

National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of questions,

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	6
Answers	9
Explanations	11
Next Steps	17

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Don't worry about getting everything right, your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations, and take breaks to retain information better.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning.

7. Use Other Tools

Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly — adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

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Questions

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- 1. Which stroke in Swedish massage involves a gliding motion?**
 - A. Petrissage**
 - B. Effleurage**
 - C. Friction**
 - D. Tapotement**

- 2. The hip joint is formed by the fusion of how many bones?**
 - A. Two**
 - B. Three**
 - C. Four**
 - D. Five**

- 3. When assessing active range of motion (AROM), what technique is correct?**
 - A. Movement of the body is unrestricted**
 - B. Movement of the joint is isolated; rest of body is kept still**
 - C. Movement requires assistance from the therapist**
 - D. Joint mobility is not considered**

- 4. How many facial bones are there in the human skull?**
 - A. 12**
 - B. 14**
 - C. 16**
 - D. 22**

- 5. Which forearm bone is located on the medial side in anatomical position?**
 - A. Radius**
 - B. Ulna**
 - C. Humerus**
 - D. Sacrum**

6. In terms of numerical labeling, which number corresponds to the pinky finger?

- A. One**
- B. Three**
- C. Five**
- D. Four**

7. When assessing a client's stress level, which element is primarily being evaluated?

- A. Physical health**
- B. Lifestyle and vocation**
- C. Dietary habits**
- D. Exercise routine**

8. Which assessment technique is used to observe the overall alignment of the head, shoulders, spine, and pelvis?

- A. Functional Movement Test**
- B. Postural Assessment**
- C. Range of Motion Evaluation**
- D. Muscle Strength Testing**

9. What is the function of the fascia in the body?

- A. To store energy and nutrients**
- B. To provide structural support and facilitate movement between muscles and other tissues**
- C. To produce hormones and metabolic products**
- D. To conduct nerve impulses and signals**

10. What is the recommended position for a client receiving a massage?

- A. Supine, prone, or side-lying, depending on the area being treated**
- B. Standing or seated for maximum comfort**
- C. Always in a supine position to prevent strain**
- D. In a reclining chair for accessibility**

Answers

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1. B
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. A

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Explanations

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1. Which stroke in Swedish massage involves a gliding motion?

- A. Petrissage**
- B. Effleurage**
- C. Friction**
- D. Tapotement**

Effleurage is a fundamental stroke in Swedish massage that is characterized by a long, gliding motion across the skin. This technique is typically used at the beginning and end of a massage session to promote relaxation and prepare the muscles for deeper work. The gliding stroke helps to warm up the soft tissues, increase circulation, and provide a sense of calm to the client. Effleurage can vary in speed and pressure, but the key defining feature is the smooth, continuous movement over the skin, which distinguishes it from other techniques. Petrissage, while also used in Swedish massage, involves kneading and lifting the muscle rather than a gliding motion. Friction focuses on deeper, more targeted pressure to break down adhesions and tension, while tapotement consists of rhythmic tapping or percussion movements that stimulate the muscles and enhance circulation. Therefore, effleurage is the only technique mentioned that specifically embodies a gliding motion.

2. The hip joint is formed by the fusion of how many bones?

- A. Two**
- B. Three**
- C. Four**
- D. Five**

The hip joint is formed by the fusion of three bones: the ilium, ischium, and pubis. These three bones come together to form one structure known as the hip bone or os coxae. They play a critical role in providing stability and mobility to the hip joint, which connects the lower limb to the pelvis. Understanding the anatomy of the hip joint is essential for practitioners in therapeutic massage and bodywork, as it can help in targeting muscle groups and addressing conditions related to hip mechanics. Each of the three bones contributes to the overall structure and function of the hip joint, making the count of three the accurate response.

3. When assessing active range of motion (AROM), what technique is correct?

- A. Movement of the body is unrestricted**
- B. Movement of the joint is isolated; rest of body is kept still**
- C. Movement requires assistance from the therapist**
- D. Joint mobility is not considered**

The correct approach to assessing active range of motion (AROM) is to isolate the movement of the joint while keeping the rest of the body still. This isolation allows for an accurate assessment of the joint's functional movement capabilities without interference from other body parts. Moving the joint in this manner helps to evaluate the strength, flexibility, and coordination of the muscles surrounding that specific joint. Proper assessment requires the individual to actively engage the muscles responsible for the movement, providing insights into any limitations or pain they may experience, which is crucial for understanding their overall functional mobility. Other methods, such as having unrestricted movement of the body, would not provide accurate information about the joint's specific capabilities, as compensatory movements might occur in adjacent joints or muscles. Similarly, relying on the therapist for assistance in movement does not assess the client's ability to perform the motion independently. Lastly, neglecting joint mobility in the assessment would overlook a significant aspect of a person's functional range of motion, making it essential to focus directly on the joints being evaluated.

4. How many facial bones are there in the human skull?

- A. 12**
- B. 14**
- C. 16**
- D. 22**

There are 14 facial bones in the human skull, which include the nasal bones, zygomatic bones, maxillae, palatine bones, lacrimal bones, nasal conchae, and the mandible. This specific count is important in understanding the structure of the face and its relationship to the cranial bones. The facial bones contribute to the overall shape of the face, support for the teeth, and the protection of internal nasal and oral cavities. Knowledge of these bones is essential for various fields such as anatomy, dentistry, and even massage therapy, where understanding anatomy can enhance techniques used in facial massage and related therapies. The other numbers provided do not represent the correct total for the recognized facial bones.

5. Which forearm bone is located on the medial side in anatomical position?

- A. Radius**
- B. Ulna**
- C. Humerus**
- D. Sacrum**

In anatomical position, the body is standing upright with the arms at the sides and the palms facing forward. In this position, the ulna is located on the medial side of the forearm. This means it is closer to the midline of the body compared to the radius, which is positioned on the lateral side of the forearm. The ulna is one of the two long bones in the forearm and extends from the elbow to the wrist on the inner side of the arm. It has a significant role in the formation of the elbow joint and provides stability to the forearm. Its structure includes features such as the olecranon and the trochlear notch, which are important for its articulation with the humerus at the elbow. In contrast, the radius, while also a forearm bone, lies on the outer side (lateral side) in anatomical position. The other two options, the humerus and the sacrum, are not forearm bones; the humerus is the bone of the upper arm, and the sacrum is part of the pelvis. Therefore, identifying the ulna as the bone located on the medial side of the forearm is essential for understanding arm anatomy in relation to the body's position.

6. In terms of numerical labeling, which number corresponds to the pinky finger?

- A. One**
- B. Three**
- C. Five**
- D. Four**

The pinky finger is referred to as the fifth digit in the anatomical numbering of the fingers. In this system, the thumb is classified as the first digit, the index finger as the second, the middle finger as the third, and the ring finger as the fourth. Therefore, the pinky finger, being the last one in that sequence, corresponds to the number five. This numerical labeling system is commonly used in anatomy to provide a clear and standardized way of identifying and referring to different fingers and toes. Understanding this classification not only helps in anatomical studies but also in clinical practice, where proper terminology is essential for effective communication.

7. When assessing a client's stress level, which element is primarily being evaluated?

- A. Physical health**
- B. Lifestyle and vocation**
- C. Dietary habits**
- D. Exercise routine**

When assessing a client's stress level, evaluating lifestyle and vocation is crucial because these factors directly impact how a person responds to stressors in their daily life. Lifestyle encompasses a variety of social, environmental, and psychological elements that can contribute to overall stress levels. For example, working in a high-pressure job, balancing family responsibilities, or dealing with social relationships can all lead to increased stress. Understanding a client's vocation can also provide insights into their work conditions, job satisfaction, and overall mental health, which are all intertwined with stress management. Evaluating these elements allows practitioners to identify stressors and develop effective strategies for managing stress, which is essential for promoting well-being in therapeutic massage and bodywork. Other factors like physical health, dietary habits, and exercise routines can contribute to a client's overall wellness, but they are not as directly linked to understanding how lifestyle choices and work environments influence stress levels. Focusing on lifestyle and vocation allows for a more holistic approach to stress assessment and management.

8. Which assessment technique is used to observe the overall alignment of the head, shoulders, spine, and pelvis?

- A. Functional Movement Test**
- B. Postural Assessment**
- C. Range of Motion Evaluation**
- D. Muscle Strength Testing**

The technique used to observe the overall alignment of the head, shoulders, spine, and pelvis is postural assessment. This method involves visually inspecting the client's posture while standing or sitting to identify any deviations or misalignments in their body structure. During a postural assessment, practitioners can evaluate symmetry and identify potential areas of concern, such as rounded shoulders or an uneven pelvis, which can inform treatment strategies aimed at improving body mechanics and alleviating discomfort. Other assessment techniques do not primarily focus on posture. For example, functional movement tests examine how a person moves during specific activities to evaluate kinetic patterns and functional fitness. Range of motion evaluation assesses the degree of movement available at a joint, which does not directly provide information about overall body alignment. Muscle strength testing measures the force output of muscles but does not address alignment and postural relationships among different body segments.

9. What is the function of the fascia in the body?

- A. To store energy and nutrients**
- B. To provide structural support and facilitate movement between muscles and other tissues**
- C. To produce hormones and metabolic products**
- D. To conduct nerve impulses and signals**

The function of fascia in the body is primarily to provide structural support and facilitate movement between muscles and other tissues. Fascia is a connective tissue that surrounds muscles, organs, and other structures, creating a supportive framework. This supportive role is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the musculoskeletal system and allowing the body to move efficiently. Additionally, fascia aids in the proper alignment and function of muscles by allowing them to glide smoothly over each other and other structures during movement. This is integral for activities ranging from simple motions, such as walking, to complex athletic performances. By maintaining a well-organized system of connective tissue, fascia helps to minimize friction, reduce the potential for injury, and support overall stability and coordination in bodily movements. In contrast, the other choices do not accurately represent the primary roles of fascia. For instance, while energy and nutrient storage and hormonal production are important functions of other tissues in the body, they do not pertain to the role of fascia. Similarly, conducting nerve impulses is associated with neural tissue rather than fascia, highlighting the unique and essential function of fascia in maintaining body structure and facilitating movement.

10. What is the recommended position for a client receiving a massage?

- A. Supine, prone, or side-lying, depending on the area being treated**
- B. Standing or seated for maximum comfort**
- C. Always in a supine position to prevent strain**
- D. In a reclining chair for accessibility**

The recommended position for a client receiving a massage being supine, prone, or side-lying is based on the massage techniques and the specific areas that need treatment. Each of these positions allows access to different muscle groups and areas of the body, facilitating effective work on tissues based on the client's needs and preferences. For example, when targeting the back, a prone position is often utilized to effectively access the posterior muscles. Conversely, a supine position is beneficial for treating the chest, arms, and anterior neck, while side-lying can provide comfort and accessibility for clients who may have difficulty lying flat or for specific therapeutic techniques like lateral stretching. This adaptability in positioning maximizes both the effectiveness of the massage and the comfort of the client. The other options are less appropriate for traditional massage practices. Standing or seated positions may limit the therapist's ability to effectively apply techniques and usually do not provide the same level of relaxation. Maintaining a supine position exclusively could restrict access to various body parts that need attention. A reclining chair may offer accessibility but may not provide the comprehensive treatment or therapeutic benefits typically achieved in the more traditional massage positions.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://ncbtmb.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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