



No more pain in the hands! Instruments add income as they reduce adhesions

BY WARREN HAMMER, DC, MS, DABCO

Soft-tissue mobilization (STM) rates high as an income-generating modality and in patient benefit.

But, unfortunately, STM can be a big a pain in the hand — so much so that chiropractors who perform STM risk cutting short their careers due to serious problems that can develop in their fingers and wrists after just a few years of working on motion-restricting scar tissue and fascial adhesions.

A viable solution: Use an instrument-assisted form of STM instead. An instrument eliminates damage potential to the hands and, as a bonus, dramatically increases efficacy — much to the delight of patients, referring physicians, and third-party payers.

The reason: Efficiency increases because instruments magnify the clinician's ability to feel the site of restriction pathology. Instruments can find restrictive soft tissue barriers that are undetectable by ordinary palpation.

Instrument-assisted soft-tissue mobilization can provide an economic boost to your practice.

For example, it:

- **Opens up your schedule.** You'll find it still takes about the same amount of time per visit as before to mobilize the soft tissues when you use instruments. However, you need fewer patient visits to obtain a good result.

With fewer visits per patient required, you have more time available in your schedule to take new patients.

- **Scores points with third-party payers.** Payers angling to issue fewer reimbursement checks will appreciate that you only need to see patients half or even one-third as many times as would otherwise be necessary.

Employers likewise will be happy, because instrumented STM can reduce their health insurance

and workers' compensation costs by shortening the time it takes to return injured employees to the job.

- **Strengthens your position in the marketplace.**

Results produced by instrument-assisted STM can help burnish your reputation as a practitioner who wants to get patients better, faster.

- **Jump-starts your referrals engine.** Because IASTM improves patient satisfaction, patients tend to refer more to your clinic.

Instrument-assisted soft tissue mobilization also is a good tool for boosting referrals from medical doctors. *For example:* After achieving a good result with IASTM, I detail that accomplishment in a note to the patient's regular or referring physician (with the patient's permission, of course).

The follow-up note is an effective tool that shows medical doctors the value of referring patients.

Suggestion: I've found it helpful to include in the follow-up note references to the many published studies demonstrating the validity of instrument-assisted STM.

- **Makes economic sense.** Although you must make an investment your choice of instruments, the investment begins paying dividends almost immediately.

- **Lengthens your career.** When you use an instrument to assist in soft-tissue mobilization, you save wear and tear on your hands. This relief enables you to carry on a productive practice for a longer period of time. ☐



Warren Hammer, DC, MS, DABCO, owns Hands On Therapeutics in Norwalk, Conn. He is the author of a widely used textbook, Functional Soft Tissue Examination and Treatment by Manual Methods:

New Perspectives (a third edition is due out soon). Hammer is a certified Graston Technique instructor and can be contacted at 203-966-4572 or by e-mail at softissu@optonline.net.