

# National Certification Program Handbook

The American Institute for Myofascial Studies, LLC

## CERTIFICATION

The American Institute for Myofascial Studies, LLC (AIMS, LLC) offers a standardized examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapists (MnTPT). Successful completion of this examination is an indication of academic competence in the specialized area of manual trigger point therapy.

Competence in the treatment of myofascial pain and dysfunction employing the principles of manual trigger point therapy is highly valued worldwide by patients and healthcare practitioners. Certification provides clinicians with formal recognition for having met the basic requirements for training provided by AIMS, LLC or a Qualifying Program (see pg 2).

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CERTIFICATION

'Certification' as used by the American Institute for Myofascial Studies, LLC does not supersede the laws governing your license, civil or federal statutes of the state or country in which you practice or the requirements of any other governing body apropos to your profession or practice commonly referred to as 'scope of practice'.

Although many techniques, methods, modalities (such as Trigger Point Injection, Dry Needling, Photo Therapy, etc) and principles (such as nutrition, etc) may be presented as part of your training, you are bound by the laws governing your license, scope of practice, statues of the state or country in which you practice or the requirements of any other governing body apropos to your profession.

Techniques outside of your 'scope of practice' may be taught in Qualified Programs for educational purposes only. AIMS, LLC does not imply, maintain, grant license or in any way direct or encourage engaging in practices outside your 'scope of practice'. **By applying for the AIMS, LLC National Certification Examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapist, you are agreeing to be bound and abide by all terms and conditions as outlined in this document.**

## PURPOSE OF CERTIFICATION

1. Promote safe and effective care in the treatment of myofascial (muscle and connective tissue) pain and dysfunction
2. Establish a standard of knowledge required for certification in Manual Trigger Point Therapy
3. Formally recognize individuals who meet the standard requirements as set forth by AIMS, LLC for Manual Trigger Point Therapists demonstrated by passing the National Certification Examination
4. Provide recognition for achieving that standard of knowledge thereby assisting potential employers, the general public, and other healthcare professionals in the assessment of Manual Trigger Point Therapists
5. Encourage ongoing personal and professional growth as clinicians practicing Manual Trigger Point Therapy

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

**You must be a healthcare provider, licensed or approved by a governing body<sup>1</sup>, authorized to treat independently of another provider's license.** You must also be a graduate of an AIMS, LLC Qualified Program in Manual Trigger Point Therapy. You must provide a copy of your diploma, certificate or equivalent<sup>2</sup> indicating successful completion of an AIMS, LLC Qualified Program in Manual Trigger Point Therapy (For a list of Qualified Programs, see **QUALIFYING PROGRAMS** on page 2);

AND

If the state in which you practice requires a license for your profession as a healthcare provider a copy of your current license must accompany your application;

AND

Completed application, delivered before the deadline<sup>3</sup> for the National Certification Examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapists;

AND

Full payment of the current application fee.

<sup>1</sup> - If you are a massage therapist who practices in a state that does not require licensure, you must be certified by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB).

<sup>2</sup> - If you have not yet received your diploma, certificate, or equivalent, please include a separate letter explaining this. Include the date you expect to receive it. The date you expect to receive it must be no less than 2 (two) weeks prior to the date of the National Certification Examination. You will be required to deliver a copy by mail, courier or in person to the office of AIMS, LLC no less than 1 (one) week prior to the exam date. (See **CONTACT INFORMATION** below) Should you fail to receive or deliver a copy of your diploma, certificate of achievement or equivalent on time, you will not be eligible to take the exam. Refunds will be made according to **REFUNDS/VOUCHERS** as outlined in this pamphlet below.

<sup>3</sup> - For a list of all dates and deadlines referenced in this pamphlet, see **DATES and DEADLINES** below.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Website: [www.AIMS-LLC.org](http://www.AIMS-LLC.org).  
Email : [generalinformation@aims-llc.org](mailto:generalinformation@aims-llc.org)  
Phone: 505-872-3100  
Fax: 505-872-2600  
Office: AIMS, LLC  
4308 Carlisle, NE Ste 208  
Albuquerque, NM 87107

## QUALIFYING PROGRAMS

AIMS, LLC - MyoRehab Seminar Series.....	160 hours
Janet G. Travell, MD Seminar Series.....	105 hours
Pittsburg School of Pain Management.....	650 hours
Sauer Seminar Series - Myofascial Trigger Point Therapy Techniques.....	161 hours

Program Qualification is based solely on a review of the current published curriculum of the programs listed and the fact that they are primarily based on the work of Doctors Janet G. Travell, MD and David G. Simons, MD. At this time, no other criterion is used for inclusion.

If the educational program you have attended is not listed and you feel the training you have received qualifies you to take the AIMS, LLC National Certification Examination, please contact the American Institute for Myofascial Studies, LLC to discuss eligibility. **At AIMS, LLC, we welcome the inclusion of all Qualified Programs.**

To insure successful testing, please review the **CONTENT OF EXAMINATION** and **REQUIRED, RECOMMENDED** and **SUGGESTED READING** sections below.

## ADMINISTRATION

The National Certification Program is administered by AIMS, LLC. All questions concerning the National Certification Program or the Certification Examination should be directed to AIMS, LLC. We invite suggestions from course directors and educators of QUALIFYING and not yet reviewed PROGRAMS.

## BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

Applicants who achieve a passing score (75% or more) on the National Certification Examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapists are eligible to use the designation CMnTPT after their names. A passing score qualifies you to be registered as a Certified Manual Trigger Point Therapist (CMnTPT) for a period of 5 years.

A Declaration of Certification suitable for framing will be mailed to you. You will also be listed on the AIMS, LLC website Directory of Certified Practitioners for as long as your certification is in good standing. You will also be entitled to all rights and privileges that may become part of the National Certification Program in the future.

## REVOCAION OF CERTIFICATION

Certification may be revoked for any of the following reasons:

1. Discovery of false information on an Application
2. Misrepresentation of education or licensure
3. Professional misconduct
4. Revocation or expiration of licensure
5. Failure to recertify

AIMS, LLC provides an appeal process for challenging Revocation of Certification. If revocation should occur, it is the responsibility of the individual to request this process.

## APPLICATION

Request an application for the National Certification Examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapists by phone, fax, mail, email or download it as a PDF by visiting us on the web at [www.AIMS-LLC.org](http://www.AIMS-LLC.org).

Completed applications with correct fee(s) and inclusions must be received at the office of AIMS, LLC by the appropriate deadline. Deliver your application by mail, courier or in person. Late or incomplete applications will be returned to you by mail.

**Please note: Faxed copies of your application will not be accepted.**

## ALTERNATE TESTING VENUE and SPECIAL NEEDS

1. Alternate Testing Venue: If an individual applicant's residence is **outside the state of New Mexico** or at a location other than at the facility of a Qualified Program, application for approval of an Alternate Testing Venue is available. Successful application is dependant upon AIMS, LLC's ability to identify and certify the proctor you recommend and your ability to provide a location acceptable to AIMS, LLC in your area.

If you are requesting a testing location other than the offices of AIMS, LLC located in Albuquerque, New Mexico or at a Qualified Program facility, a completed Alternate Testing Venue application must accompany your National Certification Examination application specifying the preferred testing venue and requested information for your potential proctor. Your request must be received 3 (three) weeks prior to the deadline for the certification examination application.

2. Special Needs: Arrangements for applicants with special needs can be made if the applicant with special needs provides a letter describing the nature of his or her special needs and the specific accommodations required. A written assessment by a qualified professional as to their current functional limitations and how they restrict the applicant's access to the examination may be required. Requests for special needs individuals must be received no later than 8 (eight) weeks prior to the exam date.

## FEES

Application fee for the National Certification Examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapists.....	\$250.00
Application fee for approval of an Alternate Testing Venue and Proctor.....	\$75.00
Seminar Series Review .....	\$150.00

Please make your check payable to AIMS, LLC. Credit card transactions are also welcome. Please complete the credit card payment form included on your application if required. Full payment must accompany your completed application.

## REFUNDS AND VOUCHERS

Application fees are not refundable; a candidate who does not take the examination for which they have applied for any reason whatsoever will receive a voucher of \$150.00 upon request (One Hundred Fifty 00/100 Dollars) to use as payment toward the next scheduled National Certification Examination only. If the voucher is not used for the next scheduled National Certification Examination, it will expire on the scheduled date of the exam and will not be honored for any other scheduled National Certification Examination.

Your request for a voucher must be **received** at the office of AIMS, LLC in writing no later than 5 business days following the missed testing date. Alternate Testing Venue fees will NOT be refunded nor will vouchers be issued for this fee. Vouchers are subject to the terms and conditions appearing on the reverse side of the voucher. Requests for vouchers will not be honored if they are received after the deadline.

## EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

The following schedule will be observed at all testing venues:

7:45 A.M. - Be at the testing venue ready to begin

8:00 A.M. - Examination begins

12:00 P.M. - Examination ends

Late arrivals may not be admitted to the examination at the discretion of the examiner or proctor. No additional time will be given for the completion of the examination should late arrivals be allowed to sit for the examination.

## DATES and DEADLINES

**Please request current dates for deadlines and scheduled examinations.  
See CONTACT INFORMATION above.**

## EXAMINATION RULES

1. You will need several sharpened Number 2 pencils with erasers. Pencils will not be provided.
2. Books, reference materials, note books, paper, etc. may not be taken into the examination room.
3. Electronic devices of any kind, including cellular phones, pagers and alarms, recording devices, etc. may NOT be in your possession during the examination.
4. Test materials, documents, or scrap paper of any kind may NOT be removed from the examination room.
5. The examination will be held on the day and at the time scheduled.
6. Questions concerning the content of the examination may NOT be asked during the testing period.
7. Listen carefully to all instructions given by the examiner or proctor.
8. Read the directions in your test booklet carefully.
9. If more than one person is taking the exam, only one person may be absent from the examination room for restroom breaks at one time. Once the examination begins, you may not leave the room for any other reason.
10. Only bottled water with a functional cap will be allowed in the examination room. Open containers of water will not be allowed. Food and/or drink (other than water) are not allowed in the examination room.

## ADMISSION TO TESTING

AIMS, LLC will notify you of the acceptance of your application by mail approximately 2 (two) weeks before the examination date. Your Notice of Acceptance may contain additional instructions. You must bring your Notice of Acceptance to the testing venue and present it in order to gain admission. If you have NOT received a Notice of Acceptance at least one week before the examination date, contact AIMS, LLC immediately at (505) 872-3100.

## NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Applicants who have tested will receive their grade notification by mail within 4 (four) weeks. Scores based on the total examination will be reported. Applicants who achieve a passing score of 75% or more will receive a Declaration of Certification suitable for framing from AIMS, LLC with their grade notification.

## RE-EXAMINATION

The National Certification Examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapists may be taken as often as desired. You must re-apply and pay the current testing fee to do so. There is no limit to the number of times the examination may be taken.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

AIMS, LLC will release test scores only to the individual who has tested. Any questions concerning test results should be referred in writing to AIMS, LLC

## CONTENT OF EXAMINATION

1. The National Certification Examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapists is composed of 250 multiple choice and true or false questions with a total testing time of four (4) hours.
2. The content for the examination will be compiled from all AIMS, LLC, Qualified Program materials, lectures and previous examination material, all of which are based on the texts appearing in **REQUIRED** and **RECOMMENDED READING** below.
3. The National Certification Examination for Manual Trigger Point Therapists is prepared solely by AIMS, LLC and contains questions that include the following topics:

### I. ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

#### A. Muscles

1. Anatomy and Physiology
  - a. Attachments
  - b. Function
  - c. Biochemistry
  - d. Fiber arrangement

#### B. Skeletal

1. Joints
2. Bony landmarks

- C. Fascia
  - 1. Properties
  - 2. Function
- D. Neurology
  - 1. Innervation
  - 2. Entrapments
  - 3. Proprioception
  - 4. Neurobiology of a myofascial trigger point
  - 5. Central Trigger Point Pathophysiology
- E. Documented Pain Patterns

## **II. MANUAL TRIGGER POINT THERAPY TREATMENT PROTOCOL**

- A. Patient Intake/History
  - 1. Personal History
  - 2. Medical History/Differential Diagnosis
  - 3. Pain Pattern/Symptom Mapping
  - 4. Mechanism of Injury - Precipitating Factors
    - a. Onset
    - b. Duration
  - 5. Perpetuating Factors
    - a. Nutritional Inadequacies
    - b. Mechanical Stresses
    - c. Metabolic and Endocrine
    - d. Psychological Factors
    - e. Chronic Infection
    - f. Allergies
    - g. Impaired Sleep
    - h. Nerve Impingement
    - i. Other
- B. Patient Examination
  - 1. Visual Assessment
    - a. Postural Analysis
    - b. Gait
    - c. Ergonomics
  - 2. Objective Findings
    - a. ROM Testing
    - b. Hypermobility Testing
    - c. Neurological Assessment
    - d. Orthopedic Evaluation
  - 3. Palpation
- C. Formulating a Treatment Plan
  - 1. Hypothesis
  - 2. Clinical Impression
- D. Manual Techniques
  - 1. Myofascial Trigger Point Pressure Release\*
  - 2. Fascia Rolling
  - 3. Muscle Energy Techniques (MET)
  - 4. Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF)
  - 5. Dynamic Muscle Release
  - 6. Spray and Stretch
  - 7. Principles of Trigger Point Injection/Dry Needling
  - 8. Phototherapy device (medical laser)
  - 9. Contraindications
- E. Exercise/Home Care
  - 1. Stretching
  - 2. Muscle Conditioning
  - 3. Strengthening
  - 4. Corrective Actions/Therapeutic Activities
  - 5. Use of Self Care/Therapeutic Devices

- F. Post-Treatment Assessment
  - 1. Patient Re-evaluation
  - 2. Patient's Report
    - a. Changes in symptoms
    - b. ROM
    - c. Pain Patterns
    - d. Other
- G. Appropriate Referrals

### III. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- A. Patient Documentation, Records and Confidentiality
- B. Communication
  - 1. Patient
  - 2. Physician
  - 3. Other Healthcare Professionals
  - 4. Other
- C. Hygiene
  - 1. Patient
  - 2. Practitioner
  - 3. Office
- D. Ethics

### SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

- 1-Type one, tonic muscle fiber has a significantly higher concentration of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Trigger Point activity (b) energy storage (c) titin protein (d) all of the above (e) none of the above
- 2- In the *Integrated Trigger Point Hypothesis*, it has been demonstrated that \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) local twitch responses are present (b) mitochondria is depleted (c) almost any technique that reduces the level of pain levels is effective (d) steroid injections will decrease electrical activity at the motor endplate (e) almost any technique that restores full stretch length of muscle is effective
- 3- Precipitating and perpetuating factors for MTrPs in the gluteus medius can include \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Sacroiliac joint dysfunction (b) keeping a thick wallet in the back pocket (c) Morton Foot Structure (d) all of the above (e) 'a' and 'c' only
- 4- Entrapment of the peroneal portion of the sciatic nerve can produce \_\_\_\_\_ on the involved side.  
 (a) mild foot drop (b) paraesthesia in the buttocks (c) weak ankle dorsiflexion (d) none of the above (e) all of the above
- 5- The primary muscle involved in sacral rotation is the \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) gluteus maximus (b) gluteus minimus (c) piriformis (d) multifidi (e) iliocostalis lumborum
- 6- Of the four suboccipital muscles found on either side of the upper cervical midline, only the \_\_\_\_\_ does not attach to the skull.  
 (a) obliquus capitis superior (b) obliquus capitis inferior (c) rectus capitis minor (d) rectus capitis major (e) none of the above
- 7- Difficulty swallowing or a lump in the throat may be caused by the \_\_\_\_\_ and/or the longus colli. Swallowing is improved by clenching the teeth while swallowing which inhibits this muscle.  
 (a) digastric (b) omohyoid (c) mylohyoid (d) hyoglossus (e) styloglossus
- 8- The Beighton Score is a simple system to test for and quantify \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) pain pressure threshold (b) histamine levels (c) nerve conduction loss (d) hypermobility (E) none of the above

Answers: 1-e; 2-e; 3-d; 4-e; 5-c; 6-b; 7-a; 8-d

## REQUIRED READING

The following required reading assignment is found in Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction: The Trigger Point Manual by Simons, Travell and Simons, Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, Vol. 1 (Second Edition) and Vol. 2

### Volume 1

Chapter or Heading	Number of pages
❖ Preface	4
❖ Chapter 1 Glossary and Acronyms	10
❖ Chapter 2 General Overview	76
❖ Chapter 3 Apropos of all Muscles	180
❖ Chapter 4 Perpetuating Factors	51
❖ Chapter 5 Overview of Head and Neck Region	75
❖ Chapter 18 Overview of The Upper Back, Shoulder and Arm Region	6
❖ Chapter 33 Overview of The Forearm and Hand Region	4
❖ Chapter 41 Overview of The Torso Region	17

### Volume 2

❖ Preface	3
❖ Chapter 1 Glossary	7
❖ Chapter 2 General Issues	13
❖ Chapter 3 Lower Torso Pain and Muscle Guide	5
❖ Chapter 11 Hip, Thigh and Knee Pain and Muscle Guide	2
❖ Chapter 18 Leg, Ankle and Foot Pain and Muscle Guide	3
❖ Chapter 28 Management of Chronic Myofascial Pain Syndrome	9
Total – 465 pages	

## RECOMMENDED READING

The following is a list of texts used extensively in the creation of the AIMS, LLC, National Certification Exam. It is highly recommended that you thoroughly review these texts before taking the Certification Exam.

- Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction: The Trigger Point Manual, Simons, Travell and Simons, Vol. 1 (Second Edition), Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, 1999
- Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction: The Trigger Point Manual, Simons, Travell and Simons, Vol. 2, Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, 1983
- Tunnel Syndromes: Peripheral Nerve Compression Syndromes, Marko Pecina, Jelena Krmptotic-Nemanic and Andrew Markiewitz, (Second Edition), CRC Press Inc, 1997

## SUGGESTED READING

- Muscle Pain: Understanding Its Nature, Diagnosis and Treatment, Siegfried Mense and David Simons, Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, 2001
- Principles of Manual Medicine, Philip E. Greenman, Williams and Wilkins, 1996
- Steadman's Medical Dictionary for the Health Professions and Nursing, Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, 2005

## CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS – GENERAL GUIDELINES

One hundred CEUs per five year period (20 CEUs/year) are required to maintain Certification. Guidelines for qualified CEU programs are included below. If you lack the required CEUs to recertify, you may certify by retesting.

Attendance, participation in, presentation or facilitation of any seminars or lecture presented by AIMS, LLC Qualified Program is approved for CEUs required to maintain Certification in good standing.

Also accepted are any seminar or lecture you attend, participate in, present or facilitate that pertains to: The treatment of muscle pain; pathological conditions, anatomy or physiology pertaining to muscle, fascia, joint, ligament, disks or menisci; neurological conditions that effect muscle or produce pain; nutrition; therapeutic exercise; oriental medicine or herbology; medical conditions involving any of the above including painful pathologies such as cancer, visceral disorder, etc. Published articles will be assessed individually for CE applicability.

If you have any question as to the acceptance of any educational program toward CEU fulfillment, please contact the directors of AIMS, LLC for guidance.