

SPINAL MANIPULATION

Preamble

The Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists regulates the practice of physiotherapy¹ in Nova Scotia through the administration of the Physiotherapy Act and regulations. For the purposes of this Practice Standard the NSCP has adopted the [Spinal Manipulations Competency Profile](#) published in 2008 by the College of Physiotherapists of Alberta.

Standard Statement:

Manipulation of the spinal column is within the scope of physiotherapy practice. Physiotherapists who practice spinal manipulation understand the role of manipulation as a component of patient care and understand the risks associated with it. They are autonomous practitioners who work within their personal level of competence and meet jurisdictional requirements.

Legislative Authority

Section 2(r)(v) states that "physiotherapy" or "physical therapy" means the application of professional physiotherapy knowledge, skills and judgement by a physiotherapist to obtain, regain or maintain optimal health and functional performance and includes, but is not limited to, spinal and peripheral joint manipulation.

Informed Consent

Informed client consent specific to spinal manipulation is required.

Resources:

College of Physiotherapists of Alberta, 2008. [Spinal Manipulation Competency Profile](#)
NS College of Physiotherapists Standard on [Informed Consent](#)

Definitions:

Spinal Manipulation: "A skilful passive movement of a spinal joint beyond its active limit of motion but within the limit of its anatomical Integrity. It is a localized high velocity, low amplitude (HVLA) thrust technique. Its purpose is to restore motion and function."

Risk: *Risks and side effects are: (a) those which are probable or likely to occur; (b) those which are possible rather than probable but can have serious consequences; or (c) anything else which would be considered relevant to know by a reasonable person in the same circumstance."*

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¹ The terms physical therapist, physiotherapist, physiotherapy, physiotherapy, physiothérapie, physiothérapeute, PT and pht are official marks used with permission. The terms physical therapist and physical therapy are synonyms for physiotherapist and physiotherapy respectfully.