

Manual Therapy Manual Trigger Point Treatment, Joint Mobilization, Myofascial Release, Massage, Connective Tissue Mobilization

Manual trigger point treatment involves the process of palpation and pressure on a contraction knot, aka “trigger point” along a taut band of muscle. There usually is a moderate amount of tenderness, up to a 5– 6/10 pain. The muscle is then manually stretched, followed by a myofascial release and, or connective tissue stretching.

Joint mobilization treatment involves the process of passively moving a joint by the therapist. This technique is under the patient's control when utilizing a mobilization between a grade 1 and 4. The therapist will instruct the patient in the grade of mobilization that they will be using. The patient will be able to say stop to the therapist and the physical therapist can immediately stop the treatment. A grade 5 mobilization or manipulation is a high velocity, short amplitude technique that is outside the patient's control and usually has an accompanying popping, crunching, clicking, or snapping sound and it is usually acutely painful but then immediately dissipates.

The Myofascial release technique is used to elongate or stretch a muscle and is used after performing the compression technique of a myofascial trigger point. Techniques can be directly applied to the muscle through a hands-on approach or can be performed indirectly through the pulling of an extremity elongating the muscle and its fibers. These techniques are usually tolerable or have a mild degree of discomfort.

Massage is a hands-on technique where the physical therapist or massage therapist will place their hands directly in contact with the skin. The therapist will then utilize a variety of compression or percussion techniques that will be used to aid in the return of circulation via veins and the lymph drainage system and, or to stretch adhesions and muscle fibers to provide a sedated, relaxing feeling and reduction in muscle tension. Sometimes lubricating creams or oils may be used and are hypoallergenic. The patient can indicate if they do not want to use creams or oils. These techniques are usually not painful or cause mild discomfort.

Indications for manual therapy include relief of pain, reduction of muscle spasms, improvement in range of motion, reduction of swelling, or when the mobilization of the contracted joint or tissue is desired. Indications for massage include the reduction in swelling and inflammation that frequently follows trauma, fractures, dislocations, joint and muscle issues, sprains, strains, bruises, and tendon or nerve injuries. These conditions will all benefit from manual therapy.

Manual therapy is not a substitute for exercise.

Contraindications for manual therapy include acute trauma with hematoma, generalized or localized circulatory problems, diminished coagulation, local or generalized skin lesions or infections, unstable joint injuries, malignant tumors, and lack of sensory and pain awareness. The physical/massage therapist will use their sound professional judgment in the intervention, treatment, or examination being performed.

The physical therapist anticipates beginning improvements in the respective condition in 3 to 8 treatments with the resolution usually occurring in 8 to 12 treatments. Treatment consists of approximately 8-15 min. for each technique utilized in a treatment session.

Alternatives to manual therapy include therapeutic exercise, thermotherapy, modalities, and medications prescribed by your physician.

The patient has the right at any time during the treatment to stop treatment and question the therapist whether to continue treatment or ask questions about the treatment.