

## Abdominal Massage for Constipation

**Begin with the client in prone, the entire back is massaged.**

- focus is on the lumbar area, sacrum and gluteal muscles.
- If the fascia is restricted it needs to be treated.
- Work to the iliac crest (inferior and superior) , spine and twelfth rib are indicated (this addresses the quadratus lumborum and lumbar erector spinae)
- Treat trigger points in these muscles.
- Fingertip and thumb kneading to the sacrum
- Gluteal muscles are treated by massaging systematically along the inferior edge of the iliac crest, along the sacrum and around the greater trochanter. A loose fist can be used to apply static compressions as well as muscle stripping to the gluteal muscles.
- Treat trigger points in these muscles.
- Treat lateral rotators by flexing the leg at the knee and loosely held at the ankle. As the therapist rotates the leg into internal rotation pressure is applied into the internal rotators with a loosely made fist. The pressure is released as the leg and ankle are brought into external rotation, shortening the lateral rotators.
- Hamstrings are treated. If the muscles are short , passive stretching or contract relax stretching can be performed when the client is supine.

### Supine

- includes attention to the abdomen and head neck and shoulders.
- Encourage deep diaphragmatic breathing
- For work to the abdomen the hips and knees are flexed **always work in a clockwise direction**
- Palmar kneading or modified effleurage is used from the lower abdomen to the xiphoid process. At this point the hands rotate and separate so the pressure is applied through each thumb. The thumbs glide firmly along the costal borders and move towards the back. The hands are repositioned with the fingertips at the base of the spine. Each hand now draws along the superior edge of the iliac crest towards the anterior hip. These 4 movements are performed in one fluid motion.
- Can use vibrations in each corner of the large intestines.
- Specific work to the diaphragm is focused bilaterally, with kneading and static pressure applied just under the costal border.

- The pressure is applied up and under the border. Long strokes are performed from the xiphoid to the lateral costal border.
- The abdominal muscles are treated with slow skin rolling to release any fascial restrictions.
  - Abdominal obliques are addressed by specific muscle stripping along the iliac crest. This is most easily performed across the body.
  - Treating the quadriceps is important if hyperlordosis is a factor.
  - Treating iliopsoas for trigger points is also important especially if hyperlordosis is a factor.
  - To treat iliacus – in rhythm with the clients breath increasing pressure is applied slowly through the abdominal muscles just medial to the anterior superior iliac spine. The fingers apply tolerable pressure as the client exhales and are held in place as the client inhales. To help locate the muscle the client is asked to gently flex the hip. Slow muscle stripping and o and I are used to treating the muscle.
  - To work psoas major the lateral border of rectus abdominis is landmarked as the level of the umbilicus. Slowly increasing pressure is applied at this location, allowing the viscera to slide away from the palpating fingers. Pressure is applied at an oblique angle towards the spine. If a pulse is palpated , the pressure is redirected. The muscle is located by the client flexing the hip. Slow muscle stripping and ischemic compression are used on the muscle belly.
  - The colon is specifically addressed using reinforced fingertip kneading.
  - First to move the fecal matter through the colon, the techniques are applied from the distal colon to the proximal colon but pressure is always applied in a clockwise direction.
  - This process is repeated a few times with increased pressure provided the client is comfortable.
  - The therapist now applies the same techniques beginning at the proximal colon and moving towards the distal colon. Again this is repeated a few times.
  - Rhythmic movements of the hips are done by placing the hands loosely at each side of the waist and gently rocking back and forth.
  - Passive relaxed movement of the hips and knees is interspersed in the treatment.