



IASTM Hygiene Best Practices

The goal of this document is to establish a clinical standard for IASTM (Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization) with respect to tool hygiene that is consistent with the 2019 guidelines established by Cheatham et al, Instrument assisted soft tissue mobilization: A commentary clinical practice guidelines for rehabilitation professionals.



CDC Hygiene/Safety Guidelines

Based upon the CDC definitions, IASTM would be considered a non-critical item since the instruments are in contact with intact skin and no mucous membranes or other sterile tissues.

The instruments should be considered a reusable medical device that should undergo proper hygienic procedures before and after patient treatment.

Non-critical items (e.g., blood pressure cuff) are in contact with intact skin but not mucous membranes, and generally require an Environment Protection Agency (EPA) approved low-level chemical disinfectant to clean

Center for Disease Control Levels of Disinfection.⁸⁰

High-level disinfection	These disinfectants kill all organisms, except high levels of bacterial spores, and is effected with a chemical germicide cleared for marketing as a sterilant by FDA. Typically, they are not used for generalized disinfecting.
Intermediate-level disinfection	These disinfectants kill mycobacterium, most viruses, and bacteria with a chemical germicide registered as a "tuberculocide" by EPA.
Low-level disinfection	These disinfectants kill some viruses and bacteria such as HIV and HBV with a chemical germicide registered as a hospital disinfectant by the EPA.

EPA: Environmental Protective Agency

FDA: Federal Drug Administraiton

□ Cheatham SW, Baker R, Kreiswirth E. INSTRUMENT ASSISTED SOFT-TISSUE MOBILIZATION: A COMMENTARY ON CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION PROFESSIONALS. Int J Sports Phys Ther. 2019 Jul;14(4):670-682.

The following proposed recommendations are a starting point to develop best practice standards for IASTM instrument hygiene and safe treatment

Instrument Hygiene and Safe Treatment Sequence Recommendations.

Tool disinfecting: use an intermediate-level disinfectant to clean instrument. Flush instrument with soap and clean water before treatment. If the tool contacts blood, bodily fluids, mucous membranes, or non-intact skin, then proper disinfecting with a high-level disinfectant or sterilization should be done.

Safe treatment sequence: Wash hands and wear personal protective equipment as needed. Its recommend following the safe treatment sequence outlined in the *instrument hygiene and safe treatment section* of the commentary.

Safe Treatment Sequence Recommendations

- Step 1** Before and after treatment the clinician's hands should be cleaned. CDC guidelines recommend hand washing with soap and water or rubbing hands together using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (e.g., gel or wipe) for a minimum of 15 seconds.⁸⁴ Sports medicine professionals may choose to follow PPE guidelines and wear gloves during treatment but should still follow pre and post hand hygiene procedures.⁴³
- Step 2** Before treatment, the body region is inspected and cleared for treatment. Then the patient's skin (at the treatment site) is cleaned with a low-level sanitizing wipe (e.g. Purell®) that is safe for the skin, or 60-70% isopropyl alcohol to further reduce the risk of infection.⁸⁵⁻⁸⁷
- Step 3** The IASTM treatment is administered using the lubricant and PPE procedures, as needed.
- Step 4** During the prescribed treatment, the sports medicine professional monitors for changes in the patient's status (e.g., skin color changes such as petechiae, sensitivity to treatment, etc.)
- Step 5** Upon completion of treatment, the body region is re-inspected and cleaned again using a sanitizing wipe or isopropyl alcohol.
- Step 6** The sports medicine professional concludes with post treatment hand hygiene, disposing of any PPE, and cleaning of the instruments.

PPE: Personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves)

CDC: Center for Disease Control