



American Naturopathic Association

The oldest and original Naturopathic organization since 1919

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□ POSITION PAPER □

JOINT MOBILIZATION (Manipulation)

This type of manual therapy has been used by naturopathic doctors since the early days of Naturopathy under the term *Mechanotherapy*. In recent decades, this was more or less officially designated as Naturopathic Manipulative Treatment (NMT). *Joint mobilization* is the contemporary and more accurate term. Modern writers, naturopathic as well as osteopathic and chiropractic, now differentiate between “impulse” movements (that produce a “pop”) and “non-impulse” movements like stretching and guided range of motion. The historic term “manipulation” is increasingly used exclusively for only “impulse” or high-velocity movements.

The official description of this therapy is:

“ Treatment by manual and other mechanical means of all body tissues and structures, including but not limited to bones, fascia, muscles, tendons, ligaments, entheses, joint capsules, bursae, tendon sheaths, scar tissue, and visceral organs. These may be located anywhere in the human body, including, but not limited to the spine, cranium, thoracoabdominal cavity and/or extremities. These manual and mechanical techniques involve the use of oscillation, thrust, pressure and sustained tension including but not limited to: high and low velocity techniques, high and low amplitude techniques, traction, mobilization through physiologic and extra-physiologic ranges of motion including passive intrinsic mobility of all body joints, and repositioning of displaced body tissues and organs”

The ANA’s position is that it is fitting and indeed essential that naturopathic education continue to include a range of manual therapies aimed at the musculoskeletal system, given that the interconnected system of nerves, muscles and bones make up two-thirds of the body mass, and illustrates to naturopathic students how an injury or illness in one part of the body can affect another. Naturopathic doctors should be able to safely and effectively perform joint mobilization, and naturopathic schools should provide the instruction to achieve that.