

Keeping Accurate Records and Session Notes of your Clients

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Record keeping

In all major forms of medical treatment, physical therapy, and bodywork, keeping accurate client records and health histories is not optional; it is required. I am concerned when I hear of Thai massage practitioners who don't keep detailed notes of their sessions or maintain health histories of their clients. It's clear that more teachers and schools should stress the importance of record keeping for a professional practice in traditional Thai healing arts. Today's holistic health practitioner must take more responsibility for his clients' welfare and for his own professional development. Session notes and client intake forms are valuable tools that can take your practice to a new level of growth and professionalism.

Client intake form

The first time you see a new client, allow a few minutes to discuss their health history, and make sure they fill out a client intake form beforehand. The intake form should include your client's name and contact information, their health history, emergency contact information, specific medical conditions, medications, and other relevant information. Many therapists also take this opportunity to have the client sign a waiver of some sort, to address personal liability claims or declarations that Thai massage sessions are strictly nonsexual. A client intake form can help a therapist to work more effectively, and to address each client's needs more appropriately. If you don't already have a health history form, samples may be found on the internet. Thai Healing Alliance has a form that may be downloaded by the general public and modified according to each therapist's specific needs. A sample client intake form appears on the next pages.

Confidential Client Information Form

name: _____ date: _____

home tel: _____ cell: _____ e-mail: _____

address: _____

date of birth: _____ profession: _____ referred by: _____

emergency contact info: _____

are you currently taking medication? _____

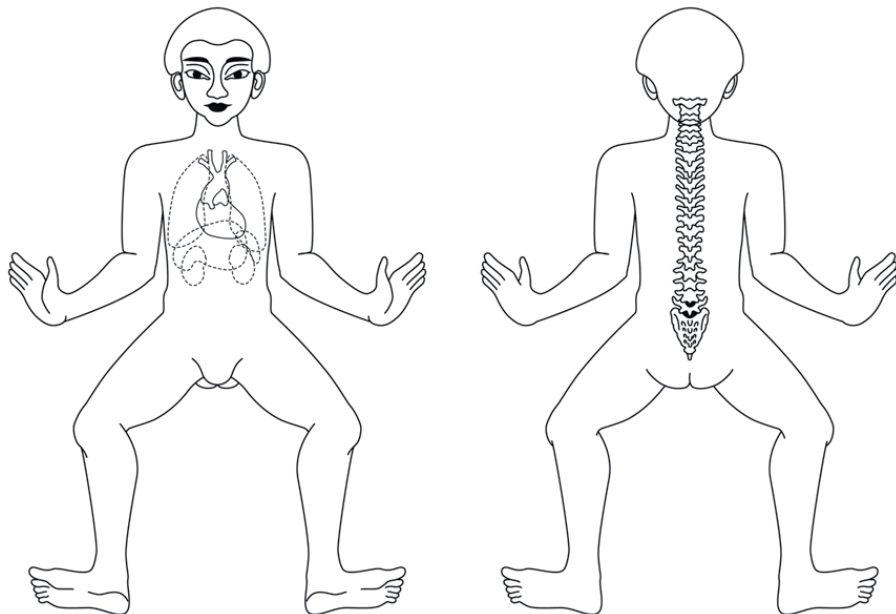
describe any special medical conditions: _____

indicate if any conditions apply:

- surgeries spinal/disc problems heart problems high blood pressure osteoporosis hernia
diabetes arthritis wear contact lenses pregnancy back pain neck pain
broken bones/fractures constipation diarrhea other

describe in more detail any of the above conditions:

On the diagrams to the right,
circle any problem areas,
and indicate as follows:
tension "T"
pain "P"
surgeries "S"



Do you have any restrictions in movement? _____

Are there any movements or stretches you think may be harmful? _____

Do you generally like to hear music during a session? _____

Is it OK to use lightly scented lotion or balm on your face? _____

Do you have any other comments or requests? _____

Client consent and agreement — Please read and sign below

- It is agreed and understood that Thai massage therapy is intended for relaxation, and that it is not meant to diagnose, treat or remedy any illness, disease, injury, physical condition or mental disorder.
- Except in cases of emergency, I agree to pay for all sessions that are not cancelled at least 24 hours in advance.
- Traditional Thai bodywork is strictly non-sexual. Under extenuating circumstances, either party reserves the right to immediately terminate the session.
- I understand that the practice of all forms of body therapy is subject to local laws and ordinances.

signature

date

date (d-m-y)

total session time

Session notes

date (d-m-y)

total session time

Session notes

Session notes

A practice log is a written record that describes a progression of treatment sessions. You may devise your own form, or staple a blank page to each client's intake form in order to record your notes after each session. Written records of each session provide invaluable information about the client's condition and about the therapist's work. They allow the therapist to track changes, and to note client preferences and responses to certain techniques and therapy routines. By keeping accurate session logs, the Thai therapist may quickly and efficiently review previous sessions, and therefore be better prepared to work with his clients from one session to the next. Written records can also be helpful if an insurance claim is ever made against the therapist, or if a client's treatment history must be shared with another healthcare professional. Always keep a written record whenever you conduct a Thai session. As soon as your client leaves the premises, and while the session is still fresh in your mind, write your thoughts on paper. Don't just write short, simple descriptions. Describe things such as the client's physical and emotional states, which positions you used during the session (supine, prone, side, sitting), and how your client responded to what you did that day. Describe any special conditions that may have had an effect on the session today, whether positive or negative, and mention the techniques you used that you thought were beneficial. Take note of anything you could have done differently, and give yourself suggestions for the future. The next time you work with this person, review your notes from previous sessions so you can see the "big picture" of your ongoing therapeutic interaction with this particular client. Samples of session notes, each of which was written by a different practicing Thai therapist about one of their own clients, are included on the next page for your reference.

Sample Client Session Notes

date (d-m-y)		special conditions		total session time	1:45
<i>session notes</i>					
<p><i>Good session, very flowing. Worked in supine, prone and seated position. I sensed that her mid-section was blocked, so I worked there as much as possible. Did compressions, spinal twists, cobras, and line work. Worked the hips with pulls and suspensions in side position, and also worked the back lines. Gave a fairly deep stomach massage to try to open her mid section; did blood stops. The rest of the session was based on a normal sequence. Next time, check the mid section, and continue to work there in different ways if needed.</i></p>					
date (d-m-y)		special conditions	smoking support	total session time	2:00
<i>session notes</i>					
<p><i>Supine and seated position. He returned after two years because he recently stopped smoking and he wants some reinforcement to remain smoke-free. Used a compress especially on the chest, stomach and throat, and applied balm to the chest area and on the back in prone position. I had him breathe in the vapors and he coughed phlegm several times into a tissue. Lateral leg lines were blocked, worked them with feet. Shoulder and neck work in seated position, and face and head in final supine position. In the future, continue to use hot herbal compresses to help clear the lungs !</i></p>					
date (d-m-y)		special conditions		total session time	1:50
<i>session notes</i>					
<p><i>Three months pregnant, so I worked mostly in side position, with extra pillows. Avoided pressure points in feet, ankles and head. No blood stops! Her lateral legs were blocked, especially the right side, but she opened up with compressions on her calves and thighs, and she said she liked the work very much (do it again in the future). Did light circular stomach massage only, very little pressure. Worked sen kalathari and sumana down the center of the back of legs. Did some gentle back openings in side position. Worked her head and face and neck with large pillows to support her in semi-seated position. A good session.</i></p>					
date (d-m-y)		special conditions	recent injury	total session time	1:30
<i>session notes</i>					
<p><i>Knee problem, right ACL injury. I avoided excessive bending and rotating but I did work the pressure points around the knee and worked the lines with thumbing on both legs. Complained of low energy due to menopause, so I worked at a steady pace to try to energize her. Used all 4 positions, focused on low and middle back in prone position, and shoulders and neck in sitting. She said she felt lighter and more open. Afterward, I showed her some yoga poses that she can do to help strengthen her back.</i></p>					
date (d-m-y)		special conditions	shoulder pain	total session time	1:50
<i>session notes</i>					
<p><i>Mysterious pain in the shoulder, left side. Osteo-arthritis in right hip, severe pain so I was gentle with direct contact and compressions. Worked in all 4 positions, spent time on her feet (one at a time) and worked her leg lines with palming and then thumbing. All techniques on the hip required a slow, careful approach, and I used pillows to prop her up in seated position. I tried to be sensitive to her right side in general. She said she felt significant pain relief in her hip. It was good to see how the work helped her. Next session, take more time to examine and prevent occurrence of pain in right side, especially near hip.</i></p>					