

iUSP161 – Provide complex massage techniques for sports massage

URN – T/617/5651

Guided Learning Hours: 85

Learning outcome	Assessment criteria	Taught content to include
LO1 Understand the principles of complex techniques used in sports massage	1.1. Describe a range of complex techniques used in sports massage, to include: • Myofascial • Positional release • PNF • Active isolated stretching	• Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) • Muscle energy technique (MET) - Post isometric relaxation - Reciprocal inhibition - Isokinetic contraction - Isolytic contraction • Positional release • Strain/counterstrain • Myofascial release • Neuromuscular technique • Active isolated stretching • Passive stretching
	1.2. Explain the protocols to follow for complex techniques used in sports massage, to include: • Myofascial • Positional release • PNF • Active isolated stretching	• Palpatory literacy and awareness of tissue-states • Client subjective perception • Reasoning and treatment selection • Informing client of intended action/obtaining informed consent • Clear instruction throughout procedure • Client positioning • Therapist positioning and posture • Timing of contractions, stretches and relaxation periods • Degrees of forces used • Barriers engaged • Modes of end-feel • Comparisons to established norms
	1.3. Critically evaluate the effects of each technique	• Intended outcomes • Range and quality of movement • Historical precedents and measurable comparisons • Impact on daily activities and quality of life • Alterations to symptomatology • Changes to objective findings • Individual peculiarities

	1.4. Critically evaluate the benefits of sports massage for pre-existing conditions	• Stroke • Hyper/hypotension • Angina • Vertebral artery disease • Haemophilia (mild) • COPD • Asthma • Colitis/Crohn's disease • Diabetes • Cancer • Arthritis • Parkinson's disease • Motor neurone disease • Muscular sclerosis • Chronic fatigue syndrome • Fibromyalgia • Pregnancy
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LO2 Understand aftercare methods to complement complex massage techniques for sports massage	2.1. Describe range of aftercare methods, to include: • Mobility relevant to condition • Proprioception • Isometric strengthening	• Cryotherapy • Hot and cold treatments • Mobility • Stretches • Strengthening exercises • Functional movement patterns and co-ordination • Trunk and core stability • Breathing and respiration • Proprioception exercises • Postural improvement and symmetry • Compliance • Nutritional recommendations • Active rest and sporting participation • Rest, relaxation and sleep • Third party liaison (coach, manager, employer, therapist, physician) • Specialised equipment
	2.2. Evaluate the purpose and benefits of each aftercare method	• Manage inflammation • Increase range and quality of motion • Promote strength and durability • Promote healing • Support immunity and general health • Improve skills, proprioceptive abilities and co-ordination • Re-establish functional capacity • Reduce scar tissue • Encourage myofascial integrity • Maximise myofascial pliability and alignment • Increase knowledge and self-awareness

		- Promote posture and respiratory capacity - Sustain psychological health
	2.3. Explain the safe and effective use of each aftercare method	- Appropriate selection and timing of aftercare strategies - Recognise stage and severity of condition - Plan realistic goals - Monitor and adapt approaches - Use a sequential approach - Acknowledge contra-indications - Recognise red or yellow flags - Tailor aftercare to the individual
	2.4. Explain contra-indications and precautions for each aftercare method	- Timed application of ice treatments - Avoidance of soft tissue intervention in acute stages - Accommodate underlying pathologies - Sequential introduction of each method - Role and timing of conservative and aggressive intervention - Use and management of therapeutic inflammation - Communicate possibilities of contra-actions - Emphasise the importance of compliance - Diminished co-ordination and proprioception
	2.5. Explain possible side effects and adverse effects of each aftercare method	- Discomfort during exercise - Post exercise muscle and fascial soreness - Inflammation - Crepitation during motion - Sensitivity of scar tissue - Feelings of apprehension and loss of confidence - Impatience and non-compliance during rehabilitation and condition management - Managing setbacks

LO3 Be able to apply complex massage techniques	3.1. Prepare clients for complex massage techniques	- Consultation - Examination - Observation - Palpation - Special testing - Informed consent - Treatment plan - Procedural explanation
	3.2. Position clients for comfort, dignity and maximal effectiveness	- Supine - Lateral recumbent - Prone - Seated - Use of available massage supports - Couch and cover - Seat

		- Floor - Other surface • Towels • Bolsters
	3.3. Locate bony and soft structures associated with treatment area	• Regions - Neck, chest, shoulder and upper extremity - Back ▪ Cervical ▪ Thoracic ▪ Lumbar ▪ Sacral and coccygeal - Abdominal wall ▪ Anterolateral ▪ Posterior - Hip, gluteal, thigh and lower extremity • Tissues and landmarks - Myofascial tissues and tendons of origin and insertion - Ligaments - Bony landmarks - Nerves - Bursae - Cartilage/menisci - Joint margins
	3.4. Demonstrate complex massage techniques	• Preparatory techniques - Effleurage - Petrissage - Frictions • Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) • Muscle energy technique (MET) • Positional release and strain/counterstrain • Myofascial release • Soft tissue release (STR) • Neuromuscular technique (NMT) • Active isolated stretching • Passive stretching
	3.5. Monitor tissue response throughout treatments	• Tone, texture, temperature and tenderness • Tissue response versus reactivity • Vasomotor and secretomotor responses • Muscle guarding and spasm • Yielding and softening • Turgor
	3.6. Gain feedback from clients about the techniques throughout treatment	• Tenderness • Tissue changes • Verbal dialogue • Body language

	3.7. Adapt complex massage techniques to meet the needs of clients	• Adapt pressures • Interchangeable applicators - Heel of hand - Thenar eminence - Fingers - Thumbs - Forearm • Alter direction of stroke • Change body or body part position • Technique substitution • Alter intensity
	3.8. Adapt own posture and position throughout application to ensure safe and effective application	• Proximity of therapist to treatment area • Standing and seated positions • Width and direction of stance • Maintain a neutral spine • Variable extension of knees and elbow • Neutral position of wrist and finger joints • Use of body weight and momentum • Angle of force • Guarding hypermobile joints • Adjust couch height • Lunging action • Pulling and pushing techniques • Use of couch and floor
	3.9. Evaluate the effectiveness of complex massage techniques	• Subjective responses • Client feedback • Re-examination of objective findings • Functional examination • Tissue responses during and after treatment • Relative range of motion • Biomechanical alignment and postural changes • Quality of end-feel • Comparison against established norms
	3.10. Adapt treatment plan based on evaluation of treatments	• Objective findings - Posture - Range of motion and end-feel - Strength - Balance and gait - Daily functional capacity - Tissue quality • Subjective findings - Pain level
	3.11. Present aftercare advice to clients, providing opportunities for questions	• Cryotherapy • Hot and cold treatments • Mobility

		• Stretches • Strengthening exercises • Functional movement patterns and co-ordination • Trunk and core stability • Breathing and respiration • Proprioception exercises • Postural improvement and symmetry • Compliance • Nutritional recommendations • Active rest and sporting participation • Rest, relaxation and sleep • Third party liaison (coach, manager, employer, therapist, physician) • Specialised equipment • Manage inflammation • Increase range and quality of motion • Promote strength and durability • Promote healing • Support immunity and general health • Improve skills, proprioceptive abilities and co-ordination • Re-establish functional capacity • Reduce scar tissue • Encourage myofascial integrity • Maximise myofascial pliability and alignment • Increase knowledge and self-awareness • Promote posture and respiratory capacity • Sustain psychological health • Appropriate selection and timing of aftercare strategies • Recognise stage and severity of condition • Plan realistic goals • Monitor and adapt approaches • Use a sequential approach • Acknowledge contra-indications • Recognise red or yellow flags • Tailor aftercare to the individual • Timed application of ice treatments • Avoidance of soft tissue intervention in acute stages • Accommodate underlying pathologies • Sequential introduction of each method • Role and timing of conservative and aggressive intervention • Use and management of therapeutic inflammation • Communicate possibilities of contra-actions • Emphasise the importance of compliance • Diminished co-ordination and proprioception • Discomfort during exercise • Post exercise muscle and facial soreness
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		• Inflammation • Crepitation during motion • Sensitivity of scar tissue • Feelings of apprehension and loss of confidence • Impatience and non-compliance during rehabilitation and condition management • Managing setbacks
LO4 Understand evidence-based practice	4.1. Explain the concept of evidence-based practice	• Qualitative, theoretical and quantitative data • Interdisciplinary approaches • Norms for evidence-based practice (EBP) • EBP versus rule of thumb, folklore and tradition
	4.2. Explain the importance of evidence-based practice in sport	• Based on scientific experimentation • Systematic approach to practice • Based on meticulous observation, analysis and enumeration • Leads to further areas for scientific study • Integrates individual expertise with external clinical evidence • Eliminates anecdotal evidence and guesswork
LO5 Be able to evaluate research undertaken on sports massage	5.1. Critically appraise research undertaken on the use of sports massage	• Trustworthiness • Value • Relevance • Validity • Reliability • Peer reviewed
	5.2. Draw conclusions on support for the use of sports massage	• Reflective practice • Referrals • Research • Professional associations

Assessment	
Practical Examination Portfolio of evidence containing: • 5 practical performances • Assignment – Conduct a review on research undertaken on sports massage/soft tissue therapy	Complex sports massage techniques should be carried out on a minimum of 5 different clients evidenced through the use of signed and dated treatment evidence forms which can be downloaded from www.vtctskills.org.uk. Assignment guidance forms and assignment assessment forms can be downloaded from www.vtctskills.org.uk.

Guide to taught content
The content contained within the unit specification is not prescriptive or exhaustive but is intended to provide helpful guidance to teachers and learners with the key areas that will be covered within the unit, and, relating to the kinds of evidence that should be provided for each assessment objective specific to the unit learning outcomes.

Document History

Version	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v1	13/08/2019	First published	Qualifications and Regulation Co-ordinator
v2	25/06/2026	Rebranding	Development Administrator