

## **Guidelines for the Safe Practice of Esoteric Body Work - Massage**



## PREAMBLE

Esoteric Massage is a modality taught by Universal Medicine, and the Esoteric Practitioners Association Pty Ltd (EPA) is the internal incorporated recognising body for practitioners of the Universal Medicine Therapies.

The EPA guidelines for all EPA-recognised modalities have been written in accordance with current United Kingdom and European Laws, Regulations and Codes of Practice (see Appendix B) in operation at the time of publication, and provide comprehensive guidance for the safety of Esoteric Massage practitioners and their clients. It is the responsibility of all EPA members to ascertain and ensure full compliance with the laws and regulations applicable to them. These laws have been made to protect people from unscrupulous, uncaring or careless practitioners, and to protect staff and clients from employers or practitioners who place profit before the safety of others. As students of the innermost, EPA recognised practitioners have a demonstrated commitment to living and practising with energetic integrity which, as a matter of course, includes practising their esoteric craft with the utmost level of respect and care for the client, their hygiene, safety, and overall wellbeing. Compliance with all applicable laws and regulations is a very important part of this.

The esoteric healing arts, of which Esoteric Massage is a part, have a stated respect and appreciation for conventional medicine and the great benefit and assistance it has brought and continues to bring humanity. Practitioners of the esoteric healing arts work closely with practitioners of conventional medicine and see that it is in the combination of the two, that a true holistic approach can be offered to the client or patient. Esoteric practitioners do not diagnose and nor do they or any esoteric modality offer a cure. What esoteric practitioners do offer, through the reflection of the way they live, is an opportunity for the client or patient to look underneath the symptoms to the way that they have been living and how this may have contributed to the symptoms they are experiencing. EPA recognised practitioners are able to offer the client the possibility of a different, gentler way of living, through the way that the practitioner themselves lives, which is clearly and comprehensively described in the EPA Code of Ethics and Conduct.

EPA recognised practitioners are committed to living with the utmost energetic integrity, and have a deep understanding, which stems naturally from the way they live and practise, of the importance of complying with all relevant laws and regulations. All EPA recognised practitioners are responsible for ascertaining and complying with all relevant laws, regulations and guidelines that are in operation in their area of practice. The EPA provides guidance and a minimum standard of practice. However, as the EPA has members in many locations, it is the responsibility of the individual practitioner to ensure that they are complying strictly with all standards in operation in the area(s) in which they practise. There may be requirements that are additional to those contained in these guidelines and other EPA documents. It is a condition of each practitioner's membership with the EPA that they are aware of the requirements in their area of practice, and comply with all such standards, laws and regulations.

The requirement to comply with all applicable laws and regulations is spelt out in the EPA Code of Ethics and Conduct, which all practitioners sign on to as a pre-condition to their membership.

By combining a demonstrated and continuing commitment to living with energetic integrity and in accordance with the EPA Code of Ethics and Conduct, with the utmost respect for the laws and regulations of the locality in which they practise, EPA recognised practitioners offer clients a true complement (not an alternative) to conventional medicine and, in so doing, create a bridge between life as it is lived by the majority today and the vitality, joy and harmony that are possible to be lived on an everyday basis.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are in keeping with the qualities of energetic integrity and energetic responsibility that are the foundation of the Esoteric Practitioners Association. They are based on the principles and precepts laid down in the EPA Code of Ethics and Conduct.

The guidelines have been prepared in accordance with current UK and EU laws and guidance in operation at the time of publication and provide comprehensive guidance for the safety of Esoteric Massage practitioners and their clients. It is the responsibility of all EPA members to ascertain and ensure full compliance with the laws and regulations applicable to them.

Esoteric Massage may appear to be similar to other forms of massage to the casual observer. It is, however, very different in its purpose and intent. Esoteric Massage works on the human body at physical, mental, emotional and energetic levels.

The Esoteric Massage practitioner acknowledges that the client has a symptom that is causing them distress, such as a sore shoulder. The treatment, however, addresses the whole body from the understanding that the sore shoulder is the result of a way of living physically, mentally and emotionally. Esoteric Massage can allow the client to feel and connect to a gentler way of being, which can help provide an opportunity for them to make different choices in their daily life. Symptoms are then addressed by the client them self as the client learns to make responsible and self-loving choices.

The Esoteric Massage practitioner does not diagnose the cause of any condition that the client presents with. The role of the practitioner is to provide support, tenderness and care in the application of the very gentle techniques that are taught in Sacred Esoteric Massage training.

Esoteric Massage is not a replacement nor is it a substitute for medical treatment. The practitioner of this modality works with and alongside the client's medical practitioner to ensure that the client receives the best treatment possible for their condition.

Specific standards and matters which Esoteric Massage practitioners are required to comply with are outlined in the remainder of these Guidelines, which are mandatory for all EPA recognised Esoteric Massage practitioners.

## 2. REGISTRATION OF PREMISES

- 2.1. Registration of premises where massage is provided is not required in the UK, however, it is recommended that you check with your local council to see if there are any local requirements.
- 2.2. Each local council will have its own set of principles and guidelines. Each practitioner is required to ensure that they make themselves familiar with and adhere to all local requirements, as doing so is a condition of your membership with the EPA.

## 3. PREMISES, SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

As practitioners, we have a duty of care to ensure the safety and protection of our clients, accompanying friends or caregivers and ourselves. In conjunction with these guidelines, practitioners are required to read and comply with the EPA Safety Guidelines. It is recommended that all practitioners are aware of the *The Health and Safety at*

*Work Act 1974* (see Appendix B) and the *European Agency for Safety and Health at Work* (see Appendix B). These codes provide a nationally consistent framework to secure the health and safety of all workers and workplaces. Potential hazards and risks in the clinic setting are to be identified and eliminated, or reduced to the fullest extent possible.

The following points are relevant and specific to the practice of Esoteric Massage, and must be complied with by all EPA recognised Esoteric Massage practitioners:

- 3.1. Ensure that the premises from which you work are clean and hygienic and that all equipment (heaters, storage shelves, stools, massage tables, towel-warming units, and any other equipment) are kept dry and in good working order. Ensure that all electrical equipment such as heaters, towel warming units and oil warmers meet prescribed electrical standards.
- 3.2. Alcohol based hand rub is to be available in the treatment room, and should be used before each massage. It should have a minimum alcohol content of 70% v/v (see *Health & Social Care Act 2008 - Infection Control*, or *Infection Prevention and Control and COVID-19 Appendix B*).
- 3.3. Detergent wipes and alcohol wipes for the disinfection of surfaces are to be on hand.
- 3.4. A hand basin with a single outlet is required. It need not be in the treatment room but should be close at hand. A hands-free tap is preferred. A water temperature of 40 degrees Celsius is required for hand washing at the completion of the massage treatment session.
- 3.5. Liquid soap should be available for hand washing. Antimicrobial soap is not required.
- 3.6. Liquid soap containers should be used until empty, then thoroughly washed and dried before re-filling. This reduces the risk of contamination of the soap.
- 3.7. Disposable, single-use hand towels or an automatic hand dryer are required. Shared hand towels are not to be used.
- 3.8. A second sink (not a kitchen sink) must be available for washing equipment. The water must be able to reach a temperature of 40 degrees Celsius. It should be deep enough to submerge the equipment to be cleaned.
- 3.9. A waste disposal bin with a pedal operated lid must be available in the treatment room. It should be lined with plastic and emptied at least daily, or more often as needed.
- 3.10. Working surfaces should be smooth and made of impervious materials for easy cleaning. Avoid using surfaces that are porous (such as wood) or have grooves or cracks. These surfaces are impossible to keep clean and disinfected.
- 3.11. The massage table should have a smooth, impervious surface for easy cleaning.
- 3.12. Make sure you are aware of safe weight limits that apply to your table.
- 3.13. Do not allow any animals in the treatment room, other than guide dogs for hearing or sight impaired clients.

## 4. HYGIENE AND INFECTION CONTROL PROTOCOLS

### 4.1. Practitioner hygiene

- 4.1.1. Hands must be washed before and after massaging every client.
- 4.1.2. Hands must be washed after massaging the feet and before proceeding to massage other parts of the body. Cleansing wipes may also be used on the client's feet prior to massaging them.
- 4.1.3. Hands should be washed prior to facial massage so that oils and essential oils used on the body are not transferred to the client's face.
- 4.1.4. Fingernails are to be kept short and clean.
- 4.1.5. Remove hand and wrist jewellery, such as rings and bracelets, prior to massage and hand washing. Proper hand cleaning cannot be assured when wearing jewellery.
- 4.1.6. If you have an open skin wound on your hand, cover it with a waterproof dressing and ensure that there is no exposure of the wound to the client.
- 4.1.7. The NHS in the UK has created comprehensive guidelines for hand cleaning. (See *NHS Standard infection control precautions and the NHS Guidance - How to Wash Your Hands* Appendix B). The critical times when hand hygiene should be performed are clearly described. It is recommended that all practitioners and student practitioners take time to study the information on the website and ensure they comply to the guidelines
- 4.1.8. Hand washing with soap and water is recommended when the hands are visibly soiled, for example, when there is residual oil and cream. The proper technique for hand washing is described in detail on the *NHS Standard infection control precautions*. (See Appendix B).
- 4.1.9. The use of alcohol based hand rub is recommended for hands that are not visibly soiled. Detailed information on when and how to use alcohol based hand rub is available on the *NHS Standard infection control precautions*. (See Appendix B).
- 4.1.10. Hand care is also covered on the *NHS Standard infection control precautions* (see Appendix B). Our skin is a crucial barrier to infection, so care of our hands has an important part to play both in our protection and in the protection of our clients. Take care of the skin on your hands. Keep your hands well moisturised and avoid excessive washing with soap and water.

### 4.2. Dispensing of oils and Universal Medicine Blue Label Body Cream for massage

Oils and cream are an essential part of massage. Understanding how to dispense and handle them effectively reduces the risk of cross-contamination. Care in dispensing oils and cream prevents potentially infectious organisms from the skin of one client contaminating the oil and cream and consequently infecting the skin of another client.

There are two options for dispensing oils and cream: (a) using a pump outlet, or (b) dispensing the oil and cream into separate, clean, reusable dishes, or disposable dishes, prior to the massage treatment.

- 4.2.1. Pump outlets are a potential source of cross-contamination when more oil or cream needs to be dispensed mid-treatment. Make sure that pump nozzles and bottles are thoroughly wiped down with an alcohol wipe between clients.

- 4.2.2. Nozzles also accumulate a build up of cream. Nozzles and cream bottles should be washed in warm water and detergent and thoroughly dried with a lint-free cloth before refilling. Do not top up the bottle. Use it until empty, clean as described, then refill.
- 4.2.3. The preferred method is option (b) above, that is, dispensing cream and oil into separate, clean, reusable dishes or disposable dishes at the commencement of the session. Any left over oils and creams must be discarded at the end of the session to avoid cross-contamination.
- 4.2.4. A single-use, disposable applicator should be used for dispensing cream into a dish. Use a clean dispenser if more cream is required mid-session.
- 4.2.5. Consider dispensing cream for use on the feet separately to cream to be used elsewhere on the body.
- 4.2.6. Warm oils and cream are deeply soothing to the client, allowing them to deeply let go and relax in the treatment session. We recommend the use of Universal Medicine blue labelled Body Cream and olive oil for massage.
- 4.2.7. Universal Medicine blue labelled Body Cream is perfectly formulated for massage. It is well absorbed by the skin, and does not stain clothing.
- 4.2.8. Olive oil is also perfect for massage because of its non-staining and absorbent qualities. **Nut based oils are to be avoided**, due to the high incidence of nut allergies in the population.
- 4.2.9. Care is needed when warming oils to ensure they do not exceed temperatures that are safe to apply to skin. It is absolutely essential that the practitioner be aware of the temperature of the oil and cream before applying it. Warmed oil and cream should be dispensed into the palm of the hand, and never directly onto the client's skin. Warming equipment can behave unpredictably causing the oil and cream to be heated to higher than expected temperatures. The practice of dispensing into the hand ensures that all cream and oils are at a safe temperature for application to the client's skin.
- 4.2.10. If you keep your oils on a warming appliance, make sure the dish or container is heat resistant.
- 4.2.11. Any left over cream and oil must be discarded at the end of the session.
- 4.2.12. Reusable dishes or containers must have a smooth, glossy surface for ease of cleaning. They should be washed between clients, using warm water with detergent and dried with a clean, lint-free cloth (see 4.4.6).
- 4.2.13. Esoteric Massage Practitioners are trained using the Universal Medicine blue labelled Body Cream. Practitioners are of course free to use any cream to perform Esoteric Massage but if so it is their responsibility to ensure that such cream is safe for use on the body and or face of the client. In addition, the ingredients of the Universal Medicine blue labelled Body Cream include essential oils, and it is part of the practitioner's duty of care to check with their client prior to use for any possible allergies to any ingredients.
- 4.2.14. Keep all dispensed oil and cream in one area of your treatment room. This area can be regarded as the "zone of contamination" (see the glossary of terms at Appendix A). This prevents the cross-contamination of surfaces and simplifies cleaning. If you need to move bottles and

containers to another location in the treatment room, use a ceramic, impervious plastic or metal tray that can be easily cleaned and disinfected between clients.

- 4.2.15. The surface where oils are kept should be washed with warm water and detergent, dried with a clean, lint-free cloth and wiped with an alcohol wipe between clients.
- 4.2.16. If electric warm water baths (such as baby bottle warmers) are used to warm oils, make sure they comply with electrical standards.
- 4.2.17. Empty the electric warm water baths of water every day and wash the reservoir carefully with neutral detergent. Do not immerse the whole unit in water. Dry with a lint-free cloth.
- 4.2.18. If a container needs to be removed from the bath mid-session to apply more oil or cream, make sure it is thoroughly wiped down with an alcohol wipe before returning it to the bath.

### **4.3. Safe handling of accessories used in massage**

- 4.3.1. Warm eye pillows are used during massage to support the client. The warmth provides a deep sense of relaxation, which can allow the client to let go of tension and assist them to gain profound benefits from their session. Eye pillows should be handled with clean hands to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- 4.3.2. The eye pillow placed over the eyes is to be wrapped in a tissue. Do not place an eye pillow on the client's eyes when they have an eye infection, such as conjunctivitis, cysts, weeping from the eye, or any other infectious condition.
- 4.3.3. It is recommended that eye pillows are warmed in a towel warming oven with a thermostat to regulated the temperature. It should have a UV light, operated by a separate switch. UV light will reduce the build up of micro-organisms on the pillows, however they cannot be completely eliminated. The pillows cannot be regarded sterile. Do not over load the oven with eye pillows as this renders the UV light ineffective. Do not open the door and place your hand in the oven when the UV light is in operation.
- 4.3.4. When warm eye pillows are used during massage sessions, place them on top of a towel draped over the client, never directly on the skin. Ensure that the eye pillows are at a comfortable temperature to protect the client from burns. If the eye pillow is too warm to hold on your own wrist, as is common practice with checking the temperature of baby bottles, then it is too warm to place on the client. Wait until the eye pillow cools to a suitable temperature before placement on the client.

### **4.4. Disinfection of equipment, towels and linen**

- 4.4.1. Towels and linen must be changed for each client. Used towels and linen should be placed in a laundry bin that is separate to domestic linen. They should be washed at 60-70 degrees Celsius and dried in a clothes dryer. All linen should be stored in a clean, dry environment.
- 4.4.2. Disposable, single-use table covers are recommended. They are to be removed and discarded after every client.



- 4.4.3. Face pillows, used to support the client's head when they are facing down, must be covered. Disposable, single-use covers are preferred. They are to be discarded at the conclusion of the treatment session.
- 4.4.4. When the session is complete and the client has left the room, the following surfaces are to be wiped with an alcohol wipe: the massage table face hole (this area is potentially exposed to saliva, tears or mucous secretions), oil and cream containers and dispensers that were touched with unwashed hands, and the surface on which oil and cream containers were kept. Any area that has oil or cream on the surface should first be cleaned with a detergent wipe, dried, then wiped with an alcohol wipe. By minimising the "zone of contamination", as described in point 4.2.15, the cleaning and disinfection process is simplified.
- 4.4.5. Options for cleaning and disinfecting reusable oil and cream containers are outlined in the following points.
- 4.4.6. Containers used to hold oil and cream can be thoroughly washed in warm water (at 40 degrees Celsius) using a neutral detergent available from medical suppliers. Very hot and very cold water are not recommended for this process. Ensure that the surface is completely free of dirt and debris. Containers should then be rinsed under hot water, dried with a lint-free cloth and wiped with 80% ethyl alcohol between each client.
- 4.4.7. Containers may be disinfected in water at or greater than 80 degrees Celsius for two minutes, after washing, as recommended in point 4.4.6 above.
- 4.4.8. Single-use disposable containers may be used instead.
- 4.4.9. Store containers in a clean, dry, dust-free environment.

## 5. CLIENT CARE AND PRACTITIONER PROFESSIONALISM

Esoteric Massage involves direct contact of the practitioner's hand with the skin of the client. Legs, back, belly and arms may be exposed to receive this treatment and clients will be required to remove outer layers of clothing. The amount of clothing to be removed should be minimised – **advise your client ahead of the session as to appropriate clothing to wear** (for example, shorts, if the legs are to be massaged or a bra with a back clasp). Practitioners need to be aware and respectful of the fact that undressing may be uncomfortable, or even confronting, for some clients. Ways of managing this are outlined below.

At all times, strict standards of respect and professionalism must be observed on the part of the practitioner. Strict avoidance of the breast area in women and the genital area of both men and women is to be observed. There is no occasion on which the practitioner should touch the breast or genital area of the client, and strict accordance with the EPA Code of Ethics and Conduct is to be observed and followed at all times. Contravention of this requirement is taken very seriously by the EPA, and is grounds for revocation of practitioner accreditation, dismissal from the EPA, or both.

Further standards relating to client care are outlined below:

- 5.1. The practitioner should follow correct towelling protocols, when the client undresses to give the client privacy. Towels or a robe may also be provided for the client to cover themselves. Do not assume that the client has experience of massage. Give them clear directions of what to do and inform them if you have provided an extra towel or robe to cover themselves.

- 5.2. Explain to female clients that there is no need to remove their bra for back massage unless the bra opening is at the front of the body or is an elasticised bra with no opening. In a back massage, the bra of a female client is unclasped in order to ensure no oil or cream touches the bra, and to allow massage of the entire back area. The bra is unclasped while the female client is lying down, to ensure respect and privacy. The back is wiped clean at the end of the session and the bra re-clasped. Ensure the client's privacy is respected at all times.
- 5.3. Some clients may prefer to wear loose fitting shorts for a leg massage. Advise the client ahead of time of what clothing to wear, so that clothing does not need to be removed.
- 5.4. Ensure that the whole of the client's body is covered with towels, except for the part that is being worked on. This keeps the body warm and also prevents the client from feeling exposed or vulnerable.
- 5.5. Develop techniques for keeping the client modest and covered when they roll over on the treatment table, such as screening the client with a towel. Also be aware that clients become deeply relaxed during Esoteric Massage and may need your support to roll over from one side to another safely.
- 5.6. As the client relaxes, their body temperature may drop, making them feel quite cool. Ensure that they are well covered, and that the treatment room is free of drafts.
- 5.7. Take time to remove massage oil from the skin at the conclusion of the session. Left over oil can stain clothing. You may also offer your client a cloth or disposable towel to wipe off any excess oil that you may have missed. Dispose of all such used cloths immediately in a sealed bin in the treatment room (see 3.9).
- 5.8. Let the client know when the session is over before you leave the room to wash your hands. Give them ample time to get up and dress themselves before you return.

## 6. CONTRA-INDICATIONS TO ESOTERIC MASSAGE

Esoteric Massage should not be performed on clients with certain medical conditions. These conditions are known as contra-indications. Some of these conditions are short term in nature and Esoteric Massage can be performed when complete healing has taken place. Other conditions are chronic and long term in nature and Esoteric Massage may not be appropriate for clients with these conditions at any time.

Consultation with the client's general medical practitioner is recommended prior to massaging clients with any of the health problems listed below. Make sure you are aware of these conditions, the potential risks they pose, and ask your client about them when taking their medical history.

### 6.1. Short term contra-indications

- 6.1.1. Do not massage or apply oil or cream to open wounds, rashes or other lesions on the client's skin.
- 6.1.2. If you have any doubt about a client's skin condition, do not massage the affected area and refer your client to their medical doctor for diagnosis and treatment of the problem. The client can receive massage when their medical doctor has deemed the condition to be cured.

- 6.1.3. Do not massage parts of the body where the client has an incompletely healed bone fracture. Massage can be provided when the client's attending doctor has confirmed that healing is complete.
- 6.1.4. Do not massage acute muscle and tendon injuries, including sprains and tears. Clients require medical attention for these conditions, not massage.
- 6.1.5. Massage is not recommended for clients with periostitis – inflammation of the delicate connective tissue membrane that surrounds the bone. Seek advice from the client's medical doctor before providing massage.
- 6.1.6. Massage is not recommended for clients with bursitis – a condition of inflammation and swelling of the small fluid filled sac that supports the free movement of tendons in joints. Do not massage the affected joint until healing has taken place, as confirmed by a doctor.
- 6.1.7. Do not massage a client who has deep vein thrombosis – a condition in which a blood clot has formed in a large vein. Deep vein thrombosis most typically forms in the veins of the calf muscle. Long haul flights, extended periods of bed rest following illness or surgery, fractures in the pelvis or legs, pregnancy, cancer, autoimmune disease (such as lupus), cigarette smoking, and high doses of oestrogen (found in some contraceptive pills and hormone replacement therapy) increase the risk of this condition occurring. The signs and symptoms include leg pain, swelling (oedema), and redness of the skin.
- 6.1.8. Some of these clients may present for massage to ease the pain in the affected limb. If you observe the signs, and the client has experienced any of the causes listed above, refer them to their medical doctor for diagnosis and treatment. In the case of deep vein thrombosis, massage of the affected calf muscle carries the risk of dislodging part of the clot whereupon it can damage the heart or lungs. Massage should not be given until a full healing has taken place, as confirmed by a doctor.

## 6.2. Absolute contra-indications

- 6.2.1. Do not provide esoteric massage for clients with untreated medical conditions, such as high blood pressure or diabetes. These clients require medical attention first and foremost. Once medical attention has been sought and treatment commenced, massage may be provided. The role of Esoteric Massage (and all Sacred Esoteric Healing modalities) is to support and be complementary to conventional medicine. Esoteric massage (as is the case for all Sacred Esoteric Healing modalities) does not offer a cure and it is never a replacement for medical treatment or advice.
- 6.2.2. Clients presenting with a medically inconclusive diagnosis of cancer, current confirmed diagnosis of cancer or any other form of cancer: Clients with breast cancer or any other form of cancer should not be given Massage until 5 years after the completion of the cancer treatment, with the exception of written permission obtained from their GP or Oncologist that directly states 'permitted to receive Esoteric Massage', and only then after any surgical incisions are fully sealed and healed. Consent is not considered nor promoted as an endorsement of the Esoteric Massage practitioner, simply a confirmation that the individual client's body is able to receive a very light and tender massage with light massage cream and oil to their body.

- 6.2.3. Do not treat clients with a diagnosed or suspected mental illness. All practitioners are required to be aware of and adhere to the EPA Mental Health Policy and Procedures Manual and to consult a member of the EPA Mental Health Advisory team about any new or existing client with such a condition. In the event of an incident involving a client with a diagnosed or suspected mental illness follow the Mental Health Policy and Procedures Manual including completing the Mental Health Critical Incident Report form should this be required.
- 6.2.4. Conditions such as haemophilia, low platelet count, susceptibility to bleeding and bruising, and use of medications to thin the blood, such as Warfarin, are indicators for not giving massage.
- 6.2.5. Rheumatoid arthritis and gout are chronic inflammatory conditions that may be aggravated by massage, especially when these conditions are in an acute phase. Massage may be possible when the client is not in an acute inflammatory phase, but only in consultation with their general medical practitioner.
- 6.2.6. Varicose veins should not be massaged under any circumstances.
- 6.2.7. Massage should not be given where there are unexplained or undiagnosed swellings or lumps under the skin. Refer your client immediately to their general medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment.
- 6.2.8. Pregnant clients should not be given massage.
- 6.2.9. Clients with cancer should not be given massage. They should be referred to their medical GP and a specialist as needed.
- 6.2.10. Clients with allergies to essential oils can be massaged with plain olive oil, and application of the Universal Medicine blue labelled Body Cream and essential oils should be avoided.

## **7. PRACTITIONER SAFETY AND SELF-CARE**

- 7.1. It is recommended that practitioners wear closed in shoes with good foot and arch support.
- 7.2. Ensure that your body is comfortably positioned at all times when delivering massage. Esoteric Massage supports clients in feeling the hard and disregarding way most people use their bodies, to be given the opportunity to let go of tension and stress, and to feel that a gentler way is possible. Practitioners offer this as a possibility to their clients through the tender and gentle way in which they give the massage, which is a reflection of the way they live themselves. In other words, it is the quality of the life lived by the practitioner (in and outside of the treatment room), and the practitioner's level of self care, that determines the quality of the session offered to the client. Further details are given in the EPA Code of Ethics and Conduct.

## **8. FIRST AID**

- 8.1. Have a first aid kit on hand in or near the treatment room. It can include an eye bath, individually wrapped sterile dressings, scissors, normal saline, adhesive tape, sterile wound dressings, emergency phone numbers and addresses. Esoteric Massage has a very low risk of causing injury to clients but accidents, such as tripping, are possible in the treatment room. To avoid incidents, ensure that the

floor of the room is clear of power cords, that the edges of matts do not represent a trip hazard, that walkways are clear at all times, and that there is a clear path of access to and from the treatment table, to avoid tripping incidents.

- 8.2. Ensure that you and your staff are trained in first aid procedures and update this training annually.

## 9. RECORD KEEPING

- 9.1. Client records are to be kept, as described in the EPA Code of Ethics and Conduct Appendix 4, the *EPA Client Consent form* and the *EPA Client Consultation Record*.
- 9.2. Ensure that you obtain the client's consent for the treatment on their first visit, prior to the treatment commencing. If the client has previously signed a consent form with another practitioner at the same clinic, ensure that the consent includes Esoteric Massage and covers all subsequent treatments at the clinic (as is the case with the EPA initial client consent form). Consent is further described in the EPA Client Consent Form guidelines.
- 9.3. Ensure that you use the EPA Client Consent Form mentioned above to take a thorough medical history for each client. The written history must include questions about the presence of blood-borne infections that pose a risk of transmission. These conditions include HIV, and Hepatitis B and C.
- 9.4. Medical history should also include a question on known allergies, specifically allergies to essential oils. Ask your client at the commencement of the session whether they have any allergies or irritation to essential oils and do not use if so. It is important to check for allergies to cleaning products, pollens, incense etc.
- 9.5. It is important to know if your client is pregnant. As outlined in points 4.2.13, 6.1.7 and 6.2.7 above, massage should not be given to pregnant women. Under no circumstance should any essential oils be used in any treatment of a pregnant woman.
- 9.6. Update each client's medical history at least annually. Make a note of the dates on which updates have been made.
- 9.7. Keep thorough and comprehensive notes for each treatment session with your clients. This includes the date, the nature of the treatment given and relevant discussions with the client. If you do not have your own recording system, it is recommended that you use the EPA Client Consultation Record form.
- 9.8. Keep a record book for incidents and accidents relevant to occupational health and safety. All incidents must be recorded on the EPA Incident Report and reported to the EPA office. You should contact your insurer at the first opportunity if there is any likelihood of a complaint being made or any possibility of legal action being taken against you.

## 10. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

- 10.1. It is a statutory requirement to ensure you handle your client's data responsibly and implement a Data Protection Policy as laid out in the *EPA UK/EU General Data Protection Regulations Policy and Procedures Template*.

- 10.2. UK based Practitioners obtain a Data Protection Fee with the ICO ([Information Commissioner's office](#)) if you are storing client personal information and European Practitioners consult the [European Commission](#) for further information.

## 11. WASTE DISPOSAL

- 11.1. The waste generated by esoteric massage (left over cream, disposable applicators, disposable dishes, alcohol wipes, tissues and disposable towels used to remove excess oils from the skin) is not exposed to body fluids and can be disposed of in general waste, but all waste should be disposed of in a sealed bin in the treatment room, which should be emptied at least daily (see 3.9).

## 12. REQUIREMENTS FOR MOBILE OPERATORS

- 12.1. All of the safety requirements set out in these Guidelines apply equally to practitioners working from home or a clinic, as well as to those providing services outside of regular treatment premises.
- 12.2. Permission from the local council may be required before providing massage services in areas outside normal treatment premises such as a private clinic. Please make enquiries with the local council in the areas where you intend to provide massage treatment.

## 13. ADVERTISING

- 13.1. Advertising Standards in the UK are self-regulated. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) states it is the UK's independent advertising regulator that enforces the Codes of Advertising Practice. Whilst holding no legal power, the ASA maintains a public blacklist of practitioners who do not comply, such cases include online public claims about the benefits a treatment without scientific evidence based research. For repeated offences or refusal to comply, the ASA can refer the case to the National Trading Standards, who are able to pursue criminal prosecution if warranted. Non-compliance risks public blacklisting and potential prosecution.
- 13.2. For a fee, UK based Practitioners, Clinics and Professional Associations can apply to the GRCCT ([General Regulatory Council for Complementary Therapies](#)) to have their website and online advertising assessed. The GRCCT Unique Certification Mark means your advertising meets stringent industry and legal requirements of the profession. Certification is valid for a period of one year and is subject to random audit.
- 13.3. European members can refer to the [European Advertising Standards Alliance](#) for Self Regulatory Advertising and the [International Chamber of Commerce](#) for more information.

## 14. USEFUL TIPS

- Contact your Local Authority – for the most up-to date local regulatory requirements.
- Ensure you are up to date with the current news and developments in your industry and area of practice.

- Contact the EPA – to connect with a member who has experience setting up in your region.
- Visit [UK Health & Safety Tool Kit](#) for more information on Health & Safety in the Workplace.
- Visit [EU Minimum Health & Safety Requirements](#) for European Health & Safety standards.

## 15. ATTACHMENTS

### Appendix A: Definition of terms

### Appendix B: Links to UK & EU Legislation and Other Resources

#### APPENDIX A: Definition of Terms

**Alcohol based hand rub.** An alcohol based liquid, foam or gel used to reduce the number of viable microorganisms on the hands of the practitioner.

**Alcohol wipes.** A disposable wipe that holds alcohol, used to clean non-soiled surfaces between client sessions.

**Body fluids.** Any substance secreted by the body. It includes blood, tears, respiratory secretions, gastric secretions, vomit, urine and faeces.

**Cleaning.** The removal of soil and a reduction in the number of micro-organisms from a surface. It is achieved by washing with detergent.

**Contamination.** The act or process of an instrument or surface being exposed to potentially harmful agents, rendering that instrument or surface unclean. For example, when a towel, pillow cover or face piece has bodily fluid on it, such as tears or mucous, it is regarded as contaminated.

**Contaminated waste.** Waste that has been in contact with any body fluid.

**Contraindication.** A factor, symptom or condition that makes a particular treatment inadvisable.

**Cross-contamination.** The act or process by which potentially harmful agents are transferred from a contaminated object to a clean or sterile surface or object.

**Detergent.** A substance that enhances the cleaning action of water or another liquid.

**Detergent wipes.** Disposable detergent-containing wipes for the cleaning of lightly soiled, shared patient equipment.

**Disinfectant.** An agent intended to destroy or remove pathogenic organisms. It does not usually destroy bacterial spores.

**Disinfection.** The inactivation of non-spore forming micro-organisms using thermal (i.e. heat) or chemical means.

**Micro-organism.** A single celled organism, including bacteria, viruses and fungi. They live on all surfaces and are capable of invading and growing within other organisms.

**Pathogen.** Any micro-organism capable of causing illness or disease.

**Practitioner.** The person who carries out healing for a client, not necessarily for gain or reward.

**Zone of contamination.** A designated area for the placement of items used in patient treatment.

#### APPENDIX B: Links to UK & EU Legislation and other Resources

##### UK Links

**Working Safely during Coronavirus (COVID-19)** - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

**Sector Strategies - Beauty HSE** - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/strategiesandplans/sector-strategies/beauty.htm>

**NHS Guidance - How to Wash Your Hands** - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

**Health & Social Care Act 2008 - Infection Control** - [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/449049/Code\\_of\\_practice\\_280715\\_acc.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/449049/Code_of_practice_280715_acc.pdf)

**NHS Standard infection control precautions: National hand hygiene and personal protective equipment policy** - [https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/4957/National\\_policy\\_on\\_hand\\_hygiene\\_and\\_PPE\\_2.pdf](https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/4957/National_policy_on_hand_hygiene_and_PPE_2.pdf)

**The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm> and <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm>

This Act sets out the general duties, which employers have towards employees and members of the public, and which employees have to themselves and to each other and this forms the basis for British Health and Safety Law.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (the Management Regulations) sets out what employers are required to do to manage health and safety of their employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/workers/index.htm>

### **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)**

While the risk of serious injury and/or infection during the treatment on your premises is very rare, should an incident occur that requires hospitalisation of the person involved or there are evident signs of a serious disease, the Practitioner has a duty to report the incident to RIDDOR - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>

**Electricity at Work Regulations 1989** - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/electrical.htm> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsr25.pdf>

**Management of Healthcare Waste** - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1992/588/contents/made> and <https://www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/healthcare-waste.htm>

**Provision and Use of Work Equipment 1998** - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg291.pdf>

**Equality Act 2010** - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

### **EU Links**

**Working Safely during Coronavirus (COVID-19)** - <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/infection-prevention-and-control-and-preparedness-covid-19-healthcare-settings>

**European Agency for Safety and Health at Work** - [https://osha.europa.eu/en/legislation/guidelines/osh\\_framework\\_directive](https://osha.europa.eu/en/legislation/guidelines/osh_framework_directive)

**Employment and Social Policy** - [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/chapter/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy.html?root\\_default=SUM\\_1\\_CODED%3D17,SUM\\_2\\_CODED%3D1713&locale=en](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/chapter/employment_and_social_policy.html?root_default=SUM_1_CODED%3D17,SUM_2_CODED%3D1713&locale=en)

**Infection Prevention and Control and COVID-19** - <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/infection-prevention-and-control-and-preparedness-covid-19-healthcare-settings>

**Europa.eu Business** - [https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/dealing-with-customers/data-protection/data-protection-gdpr/index\\_en.htm](https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/dealing-with-customers/data-protection/data-protection-gdpr/index_en.htm)

### **International Links**

**World Health Organisation Covid-19 Advice for Public** - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

**World Health Organisation Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of Covid-19** - <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/cleaning-and-disinfection-of-environmental-surfaces-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

**Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Hand Hygiene** - <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/guideline.html>