

AACET Equine Massage therapy

Education and Practice Standards for the Equine Massage.

Glossary of Terms:

Standard:

A standard is a description of a minimum level of performance one is required to demonstrate in the achievement of a task. A standard is stated in observable and measurable terms. It must be precise and clear to the therapist who is held accountable for accomplishing it. It must also be clear to the clients and the public (who assess the therapist's ability to accomplish a task as measured by the required standard).

Standards include one or more of the following measures:

- Technical Quality
- Interpersonal Quality
- Safety

Client:

The use of the word client will pertain to the animal owner or caretaker/ caregiver.

Patient:

The use of the word patient will pertain to the equine to which the therapy is being provided to.

Equine Massage Therapist

Massage Therapist (the practitioner) refers to an equine health professional that observes the patient's physical movement, assesses the soft tissue for any dysfunctions, and the effects that the dysfunctions have on the biomechanics of the patient; and then manually massages any areas of dysfunction.

Equine Massage Dysfunction: A muscle, tendon or fascial disorder in the equine body that can benefit from manual massage.

Treatment: The method with which the practitioner will correct a body dysfunction that they find while working with a patient.

Treatment Protocol: The complete plan that the practitioner feels is appropriate to provide the desired outcome for the patient.

A Course: Instruction exclusively in equine massage therapy lasting more than 8 hours, for which a certificate of completion or course certificate is given.

Wet Lab: Equine necropsy/dissection, lasting a minimum of 6 hours. Photographic documentation must be provided, including a photo of the horse when live if possible, reason for euthanasia, a minimum of 5 pictures of the anatomy learned during the

necropsy/dissection, a description in writing of what was learned, and the signature of the euthanizing veterinarian, animal owner, or wet lab instructor.

Standards of Practice:

AACET has approved the education and practice standards created by its Equine Massage therapist.

Through the development and use of these standards, AACET continues to display commitment to serve its members while promoting the highest possible quality of, performed in a safe and ethical manner.

The Alberta Association Complementary Equine Therapy (AACET) Standards of Practice for, were developed to assist the professional Equine Massage therapist.

1. Provide and determine quality safe consistent care and to provide a common base to develop a practice that has support and preserves the basic rights of the client and the professional Massage therapist.
2. This document allows the professional Equine Massage therapist to evaluate and adapt performance in his/her Equine Therapeutic Massage practice.
3. The professional Equine Massage therapist can evaluate the quality of his/her practice by utilizing the Standards of Practice in conjunction with the Code of Ethics, the Bylaws and Policies of AACET, and precedents set by the AACET Grievance, Standards and Bylaws Committees
4. This document has been developed as a tool to determine whether a therapist as a member of AACET can conduct their practice at an acceptable level. It will serve as a reference tool for:
 - Equine Massage therapist.
 - Educators in Equine Therapeutic Massage therapy
 - AACET Members
 - Complaints investigations & Conflict Resolution
 - Discipline hearings
 - Quality assurance
 - Client relations
 - The public

Scope of Practice:

The scope of practice for Equine Massage Therapy is:

- Assess dysfunction in the soft tissue of the equine patient.
- Treat the tissue dysfunction with manual massage to produce a therapeutic outcome, as well as provide preventative care.

- Throughout the session discuss with the client any findings and treatments as well as any preventive care and maintenance that may assist the future of the patients well-being and health.
- Suggest referrals to other equine professionals when necessary or if the practitioner feels that it is in the best interests of the patient.

Education Standards:

Level 1: Practitioners have attended a single course with 60-100 hours of instructional time, or a single course with 32-60 hours if the practitioner is already certified in another manual therapy.

Level 2: Practitioners who have attended 101-150 hours of instruction. This must include a minimum of 25 hours in an instructed massage course, over and above the requirements for level 1. The remainder can include instruction in equine anatomy, equine biomechanics (can be online), or instructed wet lab.

Level 3: Practitioners who have attended 151-200 hours of instruction. This must include a minimum of 25 hours in an instructed massage course, over and above the requirements for level 2. The remainder can include instruction in equine anatomy, equine biomechanics (can be online), or instructed wet lab.

Level 4: Practitioners who have attended 201-250 hours of instruction. This can include instruction in massage, equine anatomy, equine biomechanics (can be online), or documented or instructed wet lab, over and above the requirements for Level 3.

Level 5: Practitioners who have attended 251 plus hours of instruction. This can include instruction in massage, equine anatomy, equine biomechanics (can be online), or documented or instructed wet lab, over and above the requirements for Level 4.

AACET's annual minimum CE hours are currently sufficient.

The Equine Massage therapist has an understanding of the following:

- Contraindications as they relate to equine massage therapy
- Basic knowledge of equine anatomy, bones, muscles and fascial trains
- Basic knowledge of movement and biomechanics

Practice Standards:

Contraindications:

- Unsafe environment, facilities and/or handler - for the therapist, equine, or the client.
- Working beyond scope of practice, or the therapist's education/knowledge.
- Acute or chronic trauma without recommendations from the attending veterinarian
- Undiagnosed lameness
- Fractures
- Colic
- Ataxia
- Significant undiagnosed inflammation
- Infection
- Bone infection
- Skin Lesions
- Medications which would obviously affect patient response
- Stress - which compromises vital stability
- A patient that is currently under veterinarian care for acute or chronic conditions and the attending veterinarian has not given approval for body work.

Communication Standards:

The following is required to be discussed with the client:

- Fees
- Patient Information, including breed, age, sex, discipline (current and previous), pertinent past history, medical conditions, dental and hoof care as well as any other information that may assist the practitioner in treatment.
- Chief Complaint including mechanism of injury, onset, what provokes or quiets issue, any interventions that have already been provided.
- The practitioner's assessment to determination if Equine Massage therapy is needed or if referral to another modality or a veterinarian is required
- Therapeutic steps to be taken to improve health of patient.
- Horse handling safety.
- Recommended owner care in regards to actions to be taken in between sessions, such as stretching, specific exercises, appointments with other professionals, etc.

Operation Standards:

- To the best of their abilities, the practitioner will recommend a safe environment and handling procedures for themselves, the patient, and the client for the duration of the appointment.
- The practitioner will obtain a complete patient history as well as any other relevant information.
- The practitioner will obtain written consent or signed authorization of all medical information to be up to date and true, provided by client or caretaker.
- The practitioner will state verbally or in writing that they are not a veterinarian providing veterinary care.

- The practitioner will take note of any issues related to acute or chronic conditions that may be contraindications to equine massage therapy.
- The practitioner will perform an assessment of the patient based on their knowledge.
- The practitioner will use their education and knowledge gained by experience to manually treat the patient.
- The practitioner will ensure that equine massage therapy performed is within their and their patient's abilities, and is to be performed with respect to the patient's health.

Ethics Guidelines:

Although the practices of these guidelines are not required, it is highly recommended that all equine massage therapists adopt and incorporate them in their treatment regime, whenever possible.

- Do no harm. When questioning your abilities or condition of patient seek veterinary care.
- Equine massage therapists should adhere to a commitment to the highest standards of excellence and should attend to their patients in accordance with established best practices.
- Equine massage therapists should maintain the highest standards of professional and personal conduct, and should comply with AACET rules and regulations.
- Therapist-patient & client/caregiver relationships should be built on mutual respect, trust and cooperation. In keeping with these principles, equine massage therapists shall demonstrate absolute honesty with regard to the patient's condition when communicating with the client/care giver.
- Equine massage therapist shall not mislead clients into false or unjustified expectations of favorable results of treatment. In communications with a client/care giver, equine massage therapist should never misrepresent their education, credentials, professional qualification or scope of clinical ability.
- Equine massage therapists should preserve and protect the patient's confidential information, except as the patient directs or consents.
- Equine massage therapists should employ their best good faith efforts to provide information and facilitate understanding to enable the client/ care taker to make an informed choice in regard to the proposed massage treatment. The client should make his or her own determination on such treatment.
- Equine massage therapists are free to choose the patients they will serve, just as patients & client/ caregivers are free to choose who will provide healthcare services for their animal.
- Equine massage therapists should exercise utmost care that advertising is truthful and accurate in representing the equine health practitioner's professional qualifications and degree of competence. Advertising should not exploit the vulnerability of client/ caregiver, should not be misleading, and should conform to all AACET rules and regulations in connection with professional advertising.