



CHAPTER

15

Contraindications and Cautionary

Sites in Thai Massage

*“Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers,
never resents, never revenges itself.”⁸⁸*

—Mahatma Gandhi

Chapter 15

Contraindications and Cautionary Sites in Thai Massage

Contraindications in Thai Massage

Understanding Contraindications

There are conditions or situations in which massage is inadvisable because it may be harmful to the recipient. The recipient's health history information is important in order to evaluate for any contraindications and to best serve the recipient's need. (See sample health intake form in chapter 16.)

Thai massage is safe when performed with adequate knowledge of the recipient's physical condition. Physical disorders vary from one body system to another. Some Thai massage positions may be harmful to a person with particular health conditions and must be avoided. Therefore, the practitioner must know the recipient's health condition and problem to perform massage safely.

Chapter 17 which is the hands on practice section of this book provides cautionary notes for particular positions and should be followed strictly. Here are some guidelines to consider conditions which necessitate refraining from administering Thai massage in general or avoid regional area in particular.

The suggestions in this chapter are presented in two categories.

Category 1 is the strictly refrain from giving or receiving massage. The indication in the chapter will be "**Do not massage**". This means under these conditions or circumstances, massage must not be performed. It may be danger to the recipient and /or create more harm.

Category 2 is the suggestion that require the practitioner to provide massage with caution according the recipient's condition. The indication is "**Massage with caution**". Proceed with caution should these symptoms be present.

Note: Further knowledge on how to massage and apply special techniques for a particular health condition requires in depth learning and is necessary for the safety and benefit of the recipient, and to protect the practitioner from liability. This book can present only brief information to the reader and the student of Thai massage. Interested learners should seek more information from other books and appropriate classes in the field.

Contraindications and Precaution Conditions

1. Injury or inflammation of muscles

Do not massage the area.

Reduce the discomfort by applying a cold compress to the injured area if it occurred within a period of less than 72 hours, or to the inflamed area if it is red and feels warm when touched. When the injury becomes chronic and shows no sign of trauma such as bruising or swelling, massage with caution or follow physician's instructions on where to massage.

2. Bone fracture or joint dislocation

Do not massage the area.

Perform first aid if possible on acute injury and refer to physician immediately. With permission from the attending physician, during healing process, massage with caution.



Figure 15-1. Bone fracture

3. Severe ache and pain

Do not massage / massage with caution.

The decision to massage depends upon the practitioner's evaluation of the cause of pain. Some useful guidelines are shown below:

If findings show that the pain is related to muscle and not nerves, massage with caution. If findings show that it is nerve related, massage is not advisable. To prevent further harm,

do not massage when the findings are unclear. Advise the recipient to seek medical help.

4. Fever from any causes

Do not massage.

Fever may cause body soreness as a result of muscle inflammation. Massage will exacerbate the inflammation. It may also spread infection if the fever is caused by bacteria. The practitioner may, however, gently massage on recipient's hands, face and head to relax and offer relief and support to the recipient.

5. Acute non severe illnesses i.e. cold, flu, sore throat, diarrhea etc.

Do not massage.

Respiratory conditions are contagious to the practitioner and those around the setting. The conditions are also contraindications to receiving massage because muscles may be sore; the recipient may have a fever and should preferably receive appropriate care and rest. In the case of diarrhea, massage will not help alleviate the symptoms but will result in more discomfort for recipient.

6. Headache

Massage with caution in non-severe conditions.

When a recipient exhibits severe headache do not massage because it may be caused by serious conditions and medical help should be sought.

Do not massage in the case of migraine headache.

It will aggravate the symptoms. The recipient should take his/her own medical prescription and rest in a quiet atmosphere. Massage can be administered before the onset of migraine to prevent it or afterward for relaxation.