Unit 7: Applying sport massage techniques

Sports Massage
1) Preparation
2) Techniques
3) Sequence
Learners will be able to:

Understand how to prepare for Sports Massage
1.1- 1.4

Be able to prepare for sports massage
2.1-2.3
Preparing the treatment area

Sports massage may be conducted:

**Indoor** e.g.:
- Clinic
- Sporting venue
- Changing room
- Client’s home

**Outdoor** e.g.:
- Track / pitch side
- Field (mountain bike, cross country etc.)
- Back of car / van
In the clinic

- The room should be warm, quiet, private and well ventilated.
- The area must be clean and tidy.
- A hand basin or sink should be available.
- Toilet facilities for the client’s use should be available and regularly cleaned.
- A plentiful supply of clean, laundered towels, linen and paper couch roll.
- A lined, covered bin.

Creating a risk assessment checklist would be beneficial.
In-situ

When working in an environment which is not easily controlled, health and safety is paramount

- Avoid obvious hazards such as doorways, stairs, large volumes of human traffic
- Avoid working underneath trees
- Ensure ground is level and stable
- Consider the use of a bare couch
- Towels should be used prudently, massaging through clothing when possible
- Hands and couch can be kept clean using alcohol wipes
- If working in a confined area, take regular breaks
- Provide suitable privacy to the client
Selecting a surface

While a massage couch is preferred, therapists can actually use any kind of surface to perform a massage.

The surface need to be:
- Clean
- Large enough for the client
- Comfortable
- Strong/stable
- Have no sharp edges
- In an appropriate location
Personal hygiene

Cleanliness in the massage environment is very important:

- Hair should be tied back
- Armpits and feet should be covered
- Nails should be short
- Wash hands before and after a massage (or alcohol wipes)
- Use couch roll with all clients
Setting up your treatment couch

The height of the couch can be set by raising it until the sports massage practitioner’s finger tips touch the top of the couch when standing aside it with arms by their side.
Preparing the couch

‘Props’ is a term for anything that supports a client such as:

- Bolsters
- Towels
- Pillows

Also use couch roll and towels to prepare your couch
Lubricants/massage medium

Using a massage medium reduces the friction between the practitioner’s hands and the client’s skin.

There are several types of massage medium that can be used each with their own advantages / disadvantages e.g.:

- oil
- lotion
- cream
- powder
Ready to go!

As a group create an equipment and health & safety checklist for a Sports Massage

1) Create a checklist for a clinic/client’s home

2) Create a checklist for in-situ/sporting environment

3) Using your checklist go set up your bed ready for a massage

Use page 27 of your LAP to help
What have you learnt?

- Can you now set up your own massage environment?
- Do you understand the importance of health and safety when setting up your massage environment?
- Do you know how to keep yourself and your client safe during an in-situ massage?
Learners will be able to:

Understand the effects of sports massage
Unit 6: 5.1- 5.4
Physiological Effects

**Sympathetic response (flight and fight)**
Performed vigorously it can help increase mental alertness and leave the client feeling stimulated and ready for activity.

**Parasympathetic response (rest and digest)**
A reduction in physical tension brings about feelings of well being and relaxation.

Decreases stress hormones such as cortisol and increases bonding/happy hormones such as oxytocin
Psychological benefits

Depending on the massage:

- Aids relaxation
- Mentally stimulates
- Creates a sense of well-being
- Improves energy levels
- Improves concentration
- Increases bodily awareness
Physical effects

**Mechanical pumping and squeezing**
will assist in the flow of fluids (i.e.: blood and lymph)

**Longitudinal and transverse stretching**
will improve mobility and will influence the formation of collagen fibres.

**Specific techniques (e.g. frictions)**
Can separate muscle fibres that have either become adhered together. Increases ROM.
What makes it different from Swedish massage?

As sport massage practitioners we assist people in sport or fitness activities. We also:

- concerned ourselves with muscular and skeletal alignment
- understand how exercise affects the body and its systems and understand that massage can promote or reduce these effects on the athlete
- Have a deeper knowledge of anatomy and physiology
What have we learnt?

- Name a psychological benefit of massage
- Name a physical effect of massage
- Name a physiological effect of massage
Learners will be able to:

Understand the effects of different sports massage techniques
5.1 & 5.2
Preparing for massage

Body mechanics
Stances are used to generate body weight while protecting the practitioner’s hands.

Effective stances are long and deep

The practitioner should move easily and freely

If the massage looks good - it normally feels good for the client!
Massage Techniques

There are many different massage techniques and each should be considered a ‘tool’ with a specific purpose.

Specific massage techniques are used to get a desired response from the body. For example if you want to increase blood flow and wake the muscle up then a fast technique should be used.
Palpation

“Exploration of tissues by touch”

With any treatment, much with which the practitioner is confronted is invisible.

Sometimes the reason for the pain are fairly obvious, such as: deformity, skin damage, inflammation etc. However, the majority of causes lie in much deeper structures of the body.

The practitioner now needs to use their sense of touch to attempt location of the underlying problem(s)
Palpation

**Purpose**

- To identify bony prominences for navigating around the body
- To identify musculoskeletal structures
- To identify the status of soft tissues
- To identify changes in the state of soft tissues
- To monitor the effects of treatment
Palpation

Soft tissue dysfunction normally presents itself as:

- Tension in skin
- Drag
- Lack of elasticity
- Resistance
- Tenderness
- Heat / Cold
Palpation

- **RELAX!** The more relaxed the practitioner (mentally and physically) the ‘easier’ it is to palpate since any tension, whilst trying to establish minute changes makes it extremely difficult.

- Support / reinforce joints to help avoid RSI.

- Centring yourself and going into the ‘zone’ can help focus your attention on what your hands are feeling.

- **PRACTICE** effective palpation is extremely challenging and it is only the fortunate few who are able to accomplish it without a great deal of practice.
Effleurage

**Purpose**

- introduce the sports massage therapist’s touch to the client
- relax client
- apply the massage lubricant
- encourage blood and lymphatic circulation
- monitor the tissues as part of palpation
- warm up the soft tissues
- link other sports massage techniques
- provide a rest between specific, deep tissue techniques
- Helps lengthen shortened muscles
- conclude the treatment
Effleurage

Effects

- increased local circulation
- improved skin condition
- increased relaxation of soft tissues
**Effleurage**

**Application**

NB: Before applying and massage technique, the sports Massage practitioner should first consider their own safety and comfort and ensure that they subject their joints to the minimal amount of stress during treatment.

Strokes should then be applied:
- using a regular rhythm
- With pressure being applied towards the heart and reduced on return strokes.
- Avoiding any pressure on joints
- Depth of application (pressure) can be gradually increased as client and tissues relax
Effleurage

Variations

The effects of effleurage can be altered by varying its application

- Amount pressure applied
- Body part used (e.g.: whole hand, heel of hand, reinforced digits, forearm)
- Direction of stroke
- Speed of application
Petrissage

**Purpose**

‘To knead the tissues’

- mobilise muscles or groups of muscles
- reduce intermuscular congestion
- reduce tension in muscle fascia
- address inhibition of free movement of muscles or muscle groups
Petrissage

Effects

- increase mobility of muscles
- improve fascial mobility
- increase circulation
- improve skin condition, especially elasticity
- reduce fibrous adhesions in muscle fibres and fascia
Petrissage

Application

- The hands work alternately to lift and pass the tissues from one hand to the other.
- Use minimal lubricant to enable tissue to be manipulated effectively.
- To reduce risk of pinching, grasp the tissues with either palm of hands or pads of fingers.
Pettrissage

Variations
The are various petrissage techniques which can be applied.

- kneading
- ‘picking up’
- wringing
- rolling
- ‘pressures’

Since they each have similar effects, it is the area of the body or clients muscle density which dictates choice / suitability
Tapotement

“A type of massage in which the body is tapped in a rhythmic manner with the tips of the fingers or the sides of the hands, using short, rapid, repetitive movements”

Purpose
Unlike many of the other massage techniques, the purpose of tapotement is to stimulate sooner than relax the client, since it acts upon the sympathetic nervous system
Tapotement

Effects

- stimulates a reflex muscular contraction (therefore useful on muscles that exhibit poor recruitment)
- rapidly increases local circulation
- stimulates nerve endings
- invigorates physically and mentally
Tapotement

Application

The therapist stands facing the treatment area and ‘strikes’ the tissues with alternate hands at speed.

For greatest therapeutic effect and minimal discomfort, it is vital that the sports massage practitioner’s joints remain loose throughout.

Methods of application include
- hacking
- cupping
- beating
- pounding
Vibrations and shaking

**Vibrations** is a massage technique believed to enhance nerve function by using small superficial rapid movements of the fingertips or palm.

**Shaking** is a massage technique of holding and loosely, rhythmically moving a muscle mass or area of the body. Also called rhythmic mobilisation.
Vibrations and shaking

**Purpose of vibrations**
- relaxation of superficial and deep tissues
- prepare for or follow deep tissue work
- ‘wake up’ nerves by breaking up monotony of massage
- reduce pain
- increase circulation

**Purpose of shaking**
- relaxation of superficial and deep tissues
- prepare for or follow deep tissue work
- ‘wake up’ nerves by breaking up monotony of massage
- reduce pain
- increase circulation
Vibrations and shaking

Effects of vibrations

- Stimulation of proprioceptors, helps to desensitise the tissues.
- Reduction in muscles spasm
- Reduces pressure on small capillaries
Vibrations and shaking

Effects of shaking

Although the purpose(s) of shaking is similar to that of vibrations the effects of upon the neuromuscular system varies slightly

- Shaking confuses the proprioceptors and with such a disorganised sensory input to the brain the natural response is for the affected limb to go limp

- Rocking (shaking performed slowly) stimulates the vestibular system of the inner ear which in turn stimulates para-sympathetic responses
Vibrations and shaking

**Application of vibrations**
Vibrations can be applied by lightly placing the flat of the palmar surface of the hand or fingertips onto either a specific area or by moving the hand across the tissues.

The vibration is then produced by the therapist making a tremor in their hand or arm which is transmitted into the tissues.

**Application of shaking**
Lightly shake a limb which is supported
Frictions

“Concentrated movements exerting controlled pressure on a small area of the surface tissues, moving them over the underlying structures”

For effective delivery of frictions, the practitioner needs to have good knowledge of structural anatomy.

Also, extra care needs to be taken since, applied indiscriminately, frictions have the potential to be injurious to both the client and practitioner alike.
Frictions

Purpose

- To increase mobility of soft tissues
- To optimise the formation of scar tissue formed during soft tissue repair
- To assist the functioning of muscles by removing physical restrictions to their movement
Frictions

**Effects**

- physically realign collagen fibres
- remove excessive scar tissue
- remove ‘sticky adhesions’
- reduce congestion in a local area
- increase local circulation
- increase ROM
Frictions – important considerations

Even when applied correctly, frictions may be uncomfortable and leave bruising for 24hr-48hrs post treatment.

It is vital that these facts are conveyed to client (and their written informed consent obtained) before the commencement of any such treatment. Absence of such consent could legally be considered assault.

During treatment the practitioner should constantly monitor client’s reactions and be prepared to stop should the client so wish.
Frictions

Application

Since frictions requires targeted pressure on a minimal contact area, if the practitioner is to avoid damaging their own joints, the use of **correct biomechanics is of paramount importance**

- Posture
- Directed through the shoulders and straight arms
- Reinforced digits

If the target area is muscular, the tissues should be placed in a **relaxed** position and if a ligament placed in a **taut** position (slight stretch).

**Apply no more pressure than necessary** to manipulate the target tissues.

To help minimise client discomfort, **working from the ‘edge’ of the target area, gradually approaching the focal point**

Also consider the use of ice
Frictions

Application continued

Use multiple, short frictions and re-palpate regularly (approx every 10-20 secs) to monitor the effects of the treatment and ensure client discomfort is managed.

During breaks in friction treatment, effleurage should be applied toward nearest proximal lymph nodes since this will

- Help relax client
- Assist the lymphatic system in processing any waste products which have been mobilised
- Help the practitioner rest their joints
Frictions

Application continued

Muscles and tendons
Frictions can be applied
- Longitudinially
- Transverse
- Circular

Ligaments
- transversely.
How deep do you go?

This is a tricky question... good communication between you and your client is important to establish the appropriate depth of application.

Depending on the depth you will access the following structures:

**Shallow:** skin, blood & lymph capillaries

**Moderate:** fascia, blood & lymph vessels, ligaments

**Deep:** muscles
Finally...

**Speed**
Fast techniques stimulate the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) whereas slow techniques stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS)

**Pressure**
Getting the pressure of the techniques is difficult. Regular feedback from your client is necessary

Light pressure- little physical/physiological responses. May irritate the client (SNS)

Firmer- greater physical/physiological responses. Help reassure and relax the client (PNS)

Too deep- the client will tense and become stressed (SNS)
Massage sequence

Introduction to touch

- You must remember your client may be nervous because they have never had a massage before, or apprehensive because they are in pain.

- Therefore take your time to allow them to receive your touch in a positive way.

- Simple breathing exercises are good for nervous clients.
Top tips

- Always try to massage towards the heart (on the back you can go in any direction)
- Reinforce your hands in deep work
- If you are going deep - go slow
- At regular intervals ask your client if the pressure is good
- Keep the client covered with only the body part being worked on uncovered (dрапин)
Massage sequence

**Lower Posterior leg**
- Effleurage (to apply oil and warm up the tissues)
- Pick up in effleurage
- Pick up muscle with a pinched hand
- Rolling calf
- Light circular frictions
- Deep effleurage (with hand or forearm)
- Stripping
- Light effleurage to connect to upper posterior leg

No pressure on back of the knee
Upper posterior leg

- Light effleurage to connect movement
- Wringing of inner thigh
- Light circular frictions
- Deeper effleurage
- Stripping
- Frictions around the ischial tuberosity
- Nerve stroke
Glutes

The majority of clients will want gluteal work over clothing/towel
This can be restricting in many ways but does allow us to work quite deep

- Compressions
- Work all over the glute
- Pay attention to the piriformous and attachments near greater trochanter
The Back

- Effleurage
- Compressions down the spine
- Wringing of upper traps and side of body
- Rolling
- Light circular frictions down the spine
- Effleurage (deeper) over all the back
- Effleurage deep next to the spine
- Effleurage deep over upper traps
- Frictions on lev scapular, infraspinatous and medial boarder of scapular
- Tapotement (careful of kidneys)
- Effleurage to finish
Anterior leg and feet

- Effleurage lower leg and feet to spread oil
- Compression on bottom of feet
- Frictions on the bottom of feet
- Stripping between metatarsals
- Rotations of the ankle
- Frictions at the front of the ankle
- Effleurage of lower leg
- Wringing of inside leg
- Stripping
- Effleurage to connect to upper leg
Upper anterior leg

- Effleurage
- Wringing of inside leg
- Rolling
- Deep effleurage
- Compressions of rec fem
- Effleurage of inner tight (light-deep)
- Stripping of inner thigh
- Shaking/vibrations
- Deep effleurage of IT band
- Transverse frictions
- Shaking
Hip flexors

- Hip flexors are normally released over clothing or through a towel.
- The client can also be lay on their side to reach hip flexors.
Abdominals

Not many clients enjoy this massage but it can be very beneficial

- Effleurage
- Frictions working anti-clockwise
- Compressions
Arm and hand

- Effleurance
- Frictions on wrist
- Frictions on palms
- Frictions on forearm
- Wringing a traps
- Compression on coracoid process
- Effleurance
Chest, neck & face

- Effleurage over the chest
- Effleurage over the chest, behind the shoulders and up the neck
- Frictions on occipital protuberance
- Effleurage with the fingers over SCM and scalenes
- Frictions on occipital protuberance

Some clients benefit from a face massage. Many people hold tension around the jaw and light effleurage with the fingers can help relieve this tension.
Can we now...

- Understand the importance of first touch with your client?
- Can you perform a basic full body massage?