



Basic Small Animal Massage Certification

Practitioner 01 - Introduction to Animal Therapeutic Massage

Course Description

This course provides the foundation for an entry-level certification in small animal therapeutic massage. It is the first course in a two-part series for *Basic Small Animal Therapeutic Massage* certification.

This course curriculum incorporates multimodal learning opportunities by utilizing self-paced online learning, small group size in-person training, hands-on practice with mannequins, and supervised interactions with volunteer clients and patients. The goal of this course is to facilitate integration of anatomy, physiology, kinesiology and behavior concepts into the technical practice of massage.

Completion of the self-paced, in-person clinical training, and independently completed case studies allow for compilation of classroom material and the development of technical skills.

Method of Instruction

This course consists of three parts:

- 1) Module 1: Self-Paced Learning – The self-paced portion of this course is available online for students to work through independently and at their own pace.
- 2) Module 2: In-Person Clinical Intensive – An in-person, intensive, three-day learning event with small classroom sizes and a high teacher to student ratio.
- 3) Module 3: Independent Case Work - Students will independently complete four case studies after successfully finishing both the self-paced and in-person course work.

Enrollment Prerequisites

- 1) Education & Experience: Fifty (50) documented hours of animal handling experience.
- 2) Professional references: Two letters of professional reference (one letter must be from a veterinarian)
- 3) Age: At least 18 years old at time of enrollment

Course Objectives

- 1) Establish functional competence with canine anatomy
- 2) Introduce concepts of muscle, integument, circulatory & nervous systems physiology
- 3) Introduce concepts of holistic veterinary medicine
- 4) Develop functional competence with basic massage techniques
- 5) Introduce concepts of canine behavior & safe animal handling
- 6) Introduce SOAP medical record format
- 7) Introduce concepts of kinesiology and gait analysis



Course Schedule

Module 1 – Self-Paced Learning (28 Hours)

Course Topics		Method of Study
Section 1		
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Introduction & Overview • Introduction to Holistic Veterinary Medicine • History of Massage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #1
Medical Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Terminology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skeleton ○ Demonstration • Regions of a Dog’s Body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skeleton ○ Demonstration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiology of Muscle, Tendon & Ligament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #3
Basic Massage Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Massage Strokes • Basic Massage Techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #4
Physiology of Body Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the Nervous System • Introduction to the Circulatory System • Introduction to the Integumentary System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #5
Section 1 Exam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Home Study • Section 1 Exam
	Hours of Theory	8
	Hours of Lab	0
Section 2		
Anatomic Landmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axial Skeleton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skeleton ○ Demonstration ○ Skull-Skeleton & Skull Demonstration ○ Canine Skull Morphology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hindlimb Skeleton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skeleton ○ Demonstration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forelimb Skeleton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skeleton ○ Demonstration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #3



Anatomy & Physiology of Joints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiology of Joints • The Stifle Joint • CCL Rupture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #4
Introduction to Medical Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Medical Records • Common abbreviations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #5
Practitioner Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for the Massage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment Routine & Client Interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles of Body Mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #8
Safe Animal Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Animal Handling Techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #9
Section 2 Exam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Home Study • Section 2 Exam
	Hours of Theory	9.5
	Hours of Lab	0
Section 3		
Musculature of the Dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musculature of the Head & Skin • Musculature of the Neck & Trunk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musculature of the Forelimb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musculature of the Hindlimb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #3
The Massage Sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Massage Sequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #4
Veterinary Medical Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterinary Medical Ethics • VCPR Summary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #5



Animal Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Behavior & Body Language • Recognizing & Recording Pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #6
Indications & Cautions for Massage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indications & Cautions for Massage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #7
Writing & Interpreting Medical Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Intake Form • SOAP Format • Common abbreviations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #8
Massage Sequence Demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massage Sequence Demonstration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded Lectures • At Home Study • Quiz #9
Section 3 Exam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Home study • Section 3 Exam
	Hours of Theory	10.5
	Hours of Lab	0

Module 2 – In-Person Clinical Intensive (21 Hours)

Once Module 1 has successfully been completed, join us at our school facility in Wheat Ridge, CO for the 3-day clinical intensive training. Clinical Intensive must be completed within 6 months of finishing the self-paced learning module (Module 1).

Duration		Topic
Day 1		
9:00 – 9:30	ADM01	Orientation & Introductions
9:30 – 10:00	AP01	Terminology: Directional Terms & Movement Definitions
10:00 - 10:30	AP07 / AP08	Axial Skeleton & Anatomic Landmarks
10:30 – 10:45		Break
10:45 – 11:15	AP09	Hindlimb Skeleton
11:15 – 11:30	MT08	Indications & Cautions for Massage
11:30 – 11:45	MT01	Basic Massage Strokes: Effleurage & Petrissage
11:45 -12:15	MT02 / MT04	Basic Massage Techniques & Body Mechanics
12:15 – 1:00		Practical Skills Workshop: Practice on Other Students
1:00 – 2:00		Lunch
2:00 – 2:30	AP10	Forelimb Skeleton & Anatomic Landmarks



2:30 – 2:45	MT03	Preparing for the Massage
2:45 – 3:30	MT06 / QR02	Massage Sequence Review & Demonstration
3:30 – 3:45		Break
3:45 – 4:15	MT05	Practical Skills Workshop: Safe Handling
4:15 – 5:00	ADM03	Practical Skills Workshop: Practice on Demo Dogs
Homework		Anatomy Review
	BP06	Elevator Pitch Worksheet
Day 2		
9:00 – 9:15		Questions & Anatomy Review
9:15-9:45	BP05	The “Elevator Pitch”
9:45-10:15	ER01/ER03/ER04	Medical Records & SOAP Format
10:15 – 10:30		Break
10:30 – 10:45	AP13	Musculature of the Head & Skin
10:45 – 11:15	AP14	Musculature of the Neck & Trunk
11:15 – 11:45	QR03 / QR04	Recognizing & Recording Pain
11:45 – 12:15	MT01 / MT02	Variations on Massage Strokes
12:15 – 1:00	ADM03	Practical Skills Workshop: Practice on Demo Dogs
1:00 – 2:00		Lunch
2:00 – 2:30	AP15	Musculature of the Forelimb
2:30 – 3:00	MT07	Animal Behavior & Body Language
3:00 – 3:30	ER02	Veterinary Medical Ethics
3:30 – 3:45		Break
3:45 – 4:15	BP06	Working with the Clinic Team
4:15 – 5:00	ADM03	Practical Skills Workshop: Practice on Demo Dogs
Homework		Anatomy Review
	QR02	Massage Sequence Review
Day 3		
9:00 – 9:45	ADM03	Practical Skills Workshop: Practice on Demo Dogs
9:45 – 10:00		Questions & Anatomy Review
10:00 – 10:15	BP05	The “Elevator Pitch”
10:15 – 10:30		Break



10:30 – 11:15	AP16	Musculature of the Hindlimb
11:15 – 11:45	ER05	Practical Skills Workshop: Medical Record Practice
11:45 – 12:15	AP03	Physiology of Muscle
12:15 – 1:00	ADM03	Practical Skills Workshop: Practice on Demo Dogs
1:00 – 2:00		Lunch
2:00 – 2:30	AP11 / AP12	Physiology of Joints & the Stifle
2:30 – 4:30	ADM04	Practical Exam & Mentorship Session
4:30 – 5:00	ADM05	Instructions for Independent Case Studies

Module 3 – Independent Case Work (36 Hours)

Students will complete 4 case studies independently and submit case information for review and grading. Case work must be completed within 6 months of finishing the clinical intensive module (Module 2).

Course Evaluation

Students must receive >70 score to proceed through each section of Module 1: Self-Paced Learning.

Students must receive a PASS on a practical evaluation to successfully complete Module 2: Clinical Intensive.

Each section of the practical exam is awarded one of the following numeric grades:

- 1 – Unsatisfactory
- 2 – Needs Improvement
- 3 – Fair
- 4 – Good
- 5- Excellent

A FAIL grade will be assigned in the following cases:

- 2+ “Unsatisfactory” scores
- 3+ “Needs improvement” scores

Students must complete and receive a PASS on four independently completed case studies within six (6) months of completing the Clinical Intensive. Each massage series consists of the following:

- Completed medical records from each massage visit (three visits within each series)
- A 5-7 minute case summary video



Textbook(s) and Required Tools or Supplies

Required Textbook(s): Dog Anatomy Workbook: A Guide to the Canine Body; Andrew Gardiner; Trafalgar Square; copyright: 2014

Required Supplies: A solid colored scrub top and closed-toe shoes are required for Module 2: Clinical Intensive

Reference Materials:

- *Canine Medical Massage: Techniques & Clinical Applications*; Robinson, N. & Sheets, S.; American Animal Hospital Association Press; copyright: 2015
- *Guide to the Dissection of the Dog*, 6th edition; Evans, H. & deLaHunta, A.; Elsevier (USA); copyright: 2003
- *Color Atlas of Veterinary Anatomy, Volume 3: The Dog & Cat*; Done, S., Goody, P., et. al.; Elsevier Limited; copyright: 2009
- *Anatomy of Domestic animals: Systemic & Regional Approach, 10th edition*; Pasquini, C., Spurgeon, T., Pasquini, S.; Sudz Publishing; copyright: 2003

Teaching aids:

- Clay modeling aids
- Stuffed animal figures
- Massage table
- Massage pad