

# cpt codes for massage therapy

**cpt codes for massage therapy** are essential tools used by healthcare providers and insurance companies to document and bill for massage therapy services accurately. These codes, part of the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) system, help standardize the reporting of medical, surgical, and diagnostic procedures. Understanding the appropriate CPT codes for massage therapy is crucial for massage therapists, billing specialists, and healthcare administrators to ensure proper reimbursement and compliance. This article explores the most commonly used CPT codes for massage therapy, their descriptions, and the scenarios in which they apply. Additionally, it delves into coding guidelines, insurance considerations, and documentation requirements. By the end, readers will have a comprehensive understanding of how CPT codes facilitate the billing process and optimize practice management in massage therapy.

- Overview of CPT Codes in Massage Therapy
- Common CPT Codes Used for Massage Therapy
- Guidelines for Selecting Appropriate CPT Codes
- Insurance and Reimbursement Considerations
- Documentation Requirements for Massage Therapy Coding

## Overview of CPT Codes in Massage Therapy

CPT codes are a standardized set of numeric codes developed and maintained by the American Medical Association (AMA) to describe medical, surgical, and diagnostic services. In massage therapy, CPT codes serve as the universal language for reporting services to insurance companies and other payers. These codes ensure that massage therapy treatments are properly categorized and billed, enabling healthcare providers to receive reimbursement for their services. Accurate use of CPT codes is vital to avoid claim denials and to maintain compliance with payer policies. They also play a role in data collection for healthcare analytics and policy development.

## Purpose and Importance of CPT Codes

The primary purpose of CPT codes in massage therapy is to provide a consistent framework for documenting treatment types and durations. This consistency supports clear communication between therapists, insurers, and patients. CPT codes also help differentiate between various manual therapy techniques and the intensity or complexity of the treatment provided. Without accurate CPT coding, massage therapy services may be undervalued or misclassified, leading to potential financial losses or regulatory issues.

# Classification Within the CPT System

CPT codes for massage therapy fall under the category of physical medicine and rehabilitation services. They are typically included in the range of codes related to therapeutic procedures, including manual therapy, therapeutic exercises, and neuromuscular re-education. The selection of an appropriate CPT code depends on the nature of the massage therapy service, the therapeutic goals, and the time spent performing the procedure.

## Common CPT Codes Used for Massage Therapy

Several CPT codes are frequently used to represent massage therapy treatments. These codes reflect different types of manual therapy interventions and are chosen based on the treatment's specifics. Below is a list of commonly used CPT codes for massage therapy, along with brief descriptions of each.

1. **97124** – Therapeutic Massage: This code covers manual massage techniques, including effleurage, petrissage, and tapotement, performed to manipulate soft tissue and improve circulation, reduce muscle tension, and promote relaxation.
2. **97140** – Manual Therapy Techniques: This includes mobilization and manipulation techniques such as joint mobilization, muscle stretching, and myofascial release intended to improve range of motion and reduce pain.
3. **97110** – Therapeutic Exercises: While not strictly massage, this code is often used in conjunction with massage therapy to describe active exercises designed to improve strength, endurance, and flexibility.
4. **97112** – Neuromuscular Re-education: This code applies to treatments that facilitate motor function, including proprioception and balance training, which may accompany massage therapy in rehabilitation settings.

## Criteria for Using CPT Code 97124

Code 97124 is the most directly associated CPT code for massage therapy. It should be used when a therapist provides hands-on massage intended to improve soft tissue function. The service must be performed by a licensed professional, and the documentation should specify the techniques used and the therapeutic purpose. Typically, this code is reported per 15 minutes of service.

## Distinguishing Between 97124 and 97140

While both 97124 and 97140 involve manual therapy, 97124 is primarily for massage techniques aimed at soft tissue manipulation, and 97140 covers manual therapy

techniques related to joint and muscle mobilization. Proper selection depends on the clinical intervention provided and its therapeutic intent.

## **Guidelines for Selecting Appropriate CPT Codes**

Selecting the correct CPT codes for massage therapy requires understanding payer policies, service definitions, and the specifics of the treatment rendered. Adherence to coding guidelines ensures accurate billing and reduces the risk of claim denials.

## **Time-Based Coding Considerations**

Many CPT codes for massage therapy are time-based, typically reported in 15-minute increments. It is essential to document the exact duration of the therapy session and report units accordingly. Partial time increments may require rounding based on payer rules. Therapists should maintain precise records of start and end times to support billing claims.

## **Modifiers and Additional Coding Tips**

In certain situations, modifiers may be necessary to clarify the nature of the service or to indicate multiple procedures performed during a single session. For example, modifier 59 can be used to denote distinct procedural services. Understanding when and how to apply modifiers is important for compliance and reimbursement optimization.

## **Common Coding Errors to Avoid**

Common mistakes in coding massage therapy include using incorrect CPT codes, failing to document medical necessity, and improper time reporting. These errors can lead to delayed payments or denials. Regular training and audits can help maintain coding accuracy.

## **Insurance and Reimbursement Considerations**

Insurance coverage for massage therapy varies widely depending on the payer, policy, and medical necessity. Understanding reimbursement guidelines is crucial for maximizing claims success.

## **Medical Necessity and Documentation**

Most insurance companies require massage therapy to be medically necessary and prescribed by a qualified healthcare provider to approve reimbursement. Documentation must demonstrate how the therapy supports treatment goals such as pain relief, functional improvement, or rehabilitation.

## **Common Insurance Policies and Coverage Limits**

Some insurers limit coverage to specific diagnoses or conditions, restrict the number of sessions per year, or require pre-authorization. Familiarity with these policies enables providers to navigate insurance requirements effectively and counsel patients on potential out-of-pocket costs.

## **Billing and Claim Submission Best Practices**

Accurate CPT coding combined with thorough documentation expedites the billing process. Submitting clean claims with all required information reduces administrative burdens and accelerates reimbursement. Providers should stay informed about payer updates and coding changes.

## **Documentation Requirements for Massage Therapy Coding**

Comprehensive and accurate documentation is a cornerstone of effective CPT coding for massage therapy. It supports the medical necessity of services and validates billing claims.

## **Essential Elements of Documentation**

Documentation should include the patient's diagnosis, the specific massage therapy techniques used, the duration of the session, treatment goals, and the therapist's credentials. Progress notes must reflect changes in the patient's condition and response to therapy.

## **Role of Electronic Health Records (EHR)**

Utilizing electronic health records can enhance documentation accuracy and accessibility. EHR systems often include templates and prompts tailored for therapy services, facilitating compliance and coding precision.

## **Audit Preparation and Compliance**

In case of audits, well-maintained documentation provides evidence of service delivery and supports reimbursement claims. Providers should regularly review their records to ensure alignment with coding and billing standards.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **What are CPT codes for massage therapy?**

CPT codes for massage therapy are specific billing codes used to describe and document massage therapy services for insurance and medical billing purposes.

## **Which CPT code is commonly used for massage therapy sessions?**

The most commonly used CPT code for massage therapy is 97124, which represents a massage therapy session typically lasting 15 minutes.

## **Are there different CPT codes for various types of massage therapy?**

Yes, different CPT codes may apply depending on the type and purpose of the massage therapy, but 97124 is the standard code used for therapeutic massage.

## **Can massage therapy CPT codes be used for insurance reimbursement?**

Yes, massage therapy CPT codes like 97124 can be used for insurance reimbursement if the service is medically necessary and properly documented.

## **How should massage therapists document sessions for CPT coding?**

Therapists should document the duration, techniques used, patient progress, and medical necessity to support the use of specific CPT codes in billing.

## **Is there a difference between CPT and HCPCS codes for massage therapy?**

CPT codes are used for most therapy services including massage, while HCPCS codes may be used for supplies or specific services not covered by CPT codes.

## **Can massage therapy be billed under other CPT codes besides 97124?**

In some cases, additional codes such as 97140 (manual therapy techniques) may be used alongside or instead of 97124, depending on the treatment provided.

## **Additional Resources**

1. *Mastering CPT Codes for Massage Therapy: A Comprehensive Guide*

This book offers an in-depth look at CPT codes specifically used in massage therapy

practices. It covers the fundamentals of coding, including how to select the appropriate codes for different types of massage treatments. The guide is ideal for therapists who want to streamline billing processes and ensure accurate reimbursement.

## *2. The Massage Therapist's Handbook to CPT Coding and Billing*

Designed for both beginners and experienced massage therapists, this handbook breaks down complex CPT coding concepts into easy-to-understand language. It explains how to navigate insurance claims, avoid common billing errors, and maximize payment efficiency. Practical examples and case studies make it a valuable resource.

## *3. CPT Coding Strategies for Massage Therapy Professionals*

This book focuses on strategic approaches to CPT coding tailored for massage therapy providers. Topics include documentation tips, compliance with healthcare regulations, and integrating CPT codes with insurance requirements. It also provides advice on handling audits and denials effectively.

## *4. Essential CPT Codes for Massage Therapy Practice Management*

A must-have resource for massage therapists managing their own practices, this book highlights the essential CPT codes needed for everyday billing. It offers guidance on maintaining accurate records, understanding payer policies, and optimizing coding workflows. The author emphasizes practical solutions for improving revenue cycles.

## *5. CPT Coding and Reimbursement in Massage Therapy*

This text dives into the reimbursement landscape for massage therapy services using CPT codes. It explains how different insurers interpret codes and outlines strategies to secure appropriate compensation. Additionally, the book discusses emerging trends in massage therapy billing and coding updates.

## *6. Accurate CPT Coding for Therapeutic Massage: Best Practices*

Focusing on accuracy and best practices, this book helps massage therapists avoid costly mistakes in coding. It includes detailed descriptions of common CPT codes, documentation standards, and tips for communicating with insurance companies. This resource enhances coding precision to support successful claims.

## *7. CPT Coding Made Simple for Massage Therapists*

This beginner-friendly guide simplifies the complexities of CPT coding in massage therapy. Readers will find step-by-step instructions, visual aids, and practical advice for mastering the coding process. It's an excellent starting point for therapists new to medical billing.

## *8. Advanced CPT Coding Techniques for Massage Therapy Billing*

Targeted at seasoned massage therapists and billing professionals, this book explores advanced coding techniques to optimize reimbursement. It covers nuanced scenarios, multi-modality treatments, and coordination with other healthcare providers. The book also addresses legal and ethical considerations in coding.

## *9. The Complete CPT Code Reference for Massage Therapy Practitioners*

This comprehensive reference book compiles all relevant CPT codes used in massage therapy into one convenient volume. It offers detailed explanations, code modifiers, and examples of proper usage. Perfect for quick consultation and ongoing education, it supports therapists in maintaining coding accuracy and compliance.

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### **cpt codes for massage therapy: Business and Professional Skills for Massage Therapists**

Sandy Fritz, 2009-12-14 Develop the business skills necessary to succeed in massage therapy with help from respected massage educator and business owner, Sandy Fritz! With a user-friendly approach and comprehensive support tools, this authoritative guide delivers a working knowledge of essential concepts for employees or owners of a massage therapy practice and helps you prepare for the professional challenges that await you in the real world. - Renowned massage educator and business owner Sandy Fritz presents a practical, proven business philosophy for success in massage therapy practice. - Focus on need-to-know business skills for complete success as an employee or the owner of a massage therapy practice. - A companion CD with practice management software provides hands-on experience creating client records, setting appointments, entering documentation, and more. - Self-Reflection boxes put concepts into a realistic context through Sandy Fritz's personal experiences in massage practice. - Learning Activity boxes reinforce your understanding and challenge you to apply what you've learned in an engaging workbook format. - Good Stuff from the Government boxes alert you to helpful government resources and help you ensure compliance with federal regulations. - Mentor boxes provide real-world insight and advice from experts in massage and business management for successful practice. - More than 200 realistic photos and illustrations clarify concepts and familiarize you with typical practice settings and essential forms, records, office equipment, and supplies. - Evolve Resources link you to templates for building resumes, letters, advertisements, forms for documentation, and client histories, plus small business resources, annotated web links, a glossary of key terms from the text, and additional exercises and case studies.

**cpt codes for massage therapy: Massage Therapy E-Book** Susan G. Salvo, 2019-02-28 Make the essential principles of massage therapy more approachable! Covering massage fundamentals, techniques, and anatomy and physiology, *Massage Therapy: Principles and Practice*, 6th Edition prepares you for success in class, on exams, and in practice settings. The new edition of this student friendly text includes more than 700 images, expanded information on the latest sanitation protocols, critical thinking questions at the end of each chapter, and updated pathologies which reflect what you will encounter in the field. - UPDATED pathologies ensure they are current and reflect what you will see in the field as a practitioner. - UPDATED Research Literacy and evidence-informed practice skills, emphasize how to locate and apply scientific data and the latest research findings in your massage practice. - Licensing and Certification Practice Exams on Evolve mimics the major high-stakes exams in format and content, builds confidence, and helps increase pass rates. - Complete anatomy and physiology section, in addition to material on techniques and foundations, you all the information you need in just one book. - Robust art program enhances your understanding and comprehension of each topic presented through visual representation. - Case studies challenge you to think critically and apply your understanding to realistic scenarios, foster open-mindedness, cultural competency, and stimulate dialogue. - Profile boxes provide an inspirational, real-world perspective on massage practice from some of the most respected authorities in massage and bodywork. - Clinical Massage chapter focuses on massage in therapeutic and palliative settings such as hospitals, chiropractic and physical therapy offices, nursing homes, and hospice care centers to broaden your career potential. - Business chapter loaded with skills to help make you more marketable and better prepared for today's competitive job market. - NEW!

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**cpt codes for massage therapy: *Massage Therapy*** Susan G. Salvo, 2015-04-13 Covering massage fundamentals, techniques, and anatomy and physiology, Susan Salvo's *Massage Therapy: Principles and Practice*, 5th Edition brings a whole new meaning to the word 'comprehensive.' This student-friendly text boasts more than 700 illustrations and expanded sections on neuroscience, research, and special populations, plus new line drawings in the kinesiology chapter of origins and insertions that match the painted skeletons found in most classrooms. It makes the essential principles of massage therapy more approachable and prepares you for success in class, on licensing and board certification exams, and in a wide range of therapeutic practice settings. Clear, straightforward approach simplifies complex content for easier understanding. Complete anatomy and physiology section, in addition to material on techniques and foundations, gives you all the information you need in just one book. Certification Practice Exam on Evolve mimics the major certification exams in format and content, builds confidence, and helps increase pass rates. Over 700 high-quality illustrations, including line drawings and halftones, clarify difficult concepts in vibrant detail. Case studies challenge you to think critically and apply your understanding to realistic scenarios, foster open-mindedness, and stimulate dialogue. Profile boxes provide an inspirational, real-world perspective on massage practice from some of the most respected authorities in massage and bodywork. Clinical Massage chapter focuses on massage in clinical settings like hospitals, nursing homes, and medical offices to broaden your career potential. Two business chapters loaded with skills to make you more marketable and better prepared for today's competitive job market. Video icons refer you to the Evolve site featuring about 120 minutes of video covering techniques, routines, client interaction sequences, and case studies that facilitate the learning process and the practical application of the material. Evolve icons listed in each chapter encourage you to go beyond the lecture and reading assignments and learn more on the Evolve site. Evolve boxes at the end of each chapter list Chapter Extras found on Evolve that reinforce concepts learned in the chapter. NEW! Revised line drawing color scheme for origin and insertion matches the painted skeleton found in most classrooms, maintains consistency, and prevents confusion in learning origin and insertion points on the body. NEW! Coverage of Thai massage provides up-to-date content on the most useful, in-demand modalities that are most often requested by clients - and better prepares you for what you will encounter during training and practice. NEW! Updated text reflects changes to the new board certification exam so you have the most up-to-date, relevant information - and are fully prepared to pass the current exams. NEW! Brand new Think About It, Webquest, and Discussion features in each chapter's Test Your Knowledge section build your vocabulary usage and critical thinking skills necessary for day-to-day work with clients. EXPANDED! More content on pain theories, the neuromatrix model, and pain management, plus updated guidelines for massage after surgery and injury, equips you with essential information when working in rehab. NEW! Updated instructor resources, featuring more TEACH lesson plan classroom activities and an additional 500 test questions, provide instructors with more ways to interact with and test students.

**cpt codes for massage therapy: *How to Start a Home-based Massage Therapy Business*** Shirley Philbrick, 2012-12-04 Target clientele ; outfit your massage studio ; navigate professionalism and ethics ; set your prices ; provide superior customer service--Cover.

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marketing, and much, much more. Patient forms contained in the book may be used by the purchaser in their own clinic. Downloadable forms are available on the website [massageclinic101.com](http://massageclinic101.com). The outlook for Medical Massage Therapy is very good. Never in the history of the profession have more people been aware of the health benefits of massage therapy. This opens the door to all entrepreneurs who are looking for an interesting, rewarding, and profitable business.

**cpt codes for massage therapy:** Integrating Complementary Medicine Into Health Systems Nancy Faass, 2001 Comprehensive and in-depth guide provides the expertise of more than 100 of the nation's top professionals.

**cpt codes for massage therapy:** *Sports Medicine, Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation* Parmod Kumar, 2020-09-03 Sports injuries and sports medicine are both very important topics of discuss in the field of sports and physical education. These two topics are well explained briefly with important facts and essentials. Sports injury requires substantially more than 'treatment' of an injured area. Patients need advice on a number of other aspects, including maintenance of overall fitness during recovery, and require a suitable prognosis. If physical treatment is desirable it is necessary to have some knowledge of therapeutic modalities, and preferably a sound professional working relationship with the therapist of choice. The book covers: Sports Medicine, Physiotherapy, Hydrotherapy and Therapeutic Exercise.

**cpt codes for massage therapy:** Alternative Medicine and Rehabilitation Dr. Avital Fast, MD, Dr. Stanley F. Wainapel, MD, MPH, 2002-11-01 Although unconventional therapies have coexisted with traditional medicine for centuries, the extent of their utilization was only recently recognized; we now know between one third and one half of patients receiving traditional rehabilitation therapies have had some experience with what has come to be referred to variously as alternative, complementary, or integrative medicine. Given the pervasiveness and popularity of alternative medicine, physicians and other health professionals should be able to appropriately advise or counsel patients regarding the potential benefits or problems associated with such interventions. In order to do so, they need to become familiar with some of the more common therapies and the rapidly expanding research literature that has grown around them. The present volume addresses these needs and will serve as an introductory guide for rehabilitation practitioners who wish to expand their range of treatment options. This book does not presume or attempt to be an encyclopedic compendium of all types of alternative medicine services. Instead, we have selected representative therapies that will serve to introduce the reader to the wide range of therapies available. The book has organized the chapters into categories that emphasize their kinship with the specialty of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation: manipulation, therapeutic movement, mind-body techniques, and physical modalities. Subsequent sections deal with research and reimbursement, while the final chapters highlight specific therapies in the clinical management of several common disabling disorders. This book will be of considerable interest to a wide range of medical specialists, particularly those who treat chronic or painful disabling diseases: physiatrists, neurologists, rheumatologists, orthopedists, neurosurgeons, anesthesiologists, internists, and primary care physicians. Additionally, physical and occupational therapists, psychologists, chiropractors, and herbalists will find its contents useful. Finally, practitioners of any of the individual therapies included in the contents will find a wealth of scientific and clinical documentation to utilize in their practices.

**cpt codes for massage therapy:** *Hands Heal* Diana Thompson, 2018-10-12 Publisher's Note: Products purchased from 3rd Party sellers are not guaranteed by the Publisher for quality, authenticity, or access to any online entitlements included with the product. This 5th Edition of *Hands Heal* offers massage therapy students comprehensive coverage of communication, assessment, and electronic and paper documentation skills, from taking client histories and setting functional goals to documenting treatment outcomes. Reflecting the latest changes in the curriculum and the profession, the book is more ELAP compliant, includes changes to ICD-10 and CPT codes, and updates to HIPAA regulations. The new edition incorporates the effect of the Affordable Care

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**cpt codes for massage therapy: Evidence-based Management of Low Back Pain**

Simon Dagenais, Scott Haldeman, 2011-01-01 An interdisciplinary approach enables health care providers to work together. A logical, easy-to-follow organization covers information by intervention type, from least invasive to most invasive. Integration of interventions provides information in a clinically useful way, so it's easier to consider more than one type of treatment or intervention for low back pain, and easier to see which methods should be tried first. 155 illustrations include x-rays, photos, and drawings. Tables and boxes summarize key information. Evidence-based content allows you to make clinical decisions based on the ranking the best available scientific studies from strongest to weakest. Patient history and examination chapters help in assessing the patient's condition and in ruling out serious pathology before making decisions about specific interventions.-

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practice, a quick-reference abbreviation list, and a quiz tool to review key concepts. Faculty ancillaries are available upon adoption.

**cpt codes for massage therapy: Federal Register** , 2012-11

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**cpt codes for massage therapy: Cancer Nursing** Connie Henke Yarbro, Debra Wujcik, Barbara Holmes Gobel, 2016-09-19 Cancer Nursing: Principles and Practice, Eighth Edition continues as the gold standard in oncology nursing. With contributions from the foremost experts in the field, it has remained the definitive reference on the rapidly changing science and practice of oncology nursing for more than 25 years. Completely updated and revised to reflect the latest research and developments in the care of patients with cancer, the Eighth Edition includes new chapters on the biology of cancer, sleep disorders, and palliative care across the cancer continuum. The Eighth Edition also includes significant updates to the basic science chapters to reflect recent increases in scientific knowledge, especially relating to genes and cancer. Also heavily revised are the sections devoted to the dynamics of cancer prevention, detection, and diagnosis, as well as treatment, oncologic emergencies, end of life care, and professional and legal issues for oncology nurses.

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**cpt codes for massage therapy: Physical Therapy Documentation** Mia Erickson, Ralph Utzman, Rebecca McKnight, 2024-06-01 Newly updated and revised, Physical Therapy Documentation: From Examination to Outcome, Third Edition provides physical therapy students, educators, and clinicians with essential information on documentation for contemporary physical therapy practice. Complete and accurate documentation is one of the most essential skills for physical therapists. In this text, authors Mia L. Erickson, Rebecca McKnight, and Ralph Utzman teach the knowledge and skills necessary for correct documentation of physical therapy services, provide guidance for readers in their ethical responsibility to quality record-keeping, and deliver the mechanics of note writing in a friendly, approachable tone. Featuring the most up-to-date information on proper documentation and using the International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities, and Health (ICF) model as a foundation for terminology, the Third Edition includes expanded examples across a variety of practice settings as well as new chapters on: Health informatics Electronic medical records Rules governing paper and electronic records Billing, coding, and outcomes measures Included with the text are online supplemental materials for faculty use in the classroom. An invaluable reference in keeping with basic documentation structure, Physical

Therapy Documentation: From Examination to Outcome, Third Edition is a necessity for both new and seasoned physical therapy practitioners.

**cpt codes for massage therapy: Year One of Practice Transition** Jason E. Pope, Timothy R. Deer, 2021-11-16 Year One of Practice Transition: The Necessary Guide to Success is a practical guide for both established physicians transitioning from one practice opportunity to another, and those transitioning from formal residency or fellowship training. This book is an up-to-date look at how to achieve a successful practice, offering insights from top experts who have navigated transition through various phases and circumstances. - Examines key factors such as training, managing a schedule, working with staff, and problem-solving - Offers a practical approach in an easy-to-use format - Consolidates information and current tools to succeed in creating a supportive practice environment and work-life balance tools to become the best version of yourself - Written by some of the world's top physician experts

**cpt codes for massage therapy: Theory and Practice of Therapeutic Massage** Mark Beck, 2006 This text is known for being comprehensive and readable Often used as the main text for programs that are about 500 hours, it covers all the key topics for individuals entering the profession with appropriate balance and depth. Individuals entering massage programs come from widely varied backgrounds; they are all ages, have held various positions, some health-related, some not. Beck is known for being the text that can bring all these student dynamics together under the umbrella of a very readable, approachable text. Students like the fact that the often daunting area of A & P and other clinically challenging learning objectives are made approachable through a unique body system approach to the content and a nice writing style. (Midwest).

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