



**INTERNATIONAL
MASSAGE
ACADEMY OF
SWITZERLAND**



MAREY EL HAMOULY

MASSAGE MASTERCLASS

Welcome to

**Biomechanical assessment &
Ergonomics of Massage Therapist**

(the art of body mechanics)

Masterclass

“WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER”

Practitioner's Training Manual

By

Marey El Hamouly



I advise you to read this training manual before you start the practical session.

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L.M.T/ M.M.T/A.E.T

Marey El Hamouly

President

International Massage Academy of Switzerland

IMAS

“Health is not everything, but everything is nothing without health”

Once you would like to elevate and develop your Massage skills,
This 100% Masterclass of techniques is made to take you to the next
level of skills which you can really help and treat your clients.

A professional and personalized online learning solution for leading
Massage Therapists to the next level.

I am cordially inviting you to discover the world of, The Art of
Body Mechanics in Massage, using your body weight correctly and
safely for living a long life in the massage career.

As a mechanical body art to let your clients Enjoy the highest level of
personalized world-known services and total wellness...

Thank you

Marey El Hamouly



COURSE DETAILS

Body Mechanics Masterclass designed to help massage therapists to avoid muscles ache and injuries which are caused by working for a long time.

You will learn how to:

holding the **body** in proper alignment prevents strain on the joints and muscles.

You will also study:

benefits of proper body mechanics when using the muscles better and correctly to avoid injuries and Save energy.

Approved by

World Massage Council-**WMC**
International Massage Academy of Switzerland -**IMAS**

Good luck and enjoy!

THE ART OF BODY MECHANICS IN MASSAGE

It is designed to help massage therapists to avoid muscle ache and injuries which are caused by working for a long time.

In manual therapy, good treatment posture means that the practitioner's body is positioned in a way that **allows the whole body to move efficiently and to work effortlessly, without requiring the muscles to generate extra effort**. Poor posture causes muscle imbalances and inefficient movement throughout the body.

Inversely incorrect body mechanics is an equally important subject because it can physically harm the practitioner, greatly restrict his or her technical potential, and prevent him or her from building and sustaining long term successful practice.

Use Body Weight power, Body Weight Transference, NOT MUSCULAR EFFORT.

Body Mechanics: our body position in case of action or movement. Refers to the way we move during daily activities.

Proper **body mechanics** can help you avoid injury and muscle fatigue.

Holding the **body** in proper alignment prevents strain on the joints and muscles.

Body **mechanics** is the process of using the **body** safely.

Body mechanics is the safe use of the body using the correct **posture**, balance and bodily movements to safely bend, carry, lift and move objects and people. An example of a good body mechanics principle is to push rather than **pull** objects and people.

Posture: our body position in case of passive action or fixed position.

Refers to the relative positions of the **body** when lying down, standing, sitting, or any other activity.

Posture determines the stress and the strain on muscles and the distribution of weight. It affects the pressure on many of the organs of the **body**.

Ergonomics: is the process of designing or arranging workplaces, Products and systems so that they fit the people who use them.



Most people have heard of ergonomics and think it is something to do with seating or with the design of car controls and instruments – and it is... but it is so much more.

Ergonomics applies to the design of anything that involves people – workspaces, sports and leisure, health and safety.

POSTURE PRINCIPLES

- Posture Principle 1: Movement- The body is designed to move.
Posture Principle 2: Balance- Posture is how you balance your body against gravity. ...
- An inward or forward curve at the neck (cervical curve) ...
- Your Spine: Good posture actually means keeping the three curves of your spine in balanced alignment.

Ergonomic Principles

for Better Work Performance

Principle 1. Maintain Neutral Posture

Neutral postures are postures where the body is aligned and balanced while either sitting or standing, placing minimal stress on the body and keeping joints aligned.

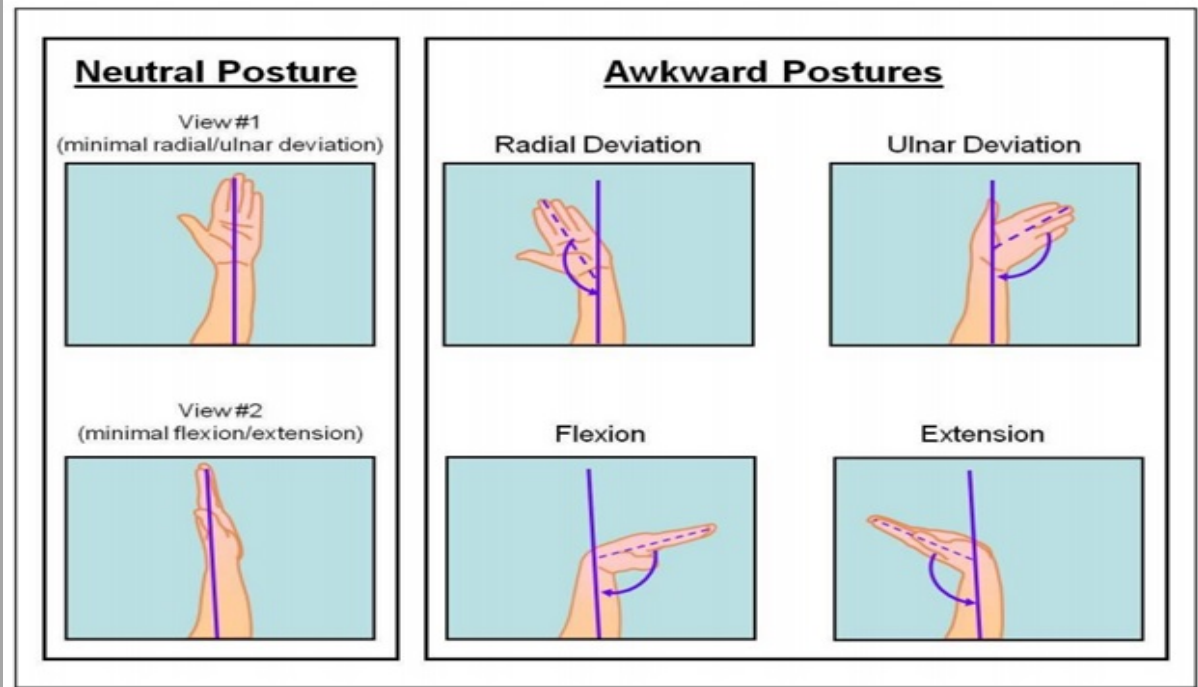
Neutral postures minimize the stress applied to muscles, tendons, nerves and bones and allows for maximum control and force production.

The opposite of a neutral posture is an “awkward posture.” Awkward postures move away from the neutral posture toward the extremes in range of motion. This puts more stress on the worker’s musculoskeletal system, is a contributing risk factor for Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and should be avoided.

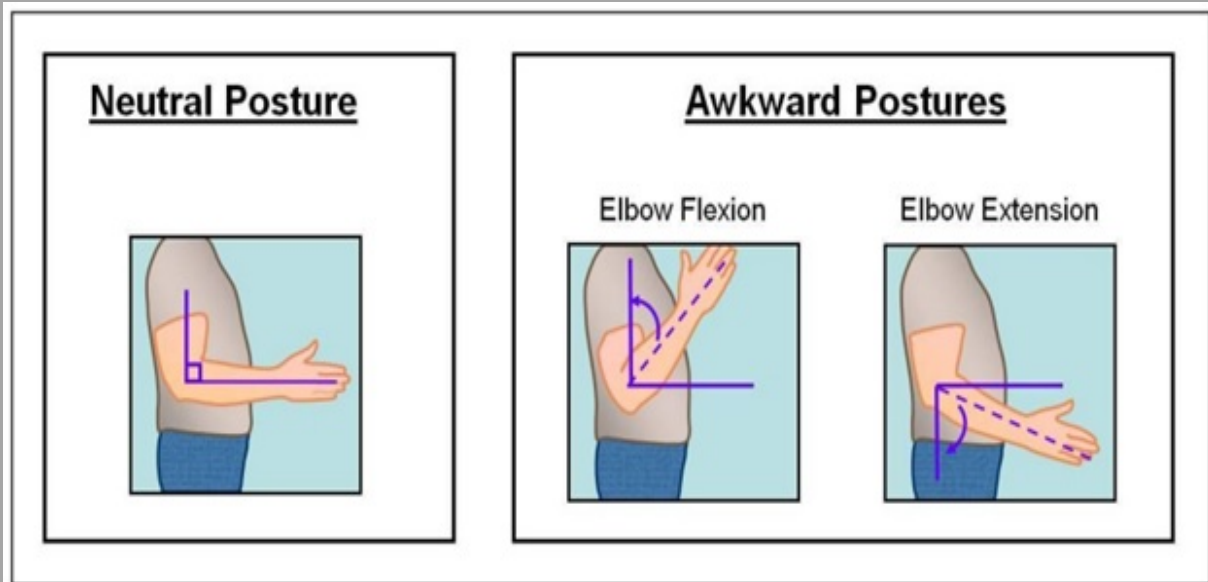
Following are examples of Neutral vs. Awkward postures for the wrist, elbow, shoulder and back. When you put on your “ergo eyes”,

you'll immediately begin to notice when workers are in awkward postures and when they are maintaining a neutral posture.

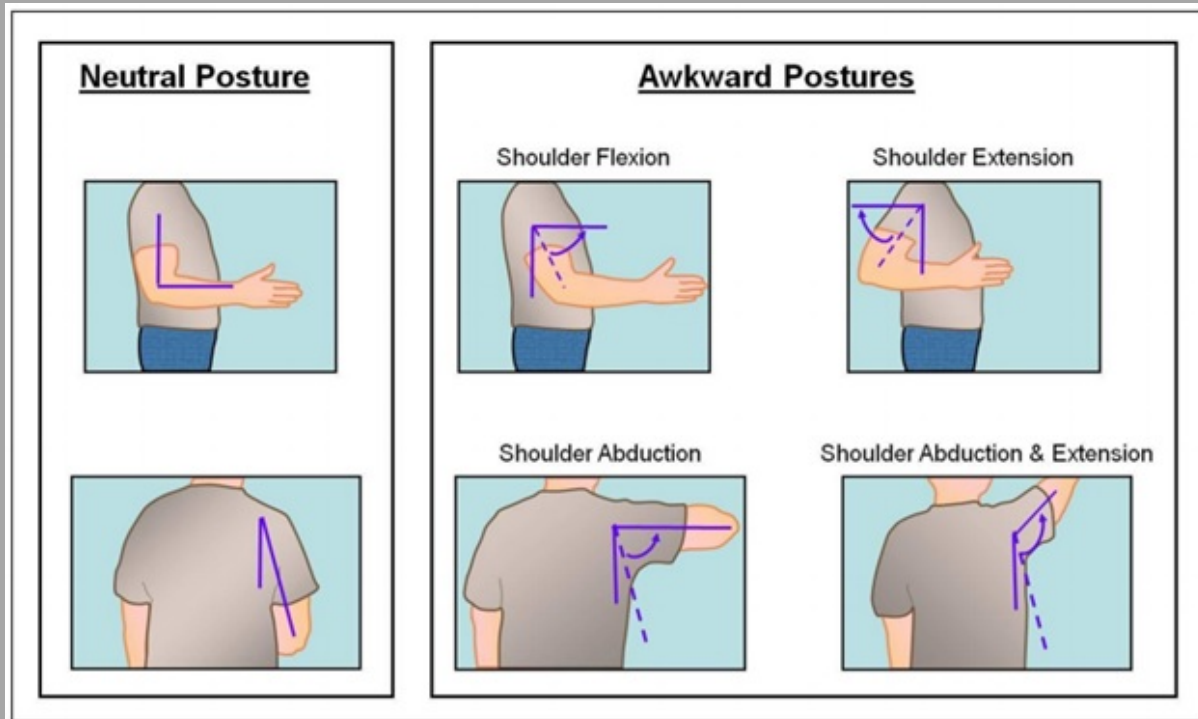
Neutral and awkward wrist postures



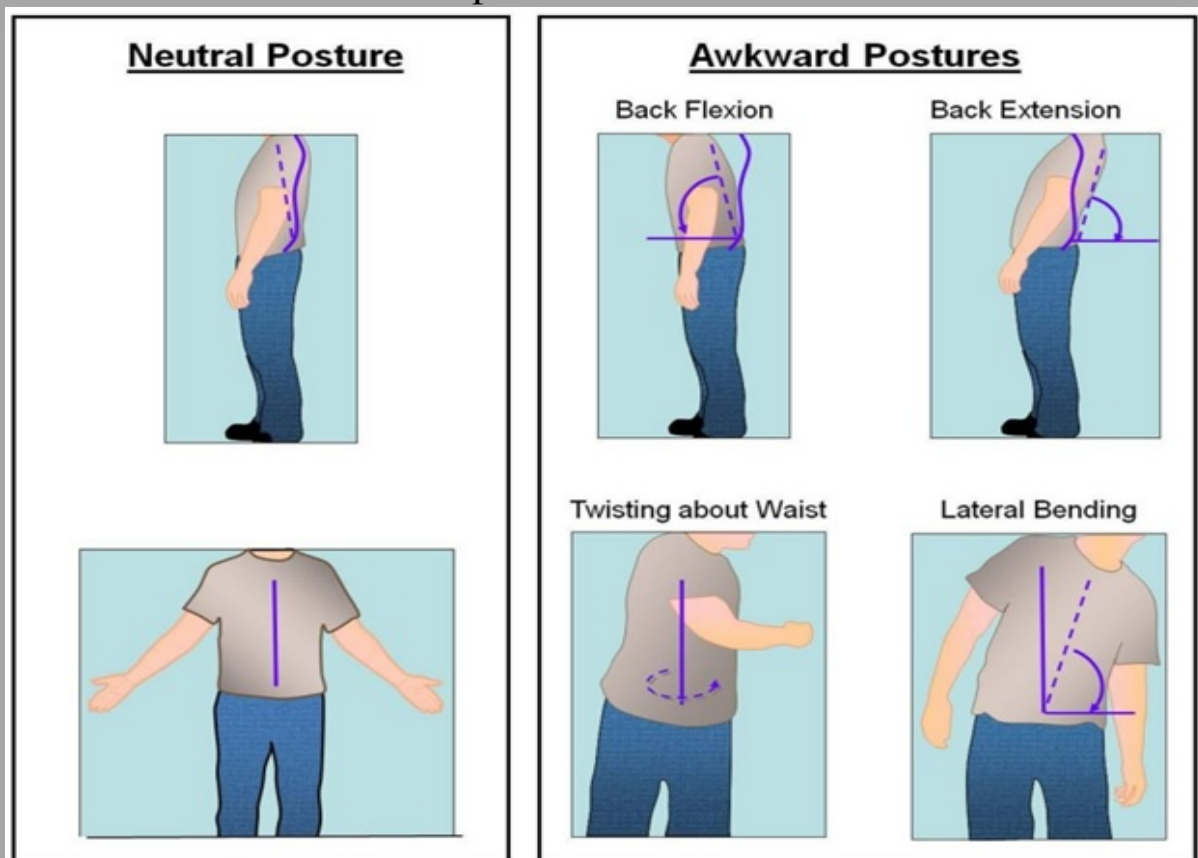
Neutral and awkward elbow postures



Neutral and awkward shoulder postures



Neutral and awkward back postures



Inline Grip – Ulnar Deviation



Bent Wrist → Poor Wrist Position

Pistol Grip – Neutral



Straight Wrist → Ideal Wrist Position

Pistol Grip – Ulnar Deviation



Bent Wrist → Poor Wrist Position

Inline Grip – Neutral



Straight Wrist → Ideal Wrist Position

Principle 2. Work in the Power / Comfort Zone



This principle is very similar to maintaining a neutral posture, but is worth expounding upon here.

The power zone for lifting is close to the body, between mid-thigh and mid-chest height. This zone is where the arms and back can lift the most with the least amount of effort.

This can also be called the “hand shake zone” or “comfort zone.” The principle here is that if you can “shake hands with your work”, you are minimizing excessive reach and maintaining a neutral posture.

Working from the power / comfort / handshake zone ensures that you are working from proper heights and reaches, which reduces MSD risk factors and allows for more efficient and pain-free work.

Now when you notice workers who are working with extended reaches and at improper heights, you’ll know they are outside their comfort zone and risk factors are present.

Principle 3. Allow for Movement and Stretching

The musculoskeletal system is often referred to as the human body's *movement system*, and **it is designed to move**.

Working for long periods of time in a static position will cause your body to fatigue. This is what is known as static load.

For example:

- Raise your hands over your head for the next 30 minutes
- Remain standing in the same position for the next 8 hours
- Write with a pencil for 60 minutes straight

If you do those things, you will experience static load. The first few seconds or minutes don't seem too bad, but the cumulative effect of holding these seemingly stress-free positions over time will cause fatigue and discomfort.

Now, what is the first thing you will naturally do once you when you are finished with these tasks?

You will stretch.

You'll stretch out your shoulders and back. You'll stretch out your legs and maybe do some squats. You'll stretch out your fingers and wrist.

Stretching reduces fatigue, improves muscular balance and posture and improves muscle coordination. Everyone is an athlete in life, so you need to prepare your body for work by warming up to improve performance and lower injury risk. A warm-up stretching regimen is a great way to prepare your body for work.

It is also beneficial to take periodic stretch breaks over the course of your work day to get your blood moving and restore your energy.



Principle 4. Reduce Excessive Force

Excessive force is one of the primary ergonomic risk factors. Many work tasks require high force loads on the human body.

Muscle effort increases in response to high force requirements which increases fatigue and risk of an MSD.

There are numerous conditions that affect force, but the idea is to recognize when a job or task requires excessive force and then find ways to reduce that force.

Eliminating excessive force requirements will reduce worker fatigue and the risk of MSD formation in most workers.

Using mechanical assists, counter balance systems, adjustable height lift tables and workstations, powered equipment and ergonomic tools will reduce work effort and muscle exertions.

Principle 5. Reduce Excessive Motions

Repetitive motion is another one of the primary ergonomic risk factors. Many work tasks and cycles are repetitive in nature, and are frequently controlled by hourly or daily production targets and work processes.

High task repetition, when combined with other risks factors such high force and/or awkward postures, can contribute to the formation of MSD.

Excessive or unnecessary motions should be reduced if at all possible.

In situations where this is not possible, it is important to eliminate excessive force requirements and awkward postures.

Other control methods to consider are Job enlargement, job rotation and counteractive stretch breaks.

Principle 6. Minimize Contact Stress

According to contact stress results from continuous contact or rubbing between hard or sharp objects/surfaces and sensitive body tissue, such as soft tissue of the fingers, palms, thighs and feet.

This contact creates localized pressure for a small area of the body, which can inhibit blood, nerve function, or movement of tendons and muscles.

Examples of contact stress include resting wrists on the sharp edge of a desk or workstation while performing tasks, pressing of tool handles into the palms, especially when they cannot be put down, tasks that require hand hammering, and sitting without adequate space for the knees.

Principle 7. Reduce Excessive Vibration



Multiple studies have shown that regular and frequent exposure to vibration can lead to permanent adverse health effects, which are most likely to occur when contact with a vibrating tool or work process is a regular and significant part of a person's job.

Hand-arm vibration can cause a range of conditions collectively known as hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), as well as specific diseases such as white finger or Raynaud's syndrome, carpal tunnel syndrome and tendinitis. Vibration syndrome has adverse circulatory and neural effects in the fingers. The signs and symptoms include numbness, pain, and blanching (turning pale and ashen).

Principle 8. Provide Adequate Lighting

Poor lighting is a common problem in the workplace that can affect a worker's comfort level and performance. Too much or too little light makes work difficult – just imagine trying to do your job without sight!

Dimly lit work areas and glare can cause eye fatigue and headaches and improperly lit areas put workers at greater risk for all types of injuries.

Providing workers with adjustable task lighting is often a simple solution to lighting problems. At a computer workstation, take steps to control screen glare, and make sure that the monitor is not placed in front of a window or a bright background.

Conclusion

Work place ergonomics doesn't have to be as difficult or complicated as brain surgery. The ergonomic principles included in this article are mostly common sense – it's the practical, day-to-day application of these principles that is challenging for many companies.

By developing your “ergo eyes” and adhering to these fundamental ergonomic principles, you can help your company identify risk factors that oftentimes go unnoticed, measure that risk with an objective ergonomic evaluation and implement control measures to reduce/remove ergonomic risk factors.

Body mechanics principles

- 1-weight transfer
- 2-Neutral position
- 3-whole body does the massage
- 4-aline of force (direction) body and mind.
- 5-back up to get low
- 6-hand move last



PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS OF BODY MECHANICS

- Avoid twisting your body when you lift.
- When possible, push, pull, roll, or slide an object rather than lift it.
- Use the largest and strongest muscles of your arms, legs, and trunk to lift, push, pull, or carry an object.
- Use short lever arms for better control and efficiency when lifting or carrying.
- Maintain your center of gravity

Environmental Health and Safety

GOOD POSTURE LIFTING MODELS POSTURE AND BODY CONTROL

Standing – rest 1 foot on a low stool to support your back. If possible, raise or lower the work surface, so that your shoulder and neck can stay relaxed.

- Traditional Model
- Deep Squat Lift
- Power Lift
- Straight Leg Lift

Lifting – get close to the object; keep your back and neck in alignment; bend your hips, and lift with your legs, not your back.

There are many differing opinions about which model is most appropriate or best to use. Research studies have not shown or proven that one method is superior to, safer than, or more effective than another method.

Bending – keep back and neck in alignment and bend at the hips. Try to tighten the abdominal muscles to protect your lower back as you bend.



Methods that can be used to protect or relieve back stress, are the use of a footstool while standing or the use of a lumbar roll while sitting.

Sitting – set with buttocks against back of chair with support for back; feet and arms supported, and chair close to surface you will be working on.

It has been hypothesized that lumbar lordosis models provide greater protection to the lumbar region of the spine, particularly during the lifting of a heavy object.

Balance work, recreational, and rest activities to avoid chronic overuse syndromes or the development of specific dysfunction.

Turning – Keep feet and hips moving with upper body; don't twist; lift feet as you turn.

PUSHING, PULLING, REACHING, AND CARRYING

You are the only person who has direct control over your lifestyle, behavior, posture, and use of your body.

Reaching – Raise your body position by standing on a wide-based footstool or ladder.

Many of the same principles applied to lifting also apply to pushing and pulling activities. You should use a crouched or a semisquat position to push or pull. This position lowers your COG nearer to the object's COG, which increases stability, reduces energy expenditure, and improves control of the object.

Carrying – when you must carry something, put equal amount of weight on both sides of your body.

Benefits of correct Body mechanics

What are the benefits of using proper body mechanics?

- Reduce stress and strain to muscles, joints, ligaments, and soft tissues.
- **correct** use of muscles makes lifting, pulling, and pushing easier.
- muscles work best when used correctly.
- Promote effective, efficient respiratory, and cardiopulmonary function.
- Promote and maintain proper body control and balance.
- Promote effective, efficient, and SAFE movements.
- **correct** application of **body mechanics** prevents unnecessary fatigue and strain.
- Save energy
 - Prevent injuries.
 - Help to apply more pressure with no effort.
 - Working long hours and without getting tired physically.
 - Maintain quality of treatments during the Massage.

Injuries caused due to bad posture in Massage

What can incorrect body mechanics do?

Poor and **improper body mechanics** are the major cause of back problems, pains, and injuries.

Poor posture, moving things **incorrectly**, and lifting objects improperly cause the spine to be subjected to stresses that with time **could** result in its tear and wear.

- Pain in wrists and thumbs (can be a serious case such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome)
- Neck and Shoulder pain
- Lower Back pain
(can be a serious case such as Sciatica)

RISKS AND INJURIES CAUSED BY IMPROPER BODY MECHANICS



Poor body mechanics can result in severe injuries that could happen immediately or eventually due to continuous repetition of the action. Injuries associated with poor posture and poor body mechanics are usually overuse injuries and they arise after a long period of time rather than suddenly.

Sciatica / Piriformis Syndrome

This is more of a symptom than a condition. It refers to the pain felt down the back of the legs. Some people describe it as an acute pain in the buttock that spreads down the back, thighs, and feet. You may feel pain when going up the stairs and notice a reduction in your ability to move at the hip joint. Overworking of the muscle resulting in compression of the nerve is usually the cause of Sciatica/Piriformis Syndrome.

Shoulder / Neck Pain

Neck and shoulder pains are common among people with desk jobs. Improper posture is the usual reason you may experience shoulder or neck pain. The simplest way to treat it is to undergo massage therapy. When working on a desk or facing the computer for an extended period, you may eventually end up falling into a slumped position and your neck protrudes forwards. This could result in shortening and weakening of your chest muscles. Your trapezius muscles in the back and neck tighten and become overworked. These imbalances can be corrected by stretching the chest muscles and engaging in building the strength of the Serratus Anterior by maintaining the right posture.

Patellofemoral Knee Pain

It is an overuse injury that results in the pain at the front part of the knee. It becomes worse when one is going down the stairs and when one tries to stand up for long periods of sitting. It is more common in women and this has been attributed to the fact that they have a wider pelvis. This wider pelvis causes a more increased angle between the thigh bone and the patella tendon in the knee.

Lower Back Pain

This is caused by improper sitting posture and arching of the lower back. Poor posture adds unnecessary strain, stress, and pressure on the muscles and ligaments of the back. The muscles become overworked, resulting in muscle spasms.

Shoulder Impingement

You experience pain when the space between the shoulder joints decreases. As a result, tendons that pass through this space are pinched. Poor posture is the main cause of the decrease in these tendons. The extended periods in the desk sitting in a slouched position causes the lower back muscles to weaken and this tightens the chest muscles. The shoulder joints tend to sit in a forward position and are strained over time, resulting in pain.

Types of Body Mechanics

Body mechanics relates to massage therapy, and can be divided into three Types: **Balance**, **Stability**, and **Leverage**.

Balance is an even distribution of weight enabling someone or something to remain upright and steady.

Stability is the state of an object or structure being not likely to give way, to remain firmly fixed.

Leverage is the exertion of force by means of a lever, or an object used in the manner of a lever.

In correct body mechanics, we combine balance and stability in order to be able to apply leverage.

While lecturing, I have noticed the majority of massage practitioners are not aware of the importance of correct body mechanics, and frequently, have been taught to use it inappropriately.

I realize that what you read below may contradict the way you are working with clients, in some cases for many successful years.

However, I ask you to try out the information I share with you here.

I guarantee it will change your practice forever.

Until recently, few studies have focused on the biomechanical demands of health care practitioners, such as dentists, chiropractors or massage therapists, who do not have patient-handling as a major job task.

Chiropractors perform all of their spinal manipulations while the patient is lying on a table and spend little time with each client.

A massage therapy treatment on the other hand typically lasts between 30 minutes and one hour.

Therefore, the massage therapist is at a higher risk of cumulative exposure to the low back and upper extremity if they are required to maintain awkward static postures for a significant time period.

To the authors' knowledge a biomechanical analysis of Massage Therapists has not been conducted and this lack of research presents a void in the work-related demands of a growing healthcare profession, therefore the purpose of this study was to determine the biomechanical demands on the low back of massage therapists performing typical massage therapy techniques.

This study was undertaken to investigate the biomechanical demands on the low back of Massage Therapists performing typical massage therapy techniques and the nature of the associated cumulative exposure.

Ten Massage Therapists performed a standardized relaxation back massage that incorporated a series of basic massage therapy techniques used in standard treatments.

The 44-minute massage treatment was videotaped and a posture-matching approach was used to determine 3D peak and cumulative loads on the low back.

Although the resultant peak low back loads would be considered safe in relation to current published compression and shear guidelines, the cumulative loading values were well within the ranges considered disconcerting in other health care and industrial workers.

The therapists were found to assume non-neutral trunk, neck and arm postures for a significant portion of the massage, which could place these professionals at risk of cumulative musculoskeletal disorders.

CHAPTER 3

What are the global errors of massage therapists?

Let's itemize the errors:

- The table is too high for the practitioner
- The practitioner does not have contact with the table, and the feet are in one line
- The center of gravity is located behind the practitioner
- The practitioner keeps the hands far from the body
- The practitioner does not use the weight of the upper body as a structural component of the strokes

This combination of errors prevents the practitioner from achieving and maintaining balance and stability, making it difficult, if not impossible to apply any significant leverage during the strokes.

Table height

Correct table height is probably the single most important factor in determining the efficiency of a practitioner's force delivery.

How low or how high a table should be depending on a number of factors:

- **The height of the practitioner** helps in calculating the appropriate table height.

There is some debate about this but the correct height of the treatment table is usually considered to be half the practitioner's own height. However, practitioners with longer legs may need to make the table slightly higher. Conversely, practitioners with a longer torso may need to adjust the table slightly down (American Massage Therapy Association 2014).

- **The size of the client** is another important factor, because choosing a correct table height based on the client's size helps to reduce strain on the practitioner's body (Muscolino 2006).

- **The client's positioning on the table** (i.e. prone, supine or side lying) also plays a major part in determining the table height.

For example, the hips of a client in a side-lying position would be higher than their head and neck.

In order to work on the hips in this position, the table would need to be lowered (Frye 2004).

- **The therapeutic technique being used** on the patient will necessitate adjustment of the table height.

If the practitioner needs to create stronger force with less effort, the table needs to be low.

However, a higher table height is more desirable when light thrust/force is being applied (Fritz 2004).

Lower table position is ideal to apply a deep massage.

Treatment posture

In manual therapy, good treatment posture means that the practitioner's body is positioned in a way that allows the whole body to move efficiently and to work effortlessly, without requiring the muscles to generate extra effort.

Poor posture causes muscle imbalances and inefficient movement throughout the body.

This can lead to the overworking of muscles and unnecessary fatigue when generating greater force (Di Fabio 1992).

Assuming the correct posture during the therapy session enables the practitioner to shift their body weight efficiently from side to side, or forwards and backwards.

It also allows for more coordinated action between the practitioner's body and hands.

Taken together, it can be said that a good posture is one in which you feel well-grounded while having the liberty to turn or move (Cassar 2005).

Adjusting or correcting posture is not as easy a task as it sounds; it takes extensive practice and constant reminding.

To adopt a correct posture prior to employing a technique, you need to use a combination of components including your body weight, body position and transfer of force (Cassar 2005).

In finding your correct posture, you should focus primarily on the following factors:

- your own physical structure
- your body weight and gravity
- your head position
- the height and width of the treatment table relative to the client's body part being treated
- your contact with the ground or table

Physical structure

Your posture must suit your own physical structure. Everyone is different and you cannot simply duplicate another practitioner's

posture; if you try to do so, you may fail to apply the technique correctly. As a practitioner, you have to appreciate your own individual morphology when you apply a technique.

Observe other practitioners' styles and then adapt them to suit you. Finding a style suitable for your own physical structure and build will allow you to have more control over the technique you are practicing in terms of the transfer of force.

It will also make the force applied to the patient more consistent and precise, giving greater sensation to the patient while giving you, the practitioner, accurate feedback from the joints and soft tissue in which you are trying to effect a change (Osteopathic Technique 2016).

Body weight and gravity

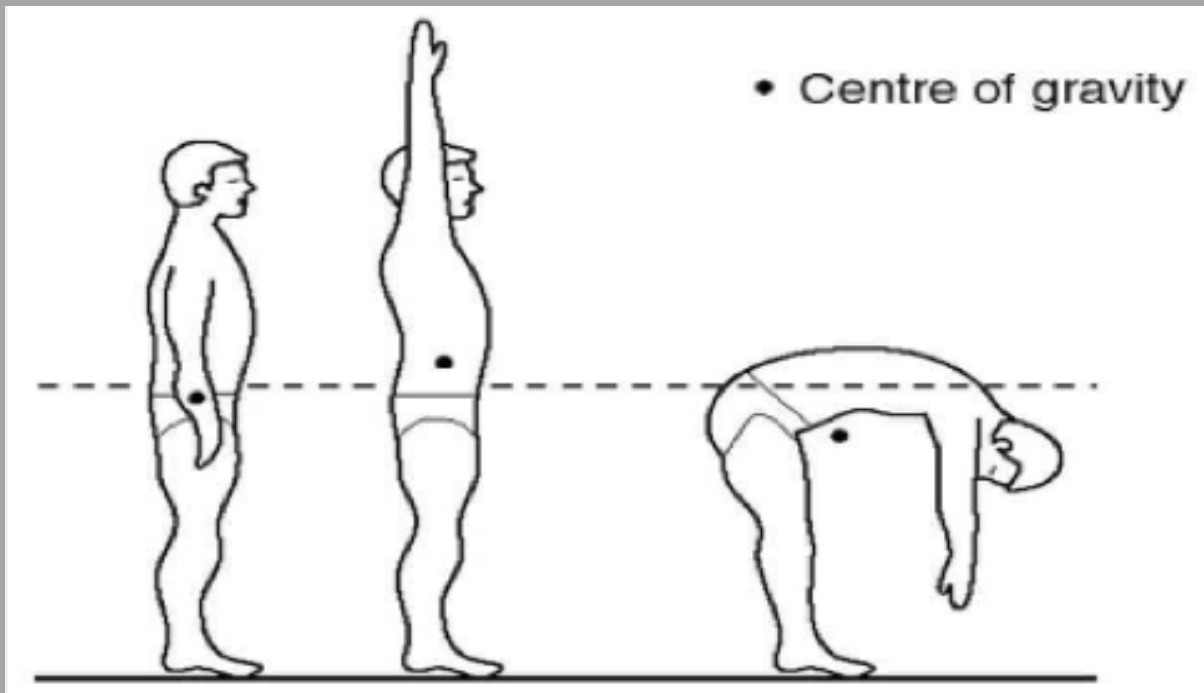
The practitioner's body weight plays a significant role in generating force to work on a patient. Usually, this force can be produced in one of two ways: internally and externally (Muscolino 2006). The internal force is created within the body by musculature, but this can be fatiguing as it requires more effort on the part of the practitioner. The external force, on the other hand, is generated with the help of gravity and so requires less effort and causes less fatigue. Therefore, if your goal is to generate greater force with the minimum possible effort, you should learn and practice how to use gravity together with your body weight as much as possible (Clay & Pounds 2003).

Since gravity only works vertically downward, in order to take advantage of it, your body weight should be higher than the patient. This requires setting the table low, so that the client is positioned below the practitioner (Peterson & Bergmann 2002). Because the whole weight of the body is located in the core (i.e. the trunk), your trunk should be positioned above the patient, as much as possible, when you lean to generate forceful thrust/pressure (Muscolino 2006).

Body center of gravity

“is the point at which the body's mass is equally balanced, and this point changes depending on one's position”

This point changes based on your body position and with each different posture.



Body weight shifting

Weight shift refers to the principle whereby the weight of the human figure is shifted from one supporting leg to another.

Head position

The position of the practitioner's head has no effect on the delivery of thrust while performing a technique.

For this reason, you can keep your head in whatever position is the least stressful for you (Muscolino 2014).

However, it has been suggested that holding the head over the trunk is the healthiest posture during a therapy, as this position balances the core weight of the head over the trunk and does not require the neck muscles to support the head (Frye 2004) (Image a).

Unfortunately, many practitioners have a habit of flexing down the neck and head at the spinal joints in order to observe their client (Image b).

This leads to an imbalance of the head position and thereby requires isometric contraction of the extensor muscles of the neck to prevent the head from falling anteriorly into flexion (Nordin & Frankel 2001).

Eventually, this results in pain and spasm in the posterior neck.



Images OMT-London

CHAPTER 4

To avoid the tired end of the day in general,

There are:

Four Basic Factors That Create the Definition of Proper Body Mechanics

Using the proper body mechanics will help you to maintain a good posture during the massage with a dynamic or static stroke, using and shifting your body weight to apply pressure with minimal effort.

Posture

Since we were young, many of us have been told to stand up straight. However, as we grew up, no one took notice of this simple rule and we lost this habit. Proper body mechanics are mostly based on the simple factor, good posture. When you're standing upright, your spine is maintained at a neutral position with no curves and arches.

The spine consists of bones known as vertebrae that — when aligned properly — form a natural S curve. This should always be maintained when standing, sleeping and sitting.

Support

The base, where we can find our center of gravity, is one of the factors you should consider before lifting, pushing, or pulling an item. A wider support provides us with more stability and balance.

Muscles

You'll find your most active muscles in your legs, arms, and torso. You need them to accomplish most tasks. You strain these muscles carrying out several activities during the day. To avoid straining them, it's essential that you're conscious of how you handle tasks.

Proper Lifting Technique

The way you lift items from the floor, irrespective of the weight, influences the stress placed on our spine. The heavier the item you are lifting, the higher the stress that's put on your spine. Before lifting, make sure to maintain good posture and follow proper bending technique to avoid overworking.

SOLVING THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY POOR BODY MECHANICS



Body Posture

If you've been complaining about back pain, consider getting a better work chair. Businesses should consider using ergonomic chairs to reduce injuries among their employees. A good chair allows you to adjust its height and the angle of the back.

Neck Posture

Avoid leaning forward and bending the neck towards the computer or any work station. You can correct this by adjusting the height of your computer or your seat. Leaning forward for long periods causes stress on the neck and shoulder muscles. The movement of the head and neck should be minimized especially during working.

Feet Posture

If your feet barely touch the ground when you're sitting, you are at risk of several problems.

The height differences cause the thigh and the knee to incur stress and result in serious discomfort and injuries.

To avoid these, use a seat that is easy to adjust so that your feet are firm on the ground with no strain on the knees.

In addition, you should be able to stretch your legs freely.

You should always maintain your posture and follow proper body mechanics at all times.

Consider the factors we have discussed when performing any activity, such as running, walking, sitting, and standing.

It is always essential to remember that the right body posture involves keeping the whole body in a perfect alignment with other parts of the body.

In addition, the spine should always be in a neutral position to avoid putting too much strain and stress on it.

Alignment refers to how the head, shoulders, spine, hips, knees and ankles relate and line up with each other.

Proper **alignment** of the **body** puts less stress on the spine and helps you have good posture.

To keep proper **alignment**, avoid the following positions or movements: Having a slumped, head-forward posture.

CHAPTER 5

Therapist posture and stances

In this chapter we will offer guidance on the treatment postures and stances best adopted by the practitioner.

Working as a manual therapy practitioner is challenging, and it requires the development and practice of a range of complex skills prior to application in the clinical context.

Apart from developing the ability to apply a technique skillfully and appropriately, you also need to learn and practice how to move your own body with an understanding of the laws of physics.

This will enable you to work more efficiently on your client with less effort, using stronger forces with less fatigue while exposing your body to less force (Domholdt 2000).

Irrespective of how a technique is used with a client, it is of critical importance that you understand and apply the fundamentals of good body mechanics.

Your efficiency in using your body during the delivery of the therapy is crucial, not only for the quality of care you provide to the client but also for your own well-being and long-term fitness to practice.

Once you understand how to use your body parts as a single entity, you will be able to perform techniques with maximum efficiency (Muscolino 2008).

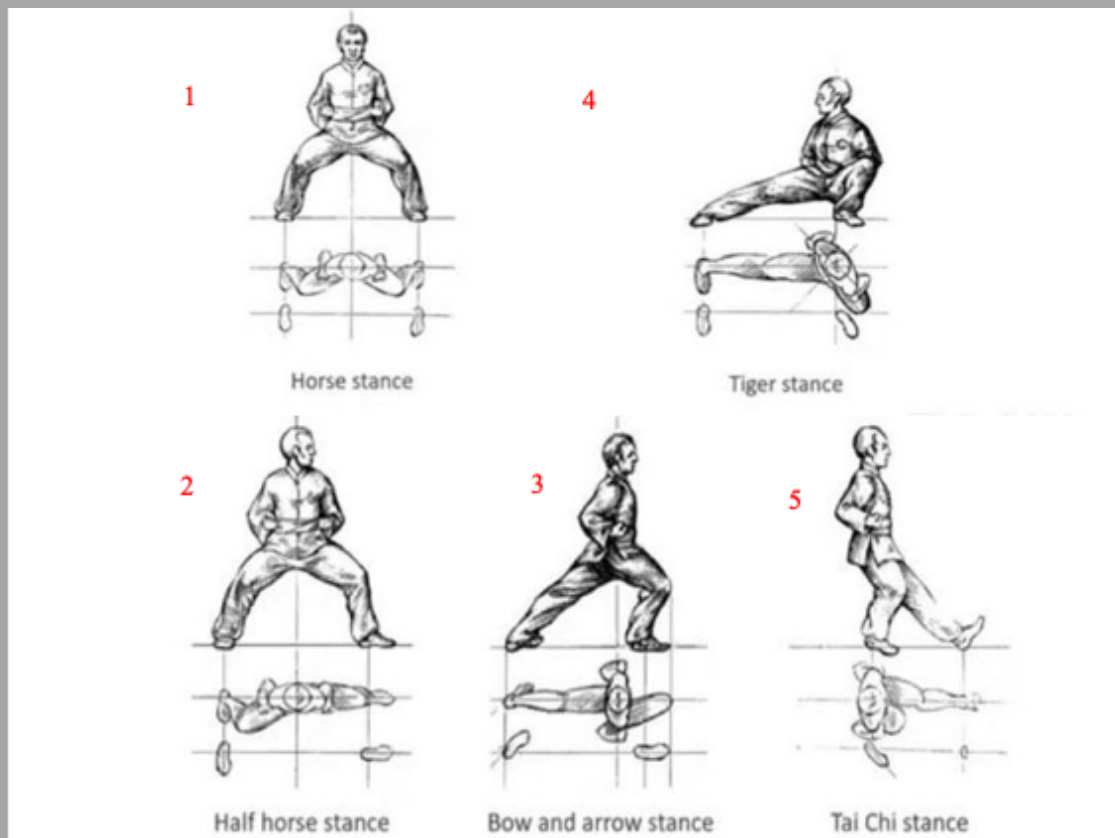
In the world of manual therapy, however, the study of body mechanics has not yet received much attention.

Because of this, many established practitioners, as well as new graduates, often work harder, instead of working smarter; as a result, a good number of them are at risk of incurring career-ending injuries (Muscolino 2006).

This chapter will discuss one of the principal concerns of healthy body mechanics: the positioning of your body, particularly your posture and stance, while delivering a therapeutic procedure.

Different Body Positions and Stances

- 1-Horse stance (to apply pressure and on a point)
- 2-Half horse stance (about how to start)
- 3-Bow and arrow stance (to give a long movement)
- 4-Tiger stance (to pull back)
- 5-Tai Chi stance (to go back)



Horse stance (to apply pressure and on a point)



Half horse stance (about how to start)



Bow and arrow stance (to give a long movement)





Tiger stance (to pull back)





Tai Chi stance (to go back)



CHAPTER 6

Motion/Movements/Strokes

- **Static:**

(Stretching & Ischemic compression, for exp: Trigger points)

- **Dynamic:**

(Effleurage, Petrissage, Wringing, Rolling, Kneading, Tapotement, Vibration, etc...)

Applicators

Thumb



Double Thumb



Reinforced Hand



Heel of Hand



Forearm



Elbow



Knuckles



Fist



Double Fist



Palm



Double palm



Knee (special usage)



A Note about the Forearm and Elbow

The forearm and elbows are strong, powerful tools, which can deliver **bruising** pressure to clients if they are used without care, using them skillfully and learning how to adapt each technique to a range of builds, tolerances and reactions is a core part of the training.

Conclusion

How to Have Proper Body Mechanics of Massage Therapists

- 1) Make sure your table is at a proper height.
- 2) Bend at the knees.
- 3) Avoid overuse of your fingers.
- 4) Use Your Bodyweight.
- 5) Dance with the strokes.
- 6) Use a stool.
- 7) Drop your shoulders.
- 8) Avoid hyperextension.

CHAPTER 7

How to avoid being tired at the end of your massage day.???

There are,

Ergonomic tips for a Safe and durable massage career

- MASSAGE TABLE HEIGHT: Make sure that your massage table is at a proper height.
- For normal massage, a good reference height is your wrist, and for a deep pressure massage, in which you use especially your body weight for applying pressure, it should be a bit lower.
- POSTURE: The correct posture for applying massage is standing with your feet shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent. The idea is to move your body weight from one leg to the other, in a soft rocking movement. Depending on the massage stroke applied, you move your body weight sideways or forwards and backwards. *Remember to keep your back straight and neck relaxed!*

APPLYING PRESSURE CORRECTLY

When applying pressure, the force should originate in your shoulders or forearms, and not your hands/fingers.

The idea is to use your body weight as much as possible in order not to strain your hands and fingers.

TAKE BREAKS: Try to have a minimum of 15 min break between the massage treatments.

ALTERNATE TREATMENTS: Try to never apply a deep pressure massage (such deep tissue massage, sports massage...) for more than 120 min. When possible, try to combine deep pressure massages with softer massage treatments (this is naturally easier when working for a large Spa or Wellness Center as they have several therapists that can alternate).

STRETCH: Stretch your fingers, wrists, arms, shoulders and neck at least twice a day. A good time to do this is to use 5 min (or more if you have time!) of your break to stretch. Remember to keep your neck and jaw relaxed when giving a massage (we tend to tense them). It helps to breath long and deep breaths, this will relax you.

SAFE FOOTWEAR. Use adequate shoes that are comfortable, breathable and allow you to move safely.

PROJECT AN EXEMPLARY IMAGE: We work in the Wellness sector, and we should be able to motivate our clients with the image we project of ourselves. Maintain yourself in a good physical shape through exercise, stretches, and healthy nutrition. Maintain your mind at ease, and work on living on positive energy. A great practice that works on a body-mind-energy level is Yoga; it makes us strong, flexible and gives us peace of mind, all in one!

REMEMBER

- avoiding movement beyond perpendicularity
- stacking joints or keeping joints in straight alignment
- supporting tools
- proper spinal alignment
- table height recommendations and
- proper foot placement and stances.
- stretching recommendations and exercises
- hydrotherapy use
- rest period duration
- Eastern influences; and
- emotional and personal aspects.

When massage practitioners use these techniques into their massage treatments, regular clients often remark on:

- how much deeper the massage is
- how much more extensive the strokes feel, especially on their back and legs
- and how they feel that their tensions have been ‘ironed out’ by these techniques

Protect your hands, save your back and shoulders for massage therapists

Doing massage is very hands-intensive. This day focuses on ways of saving your hands, particularly your vulnerable thumbs and wrists - the areas most at risk in massage. It also covers the main principles of using your body effectively to support what you do with your hands

MAINTAINING PROPER BODY MECHANICS

When Standing or Walking

Make sure that your ears, shoulders, hips and even your ankles are aligned. Avoid locking your knees while standing. If you've been standing for a long time, consider changing positions or placing your foot on a lower stool. If you cannot avoid standing for long hours, try leaning on walls to help reduce the stresses and fatigue. Your feet should be flat on the ground and be approximately 12 inches apart.

When Sitting

Most people are seated for the greater part of the day. Sitting in itself is a good activity but it could result in injuries if you do not maintain proper posture. When sitting, ensure that your back is supported, and your feet are flat on the floor at approximately 90 degrees. Your shoulders should be in a relaxed position and your chest should be lifted. Your back should be straight or in a neutral position to avoid stressing your back and spine. Your buttocks should be at the back of the seat. Lift your jaw and chin and relax them. It is essential to use chairs with armrests as they provide support for your arms and body. For prolonged sitting periods, take short breaks so you can change positions and stretch.

When Sleeping

According to research, most people spend approximately a third of their time in bed. Therefore, it is essential to be mindful of our sleeping position. In addition, choose a mattress that is firm enough to maintain proper posture.

When Lifting

It is essential not to lift or carry objects that weigh more than 10 pounds. When picking a heavy object, avoid bending over in a manner that your back becomes parallel to the ground as this could strain your back. Many recommend kneeling with one knee first on the ground and having one hand hold on to something for support. Once the object is close enough to the body at the waist level, pull the abdomen in support of the back and breathe out as you lift. Holding your breath strains the muscles and the spine.

Bending and Turning

When bending and turning, keep your feet flat and should-width apart. Remember to avoid bending over the waist. Instead, bend from the knees and hips while keeping your back straight.

Climbing Stairs

Keep your head high and abdomen gently pulled inward. Point your feet ahead and not to one side of your body. Bend your knees slightly and hold the rail for support as you go up or down the stairs.

Avoid reaching too far out or hyperextending your body. If you need to get something that is out of reach, consider having a stool to step on to bring you closer to the object. Picking it from your initial position could result in imbalances and falls that could cause injuries such as back and spine injuries.



Health and Safety at Work

This protects your rights either as an employer or employee. The law states that the employer must provide a safe working environment, provide health and safety training for staff, produce a written policy of the company's health and safety policy, and ensure that anyone on their premises is not exposed to any health or safety risks.

Medical Disclaimer

It is advised that you take medical advice if you or any of your clients have a health problem.

Any qualification from Marey El Hamouly will not be enough to qualify you to advise on any medical condition or to diagnose a condition.

PS: Test is an obligation to receive your certificate



Regards

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Sources and Researches

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Esclarmonde Health Formations-Switzerland

ESSR,Health School-Switzerland

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