

# Working with Tech Neck- A Digital Age Epidemic

6.5 NY State, 6.5 NCBTMB, 6.5 FL State

## Course Description:

**T**ech neck is being deemed a new worldwide epidemic that will only continue to grow as people spend more and more time working and playing on hand-held devices. What do you know about it? How does it differ from other conditions like thoracic outlet syndrome, etc? How is the WFH trend and unprecedented societal stress affecting risk? How can you best guide your clients in prevention and recovery?

The average person texts and scrolls on their smartphone for at least 5 hours a day, and the time spent attached to our devices is only increasing as the range of mobile devices expands. Holding I-watches, tablets, e-readers and personal gaming consoles in front of us while tilting the head down to view them transforms our normal, neutral posture into a contorted posture that over-taxes neck muscles and over time, damages the spine.

As we know by studies of other forward-head posture conditions, the weight of the head increases greatly with every inch it's held in a forward or tilted posture- experts say it may increase double-fold for every inch. Combine that with fine, repetitive movement of the thumbs and grasping of the device itself and you have a recipe for disaster.

Millennials in particular, who have grown up in a hand-held digital device culture, will soon make up an enormous percentage of clientele that suffer from muscle pain and fatigue, nerve pain and paresthesia, and poor posture that creates long-term dysfunction and possible debilitating spinal abnormalities like herniated disks and loss on the natural cervical curve.

As a massage therapist you can educate your clients on the possibility of this imbalance, teach them beneficial ergonomics, stretches and exercises that can correct and relieve pain, instill the long-term benefits of adopting a practice of being mindful of body position during mobile technology usage, and create the most effective massage treatment special to their postural needs.

**Lecture (10:30am-12pm)**

- What is Tech Neck?
- Is it thoracic outlet syndrome, carpal tunnel, double-crossed syndrome, tendinitis? -Anatomy Review
- Incidence (now and future)
- Ergonomic risk factors
- Symptoms and exacerbations, further dysfunctions
- Spinal damage and long-term dysfunction
- Learning Outcome: Understanding the complexities of Text Neck

### **Assessment (12pm-12:30pm)**

- Observation and Intake:
- What will clients present with
- What questions to ask
- Assessment to identify individual problem areas
- Learning Outcome: How to gauge where each individual is being affected most and the cause of their particular symptom manifestation

### **Hands-on (Demo) (12:45pm-2:45pm)**

- Deciding on proper treatment -Massage modalities (2 or 3 sequences)
- Learning Outcome: Know how to choose/create the best treatment for each individual

### **Hands-on (Practice) (3:00pm-5:00pm)**

- Students practice text neck sequences to treat the neck and affected areas.
- Learning Outcome: Become familiar with treatment modalities/sequences that address this condition

### **Complementary and After-Care (Stretches & Strengthening) (5pm-5:30pm)**

- Exploring the postural imbalance of 'tech neck' syndrome in your own body
- Learn stretches and strengthening exercises to alleviate symptoms and correct posture
- Demo & practice in your own body
- Practice teaching these to clients (in an effective manner without taking too much time from session)
- Learning Outcome: Become familiar with how the postural imbalance feels in your own body and practice specific stretches and strengthening exercises. Become proficient at teaching them to your clients as part of their self-care and recovery plan.

### **Educate Your Clients (Daily Mindfulness) (5:30-6pm)**

- Educating your clients about what this new common condition is and how it may affect them, as well as potential long-term serious conditions
- Talking about mindfulness & long-term implementation of daily ergonomics w/ your clients (include digital reminders, apps etc)

- Learning Outcome: Learn how to give your clients the right tools to take with them into daily life to increase the benefits of their massage sessions with you, empower them, and give them confidence in your work

## **The Art of Self Care**

6 NCBTMB

### Course Description:

Why spend so much of your life on autopilot when you can make small changes to your daily routine and truly begin to thrive?

All prevention and growth begins with you. Nobody knows the intricacies of your body and your mind better than you do. In order to hone your self-reflective and self-communication skills, we'll practice getting reacquainted with the body, mind and emotions- as one whole being.

In this course you'll be presented with a holistic set of carefully curated tools that can be combined to create a complete and customized Self Care routine that fits into your lifestyle and schedule.

- **begin to adopt mindfulness in all areas of your life**
- **develop greater Self and body awareness**
- **relax deeply and reduce stress, self-treat fatigue and pain patterns**
- **activate more energy and endurance**
- **stay grounded and hold clear energetic boundaries with others**

We'll discover how to cultivate more Self and Body Awareness by exploring a series of diverse and holistic techniques that can be implemented into daily life to create a stronger, healthier body-mind connection. We'll also discuss how to individualize- how to decide which tools to keep, and which to drop, for our best personalized experience and success rate.

We'll start by discussing the topic of Mindfulness & Meditation in relation to self care. We'll talk about the basics of mindfulness and meditation practices as viewed through different lineages (Buddhist, Yogic, Modern Psychology, etc) and we'll practice a selection of basic, but potent, exercises for Self exploration.

We'll then learn about Stress and its body-brain connection, and experience

powerful ways to use and direct our own breath and thoughts to shift our nervous system to find more peace, calm, and deeper sleep.

We'll experience multiple ways to release and relieve our physical tension, holding, and pain patterns by using stretches and traditional Hatha yoga postures, including restorative poses, to re-educate our alignment and access emotional information and guidance that may be stored in our soft tissue and organs.

We'll discuss how to activate more energy in our system- be it physical, mental, or psychic/ creative. We'll talk about the manifold ways we may leak energy, how to discern when we're giving too much of it away, and we'll practice exercises that can immediately increase access to our stores of vital energy.

Finally we will talk about staying grounded and centered within all we have going on, and learn some ways to release and clear negative energy and re-focus when we fall off track. We'll talk about ways to practice self-compassion and to use Self-knowledge to stay grounded on our life path.

## **Cultivating Awareness**

10am-11:30am

Meditation & Mindfulness -What is meditation and what is mindfulness? We'll have a lecture covering the various understandings of these modalities from different perspectives (i.e. spiritual/ religious vs. scientific, or Buddhist vs. Yogic), what current research reveals about the practices and their effects on our physical, mental, emotional and relational health.

Activities- We'll learn and experience some of the most impotent techniques in many meditation practices:

Body Scan, Breath Awareness, and Observing and Allowing Thoughts

Awareness in Everyday Activities- We discuss how to extend your awareness into everyday tasks and interactions with others by creating new habits (some topics include journaling about diet/ mood/energy levels, how to truly listen to others rather than simply react, placing attention on success and small steps forward to fuel personal motivation, etc.)

Learning Outcome: Students gain an understanding of what the terms 'Meditation' and 'Mindfulness' can mean, experience some basic practices, and learn about some of the myriad benefits of adopting a practice, and how to begin.

## **Stress Reduction for Better Health**

11:45am-1:00pm

Your Body & Brain on Stress- Review of how stress affects the body and brain and how to reset the nervous system with relaxation techniques to facilitate balance and health.

Activities- We'll learn and experience the effects of various relaxing pranayama techniques and sleep induction techniques from the fields of yoga and psychology (calming breath, diaphragmatic breath, progressive muscle relaxation, etc)

Learning Outcome: Students leave with an understanding of how chronic stress negatively affects body and brain function, and techniques to counter it nearly instantly.

**\*Lunch 1:00pm- 2:00pm\***

## **Mobility, Strength & Length**

2:00pm- 3:30pm

Stretch & Strengthen- Learn to apply to your own body as well as instruct others in some of the most simple and beneficial techniques that help relieve pain and discomfort and prevent common overuse syndromes from sitting long hours, hunching over at a computer or on your mobile device.

Activities- Simple exercises from physical therapy, sports therapy, and hatha yoga will be taught on chair, near wall, on bed/massage table, and on yoga mat. Several powerful restorative yoga postures will be taught (using mats/ yoga props)

Learning Outcome: Students learn self-care techniques to apply daily to reduce strain, pain, and fatigue.

## **Energy Activation**

3:45pm- 4:30pm

Harnessing Extra Energy- When we learn how to best honor our individual personal needs and instill new, healthy habits daily, we find that more energy to do the things we love is available to us. Brief discussion of diet/ food choices, sleep, and the importance of a regular physical movement routine

Activities- Learn and experience select breathing exercises (pranayamas) meant to energize and activate the body's energy centers (chakras), or to oxygenate the organs and blood for better physical endurance and keen mental alertness and focus. We will also create and practice our own unique visualization meditation to increase energy, inspire creativity and re-affirm health, and learn basic sequence of yoga sun salutations to awaken the body.

Learning Outcome: Students learn how to boost their daily energy levels with their own breath and by using visualization and yoga asana techniques.

### **Grounding and Centering**

4:45pm- 6pm

Staying Centered- Learn and experience clearing and grounding techniques from Hatha yoga, reiki, the field of modern day psychology and beyond, that can be used as tools to re-center yourself when life throws you off balance or you find you've taken on too much and feel overwhelmed (physically, mentally or emotionally).

(including clearing breathings, standing charging breathing, self-compassion practices, etc)

Grounding and Letting Go- Experience the benefits of a full-length guided relaxation/ yoga nidra (aka psychic sleep).

Learning Outcome: Students learn tools to use to feel grounded and centered when stress or injury hits hard.

# Massage for Professional Musicians

6 NY State, 6 NCBTMB, 6 FL State

## Course Description:

In this course we'll learn about lifestyle, postural, and overuse injury considerations specific to 6 main categories of professional musicians: vocals, piano and keyboard, drums and percussion, guitar, strings, and horns.

Musicians rarely think of themselves as athletes, when in fact professional musicians use their bodies in ultra specific, repetitive ways during intensive live performances, long recording sessions, and/or grueling tour schedules. Yet unlike professional athletes who have teams of people who direct both preventative and injury care, professional musicians aren't usually taught how to care for their bodies and minds while honing or expressing their craft, but they're nonetheless subject to the permeating stigma of the music industry that equates injury with less talent or poor musicianship.

Most injuries in the music world result from a combination of overuse, poor body awareness, and lack of self-care. Massage therapists are soft tissue and body alignment experts- so we can absolutely help alleviate pain and facilitate healing in muscles, tendons and joints. But we can also help to educate our musician clients about finding a healthy posture for their particular instrument, teach them stretches and exercises specific to their function, and even encourage them to adopt a higher degree of self-care in their professional lives to prevent downtime and extend their careers (including regular massage, meditation, exercise, relaxation techniques, and more).

Understanding each musician's particular challenges will help you to formulate the best treatment plan and take-home recommendations for this special set of clients. Expertise in this area can position you to work with touring artists, in recording studios, with city orchestras and Broadway type shows, worldwide music festivals and more.

(For each section we discuss what to look for in terms of posture, injury and overuse, what to add to make the treatment most effective, and how to advise in complementary aftercare/self-care)

### **The Pro Musician Lifestyle**

10:00- 10:45

We'll discuss what a typical day might be like for a professional musician who tours, plays in a symphony, or plays in the studio setting- We'll talk about the amount of hours spent playing, moving/ traveling with gear, disruptions to normal schedule and habits and more. And we'll discuss the amount of self-care taught in schools or exposed to in the music community as well as the stigma associated with injury from playing.

### **Piano and Keys**

10:45- 11:15

### **Drums & Percussion**

11:15- 11:45

-Break-

11:45- 12:00

### **Horns**

12:00- 12:30

**Practical-** Assessment, Treatment, Aftercare (Horns, Drums, Keys)

12:30- 1:30

-Lunch-

1:30- 2:30

### **Guitar and Bass**

2:30- 3:00

### **Strings**

3:00- 3:30

-Break-

3:30-3:40

### **Vocals**

3:40- 4:00

**Practical-** Assessment, Treatment, Aftercare (Guitar, Strings, Vocals)

4:00- 5:00

**Learning Objectives:**

\* Students learn what a daily routine/ lifestyle might entail for professional and touring musicians, and how these activities can exacerbate the overuse symptomology of their particular instrument so they can better assess chronic conditions and injuries and create more targeted treatments.

\* Students learn the intricacies of 'Piano/ Keys'- what postural considerations to be aware of, what common overuse injuries to expect, and what a targeted treatment might look like.

\* Students learn the intricacies of 'Drums/ Percussion'- what postural considerations to be aware of, what common overuse injuries to expect, and what a targeted treatment might look like.

\* Students learn the intricacies of 'Singers /Vocalists'- what postural considerations to be aware of, what common overuse injuries to expect, and what a targeted treatment might look like.

\* Students learn the intricacies of 'Guitar, Bass & Strings'- what postural considerations to be aware of, what common overuse injuries to expect, and what a targeted treatment might look like.

\* Students learn the intricacies of 'Brass/ Horns'- what postural considerations to be aware of, what common overuse injuries to expect, and what a targeted treatment might look like.

\* Students learn practice intake, assessment and hands-on treatment protocols for several of the musician types/ common conditions as well as Self Care recommendations for particular types and lifestyles.