

## 5. Preparation rituals and practitioner posture

### Preparation Rituals and Practitioner Posture

*(How to ready the space, the self, and your mechanics so every session is safe, efficient, and deeply effective)*

#### 1) Space preparation & safety -

Before technique, make the room an ally. Aim for **clean, warm, quiet, and slip-safe**.

**Environment** - Room temperature 24-27 °C; soft, diffuse light; floor free of oil; non-slip mat where feet will stand or where Chavitti rail is used. Keep a towel within reach to wipe spills immediately.

**Equipment** - Stable table or floor mat; if using **Chavitti**, ensure overhead rope/rail is fixed and wrist loop height matches your forearm length. Place warmed oils (38-40 °C) in lidded beakers; keep a waste bowl for used bolus/pads.

**Hygiene** - Short nails, clean hands/forearms, no jewellery or dangling sleeves; hair tied back. Patch-test new oils when relevant. Fresh linens each client.

**Clinical start** - Review updates (meds, sleep, pain). Confirm **consent** for sensitive areas (abdomen, chest, inner thigh). Agree on a **pain ceiling**  $\leq 5/10$ .

#### 2) Personal centering & opening ritual -

Clients feel your internal state through your touch. Take **60-90 seconds** to arrive fully.

**Breath set** - Stand in neutral, inhale for **4**, exhale for **6**, five cycles. On the last exhale, set a simple **saṅkalpa** (e.g., "Steady breath, steady hands"). If culturally appropriate, a brief silent mantra or gratitude note is optional, never imposed.

**Body wake-up** - Neck circles small and slow; shoulder rolls; wrist figure-eights; 10 hip hinges; ankle rocks. This primes the fascial lines you will lean on for pressure.

**Energy hygiene** - Quick hand rub to warm palms; one slow sweep along your own sternum and abdomen to settle your pace before first contact.

#### 3) Practitioner posture fundamentals -

Think **stacked joints, soft knees, long spine, heavy heels**. Power comes from your **centre of mass**, not finger strength.

**Neutral spine** - Ears over shoulders, ribs softly down, pelvis neutral. Avoid rib flaring during deep strokes.

**Shoulders & scapulae** - Down and wide; slide the chest forward rather than hunching when you need more reach.

**Elbows & wrists** - Micro-bend elbows; keep wrists in mid-range (no prolonged extension). Change **tool** (palm  $\rightarrow$  forearm) before your wrist complains.

**Base & weight shift** - Two default stances:

- **Lunge stance** (one foot forward): best for long **distal→proximal** glides. Push from the rear foot, don't pull with

the arms.

- **Horse stance** (feet wider than hips): best for vertical sinks, sacral holds, and abdominal work. Drop from knees/hips, not spine.

**Breath coupling** - Start depth **on the client's exhale**. You exhale with them; inhale as you lighten or transition.

## 4) Tool-specific ergonomics -

**Thumb work (sūksma marmas)** - Brace working thumb with the other thumb/index to create a "T" support. Keep wrist straight; sink over the point using body weight, not thumb flexors. Duration short; exit slower than entry.

**Palm/heel of hand (broad glides)** - Stack shoulder over wrist; think "surfing" forward from the back leg. For long tracks, switch to **forearm** before the wrist tires.

**Forearm (deep fascial planes)** - Ulnar edge for narrow tracks, flat forearm for broad. Keep elbow close to ribs; slide your whole body, not just the arm.

**Elbow (only on dense, non-vital tissue)** - Bring torso very close; drop from knees/hips, not from shoulder height. Never over **agni marmas** (Hṛidaya, Nābhi, Ādhipati, Basti).

**Chavitti (foot pressure)** - Hold the rail lightly; keep standing knee soft; apply pressure with **heel** or full sole, not bony edges. Centre of mass directly above contact; micro-rock to modulate depth. Contraindicated for fragile clients or osteoporosis.

## 5) Session choreography -

A consistent flow protects your body and clarifies the client's nervous system.

**Enter** - Spread a thin warm oil film with both palms before any depth. This lowers skin friction and spares your wrists.

**Build** - Long, even glides first; joint decompressions second; **marma** holds third; stillness last. Move **around the table/mat**, not overreaching; turn your feet where your hands go.

**Pacing** - Most therapeutic work sits at **0.5-3 cm/s** surface speed. If you can't keep breath and pace steady, you're going too fast or too deep.

**Micro-breaks** - Every 8-10 minutes: stand tall, shake out hands, two long exhales. Use these to check client colour, breath, and warmth.

**Close** - Feather-light crown or sternum hold for 2-3 breaths; wipe excess oil; help client sit up slowly. Offer one sentence of homework (e.g., "Five slow **Neeta** lunges today").

## 6) Common posture mistakes & quick fixes -

- **Leaning from the lumbar** → Step closer, hinge at hips, lengthen spine.
- **Locked knees** → Soften both; feel weight in heels.
- **Chicken-wing elbows** → Tuck elbows; switch to forearm contact.
- **Thumb pain** → Shorten sets; brace thumb; alternate with palm/forearm.
- **Shoulder hiking** → Lower table height (or kneel for floor work); slide chest forward.
- **Holding breath** → Count client exhales out loud (softly) for a minute to resync.

## 7) Closing ritual & after-care -

**Hand cleanse** (soap/warm water) before leaving the room. Quick note of **what changed** (heat rise, pulse softening, sigh). Re-roll shoulders, three breaths, tiny gratitude to mark the session's end—this resets you for the next client.

## Summary Tables

### A) Pre-session checklist (2 minutes)

Item	✓
Room warm, clutter-free, non-slip floor ready	
Oils at 38-40 °C; clean linens; spill towel ready	
Nails short, jewellery off, hands/forearms washed	
Health update & consent (incl. sensitive areas)	
Agree on pain ceiling $\leq 5/10$ and stop signal	
Quick personal breath set (4-in / 6-out $\times 5$ )	

### B) Posture quick-ref by tool

Tool	Joint stack	Power source	Typical use	Avoid
Thumb	Wrist neutral, elbow soft	Body weight, short holds	Sūkṣma marmas, borders	Long hard jabs, hot tissue
Palm	Shoulder over wrist	Rear-foot drive	Warming, long glides	Locked elbows
Forearm	Elbow near ribs	Whole-body slide	Deep fascial planes	Twisted spine
Elbow	Torso close, knees bent	Hip/knee drop	Dense knots (non-vital)	Agni marmas, thin clients
Foot (Chavitti)	Hip over heel	Body weight + rail	Posterior chains	Osteoporosis, instability

### C) Breath & pacing cues

Aim	Inhale	Exhale	Surface speed
Calm & parasympathetic	4	6	1-2 cm/s
Lymph/venous return	3-4	4-5	2-3 cm/s, distal→proximal
Focal release	Natural	<b>Guided</b> long	0.5-1 cm/s (holds)

### D) Micro-drills between clients (60-90 s)

Drill	How	Why
Hip hinge $\times 10$	Neutral spine, arms long	Resets lumbar, loads glutes
Wall angels $\times 6$	Back of hands to wall	Opens chest, lowers shoulders
Wrist mobility	Flex/extend/circles 20 s	Protects small joints
4-6 breath	4 in / 6 out $\times 5$	Re-centres autonomics

### E) Red-flag ergonomics (protect yourself)

Sign	Likely cause	Immediate fix
Thumb ache	Overuse, poor bracing	Switch to palm/forearm; shorten sets
Wrist pinch	Extension + friction	Lower table, neutral wrist, more oil
Low-back tightness	Leaning from spine	Step closer, hinge hips, soften knees
Shoulder burn	Reaching too far	Move feet, bring torso over work



## Key take-aways

1. **Rituals create reliability**—a two-minute prep makes your touch calmer and your client safer.
2. **Posture is pressure**—stacked joints and breath-driven weight beats muscle effort every time.
3. **Change tools before pain**—rotate thumb → palm → forearm (→ foot) to protect your own anatomy.
4. **Finish clean and quiet**—a brief seal, slow sit-up, one line of homework: that's how results stick and the next session starts strong.