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american massage therapy association®

2010 Massage Therapy Industry Fact Sheet

The following is a compilation of data gathered by the American Massage Therapy Association® (AMTA®) from U.S. government statistics, surveys of consumers and massage therapists and recent clinical studies on the efficacy of massage. These data provide an overview of the current state of the massage therapy profession, public and medical acceptance of the value of massage and increasing consumer usage of massage therapy in the U.S.

Massage Therapy as a Profession

- In 2005, massage therapy was projected to be a \$6 to \$11 billion a year industry.¹
- AMTA estimates that in 2009, massage therapy was a \$16-20 billion industry.²
- It is estimated that there are 280,000 to 320,000 massage therapists and massage school students in the United States.² According to the U.S. Department of Labor employment for massage therapists is expected to increase 20 percent from 2006 to 2016, faster than average for all occupations.³
- Between July 2008 and July 2009, roughly 48 million adult Americans (22 percent) had a massage at least once.⁴

Who is Today's Massage Therapist?

Today's massage therapists are...⁵

- Most likely to enter the massage therapy profession as a second career.
- Predominantly female (85 percent).
- In their late 40s, on average.
- Most likely to be members of a professional organization.
- Most likely to be sole practitioners.
- Working an average of 20 hours a week providing massage. (excluding time spent on other business tasks such as billing, bookkeeping, supplies, maintaining equipment, marketing, scheduling, etc.)
- Charging an average of \$63 for one hour of massage.
- Earning an average wage of \$45 an hour (including tips) for all massage related work.
- Seeing on average of 44 clients per month.
- Heavily dependent on repeat clients.
- Likely to provide massage therapy in a number of settings, including their own home, spa/salon, their own office, a healthcare setting, health club/athletic facility, or massage therapy only franchise or chain.
- Eighty-four percent (84 percent) of massage therapists provide Swedish massage, followed by 77 percent who provide deep tissue massage, 49 percent trigger point, and 45 percent sports massage.

Massage Therapy as a Career

Massage therapy can be a rewarding and flexible career

- In 2009, the average annual income for a massage therapist (including tips) who provides approximately 16 hours of massage per week was \$37,123, compared to incomes in 2006 of \$28,170 for full-time healthcare support workers; \$27,190 for full-time medical assistants and \$23,290 for occupational therapist aides.⁵
- While massage therapists work in a variety of work environments, sole practitioners or independent contractors account for the largest percentage of practicing therapists (96 percent). Thirty-eight percent work at least part of their time at a client's home/business/corporate setting or their home, 25 percent in a healthcare setting, and 23 percent in a spa setting.⁵
- Eighty-three (83) percent started practicing massage therapy as a second career.⁵
- Sixty two percent of massage therapists say they would not want to work more hours of massage than they presently do.⁵
- More than half of massage therapists (54 percent) also earn income working in another profession.⁵
- Of those massage therapists who earn income working in another profession 26 percent practice other form of bodywork, while 22 percent work in healthcare and 21 percent work in education.⁵

Education and Credentials Valued In the Massage Therapy Profession

- There are more than 300 accredited massage schools and programs in the United States.⁸
- Today there are 90,000 nationally certified massage therapists and bodyworkers. To become nationally certified, a massage therapist must demonstrate mastery of core skills and knowledge, pass an exam, uphold the standards of practice and code of ethics of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork and take part in continuing education.⁹
- Ninety-two (92) percent of massage therapists strongly or somewhat agree there should be minimum education standards for massage therapists.⁵

- Massage therapists have an average of 624 hours of initial training.⁵
- The vast majority of massage therapists (96 percent) have taken continuing education classes.⁵
- Massage therapists take an average of 22 hours of continuing education per year.⁵
- The most popular choices for continuing education are training for new modalities/techniques, advanced training for specific modalities, and massage for specific populations (e.g. pregnant women, geriatrics and athletes).⁵

State Regulation of the Massage Profession Rapidly Growing⁶

- Currently, 43 states and the District of Columbia regulate massage therapists or provide voluntary state certification.
- In states that regulate massage therapy, massage therapists must meet the legal requirements to practice, which may include minimum hours of initial training and passing an exam.
- In states that do not regulate massage therapy, this task may fall to local municipalities.
- Most states that license massage therapists require a passing grade on the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Exam (MBLEx) or one of two exams provided by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork.
- The American Massage Therapy Association and most other massage therapy organizations prefer the MBLEx, administered by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Board (FSMTB), as a state licensing exam.
- AMTA supports fair and consistent licensing of massage therapy in all states.

Who Gets Massage, Where and Why?

- According to the 2009 AMTA consumer survey, an average of 22 percent of adult Americans received at least one massage between July 2008 and July 2009, and an average of 34 percent of adult Americans received a massage in the previous five years.⁶
- In July 2009, 40 percent of women and 29 percent of men reported having a massage in the past five years.⁴
- Spas are where most people continue to receive massage, with 24 percent of those surveyed in July 2009 saying they had their last massage at a spa.⁴

While the use of massage is growing, the reasons people are turning to massage therapy are also expanding. More and more people recognize it as an important element in their overall health and wellness.⁴

- Thirty-two (32) percent of adult Americans who had a massage between July 2008 and July 2009 received it for medical or health reasons.
- Nineteen (19) percent of adult Americans say they've used massage therapy at least one time for pain relief.
- Of the people who had at least one massage in the last five years, 31 percent reported they did so for health conditions such as pain management, injury rehabilitation, migraine control, or overall wellness.
- Eighty-six (86) percent agree that massage can be effective in reducing pain.
- Eighty-five (85) percent agree that massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.

Consumers are increasingly seeking massage for stress reduction and relaxation.

- In July 2009, 32 percent of adult Americans said they had at least one massage in the last five years to reduce stress or relax—from 22 percent reported in 2007.
- Forty-nine percent of consumers said they have considered a massage to manage stress in the last year, as compared to 38 percent in 2008.

Massage and Healthcare

Healthcare providers are increasingly promoting the benefits of massage to their patients.

- In July 2009, over thirty-nine million American adults (18 percent) have discussed massage therapy with their doctors or health care providers, compared to 13 percent in 2008.⁴
- Of those 18 percent, 35 percent of their health care providers strongly recommended massage therapy, compared to 27 percent in 2008. While physicians led the way in recommending massage (55 percent vs. 50 percent in 2008), chiropractors (48 percent vs. 47 percent in 2008) and physical therapists (42 percent vs. 40 percent in 2008) also recommended massage therapy when their patients discussed it with them.⁴
- More than two-thirds of massage therapists (76 percent) indicate they receive referrals from health care professionals, averaging 1.5 referrals per month. This represents a significant increase from 2008, when 69 percent of massage therapists reported receiving health care referrals.⁵

Massage therapy usage in hospitals is common.

- The number of hospitals offering complementary and alternative medicine grew from 7.7 percent in 1998 to 37.3 percent in 2007. Of those hospitals that offer CAM therapies, massage therapy was offered by 70.7 percent.¹⁰
- Stress-related issues are major reasons why hospitals offer massage. 71.2 percent of hospitals that offer massage provide it for stress reduction for patients, and 69.1 percent of hospitals that offer massage provide it to staff to reduce stress.¹⁰
- Among hospitals that offer massage, some other prevalent populations served and/or reasons for massage include:¹⁰
 - 1) Pain management (66 percent)
 - 2) Massage for cancer patients (57 percent)
 - 3) Pregnancy massage (55 percent)
 - 4) Part of physical therapy (53 percent)

- 5) For mobility/movement training (45 percent)
- 6) Palliative care (41 percent)

Massage therapists and consumers are in favor of integration of massage into healthcare.

- More than half of adult Americans (59 percent) would like to see their insurance cover massage therapy.⁴
- A great majority of adult Americans (92 percent in 2006 and 96 percent in 2009) agree that massage therapy should be considered part of the health care field.⁵

Massage Therapy Research

The therapeutic benefits of massage continue to be researched and studied. Recent research has shown the effectiveness of massage for the following conditions:

- Cancer-related fatigue.¹¹
- Low back pain.¹²
- Osteoarthritis of the knee.¹³
- Reducing post-operative pain.¹⁴
- Boosting the body's immune system functioning.¹⁵
- Decreasing the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome.¹⁶
- Lowering blood pressure.¹⁷
- Reducing headache frequency.¹⁸
- Easing alcohol withdrawal symptoms.¹⁹
- Decreasing pain in cancer patients.²⁰

The American Massage Therapy Association® (AMTA®) is the largest non-profit, professional association serving massage therapists, massage students and massage schools. The association is directed by volunteer leadership and fosters ongoing, direct member-involvement through its 51 chapters. AMTA works to advance the profession through ethics and standards, the promotion of fair and consistent licensing of massage therapists in all states, and public education on the benefits of massage.

The association also helps consumers and health care professionals locate professional massage therapists nationwide, through AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist® national locator service. The free national locator service is available via AMTA's website at www.FindaMassageTherapist.org or toll-free at 888-THE-AMTA [888-843-2682].

¹ Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2004) *National Health Expenditure Projections 2004-2014*. Barnes P, Powell-Griner E, McFann K, Nahin R. *CDC Advance Data Report #34*.

² Data compiled by American Massage Therapy Association 2009.

³ *U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook*

⁴ 2009 and 2008 AMTA Consumer Surveys

⁵ 2009 AMTA Industry Survey

⁶ AMTA Consumer Surveys 2003-2009

⁷ Based on a comparison of results of an AMTA 2009 Industry Survey and 2006 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

⁸ American Massage Therapy Association

⁹ The National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork

¹⁰ National Survey conducted by the Health Forum/American Hospital Association 2007

¹¹ Currin, J. Meister, E.A. (2008) A hospital-based intervention using massage to reduce distress among oncology patients. *Cancer Nurs.* 31(3):214-21. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18453878?ordinalpos=3&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum

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