

USP93M

Professional practice in sports massage

Unit reference number: H/507/5633

Level: 3

Guided Learning (GL) hours: 30

Overview

This unit provides the foundation knowledge of professional practice in sports massage. Learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of the key legislation and requirements for working in sports massage, including – scope of practice, informed consent, referral and record keeping requirements, the use of chaperones and of working with vulnerable populations. Learners will also develop their understanding of the standards of professionalism required and the importance of continuing professional development.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, learners will:

LO1 Understand legislation required in sports massage

LO2 Understand scope of practice in sports massage

LO3 Understand the standards relevant to the sports massage profession

LO4 Understand the principles of professional practice in sports massage

LO5 Understand how to produce, maintain and store client records

Assessment requirements

Learners must complete **both** assessment requirements related to this unit:

1. External examination
2. Graded synoptic assessment

1. External examination

The theory content of LO1 – LO5 will be tested by an external examination at the end of the period of learning.

External examinations will test knowledge and understanding from across the whole vocational area (mandatory units). Learners should use the unit content section of this unit to aid revision since exam questions will test the full breadth of this content.

External examinations will be set and marked by VTCT and will contribute to the overall qualification grade.

2. Graded synoptic assessment

In the last term or final third of their qualification learners will be required to undertake a graded synoptic assessment. This will require learners to carry out a range of services from across the whole vocational area (mandatory units). Assessment coverage will vary year on year, although all services will be covered over time.

VTCT will set a brief for centres which will detail the services to be covered in the graded synoptic assessment. Grading descriptors for the synoptic assessment will also be provided by VTCT.

The graded synoptic assessment will be marked and graded by centre staff and externally quality assured by VTCT.

The graded synoptic assessment will contribute to the overall qualification grade.

Unit content

LO1 Understand legislation required in sports massage

Learners must understand the legal requirements for sports massage:

- Legal requirements and organisational procedures relating to
 - Health and safety at work act (1974)
 - Control of substances hazardous to health
 - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
 - Electricity at work regulations
 - First aid regulations
 - Equality and inclusion
 - Data protection
 - Employer insurance
 - Professional indemnity insurance
 - Public liability insurance
 - Manual handling
 - Accident recording and reporting
- With consideration to
 - Different environments, e.g. sport event or clinic
 - Maintenance procedures for equipment and building
 - Risk assessment
 - Duty of care
 - Disclosure and non-disclosure
- How laws relate to the sports massage therapist

Learners must understand the importance of chaperones:

- Chaperones are required if working with children or vulnerable adults and/or when the therapist themselves feels vulnerable
- Chaperone can provide reassurance and act as an advocate, if required
- Adherence to legislation and safeguarding guidelines

Learners must understand the importance of informed consent:

- Purpose
 - Informed consent is a legal requirement
 - It reflects ethical practice and adherence to professional codes of conduct
 - It offers protection for client and therapist
 - It should be obtained prior to any treatment – all examinations and treatments require agreed informed consent
 - Informed consent should be discussed fully with the client (verbally) and a written record maintained
 - To provide the client with the information they need to make an informed decision regarding their treatment
 - To provide the client the opportunity to reflect on verbal and written information provided, to check the client's understanding of the proposed treatment

- Process of informed consent
 - Explain the reasons for informed consent
 - Inform the client of the treatment aims and objectives, the benefits and risks of any treatment
 - Provide the opportunity for the client to ask questions and respond to the client's questions
 - Sign and record all information
 - Store written informed consent securely and confidentially
- Content of informed consent record
 - Purpose of sports massage
 - Nature and procedure of treatment
 - Alternative treatment options
 - Effects and benefits of treatments
 - Any risks of treatments
 - Responsibilities of client and therapist
 - Record of questions and answers
 - Date and signatures of client and therapist

Learners must understand the consequences of non-compliance with legislation and professional standards:

- Breach of professional codes of conduct
- Loss of professional membership
- Loss of right to practise and work in the sector – loss of career and income
- Loss of reputation
- Prosecution
- Invalid insurance
- Possible injury to the client
- Liability claims

LO2 Understand scope of practice in sports massage

Learners must understand the cautions and contra-indications to sports massage:

- Cautions – a situation where the massage therapist may proceed with the treatment but will need to modify techniques to accommodate the client's needs/condition, e.g. healed fractures, risk of irritating the area
- Contra-indications – risks of treatment may outweigh the benefits
- Absolute, local and temporary contra-indications
 - Local contra-indications, e.g. bruising, swelling and gout
 - Absolute contra-indications, e.g. systemic conditions – cancer, cardiovascular problems
 - Temporary contra-indications, e.g. flu or fever

Learners must understand the actions to take when presented with cautions and contra-indications:

- Cautions – adapt treatment, apply lighter pressure, show sensitivity and awareness, refrain from percussive techniques
- Contra-indications
 - Local contra-indications – avoid the specific area, e.g. open wound, varicose vein
 - Absolute contra-indications – no treatment, signpost and refer to a medical practitioner, medical clearance required prior to giving massage treatment, e.g. deep vein thrombosis (DVT), diabetes
 - Temporary contra-indications – treatment to be deferred until temporary condition has healed/recovery complete, e.g. colds and flu

Learners must understand the procedures for referring a client:

- When to signpost and refer to other professionals
 - If contra-indications are identified
 - When treatment is not working
 - When client needs are outside limits of professional knowledge or responsibility
 - When client needs are outside scope of practice
- Identification of appropriate healthcare professional for referral
 - Doctors
 - Physiotherapists
 - Psychologists
 - Registered dieticians
 - Registered nutritionists
 - Physiologists
 - Bio-mechanists
 - Counsellors
 - Sports therapists
 - Specialist health/exercise professional
- Referral etiquette and protocol
 - Professional format and content of referral letter
 - Assessment report for referral

Learners must understand how to communicate and present professional image:

- Personal appearance – clean, hygienic, appropriate uniform and footwear, long hair tied back or covered, jewellery removed (if worn)
- Importance of communication and professional image – build rapport, value individual and diversity, mutual respect, confidence and trust, fair treatment, determine and meet client needs, establish rapport, present self and organisation positively, gain new clients (word of mouth)
- Communication skills
 - Verbal communication – use of appropriate language, tone, pace, clarity
 - Active listening, non-judgemental, empathy, use of open questions (as appropriate), affirming and reflective statements, accessible language, positive feedback, accurate written records
 - Awareness of non-verbal language – body language, posture, facial expressions and voice intonation, eye contact, gestures
- Record keeping and referral procedures
 - Appropriate records maintained – informed consent and treatment records
 - Maintain client confidentiality – according to data protection legislation (e.g. confidential paperwork securely stored in locked filing apparatus, e-information password protected, coding system used on confidential forms instead of names), according to code of ethics
 - When to share information, who with and how to share – adherence to codes of professional practice and organisation guidelines

LO3 Understand the standards relevant to the sports massage profession

Learners understand the key principles of professional standards:

- Professional standards stipulated by
 - Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC)
 - Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT)
 - The Council for Soft Tissue Therapies
 - General Council for Massage Therapists (GCMT)
 - Sports Massage Association (SMA)
 - Institute of Sport and Remedial Massage
 - Other appropriate bodies, e.g. sports coaching, governing bodies

Learners must understand the roles of professional organisations:

- Reputation and development of the sector and profession
- Safeguard the interests of all involved in the sector and profession and the public interest
- Maintain and enforce standards of training, ethics and professionalism
- Provide professional membership services - updating of skills, continuing professional development

Learners must understand the purpose of regulation:

- To maintain high standards of practice
- To maintain health and safety
- To ensure continuous professional development of practitioners
- To maintain a national register of professionals

Learners must understand the importance of continuing professional development (CPD):

- To keep up to date with current professional practice
- To develop and improve professional practice
- To maintain membership within professional organisations

Learners must understand emergency protocols and procedures:

- Emergency situations in the home, e.g. if working from a home base
 - Develop emergency protocols to follow in accordance with health and safety guidelines
- Emergency situations within an organisation, e.g. if working for an employer or renting a room in a clinic environment
 - Follow organisations policy and protocols that have been developed in accordance with health and safety guidelines
- Emergency situations during an event, e.g. at sports event, fun runs etc
 - Follow protocols provided by the event organiser that have been developed in accordance with health and safety guidelines
 - All protocols should be established prior to the event

Learners must understand insurance requirements:

- Employer's liability – protects employees working for an organisation
- Professional indemnity and public liability – covers any legal costs or claims relating to harm, accident or loss, e.g. theft of goods while using a service
- Personal injury
- The questions to ask insurers and the level of cover they provide to ensure adequately insured
 - Income protection
 - Clinic and equipment
 - Travel and car cover
 - Claiming on insurance
- How to deal with claims against the sports massage practitioner

LO4 Understand the principles of professional practice in sports massage

Learners must understand the importance of valuing equality and diversity:

- Removal of barriers to treatment, fair access to treatment
- Fair and equal treatment of all clients, no discrimination
- Respect the views and beliefs of clients
- Build rapport and trust
- Comply with legislation
- Respect for equality and diversity of clients
 - Specific needs, apparently healthy adults, young people, antenatal and postnatal clients, disabled clients
 - Protected and other characteristics – age, gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious or political beliefs, disability, marital status, social background, family circumstance, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, spent criminal convictions

Learners must understand the importance of professionalism:

- Provide a high standard of treatment
- Optimise treatment benefits
- Prevent cross-infection
- Promote confidence in the practitioner
- Client retention and satisfaction
- Maintain reputation
- Maintain credibility of the profession
- Professional conduct – maintain professional boundaries, work within scope of practice, positive attitude, show respect, equal opportunities, inclusion, punctuality

Learners must understand personal and clinical standards:

- Personal and clinical standards as stipulated by professional organisations
 - Personal standards – personal hygiene, appearance, dress, attitude, conduct, integrity, respect, communication, continuous professional development
 - Clinical standards – providing treatments within professional competence, hygiene, premises and equipment, health and safety, referral, record keeping

Learners must understand the importance of good communication skills:

- To build rapport and put the client at ease
- To demonstrate professionalism
- To inspire confidence
- To provide clear information about treatment and risks, clarity of instructions
- To ensure client understanding

Learners must understand different means of communication:

- Types of communication
 - Face-to-face
 - Verbal communication
 - Body language
 - Telephone
 - Written – email, letter, leaflet, poster
 - Social media
- Advantages and disadvantages of each type
 - Immediacy
 - Clarity
 - Opportunities to clarify misunderstanding
 - Permanence of information

LO5 Understand how to produce, maintain and store client records

Learners must understand the importance of record keeping:

- Adhere to legal requirements for data protection and information transfer
- To protect the client and protect therapist from litigation
- To inform safe and effective treatment over time

Learners must understand the information to be recorded:

- Client details on every sheet of record
- Medical history
- Subjective information
- Objective information
- Massage strategy plan (subjective, objective, analysis, plan (SOAP))
- Effects
- Outcomes
- Changes to strategy
- Cautions and contra-indications
- Referrals and signposting
- Aftercare/advice given
- Client signature for informed consent

Learners must understand the procedures to follow when recording treatments:

- Records should be clear and legible
- Recorded in a logical format
- Accurate details
- Use of permanent ink
- Completed within 24 hours of massage
- Initialled when corrections are made
- No judgemental statements
- Signed by practitioner on each page, blank lines struck through
- No correction fluid (errors struck through) and initialled
- Electronic records should have regular back-ups made and be password protected and firewall protected

Learners must understand the legal requirements for storage and disposal of records:

- Storage of records – in a safe place, use of locked cabinets for paper records, not accessible to third parties
- Electronic records – password protected electronic records, drive professionally wiped upon disposal of computer, not accessible to third parties, e.g. do not leave records on screen for others to view
- Written permission must be gained from client to release records to third parties
- The client must have access to their records if requested
- Disposal of records – records not kept for longer than necessary, destroy records as legally required, follow guidelines of professional association

Skin cancer awareness

Please note this information will not be assessed for the achievement of this unit.

Public awareness of skin cancer has never been higher, and yet skin cancer remains the fastest growing cancer in the UK, especially amongst young people. The chances of a positive outcome can be dramatically increased with early identification and diagnosis.

Professionals in hair, beauty, sports massage and health and wellbeing industries work closely with clients and in many cases have sight of areas of skin which may not be easily visible to the client. An informed awareness of the signs, symptoms and changes of appearance to be aware of when checking for early signs of cancer is a crucial tool for the conscientious practitioner in order to provide the most thorough service and in some cases, possibly lifesaving information signposting.

Signs to look for when checking moles include utilising the ABCDE guide:

A - Asymmetry – the two halves of the area/mole may differ in their shape and not match.

B - Border – the edges of the mole area may be irregular or blurred and sometimes show notches or look 'ragged'.

C - Colour – this may be uneven and patchy. Different shades of black, brown and pink may be seen.

D - Diameter – most but not all melanomas are at least 6mm in diameter. If any mole gets bigger or changes see your doctor.

E - Elevation/evolving – elevation means the mole is raised above the surface and has an uneven surface. Looks different from the rest or changing in size, shape or colour. Anyone can get a suspicious mole or patch of skin checked out for free by the NHS by visiting their doctor, who may then refer to a dermatologist (an expert in diagnosing skin cancer).

If you require any additional NHS information please refer to <https://www.nhs.uk/be-clear-on-cancer/symptoms/skin-cancer>

If your learners are interested in learning more about skin cancer awareness alongside this qualification, VTCT runs the following qualification: VTCT Level 2 Award in Skin Cancer Awareness for Non-Healthcare Professionals.

This qualification has been specifically designed for those working in the sports massage, health and wellbeing, beauty, hairdressing and barbering sectors. It will enable learners to identify any changes to their client's skin and to highlight those changes to the client using appropriate language and communication skills. It will enable the learner to raise awareness of skin cancer and signpost their clients to public information about skin cancer.

This qualification will enable hair, beauty and wellbeing professionals to gain the appropriate knowledge and communication skills required to provide non-diagnostic, professional advice and information to clients in a discrete, empathetic and confidential manner.

For more information please refer to the Record of Assessment book:

<https://qualifications.vtct.org.uk/finder/qualfinder/1Record%20of%20Assessment%20Book/AG20529.pdf>

Resources

The special resources required for this unit must support learners to develop their knowledge of professional practice in sports massage.

For best practice learners should have access to the relevant codes of conduct, ethics and guidelines that inform professional practice from the different professional organisations. This may include access to record cards so learners can practise accurate and legible record keeping; context specific examples of sports massage with regards to different laws and legislation. Learners should also have access to examples of referral letters and accepted referral practice.

Recommended text books:

- Norris, C (2011) *The Complete Guide to Sports Injuries*. UK. A&C Black/Bloomsbury Publishing
- Norris, C (2013) *The Complete Guide to Exercise Therapy*. UK. A&C Black/Bloomsbury Publishing
- Paine, T (2000) *The Complete Guide to Sports Massage*. 2nd edition. UK. A&C Black/Bloomsbury Publishing

NB: This list is not exhaustive. There are many other valuable textbooks.

Recommended websites:

- The SMA Code of Ethics and Conduct – www.thesma.org
- Institute of Sport and Remedial Massage – www.theisrm.com/terms.php
- Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) – www.cnhc.org.uk
- Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT) – www.fht.org.uk
- The council for soft tissue therapies – www.gcmt.org.uk
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) – www.nice.org.uk
- The American College of Sport Medicine (ACSM) – www.acsm.org
- The Department of Health – www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health
- The British Association of Sport and Exercise Science – www.bases.org.uk

Delivery guidance

Teachers are encouraged to use innovative, practical and engaging delivery methods to enhance the learning experience. Learners may benefit from the use of:

- Interactive information and technology systems and software so they can actively learn about concepts and theories related to professional practice
- Interactive workshops that enable application of knowledge in a practical context, e.g. exploration of client planning records used in other practical units which outline how sports massage will be planned and delivered. This will provide learners with the opportunity to apply their learning to real or realistic situations
- Case studies where they are able to review the relevance of legislation and application to a sports massage context
- Guest speakers or presentations from individuals who represent professional organisations to discuss ethical and safe practice

Links with other units

This unit is closely linked with the following units:

USP94M Assessment for sports massage

Learners will be required to apply their knowledge of professional practice when conducting client assessments. All aspects of this assessment for sports massage unit are underpinned by the rules of professional standards in the context of conduct, ethics and performance. Consultation and assessment is a legal requirement and failure to consult properly with the client prior to treatment could invalidate therapy insurance. The content of the professional practice for sports massage unit can be delivered before, or integrated with, the delivery of the assessment for sports massage unit

USP95M Sports massage treatments

Learners will be required to apply their knowledge of professional practice when conducting sports massage treatment. Sports massage is underpinned by professional practice and practitioners must adhere to professional practice and appropriate codes of conduct at all times. The content of the professional practice for sports massage unit can be delivered before, or integrated with, the delivery of the sports massage treatments unit

USP96M Understand the principles of soft tissue dysfunction

Learners will be required to apply their knowledge of professional practice when studying the principles of soft tissue dysfunction. This is to ensure they work within their role boundaries. The content of the professional practice for sports massage unit can be delivered before, or integrated with, the delivery of the principles of soft tissue dysfunction unit

USP97M Health and lifestyle

Learners will be required to apply their knowledge of professional practice when studying health and lifestyle. This is to ensure they work within their role boundaries and provide appropriate guidance, including signposting to other professionals, when appropriate. The content of the professional practice for sports massage unit can be delivered before, or integrated with, the delivery of the health and lifestyle unit.

Graded synoptic assessment

At the end of the qualification of which this unit forms part, there will be a graded synoptic assessment which will assess the learner's ability to identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from a number of units from within the qualification. It is therefore necessary and important that units are delivered and assessed together and synoptically to prepare learners suitably for their final graded assessment.

Version	Details of amendments	Date
v7	Skin cancer information page added	13/06/17