

Mosby: Mosby's Nursing Video Skills

Procedure Guideline for Performing a Back Massage

1. Verify the health care provider's orders.
2. Perform hand hygiene.
3. Provide privacy for the patient.
4. Introduce yourself to the patient and family if present.
5. Identify patient using two identifiers.
6. Assess patient's pain level and offer analgesics if needed.
7. Gather the necessary equipment and supplies.
8. Prepare the patient's environment:
 - A. Temperature: The room temperature should be suited to the patient.
 - B. Lighting: Bright or very dim lighting can aggravate pain sensation.
 - C. Sound: Eliminate unnecessary interruptions, and coordinate care activities to allow for the patient's rest.
9. Adjust the bed to a comfortable position for you by lowering the upper side rail on your side.
10. Place the patient in a comfortable position, such as prone or side-lying. If the patient has difficulty breathing, have him or her lie on the side of the bed with the head of the bed elevated.
11. Offer to play background music if patient desires.
12. Assess for allergies.
13. Untie the hospital gown and drape the patient with a folded sheet, exposing only the areas to be massaged.
14. Assess the skin, and apply gloves if necessary.
15. Warm the lotion in your hands. During a bath, the lotion could be warmed in a basin of water.
16. Choose the stroke technique to achieve the desired effect, or select a technique based on the body part being massaged:
 - A. Effleurage: A technique in which a gliding stroke is used to massage upward and outward from the vertebral column and back again. This motion does not manipulate deep muscles; rather, it *smoothes* and extends them, increasing nutrient absorption and improving lymphatic and venous circulation.
 - B. Pétrissage is a light kneading motion used to relax tense muscle groups and stimulate local circulation.
 - C. Friction is accomplished by using strong circular strokes to bring blood close to the surface of the skin, increase local circulation, and loosen tight muscle groups.
17. Encourage the patient to breathe deeply and relax during the massage.
18. Do not allow your hands to leave the patient's skin. Continuous contact with the skin's surface is soothing and stimulates circulation to tissues. Breaking contact with the skin can startle the patient.
19. Begin by using a circular motion to massage the sacral area. Stroke the skin upward, from buttocks to shoulders. Use smooth, firm strokes to massage over the scapulas. Continue in one smooth stroke to the upper arms, moving laterally along the sides of the back down to the iliac crests. Continue this massage pattern for 3 minutes.

20. Use effleurage along the muscles of the spine, moving upward and outward.
21. Use pétrissage on the muscles of each shoulder, toward the front of the body.
22. Use the palms in a circular motion to massage upward and outward from the lower buttocks to the neck.
23. Knead the muscles of the upper back and shoulder between your thumb and forefinger.
24. Use both of your hands to knead the muscles up one side of the patient's back, and then the other side.
25. End the massage with long, stroking effleurage movements.
26. Tell the patient you are finished.
27. Wipe excess lotion or oil from the patient's body with a bath towel.
28. Instruct the patient to inhale deeply and exhale. Caution him or her to move slowly after resting for a few minutes.
29. Have the patient turn slowly after resting for a few minutes.
30. To ensure the patient's safety, raise the appropriate number of side rails and lower the bed to the lowest position.
31. Help the patient into a comfortable position, and place toiletries and personal items within reach.
32. Assess pain level.
33. Place the call light within easy reach, and make sure the patient knows how to use it to summon assistance.
34. Dispose of used supplies and equipment. Leave the patient's room tidy.
35. Remove and dispose of gloves, if used. Perform hand hygiene.
36. Document and report the patient's response and expected or unexpected outcomes. Document the patient's response and comfort level.