

The Society of Sports Therapists Standards of Proficiency

Standards for Sports Therapy

This document sets out the standards of proficiency that form the *minimum* benchmark requirement for Member status of The Society of Sports Therapists to be applied from **1st July 2008**.

1a Professional autonomy and accountability

Sports Therapists must:

1a.1 be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession

- understand the need to act in the best interests of their patients at all times
- understand what is required of them by The Society of Sports Therapists
- understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every patient including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health sporting participation and wellbeing
- be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession
- be aware of the role of sports therapy within the context of the sports and exercise medicine team

1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner

1a.3 understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality

1a.4 understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent

1a.5 be able to exercise a professional duty of care

1a.6 be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement

- be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem

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- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
- know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional
- recognise that they are personally responsible for, and must be able to justify their decisions

1a.7 recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly

1a.8 understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise

- understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice
- understand the need to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct
- understand the importance of maintaining their own health
- understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning

1b Professional relationships

Sports Therapists must:

1b.1 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other healthcare professionals, managers and coaches, fitness trainers, relevant sports and exercise practitioners, support staff, patients and their relatives and carers

- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
- understand the need to engage patients, carers and if appropriate coaches in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals
- be able to make appropriate referrals

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- understand the structure and function of health, education and social care services in the UK and current developments, and be able to respond appropriately

1b.2 be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

1b.3 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinions to colleagues, patients, their relatives and carers

- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System (see below), with no element below 6.51
- understand how communication skills affect the assessment of patients and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical ability and learning ability
- be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with patients and others
- be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
- understand the need to provide patients (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist patients whose first language is not English, wherever possible
- recognise that relationships with patients should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility

1b.4 understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the patient

- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of patients

The skills required for the application of practice

2a Identification and assessment of injury and risk factors associated with participation in exercise and competitive and / or recreational sport

Sports Therapists must:

2a.1 be able to gather and synthesis appropriate information

2a.2 be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques

- be able to apply be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment
- be able to recognise the need to identify and take account of the physical, psychological, social and cultural needs of individuals, and specific sporting populations during the assessment process

2a.3 be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate

2a.4 be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected

2b Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting sports and exercise injury prevention, management and rehabilitation needs

Sports Therapists must:

2b.1 be able to use research, reasoning and problem-solving skills to determine appropriate actions

- recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice
- be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures
- be aware of a range of research methodologies
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice
- *recognise the need to discuss, and be able to explain the rationale for the use of sports therapy interventions*
- *be able to form a clinical hypothesis on the basis of sports therapy assessment*

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- *understand the need to plan and implement comprehensive prevention, rehabilitative and training programmes that involve an understanding of the components of sport and exercise science.*
- *be able to identify injury and illness risk factors associated with participation in exercise and competitive and recreational sport.*
- *understand the need for appropriate administration and implementation of specific pre-participation physical examination and screening*
- *understand the components of a comprehensive rehabilitation programme*

2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements

- be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments
- be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice

2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management and rehabilitation plans including the setting of timescales

- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors
- *be able to set goals and construct specific individual and group sports and exercise therapy programmes*
- *be able to determine patient specific goals and objectives in the rehabilitation process*
- *understand the need to agree the goals, priorities and methods of sports and exercise therapy interventions in partnership with the patient*
- *be able to apply problem solving and clinical reasoning to assessment findings to plan and prioritise appropriate sports therapy interventions*
- be able to select, plan, implement and manage sports therapy treatment aimed at the facilitation and restoration of movement, function, sports activity and participation

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2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully

- *understand the need for the preparation, application and accomplishment of appropriate immediate first aid intervention and management in a sports and exercise environment.*
- *understand the need and be able to apply basic life-saving techniques*
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- *ensure the safe and effective handling and removal of a casualty from the competitive or recreational sport and exercise environment*
- understand the need to maintain the safety of both patients and those involved in their care
- *ensure patients are positioned (and if necessary immobilised) for safe and effective removal from a sporting and recreational environment*
- ensure patients are positioned (and if necessary immobilised) for safe and effective interventions, if appropriate
- *be able to deliver and evaluate sports therapy interventions*
- be able to select and apply safe and effective therapeutic exercise, manual therapy and electrotherapies in order to alleviate symptoms and restore optimum function and sports participation
- *be able to use manual therapy and massage techniques in a pre and post sports and exercise environment*
- *be able to use manual therapy and massage in a therapeutic and remedial context*

2b.5 be able to maintain records appropriately

- be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
- understand the need to use only accepted terminology in making records

2c Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the therapists actions

Sports Therapists must:

2c .1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of patients to their care
- be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the patient
- recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes
- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or rehabilitation programmes, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- *be able to evaluate treatment and rehabilitation plans to ensure that they meet the sports therapy needs of patients, informed by changes in circumstances health status and sporting activity*

2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
- understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection

3a Knowledge, understanding and skills

Sports Therapists must:

3a.1 know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession specific practice

- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction

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- be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process
- recognise the role of other professions in sports and exercise therapy
- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, sports and exercise injury assessment and intervention
- understand the following aspects of biological science:
 - *normal human anatomy and physiology, especially the dynamic relationships of human structure and function and the neuromuscular, musculoskeletal, cardio-vascular and respiratory systems within a sport exercise and rehabilitation environment*
 - *patterns of human growth and development related to the pre-adolescent, adolescent and adult sports person*
 - *factors influencing individual variations in human ability, health status and sporting performance*
 - *how the application of sports therapy can influence physiological and structural change following trauma*
 - *the principles and theories from physics, biomechanics, ergonomics and applied exercise science that can be applied to sports therapy*
 - *the means by which the physical sciences can inform the understanding and analysis of movement and function of the sport and exercise participant*
 - *the principles and application of measurement techniques based on sound biomechanical principals*
 - *the application of anthropometric and ergonomic principles*
- understand the following aspects of clinical science:
 - *the normal immediate and delayed pathophysiological responses to trauma and injury*
 - *adaptations brought about by sport specific training, rehabilitation regimes and exercise programmes*
 - *the pathophysiological responses to overtraining, overuse and poor or incorrect sports performance*

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- *physiological, structural, behavioural and functional changes that can result from sports therapy intervention, rehabilitation and sport and exercise participation*
- *the specific contribution that sports therapy can potentially make to enhancing individuals' functional and sporting ability, together with the evidence base for this*
- *the different concepts and approaches that inform the development of sports therapy interventions*
- *understand the following aspects of behavioural science:*
 - *psychological, social and cultural factors that can influence an athletes injury, health and illness, including their responses to the management of their injury and related treatment and rehabilitation*
 - *how psychology, sociology and cultural diversity inform an understanding of sports therapy and the incorporation of this knowledge into sport and exercise prevention, injury management and rehabilitation*
 - *theories of communication relevant to effective interaction with patients, colleagues, coaches and other sports medicine professionals*
 - *theories of team working and leadership*

3a.2 know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual, groups or sporting populations

3a.3 understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment

- be aware of applicable health and safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, or sporting environment such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
- be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation
- be able to select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly
- be able to establish safe environments for practice, which minimise risks to patients, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control

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- know and be able to apply appropriate moving and handling techniques



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