

Sports Massage Advice Sheet

What is Massage?

Massage therapy is the scientific manipulation of soft tissues of the body for the purpose of normalising those tissues and consists of manual techniques that include applying fixed or movable pressure, holding, and/or causing movement of or to the body.

What is Sports Massage?

A form of massage which utilises specific techniques and stretches to help obtain maximum performance and physical conditioning with less chance of injury or pain. It increases power, endurance, and flexibility both before and after an event or workout.

NICE Guidelines suggest for lower back pain a course of manual therapy - 12 weeks and 9 treatments – including manipulation, mobilisation and massage.

Intended benefits

- Reduce pain and swelling
- Reduce muscle injury
- Reduce muscle spasm
- Relieve stress and aid relaxation
- Relieve muscle tension and stiffness
- Promotes faster healing of strained muscles and ligaments
- Increase ROM/ flexibility
- Strengthen immune system
- Form of Rehab after injury
- Improve blood flow
- Improve posture

Physiological effects:

Chemical

- Vasodilation and local blood flow are increased as a result of histamine

Mechanical

- Increased Venous flow
- Increased lymphatic flow
- Reduction in oedema

Reflex effects

- Stimulates local cutaneous mechanoreceptors that moderate pain
- Increase blood pressure initially, then decrease it.

Potential causes of trigger points

- Activation of trigger points may be caused by a number of factors including the following:
- Acute or chronic muscle overload
- Activation by other trigger points
- Disease
- Psychological distress (via systemic inflammation)
- Homeostatic imbalances
- Direct trauma to the region
- Accident trauma (such as a car accident which stresses many muscles and causes instant trigger points)
- Radiculopathy infections and health issues such as smoking

Precautions

- Pregnancy
- Cardio vascular conditions
- Haemophilia
- Medical oedema
- Osteoporosis
- Arthritis
- Nervous/Psychotic conditions
- Recent operations
- Bell's Palsy
- Inflamed nerve
- Previous malignancy/ cancer
- Spastic conditions
- Kidney infections
- Whiplash
- Slipped disc
- Undiagnosed pain
- Acute rheumatism
- Any dysfunction of the nervous system (e.g. Muscular sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Motor neurone disease)
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Skin diseases
- Undiagnosed lumps and bumps
- Inflammation
- Varicose veins
- Pregnancy (abdomen)
- Cuts/ bruises/ abrasions
- Sunburn
- Hormonal implants
- Abdominal pain
- Haematoma
- Hernia
- Recent fractures (minimum 3 months)
- Cervical spondylitis
- Gastric ulcers
- Scar tissues (2 years for major operation and 6 months for a small scar)
- Recent operations
- Postural deformities
- Medical oedema

Contraindications

- Cancer
- Acute injury (first 24-48 hrs)
- Fever
- Suspected DVT
- Hyperthermia
- Infectious diseases
- Under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol

Aftercare Advice

The massage can be quite intense to the muscles, so you may find you experience some of the following symptoms after your massage:

- Tiredness
- Heightened Emotions
- Sounder Sleep
- Cold Symptoms
- Stuffy or Blocked Nose
- Increased Thirst
- Muscle Tenderness
- Bruised Feeling within the Muscle
- Redness to the area

In order to get the most out of your massage, ensure you do the following after your massage:

- Drink plenty of water
- Rest as much as possible
- Avoid any exercise or any strenuous work
- Apply ice or heat (your therapist will advise) to any sore or tender areas