



CMTO's Multiple Choice Examination (MCQ) Content Outline 2026

The [2016 Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists at Entry-to-Practice \(PC/PIs\)](#) document provides the foundation for the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) Certification Examinations and, accordingly, the examination content outlines. While based on the PC/PIs, the context of CMTO's Certification Examinations is such that the layout and numbering for the examination content outlines differ from that of the PC/PIs document.

The MCQ content outline is organized into 4 content areas, each comprising a percentage of the total items contained in each test form:

- **Professional Practice:** **18% of items**
- **Assessment:** **25% of items**
- **Treatment:** **42% of items**
- **Clinical Science:** **15% of items**

1. Professional Practice (18%)

- 1.1. Utilize communication effectively.
 - 1.1.1. Employ effective questioning techniques.
- 1.2. Utilize medical terminology.
 - 1.2.1 Knowledge of medical terminology.
- 1.3. Comply with federal and provincial requirements.
 - 1.3.1. Knowledge of relevant provincial and federal requirements.
- 1.4. Comply with regulatory requirements.
 - 1.4.1. Knowledge of the mandate and roles of a regulatory body.
 - 1.4.2. Knowledge of CMTO requirements (e.g., Policies, Standards of Practice, Position Statements, etc.,).
 - 1.4.3. Differentiate between the role of a regulatory body and that of a professional association.
 - 1.4.4. Knowledge of quality assurance requirements.
- 1.5. Maintain comprehensive practice records.

- 1.5.1. Knowledge of professional practice documentation requirements.
 - 1.5.2. Knowledge of security, confidentiality and access requirements for records.
- 1.6. Apply standard hygiene and infection control precautions.
 - 1.6.1. Knowledge of standard hygiene practices.
 - 1.6.2. Knowledge of standard precautions of infection control.
- 1.7. Utilize research and professional literature.
 - 1.7.1. Understand research processes.
- 1.8. Ensure sound practice management.
 - 1.8.1. Knowledge of billing procedures.
- 1.9. Maintain informed client consent throughout assessment and treatment.
 - 1.9.1. Knowledge of the purpose of informed consent.
 - 1.9.2. Knowledge of the components of informed consent.
- 1.10. Obtain explicit consent prior to assessment and treatment of sensitive body areas.
 - 1.10.1. Knowledge of potential sensitive areas.
- 1.11. Recognize and address the power differential in the client-therapist relationship.
 - 1.11.1. Knowledge of what constitutes abuse in the client-therapist relationship.
 - 1.11.2. Explain the therapist's responsibility for managing the client-therapist relationship (e.g., prevention of sexual, emotional, and financial abuse).
- 1.12. Recognize and address transference and countertransference.
 - 1.12.1. Knowledge of the characteristics and implications of transference and countertransference.

2. Assessment (25%)

- 2.1. Obtain comprehensive case history.
 - 2.1.1. Knowledge of the components of a comprehensive case history.
- 2.2. Integrate findings of other healthcare practitioners.
 - 2.2.1. Incorporate assessment findings of other healthcare practitioners into assessment planning.
- 2.3. Apply knowledge of commonly-occurring conditions to assessment.
 - 2.3.1. Identify indications for assessing client, based on presenting symptoms and conditions.
 - 2.3.2. Knowledge of safety considerations and adaptation of assessments for client, based on presenting symptoms and conditions.
- 2.4. Modify assessments based upon emerging findings.
 - 2.4.1. Adapt assessments based on findings.
- 2.5. Perform vital signs assessment.
 - 2.5.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing vital signs assessment.
 - 2.5.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.

- 2.6. Perform postural assessment.
 - 2.6.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing postural assessment.
 - 2.6.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.
- 2.7. Perform palpatory assessment.
 - 2.7.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing palpatory assessment.
 - 2.7.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.
- 2.8. Perform gait assessment.
 - 2.8.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing gait assessment.
 - 2.8.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.
- 2.9. Perform range of motion assessment.
 - 2.9.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing range of motion assessment.
 - 2.9.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.
- 2.10. Perform muscle length assessment.
 - 2.10.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing muscle length assessment.
 - 2.10.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.
- 2.11. Perform muscle strength assessment.
 - 2.11.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing muscle strength assessment.
 - 2.11.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.
- 2.12. Perform joint play assessment.
 - 2.12.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing joint play assessment.
 - 2.12.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.
- 2.13. Perform neurological assessment.
 - 2.13.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing neurological assessment.
 - 2.13.2. Differentiate between normal and abnormal findings.
- 2.14. Perform appropriate special tests.
 - 2.14.1. Identify indications, safety considerations for and the components of performing special tests.
 - 2.14.2. Identify the purpose of the selected test.
 - 2.14.3. Knowledge of how the selected test affects the involved tissues.
- 2.15. Interpret findings and formulate clinical impression / differential diagnosis.
 - 2.15.1. Formulate a clinical impression / differential diagnosis.
- 2.16. Recognize conditions requiring urgent medical attention and respond accordingly.
 - 2.16.1. Recognize presentations of common urgent medical conditions.

- 2.16.2. Knowledge of appropriate responses to urgent medical events.
- 2.17. Recognize conditions requiring non-urgent medical attention and respond accordingly.
 - 2.17.1. Knowledge of presentations that require non-urgent medical care.
 - 2.17.2 Knowledge of appropriate responses to non- urgent medical events.

3. Treatment (42%)

Treatment Principles

- 3.1. Incorporate relevant assessment data, research evidence, and clinical experience into development of a client centered treatment plan.
 - 3.1.1. Knowledge of considerations that guide treatment planning, including principles of massage.
 - 3.1.2. Formulate an individualized treatment plan.
- 3.2. Select treatment components based on indications and safety considerations.
 - 3.2.1. Relate treatment components to indications and safety considerations.
- 3.3. Treat consistent with treatment plan.
 - 3.3.1. Knowledge of health sciences related to client symptoms and conditions.
 - 3.3.2. Knowledge of common clinical presentations.
 - 3.3.3. Apply treatment modalities and techniques based on commonly-occurring\ symptoms and conditions.
- 3.4. Employ draping.
 - 3.4.1. Knowledge of appropriate draping for treatment.
- 3.5. Guide client in self care.
 - 3.5.1. Select self care based upon desired outcomes.
 - 3.5.2. Knowledge of how to instruct client in self care.

Massage Techniques

- 3.6. Perform effleurage, including knowledge of:
 - 3.6.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of effleurage.
- 3.7. Perform stroking, including knowledge of:
 - 3.7.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of stroking.
- 3.8. Perform petrissage, including knowledge of:
 - 3.8.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of petrissage.
- 3.9. Perform skin rolling, including knowledge of:
 - 3.9.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of skin rolling.
- 3.10. Perform vibration, including knowledge of:

- 3.10.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of vibration.
- 3.11. Perform percussive techniques, including knowledge of:
 - 3.11.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of percussive techniques.
- 3.12. Perform rocking and shaking, including knowledge of:
 - 3.12.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of rocking and shaking.
- 3.13. Perform frictioning, including knowledge of:
 - 3.13.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of frictioning.
- 3.14. Perform muscle stripping, including knowledge of:
 - 3.14.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of muscle stripping.
- 3.15. Perform muscle approximation, including knowledge of:
 - 3.15.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of muscle approximation.
- 3.16. Perform Golgi tendon organ techniques, including knowledge of:
 - 3.16.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of Golgi tendon organ techniques.
- 3.17. Perform lymphatic drainage techniques, including knowledge of:
 - 3.17.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of lymphatic drainage techniques.
- 3.18. Perform trigger point techniques, including knowledge of:
 - 3.18.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects and outcomes of trigger point techniques.
- 3.19. Perform fascial / myofascial techniques, including knowledge of:
 - 3.19.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of fascial / myofascial techniques.
- 3.20. Perform joint mobilization techniques, including knowledge of:
 - 3.20.1. Components, indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of joint mobilization techniques.

Therapeutic Exercise

- 3.21. Perform and direct client in stretching.
 - 3.21.1. Knowledge of components, indications, safety considerations, procedures, effects, and outcomes of stretching techniques.
 - 3.21.2. Knowledge of how to instruct client in different types of stretching.
- 3.22. Perform and direct client in range of motion exercises.
 - 3.22.1. Knowledge of indications, safety considerations, procedures, effects, and outcomes of range of motion exercises.

- 3.22.2. knowledge of how to instruct client in range of motion exercises.
- 3.23. Direct client in strengthening exercises.
 - 3.23.1. Knowledge of indications, safety considerations, procedures, effects, and outcomes of strengthening exercises.
 - 3.23.2. Knowledge of how to instruct client in different types of strengthening exercises.
- 3.24. Direct client in cardiovascular exercises.
 - 3.24.1. Knowledge of indications, safety considerations, procedures, effects, and outcomes of cardiovascular exercises.
 - 3.24.2. Knowledge of how to instruct client in different types of cardiovascular exercises.
- 3.25. Direct client in proprioception exercises.
 - 3.25.1. Knowledge of indications, safety considerations, procedures, effects, and outcomes of proprioception exercises.
 - 3.25.2. Knowledge of how to instruct client in different types of proprioception exercises.

Thermal Applications

- 3.26. Perform and direct client in heat applications.
 - 3.26.1. Knowledge of indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of heat applications.
 - 3.26.2. Knowledge of how to instruct client in heat applications.
- 3.27. Perform and direct client in cold applications.
 - 3.27.1. Knowledge of indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of cold applications.
 - 3.27.2. Knowledge of how to instruct client in cold applications.
- 3.28. Perform and direct client in contrast applications.
 - 3.28.1. Knowledge of indications, safety considerations, effects, and outcomes of contrast applications.
 - 3.28.2. Knowledge of how to instruct client in contrast applications.

4. Clinical Sciences (15%)

- 4.1. Incorporate and apply an understanding of anatomy.
 - 4.1.1. Knowledge of anatomy.
- 4.2. Incorporate and apply an understanding of physiology.
 - 4.2.1. Knowledge of physiology.
- 4.3. Incorporate and apply an understanding of pathophysiology.
 - 4.3.1. Knowledge of pathophysiology.
- 4.4. Incorporate and apply an understanding of pharmacology affecting massage treatment.
 - 4.4.1. Knowledge of pharmacology as it relates to massage.

Appendix

Items throughout the MCQ require candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the etiology, pathophysiology and clinical manifestations of the conditions listed in the Appendix.

A1 Common clinical conditions that present as variables of:

- a Stress
- b Pain
- c Mood
- d Anxiety
- e Sleep
- f Cognition

A2 Conditions with multi-factorial considerations:

- a Inflammation
- b Infection
- c Scarring
- d Swelling
- e Congestion
- f Movement restriction
- g Malignancy
- h Trauma and abuse

A3 Stages of life:

- a Pregnancy
- b Infancy and childhood
- c Adolescence
- d Adulthood
- e Senior years
- f End of life

A4 Neurological conditions:

- a Conditions of the central nervous system
- b Conditions of the peripheral nervous system
- c General neurological conditions

A5 Orthopedic conditions:

- a Conditions of the bone and periosteum
- b Conditions of the muscles and tendons
- c Conditions of the fascia
- d Conditions of the skin and connective tissue

- e Conditions of the synovial joints, cartilage, ligaments, and bursa
- f Systemic myofascial and orthopedic conditions

A6

Post-surgical conditions:

- a Conditions involving orthopedic interventions
- b Conditions involving artificial openings
- c Conditions involving implants

A7

Systemic conditions:

- a Conditions of the cardiovascular system
- b Conditions of the digestive system
- c Conditions of the endocrine system
- d Conditions of the gastrointestinal system
- e Conditions of the immune system
- f Conditions of the integumentary system
- g Conditions of the lymphatic system
- h Conditions of the reproductive system
- i Conditions of the respiratory system
- j Conditions of the urinary system