

McKinnon Body Therapy Center
Touch, Health, and Common Conditions – 125 hrs

Elements of Massage

The framework for the decision-making model and the following massage element descriptions are excerpted from “Mapping It Out,” *Massage Therapy Journal (MTJ)*, Summer 2007, Volume 46, #2, pp. 53, 55, and 58.

Please note that the list below just contains examples: It is by no means complete or exhaustive! And there may be examples you like better or examples that have more meaning with regard to the pathologies and systems you are covering in class.

ELEMENTS OF MASSAGE AND EXAMPLES OF CONTRAINDICATIONS

<u>Element</u>	<u>Example of modification, concern, etc.</u>
Contact	General contact is contraindicated in highly infectious conditions spread by contact such as scabies or lice; a site-specific contraindication exists at open lesions in Herpes Simplex I
Lubricant	Aromas may be contraindicated in lubricant if client is easily nauseated; site-specific contraindications may exist at lesions from atopic dermatitis
Pressure	Heavy pressure is contraindicated overall if tissues bruise easily (perhaps from “blood thinners”); heavy pressure is contraindicated at specific sites if tissue is unstable, such as in bone metastasis in cancer
Joint Mov'mt	Vigorous joint movement should be avoided in cases of osteoporosis; if injury is recent or an area/joint is unstable, joint movement should be minimized
Friction	Friction is contraindicated in the presence of inflammation (unless therapeutic inflammation is the aim – and one has specialized training)
Site	Any of the above five elements may be contraindicated at one region of the body but not in other areas; local contraindications such as wounds
Position	Flat supine and prone positions are contraindicated in cases of emphysema if they aggravate breathing difficulties; elevation of head and feet is indicated for congestive heart failure
Draping	Additional drape may be necessary for a client intolerant of cold because of anemia or hypothyroid condition

Speed	Slow speeds (strokes) may be needed if a client is on strong medication or is recovering from illness such as cold or flu; very slow speed should be avoided for those experiencing Parkinson disease
Rhythm	Even, predictable rhythms are preferred if a client is nauseated
Length of Session	Shorten session if client is undergoing intense medical treatment or is fatigued or in a weakened state
Scheduling of Session	"Good" and "bad" times of day for massage may exist in cases of intense medical treatment, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, medication doses, etc.
Intention of Session	Intent to move body fluids is inappropriate when heart, kidney, liver, or spleen function is impaired
Physician Consult	Needed when client or those related are unable to provide reliable medical /health history info or when additional info is needed to gauge contraindications
Physician Referral Or Referral Necessary	When therapist recognizes possible emergent situation (new symptom arises) or whenever action within physician scope of practice is needed