

1 **Clinical Practice Guideline:** **Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy™**

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3 **Date of Implementation:** **July 13, 2006**

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5 **Product:** **Specialty**

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8 **GUIDELINES**

9 American Specialty Health – Specialty (ASH) considers Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy™
10 unproven due to insufficient evidence of clinical effectiveness over other forms of
11 therapeutic massage. The risks to both the therapist and the patient/client from the delivery
12 of Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy™ outweigh the benefits, thus determining the use of
13 Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy™ as unsafe with a risk of direct harm. For more information,
14 see the *Techniques and Procedures Not Widely Supported as Evidence Based (CPG*
15 *133 – S)* policy.

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17 The practitioner’s use of their body weight to massage by use of the feet while balancing
18 on top of the client has the potential to result in the application of excessive weight and
19 force to the client. In addition, there is a risk of direct harm due to the Ashiatsu Oriental
20 Bar Therapy practitioner falling off of the table especially if a portable table is used.

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22 Patients must be informed verbally and in writing of the nature of any procedure or
23 treatment technique that is considered experimental/investigational or unproven, poses a
24 significant health and safety risk, and/or is scientifically implausible. If the patient decides
25 to receive such services, they must sign a *Member Billing Acknowledgment Form* (for
26 Medicare use *Advance Beneficiary Notice of Non-Coverage form*) indicating they
27 understand they are assuming financial responsibility for any service-related fees. Further,
28 the patient must sign an attestation indicating that they understand what is known and
29 unknown about, and the possible risks associated with such techniques prior to receiving
30 these services. All procedures, including those considered here, must be documented in the
31 medical record. Finally, prior to using experimental/investigational or unproven
32 procedures, those that pose a significant health and safety risk, and/or those considered
33 scientifically implausible, it is incumbent on the practitioner to confirm that their
34 professional liability insurance covers the use of these techniques or procedures in the event
35 of an adverse outcome.

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37 **DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND**

38 Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy™ is a Swedish style of effleurage massage (long,
39 connecting strokes) using only the therapist’s feet to perform the massage. The massage
40 therapist uses either ceiling-mounted support bars or a portable structure attached to the
41 massage table with overhead support bars for balance, support, and leverage while applying
42 “deep compression effleurage” using body weight as the therapist’s feet “gliding over the

1 body” of the client. The feet are also used for stretching and range of motion activities for
2 the client.

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4 Therapeutic Massage providers are required to complete training in this technique and
5 become a Certified Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapist™ before any supporting structure
6 (Ashiatsu Portable System) can be purchased from the developer and manufacturer of this
7 specialized massage equipment. Developers of this technique offer a 25-hour continuing
8 education certification course. Advanced Ashiatsu Oriental Bar massage practitioners are
9 also taught how to administer Swedish effleurage strokes with their feet while using an
10 overhead bar system; one-footed and two-footed sequences; contraindications; proper body
11 mechanics for gravity assisted massage; and foot hygiene.

12 13 **EVIDENCE REVIEW**

14 Based on the review conducted, ASH has determined this procedure to be unsafe with risk
15 of direct harm.

16 No relevant studies for Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy™ were found to establish that
17 benefits outweigh the known risks of direct harm of using this technique.

18 19 ***References***

20 Ashiatsu Oriental Bar Therapy. Retrieved August 11, 2023 from <http://deepfeet.com/>