

iUSP178 – Sports massage treatments

URN – F/617/5684

Guided Learning Hours: 90

Learning outcome	Assessment criteria	Taught content to include
LO1 Understand the history and development of massage	1.1. Summarise the history and origins of massage	• Arabic • French • Origins - Chinese - Hippocrates - Galen - Dark ages - Per Henrick Ling - Johann Georg Mezger
	1.2. Explain the development of sports massage	• 1900 Finnish School of Massage • 1924 Olympic Games • Paavo Nurmi • 1924-1930 Dr. I.M. Sarkisov-Sirasini • 1980 Jack Meagher • 1985 The American Massage Therapy Association
	1.3. Explain how sports massage can complement other therapies and treatments	• Working environments • Sports sector • Physical therapists • Mainstream medicine • Specific roles and responsibilities

LO2 Understand the fundamentals of sports massage treatments	2.1. Explain the contexts in which sports massage is used	• Pre-event • Intra-event • Post-event • Inter-event • Maintenance
	2.2. Explain the requirements of a suitable environment for sports massage	• Treatment room - Lighting - Heating - Ventilation - Available space - General hygiene - Waste disposal - Décor - Equipment - Privacy - Reception areas - General use/treatment areas • In-situ environment - Awareness and minimisation of risk - Suitable adaptability to environment
	2.3. Identify types of equipment needed for sports massage, giving reasons	• Couch/plinth and couch roll • Other suitable surface • Towels and bolsters • Blankets • Massage mediums - Oil - Talc - Cream - Specialised sports massage mediums • Heat pads • Ice packs • Sanitising fluid
	2.4. Identify signs and symptoms of contra-actions	• Muscle soreness • Bruising • Inflammation • Cramp • Erythema

		• Fatigue • Headache • Increase in frequency of urination or defaecation • Thirst • Heightened emotions • Cold-like symptoms • Nausea
	2.5. Identify the therapist's subsequent response to contra-actions	• During treatment - Technique-approaches can be adapted - Stretches applied in cases of cramp - Client reassured and advised • After treatment - Client pre-warned - Strategies provided - Application of ice – hot and cold contrast therapy - Rehydration - Rest - Reassurance
	2.6. Describe a range of sports massage techniques, to include: • Methods • Application • Effects • Safety considerations	• Application - Technique - Sequence - Pressure - Direction - Speed - Rhythm - Skills • Effects - Physical ▪ Stretches and releases - Physiological ▪ Stimulation ▪ Blood flow ▪ Extensibility ▪ Heat ▪ Lymph drainage ▪ Breakdown of adhesions ▪ Mobility of soft tissue ▪ Pain reduction

		- Psychological ▪ Relaxation • Methods - Effleurage - Petrissage - Frictions - Tapotement ▪ Hacking ▪ Cupping ▪ Beating ▪ Pounding - Vibrations - Oscillations - Connective tissue massage (CTM) ▪ Cross-fibre frictions - Compressions - Splitting - Stretches ▪ Maintenance ▪ Developmental ▪ Active ▪ Passive ▪ Assisted • Safety considerations - Technique - Tissue responses - Contra-indications - Health and resilience of client - Verbal contact - Feedback - Contra-actions
	2.7. Explain the importance of positioning and posture for the: • Sports masseur • Client • Use of props	• Sports massage therapist • Client • Props - Couch - Bench - Floor - Chair

		- Mat - Towels - Bolsters - Massage media - Heat pads - Ice packs
	2.8. Describe effects and benefits of commonly used mediums in sports massage	• Oil • Talc • Cream • Specialised sports massage mediums
	2.9. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of commonly used mediums in sports massage	• Oil • Talc • Cream • Specialised sports massage mediums

LO3 Understand how to assess and screen clients for sports massage treatments	3.1. Describe what is meant by subjective and objective assessments	• Subjective assessment - Verbal data - Client questioning - Client perception and interpretation • Objective assessment - Observation - Measurable data - Information gathered through physical examination
	3.2. Explain methods of carrying out subjective and objective assessments	• Subjective assessment - Questions establish - Type of sport or physical activity - Level of sport or physical activity - Frequency of training or competition - Previous injuries - Medical history and medication - Details of presenting complaint or injury • Objective assessment - Information attained through instruction, observation and palpation - Posture analysis - Range of motion testing - Strength testing

		- Special
	3.3. Explain reasons for use of subjective and objective assessments	• Subjective assessment - Information from the client's viewpoint giving information based on: ▪ Personal opinion ▪ Emotion ▪ Perception ▪ Interpretation ▪ Psychological status • Objective assessment - Information attained by the sports massage therapist that is: ▪ Analytical ▪ Fact-based ▪ Measurable ▪ Observable ▪ Reproducible
	3.4. Explain the value of client consultation	• Personal information • Trust and rapport • Suitability for treatment • Informed consent • Future treatments or referral
	3.5. Explain the importance of accurate client assessments and re-assessments	• Client assessment - Physical and psychological status of client - Data provides a means of informed analysis - Suitability for treatment - Accurate data for treatment plan - Legal requirements - Record keeping • Client re-assessment - Monitors changes - Comparison between treatments - Efficacy of previous treatment - Feedback - Adverse reactions to treatment - Informs changes to the original treatment plan, exercise and aftercare strategies - Motivational tool

LO4 Be able to carry out client assessments	4.1. Carry out subjective assessments of clients	• Assessment • Consultation • Posture • Comfortable movement patterns • Palpation • Observation • Verbal and non-verbal • Client's personal and medical details • Contra-indications requiring medical permission • Client medical history • Previous medical history • Type and level of pain • Nature of sporting or physical activity participation • Details of presenting complaint or injury or other reasons for seeking treatment • Contra-indications that require medical permission - Pregnancy - Cardiovascular conditions (thrombosis, phlebitis, hypertension, hypotension, heart conditions) - Haemophilia - Any condition already being treated by a GP or another health professional, e.g., physiotherapist, osteopath, chiropractor, coach - Medical oedema - Osteoporosis - Arthritis - Nervous/psychotic conditions - Epilepsy - Recent operations - Diabetes - Asthma - Any dysfunction of the nervous system (e.g., Multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Motor Neurone disease) - Bell's palsy - Trapped/pinched nerve (e.g., sciatica) - Inflamed nerve - Cancer - Postural deformities
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		- Spastic conditions - Kidney infections - Whiplash - Slipped disc - Undiagnosed pain - When taking prescribed medication - Acute rheumatism - Acute trauma - Tumour - Open wounds - Frostbite - Acute soft tissue injury - Bursitis - Periostitis - Myositis ossificans - Risk of haemorrhage - Mental incapacity
	4.2. Obtain informed consent before carrying out physical assessments	• Personal or written permission from the parent/guardian/carer • GP permission to treat • Consultation form • Signatures
	4.3. Carry out objective assessments of clients	• Instruction • Observations • Testing for fitness (agility, flexibility, strength) • Posture and figure analysis • Range of movement • Active and passive • Functional tests • Special testing • Palpation and physical examination • Massage strategy • Advice and guidance

LO5 Be able to devise sports massage treatment plans	5.1. Devise massage strategies relevant to collated information	- Consider history, subjective and objective data - Judge whether treatment is indicated or contra-indicated - Where contra-indicated: Refer or advise - Where indicated: Devise treatment plan that considers short, medium and long term objectives
	5.2. Present massage strategies to clients and obtain informed consent	- Present and agree treatment plan to client - Obtain signature

LO6 Be able to apply sports massage treatments	6.1. Prepare treatment area, equipment and self for sports massage	- Environment - Couch - Trolley - Client - Towels - Use appropriate supports e.g., under the ankles, chest and forehead, knees, head, or wherever a support is appropriate for the sports massage movement
	6.2. Prepare clients for sports massage	- Comfort - Client care - Positioning - Ease of treatment - Support - Use appropriate supports e.g., under the ankles, chest and forehead, knees, head, or wherever a support is appropriate for the sports massage movement - Ensuring all parts of the client are covered except the area being massaged - Cleanse the feet with a medi-wipe or similar - Pre-cleansing of area to be worked on if required
	6.3. Position clients for comfort, dignity and maximal effectiveness	- Checking consultation and contra-indications - Explaining the treatment to the client - Helping the client onto the couch/seat, protecting the client's modesty at all times - Ensure that all parts of the client are covered except the area being massaged - Cleanse the hands & feet with a medi-wipe or similar - Wash own hands

		• Keep ensuring that the client is comfortable • Remove the massage medium at the end of the treatment if appropriate • Help the client off the couch/seat protecting their modesty at all times
	6.4. Carry out massage methods that meet the presentation and needs of the client	• Sports massage strategies • Pre-event • Intra-event • Post-event • Inter-event • Corrective • Preventative • Maintenance • Conditioning massages • Effleurage • Petrissage • Frictions • Tapotement • Vibrations • Specific sports massage techniques (CTM, cross fibre friction, pressure etc.) • Compressions
	6.5. Adapt own posture and position throughout application to ensure safe and effective application	• Therapist • Within the massage room • In situ
	6.6. Monitor visual and oral feedback and adapt treatment strategy	• At the end of each treatment the client's feelings and any skin or other reactions should be recorded • The following areas should be monitored: - Outcomes achieved - Effectiveness of the treatment - Any change in demands - Whether the treatment met the needs of the client - Longer term needs of the client - Encourage clients to express their feelings/requirement during the treatment - Note client's reactions and make appropriate adjustments

	6.7. Remove massage medium when necessary	• Tissue • Cotton wool • Couch roll • Surgical spirit
	6.8. Maintain interaction with clients throughout the massage	• Verbal feedback • Non-verbal feedback • Instruction • Rapport
	6.9. Apply and maintain professional standards throughout treatments	• Demonstrate appropriate attire – Clean, ironed professional wear • Full, flat shoes • No visible underwear • Hair neat, clean and tied back – not on the collar or face • Short, clean well-manicured nails with no varnish and clean hands • No jewellery – with the exception a wedding band and 1 pair of small stud earrings • No chewing of gum or sucking of sweets, body or breath odour
	6.10. Restore working environment to safe and hygienic condition	• Legislation and working practices - Any particular rights, restrictions, acts and charters applicable to massage treatment, e.g.: ▪ Health and Safety at Work Act ▪ General Product Safety Regulations ▪ Cosmetic Products (Safety) Regulations ▪ Data Protection Act/GDPR - Advertising standards - Legal framework relating to people and settings with which the practitioner is involved, e.g.: ▪ Mental Health Act ▪ Children Act - Moral rights which are not recognised by law - Records which the practitioner is responsible for completing in relation to rights and responsibilities - Code of good practice/ethics - Insurance and professional association membership - Legislation which relates to the work being carried out, the environment and the client with whom the practitioner is working - Awareness of National Occupational Standards

LO7 Understand evaluation of sports massage treatments	7.1. Describe methods used to evaluate the effectiveness of treatments	• Client feedback - Adverse reactions - Pain level - Mobility - Strength - Ability to perform everyday tasks - Sport or physical activity - Progression of symptoms since last treatment • Physical re-assessment - Posture analysis - Range of motion testing - Strength testing - Special testing
	7.2. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of evaluation methods	• Client feedback - Disadvantages ▪ Subjective ▪ Unreliable ▪ Client integrity ▪ Accurate perception - Advantages ▪ Client can monitor condition ▪ Awareness of capabilities ▪ Experiences the condition at first hand • Physical re-assessment - Disadvantages ▪ Monitoring ▪ Re-assessment ▪ Tests are limited in their scope ▪ Tests not fully reliable - Advantages ▪ Physical assessment ▪ Demonstrable ▪ Changes can be observed and palpated
	7.3. Explain the importance of providing opportunities for further feedback	• Client - Consistency of feedback - Opportunity for client to relay previously undisclosed information

		• Therapist - Reinforces understanding - Further empowers client to actively participate in actively achieving objectives - Reinforces key aspects
	7.4. Explain the importance of self-reflection	• Organises and clarifies thought processes • Provides solutions to problems • Identifies skills or knowledge gaps • Identifies potential for continuous professional development • Establishes whether existing skills or knowledge are being fully utilised • Direct response to client feedback • Encourages intellectual growth
LO8 Be able to evaluate sports massage treatments	8.1. Carry out post-massage assessments of clients	• Rest • Hydration • Awareness of adverse reaction • Erythema • Pain stiffness • Tiredness • Light headedness • Bruising • Stretches • Contra-actions • Physical assessment • Feedback • Explanation
	8.2. Obtain feedback from clients	• Record evidence • Evaluate • Reflection
	8.3. Reflect on feedback received and self-analysis of treatment	• Client feedback • Achievement of aims and objectives • Identify strengths • Identify aspects that could be improved • Build upon knowledge and skills

	8.4. Evaluate treatment and identify areas and opportunities for improvement	• Consultation • Posture • Pain free active movement patterns • Palpation • Observation • Verbal and non-verbal • Justify strengths • Evaluate validity of client feedback • Match client and own expectations with established precedents • Plan strategy for improvement
	8.5. Present aftercare advice to clients, providing opportunities for questions	• Aftercare advice • Home care advice • Home exercises to improve problem area • Re-assessment through question and answer session • Re-evaluation
	8.6. Record massage sessions as legally required	• Consultation form • Subjective data • Objective data • Indications • Contra-indications • Referral • Hypothesis/analysis • Treatment plan • Treatment • Aftercare • Evaluation

Assessment

Portfolio of evidence containing 5 practical performance	25 full sports massage treatments to be performed on five different profile clients (Case studies can be made through a number of combinations)
Practical examination	To include: • Consultation including medical history • Treatment details including pre-event, post-event & maintenance • After/home care advice • Candidates and client signature • Treatment date The Therapist must also perform 10 logged treatments that include pre-event, post-event and maintenance massage routines on specific areas of the body. These do not need to be documented.

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	24/04/2023	Amended requirement to 25 treatments	Qualification Administrator
v3	26/06/2026	Rebranding	Development Administrator