

Home Maintenance and Self-Treatment Program/Handout

This document presents guidelines for a home maintenance and self-treatment program for patients after therapy at Clear Passage. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult a Clear Passage therapist or your physician for clarification. We prefer to help talk you through any issues with self-treatment, rather than have you do it incorrectly, unsuccessfully, or stop altogether.

Following Clear Passage therapy, we recommend:

- Setting aside 20 minutes a day, 5 to 7 days a week, for self-treatment.
- If you go 3 to 6 months without a setback in your condition or you are not finding any restrictions, you can decrease the frequency to 3 times a week.
- You can use any combination of techniques, tools, balls, foam roller or use of your hands.
- You can divide it into several sessions during your day or do it all in one session. Find a time of day that is convenient for you.
- We suggest creating a routine and making it a part of your daily schedule.

If your medical condition changes, or if you experience a bowel obstruction, wait to resume self-treatment until you have obtained clearance from your physician and the soreness from the obstruction has resolved. If you think you are having a bowel obstruction, do NOT use the ball or tools. In this case, we recommend the compression technique (see below).

Principles of Self-treatment

- Treatment can be performed either sitting or lying in a reclined position. Support your elbows and forearms with pillows to keep your neck and shoulders relaxed.
 - Gently and slowly, with relaxed hands, feel for areas in your abdomen that feel tight or are restricted.
 - Restrictions may feel hot, hard, tender or thicker. It may feel like “a good hurt” when gentle pressure is applied.
 - Compression: Slowly sink into the tissues, like sinking into wet clay, until you meet your body’s resistance. Take 15-30 seconds to do this. If you are using a lot of muscle power, you are working too hard. You can use your hands, a ball or one of the tools provided for you, whichever you prefer. More in depth instructions are found below.
 - Gently engage the restriction and move it in a clock or compass like direction and note which direction is the most restricted.

- Push or stretch the tissue INTO the direction that is the most resisted, feeling for an increase in tautness or further resistance to stretch. Maintain that hold until you feel the tissues begin to soften and change. It can feel like butter melting or taffy stretching. Stay with that line of tension as it releases and don't lose that tautness, continually and gently taking up the slack.
- Keep direct pressure for at least 2 minutes, working up to 10 minutes. Try to wait until you feel the softening and release before letting go.
- Always ease slowly out of the tissues.
- It is better to do one or two longer holds than a lot of shorter ones.
- You should never feel more pain or soreness during self-treatment than you did when you were being treated by your therapist.
- These principles should also be followed if a family member is going to treat you.

Self-Treatment Techniques

Alternative Sitting Technique

- Sit on a chair and scoot your bottom towards the front edge of the chair. Gently let your finger pads sink into your abdomen.
- Find the area that is restricted, and then bend forward over your finger pads (or a tool).
- Your body weight becomes a source of pressure. You can apply direct, deep pressure, or stretch the tissues apart with your fingers, or a finger and the tool.
- Keeping your finger pads on the restricted tissues, you can slowly straighten your body, letting that movement add to the stretch.
- Curl your fingers and place them together back-to-back.
- With your fingertips, press into an area that feels tight or restricted and sink in slowly.
- Staying at the appropriate depth, slowly stretch your fingers apart, and pay attention to the amount of restriction you feel between your fingers. You will likely only move a small distance, about 1 cm (less than half an inch).
- Next, stretch the tissues diagonally and assess the amount of restriction you feel between your fingers. You can do this in different directions until you find the tightest direction.
- Hold the stretch for 2 -10 minutes or longer.
- During this time, you may notice the tissues begin to soften, melt, or stretch like taffy. When this occurs, follow the tissues and maintain the line of tension until you feel the tension release and soften, and your hand or hands get pulled to the next tension barrier.

- *Larry Wurn: “This process may resemble a very slow dance, where one hand starts to move before the other. One side may move a half an inch, and then the other side may begin to release. You may feel more things happen under one hand, and then the other. Just follow the tissues, waiting until the restrictions have softened and disappeared. If you don’t feel a release or any changes, or if the spot you are working on feels like it is getting worse, then move your fingers to a different spot and try working there.”*

Using a Massage Tool

- Hold the massage tool in one hand and slowly sink the tool into an area of restriction, using the tool as an anchor.
- Sink in slowly with the fingers or palm of your other hand and apply a directional stretch away from the tool into the direction that is the most restricted.
- Focus your attention on the stretch with your free hand rather than with the tool (which is the anchor). You may feel the tissues release, then stop again and release some more. Continue to apply pressure until you feel a release and there is no longer resistance to the stretch.
- Maintain the stretch for 2-10 minutes and release slowly.

Ball Protocol

- Lie down on your stomach, face down on a carpeted floor, on a yoga mat, or your bed and place a small inflatable ball or a softball directly on a restricted spot between your ribs and your pelvis.
- Keep direct pressure for at least 2 minutes, working up to a maximum of 10 minutes.
- Allow yourself to soften over the ball, breathing gently throughout. When you feel as if the tissues have softened, gently keep easing your body onto the ball more, maintaining the tension in the fascia. You may press up on your elbows to increase the pressure, or if lying on your side, bring your upper leg forward, rotating through your low back.
- If you are on a bed and feeling like you need more depth, you can place a small paperback book under the ball. If the floor is too hard, you may place a pillow under the ball.

- If at any time you feel uncomfortable, your breathing becomes labored, or you feel like the discomfort is getting worse, ease your weight slowly off that spot or move the ball to another area nearby and see if that eases the discomfort.
- Do NOT lie with the ball directly above your belly button in the center of the abdomen.

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