

AMT Position Statement

Cosmetic claims in massage therapy practice

Massage therapy is a healthcare practice which aims to treat musculoskeletal conditions, relieve pain, prevent and repair injury, promote relaxation and reduce stress. Claims to provide cosmetic benefits from massage therapy are outside the scope of practice and training of massage therapy practitioners.

Evidence for cosmetic effects of massage is lacking. Several studies investigating facial massage techniques report temporary physiological changes such as increased blood flow and muscle thickness. However, the sample sizes range from 6 to 50 people and the conclusions use loosely defined terms like “facial rejuvenation”¹ or subjective improvements like “vertical mobility”² rather than clinically significant cosmetic outcomes.

Similarly, there is no robust evidence to support claims that massage therapy, including lymphatic drainage, can reduce cellulite or promote weight loss.

Consumers need reliable and accurate information to make an informed decision about whether to purchase a health service. Claims that massage therapy has cosmetic benefits are not consistent with current evidence or with the scope of services provided by massage therapists. They also constitute a breach of jurisdictional Codes of Conduct³ that prohibit healthcare practitioners from misinforming clients or making claims about the efficacy of treatment or services provided if the claims cannot be substantiated.

Under Australian Consumer Law, businesses must be able to prove any claim they make or advertise. Complaints about false advertising are handled by state and territory consumer protection agencies.⁴

Massage therapists have an obligation as healthcare providers to ensure that the way they promote their services is ethical, non-exploitative and trustworthy. Advertising that is false, misleading, inaccurate or deceptive compromises the integrity of the massage therapy profession and carries serious risks to the health consumer, such as exploitation, false expectation and false hope.

Massage therapists who hold additional qualifications in beauty therapy must clearly distinguish between their massage therapy services and any beauty treatments they offer, ensuring clients understand which services fall within each professional scope.

By maintaining clear boundaries around cosmetic claims, massage therapists uphold the integrity of the profession. AMT is committed to supporting massage therapists to deliver healthcare that builds consumer trust and promotes meaningful therapeutic benefits.



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- 1 Hwang, U. J., Kwon, O. Y., Jung, S. H., Ahn, S. H., & Gwak, G. T. (2018). Effect of a Facial Muscle Exercise Device on Facial Rejuvenation. *Aesthetic surgery journal*, 38(5), 463–476. <https://doi.org/10.1093/asj/sjx238>.
- 2 Okuda, I., Yamada, M., Yamada, Y., Yokoyama, Y., Kampan, N., Akita, K., & Jinzaki, M. (2021). Anatomic and diagnostic considerations of facial mobility for understanding the effectiveness of facial massage: A pilot study. *Skin research and technology : official journal of International Society for Bioengineering and the Skin (ISBS) [and] International Society for Digital Imaging of Skin (ISDIS) [and] International Society for Skin Imaging (ISSI)*, 27(6), 1057–1063. <https://doi.org/10.1111/srt.13058>.
- 3 <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/national-registration-and-accreditation-scheme>, accessed 16 September 2025.
- 4 <https://consumer.gov.au/consumers/consumer-protection-agencies>