

Manipulation and Remedial Massage Therapy

Touch Text

Newsletter of the AAMT.

(Australian Association of Massage Therapists Ltd)

ISSN 1449-3063

Volume 1, Issue 1

April 16, 2004

Massage therapists are not legally permitted to “manipulate” and must work within the range of movement of the client using stretches and massage techniques on soft tissue to assist and increase flexibility and range of movement.

The intention of massage therapy is to work with soft tissue whereas the intention of manipulation is to work with joint structures and to improve functional integrity of motion segments. Any forceful or thrusting movement which intends to reposition, shift or mobilise bony tissue is considered manipulation.

AAMT (Australian Association of Massage Therapists Ltd) would like to take the opportunity to remind members that they should not manipulate clients unless they are qualified to do so. Massage therapists are obliged to work within the boundaries of their massage therapy training. Only a registered Physiotherapist or Chiropractor are permitted by law to manipulate and before a Physiotherapist or Chiropractor can be registered and legally able to manipulate, it is necessary for them to undergo extensive training.

The major health insurers for professional indemnity and liability will not cover manipulation performed by massage therapists and the legislation is different in each state regarding “manipulation”. In South Australia, the maximum penalty for performing unlawful manipulation is around six months jail and \$8000 fine. The law regarding manipulation is intended to protect the public from treatment by persons who do not have the required skill level.

Best practice advice for massage therapists is to use informed consent for procedures which involve any risk of injury or harm. Therapists should keep detailed case notes and record immediately the details of relevant client comments or the procedures performed. The therapist has the responsibility to ensure that the client has understood all the information provided and has provided their express consent before being treated. Express consent is where a client explicitly indicates agreement either orally or in writing.

Edited version of a compiled work by: Rory Williams from the PMRTS - Professional Development Day - “Manipulation and Remedial Massage Therapy”, held September 2002.

The information contained in this outline was accurate at the date of issue. For the full paper email <mailto:info@aamt.com.au>