assisting him/her 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 he/she needs 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.



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Standard 12

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 is rearranged for his/her 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 Standards.
- So that the client's genitalia or gluteal cleft are not exposed.
- Notwithstanding all 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 clients 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



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Standard:

Quality / Technical:

- So that the client is informed 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 the client is asked about his/ her level of comfort after he/she is in the new position.
- So that all efforts are made to maintain respectful privacy of the client by use of covering, while assisting him/her to change position.

Safety:

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



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Standard 13

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.



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Standard 14

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 should 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 his/her last visit, the records are kept for 10 years after the day he/she turned (or would have turned) 18.

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.



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- 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.



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Standard 15

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 Guidelines* 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.



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Standard 16

Category: COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC HEALTH

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 discussion 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.



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Massage Therapy Technique Standards

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 his/her pain level within a mutually agreed upon range of acceptable pain.

Quality / Technical:

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



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 30

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 31

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 32

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 33

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta

Standards of Practice

Standard 34

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 a 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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 35

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 36

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

Perform a Tapotement Technique

Conditions:

Given that the client's treatment plan indicates the need for a 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, abdomen or any fragile tissue.
- So that tapotement is not used or is modified if a contraindication to this technique exists.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 37

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

Apply Deep Fascial Techniques

Conditions:

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

Task:

Apply 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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta

Standards of Practice

Standard 38

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

Myofascial Trigger Points

Identify Myofascial Trigger Points

Conditions:

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

Task:

Identify myofascial 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 Myofascial Trigger Points

Conditions:

Given that a trigger point has been identified.

Task:

Treat myofascial 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 myofascial 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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta

Standards of Practice

Standard 39

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta

Standards of Practice

Standard 40

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 is 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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 41

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 42

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta

Standards of Practice

Standard 43

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

Perform Breast Massage

Conditions:

Given that breast massage is requested or clinically indicated prior to treatment, and that the client has consented to breast massage.

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 & Interpersonal:

- 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 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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Standard 44

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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 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.



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta

Standards of Practice

Standard 45

Category: Technique

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

Apply Hydrotherapy

Conditions:

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

Task:

Apply hydrotherapy.

Standard:

Quality / Technical & 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 Guidelines* document.

Safety:

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



Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Standards of Practice

Additional Massage Therapy Technique Standards

Category: Additional Techniques

Ratified: September 13, 2008

Amended:

Rescinded:

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.
- 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 his/her 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 judgment 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.