



COLLEGE OF
PHYSICAL
THERAPISTS
OF ALBERTA

position statement

SPINAL MANIPULATION

Physical therapists¹ whose practice includes spinal manipulation² have successfully demonstrated they have the competencies³ necessary to safely and effectively use spinal manipulation in practice.

The College of Physical Therapists of Alberta (CPTA) maintains a roster of physical therapists who incorporate spinal manipulation into their practice; the roster is available upon request. Physical therapists use spinal manipulation in practice only if their name appears on the Spinal Manipulation Roster. Physical therapists studying spinal manipulation are registered on a 'provisional' roster prior to successful completion of the courses and examinations encompassing the competencies required to safely perform spinal manipulation as a physical therapy intervention.

The use of spinal manipulation by physical therapists is restricted to the treatment of neuromusculoskeletal conditions.

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January 2005

¹ Physical therapist, physiotherapist, physical therapy, physiotherapy, physiothérapie, physiothérapeute, PT and pht are official marks used with permission. The terms physical therapist and physical therapy are synonyms for physiotherapist and physiotherapy respectively.

² Spinal manipulation is a skillful passive movement of a spinal joint beyond its active limit of motion but within the limit of its anatomical integrity. It is a localized high velocity, low amplitude thrust technique. Its purpose is to restore motion and function.

³ Demonstration of the competencies has occurred through successful completion of a theoretical course and examination and a practical course and examination encompassing the competencies required to safely perform spinal manipulation as a physical therapy intervention or performed spinal manipulation as a physical therapy intervention competently in practice prior to January 3, 2003 with satisfactory patient outcomes. The competencies are set out in the Spinal Manipulation Competency Profile for Physical Therapists, 2008, College of Physical Therapists of Alberta.