

Massage and KinesioTaping® for Rheumatoid Arthritis

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Introduction

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic, systemic, autoimmune disease.

KinesioTaping® (KT) is a rehabilitative intervention that uses a unique, patented, medical grade elastic tape specifically designed for treating muscular problems and reducing lymphedema.

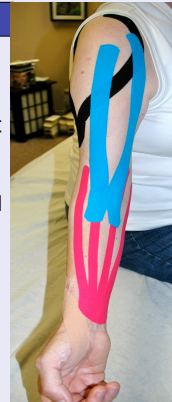
There was no reported use of KinesioTaping® for management of RA symptoms in the current literature.

Objective

To study the combined effects of massage therapy and KT on RA symptoms of pain, swelling, restricted range of motion and performing endurance in the right arm of a 59 year-old, female professional oboeist.

Case Presentation

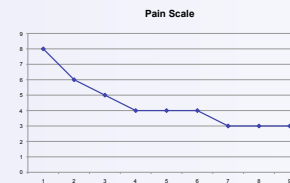
A 59 year-old female musician presented with moderate to severe pain the right shoulder, elbow, wrist and digits consistent with the diagnosis of RA. Pain and restricted movement in the affected joints resulted in her inability to continue to practice (less than 30 minutes per session) and perform, minimizing her ability to earn a living wage. A regular program of massage therapy provided ephemeral relief from pain and moderately increased function of the right elbow, wrist and digits. Weekly 30-minute sessions consisted of traditional Swedish massage, trigger point therapy and myofascial techniques. To extend the therapeutic benefits of massage, a series of KT applications was developed.



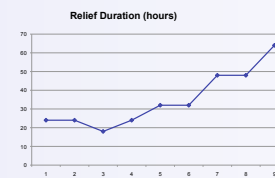
Clockwise from top left: Lengthening encouragement in deltoid group, biceps brachii, wrist and finger flexors; triceps brachii; shoulder joint stability; complete taping in oboe playing posture.

Results

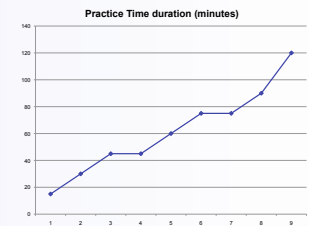
The addition of KT applications to massage sessions provided a reduction of joint pain (from 8 to 4 on a 10-point scale) within the first three applications



Relief duration extended from 24-48 hours to 4-5 days.



Extent of practice time increased to 40 minutes per session after KT application 1. By the fourth KT application, practice time increased to 60 minutes per session; by KT application 9, two 60-minute practice sessions per day.



Implications

Complementing traditional massage applications with KT appears to yield positive result in pain reduction, functional mobility, and duration affect. Further investigation with additional outcome measures is indicated.