

Physical Agent Modalities (PAMs) in the State of Wisconsin

The Northwood Tech OTA program aims to prepare entry-level occupational therapy assistants ready to meet the work environment's demands. While PAMs are commonly used in occupational therapy, both AOTA and the State of Wisconsin believe that PAMs are not entry-level skills. Please see the AOTA document, *Physical Agent Modalities: A Position Paper* and the State of Wisconsin Practice Act *Practice and Supervision* for specific guidelines.

Level II fieldwork students have successfully completed Physical Rehabilitation Practice (10-514-182) with a grade of a C or higher. Students have not received physiological or theoretical background for the PAMs. Here is the course content regarding PAMs:

a. Describe the role of the OTA regarding PAMs, according to AOTA and Wisconsin guidelines
b. Categorize PAMs by superficial thermal agents, deep thermal agents, electrotherapeutic agents, and mechanical devices, according to AOTA
c. Categorize PAMs by thermal modalities (conduction, convection, and conversion) or electrical modalities
d. Describe in basic terms the following PAMs: paraffin, hot packs, cold packs, fluidotherapy, ultrasound, iontophoresis, ice massage, contrast baths, TENS, and NMES
e. Describe in terms the client can understand, the purpose of the following PAMs: paraffin, hot packs, cold packs, fluidotherapy, ultrasound, iontophoresis, ice massage, contrast baths, TENS, and NMES
f. Describe the contraindications of the following PAMs: paraffin, hot packs, cold packs, fluidotherapy, ultrasound, iontophoresis, ice massage, contrast baths, TENS, and NMES

If you have any questions, please contact the Northwood Technical College Academic Fieldwork Coordinator or the OTA Program Director.