

2005 Massage Therapy *Industry Fact Sheet*

The following is a compilation of data gathered 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.



Massage Therapy As A Profession Is On The Rise

- In 2005, massage therapy was projected to be a \$6 to \$11 billion a year industry.¹
- It is estimated that there are 250,000 to 300,000 massage therapists and massage school students in the United States.²
- According to the U.S. Department of Labor in 2002, employment opportunities for massage therapists were expected to grow at a faster than average rate. Through 2012, massage therapists are likely to see a 20 percent to 35 percent (21% to 35%) increase in job opportunities.³
- Between August 2004 and July 2005, approximately 47 million American adults received a massage – 2 million more than in the previous year.⁴

Who Is Today's Massage Therapist?

Today's Massage Therapists are...⁵

- Likely to enter the massage therapy profession as a second career.
- Predominantly female (83%).
- In their mid-40s, on average.
- Most likely to be members of a professional organization.
- Most likely to be sole practitioners.
- Working an average of 15 hours a week providing massage. (Excluding time spent on other business tasks such as billing, bookkeeping, supplies, maintaining equipment, marketing, scheduling, etc.)
- Earning approximately half of their income (49%) from practicing massage therapy.

- Charge an average of \$58 for one hour of massage.
- Earning an average wage of \$39 an hour (including tip) for all massage related work.
- Giving an average of 38 massages per month.
- Working in the industry on average for 7.8 years.
- Likely to provide massage therapy in a number of settings, including their own place of practice, a client's home, a healthcare setting, or an on-site workplace.
- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of massage therapists provide Swedish massage, followed by 70 percent who provide deep tissue massage, 41 percent trigger point, and 37 percent sports massage.

Massage Therapy Provides A Rewarding And Flexible Career

Massage therapists earn a comparable annual income when compared to other healthcare support workers, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics.⁶

- The average annual income for a massage therapist (including tips) who provides 15 hours of massage per week is \$29,250, compared to \$26,210 for full-time physical therapist aides; \$28,140 for full-time physicians' office workers, \$34,780 for full-time recreational therapists, and \$26,610 for other full-time healthcare support workers.⁷

While massage therapists practice in a variety of work environments, sole practitioners and independent contractors account for the largest percentage of practicing massage therapists.⁸

- Sole practitioners or partners in their own business account for 72 percent of respondents.

Massage therapists overwhelmingly indicate that they chose massage therapy as a second career, providing them with a flexible schedule and additional income.

- Eighty-three percent (83%) started practicing massage therapy as a second career.
- The average hours per week a massage therapist practices massage is 15.38 for providing actual massage. This does not include additional hours spent on billing, scheduling, marketing, etc.
- Fifty-five percent (55%) of massage therapists say they would not want to work more hours providing massage than they do presently.
- Many massage therapists surveyed work in complementary fields such as teaching massage (23%) or providing other forms of healthcare (26%).

Education Is Highly Valued In The Massage Therapy Profession

In recent years, the massage therapy profession has introduced accreditation programs to enhance the profession's reputation and ensure that consumers can find massage therapists who have been trained in programs that meet high educational standards.

- Organizations such as the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA), which has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, work with massage therapy schools and programs to ensure that their educational standards demonstrate quality, performance and integrity of higher learning.
- There are more than 70 COMTA-accredited massage therapy institutions and programs in the United States, and many other massage training programs accredited by other organizations.⁹

Professional affiliations and certification programs provide massage therapists with vital opportunities for continuing their education and improving their skills.

- Today, there are more than 80,000 Nationally Certified massage therapy practitioners. To become Nationally Certified, a massage therapist must possess certain levels of education, experience and training, demonstrate mastery of core skills, abilities and knowledge, and pass a certification exam.¹⁰
- Ninety-two percent (92%) of massage therapists strongly or somewhat agree there should be minimum education standards for massage therapists.¹¹
- A majority of massage therapists (89%) have taken continuing education classes.
- The average number of hours spent in continuing education is 27 per year.

- The most popular choices for continuing education are advanced training for specific modalities, training for new modalities/ techniques, and massage for specific populations (i.e. pregnant women, geriatric, and athletes.).

State Regulation Of The Massage Profession Rapidly Growing

Currently, 36 states and the District of Columbia regulate massage therapists. In 1995, only 20 states and the District of Columbia regulated the massage therapy profession.¹²

- Though each state law is different and has different requirements, in most cases, only those individuals who have the state designation may provide massage for pay and/or use a title indicating that person is a massage therapist. In states that do not regulate or license massage therapists, this task often falls to local municipalities.

Who Gets Massage, Where And Why?

According to AMTA's 2005 Consumer Survey, 34 percent of adult Americans received a massage within the past five years.¹³

- Seventeen percent (17%) of men had a massage in the past 12 months, up from fourteen percent (14%) last year. Twenty-eight percent (28%) received a massage in the past five years, up from twenty-three percent (23%) last year.
- In comparison, the rate for women who received massage in the past five years remained consistently high at 40 percent for the past two years.
- Seventy-three percent (73%) of people who have had a massage would recommend massage therapy to someone else.

Americans most often choose to get a massage for medical reasons, relaxation and stress relief.¹⁴

- Thirty-two percent (32%) of adult Americans who received a massage in the past 5 years did so for medical purposes, such as for muscle soreness and spasm, injury recovery and rehabilitation, and pain relief.
- Twenty-six percent (26%) of consumers who had a massage in the past 5 years cited relaxation and stress relief as the main reason for getting a massage.
- Additionally, 26 percent of Americans who received a massage in the past 5 years did so because it was a gift or it was free.

A majority of people in the same survey said they preferred to receive a massage in a spa or in a massage therapist's place of business.

- The majority of consumers indicated that they would prefer to receive a massage in a place of business such as a spa (27%) or at massage therapist's location (24%) while 30 percent would prefer receiving a massage at home or the home of someone they know.

- Most Americans received their last massage at a spa (20%), 18 percent at their massage therapist's location, and 13 percent at home or in the home of someone they know.
- Almost all spas in the U.S. (94%) have a massage therapist on staff.¹⁵

Massage Therapy In The Workplace

Employers and employees recognize the benefits of massage therapy in the workplace.¹⁶

- Massage therapy has been shown to be effective in reducing stress and managing/relieving pain.
- Many companies have seen that massage therapy has increased productivity and reduced stress.

There are many ways in which American companies incorporate massage therapy into the workplace.¹⁷

- Massage therapists as full- or part-time employees.
- Individual contractors.
- Employee wellness centers.
- Cost-sharing for massage therapy sessions with employees.

Research has shown that massage therapy benefits employees in the workplace.¹⁸

- A study by the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami found that after five weeks, a group of 26 employees who had twice-weekly, 15-minute massages in the office fared better than a control group of 24 employees who were just told to close their eyes and relax. The massaged group experienced reduced stress and improved performance, while the control group did not.

Top companies offer massage therapy in the workplace.

- Among the companies identified as the "100 Best for Working Mothers," 77% offered massage therapy to their employees.¹⁹
- Eighteen percent (18%) of corporations with more than 500 employees offered massage therapy to their employees versus 11% of companies nationwide of all sizes that were surveyed.²⁰
- Companies offering massage therapy as an employee benefit include Allstate, Best Buy, Cisco Systems, FedEx, Gannett (USA Today), General Electric, Hewlett-Packard, Home Depot, JC Penney, Kimberly-Clark, Texas Instruments and Yahoo!.²¹
- S.C. Johnson says that more and more managers recognize the benefits of massage for their employees – and the company's been offering massage therapy as a benefit for more than 10 years.²²

Massage And Healthcare

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

- According to AMTA's 2005 Consumer Survey, 21 percent of American adults indicated that they discussed massage therapy with their doctor or other healthcare provider, up from 14 percent in 2002.
- Of those people who discussed massage therapy with their healthcare provider, when asked who recommended massage therapy to them, 60 percent of adult Americans said a physician, followed by a physical therapist (50%) and a chiropractor (38%).²³
- The majority of massage therapists (70%) indicate they receive referrals from healthcare professionals, averaging two referrals per month.²⁴
- Eighty-two percent (82%) of hospitals offering CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) therapies include massage therapy among their healthcare offerings.²⁵
- Of those hospitals, 70 percent utilize massage therapy for pain management and pain relief.²⁶
- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of American adults would like their health insurance providers to cover massage therapy.²⁷
- Seventy-four percent (74%) of HMO plans cover massage/relaxation therapy in some way.²⁸

The therapeutic benefits of massage continue to be researched and studied, with several recent clinical studies, sponsored by The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.²⁹

- Massage therapy for cancer-related fatigue.
- The effect of massage therapy on depression, quality of life and plasma cortisol levels in subjects with advanced HIV disease.
- Massage therapy's effectiveness in reducing pain and improving quality of life among cancer patients at life's end.
- Massage therapy's effectiveness in helping pre-term infants show greater daily weight gain and are discharged earlier from the hospital.
- The effects of in-home, family-administered massage and in-home relaxation training on measures of physical status and healthcare utilization in a sample of African-American adolescents age 15 years and older and adults with chronic pain associated with sickle cell disease.

The health benefits of massage therapy have begun to be studied in depth, with recent studies associating massage with substantive improvement of symptoms in cancer patients.³⁰

- Following massage therapy, 50 percent of surveyed cancer patients reported a reduction in symptoms of pain, fatigue, stress, anxiety, nausea, and depression.
- Surprisingly, even patients who reported a high baseline level of symptom severity pre-massage therapy reported significant improvement with massage.
- During the 48-hour follow up period, 100 percent of patients' symptoms stayed below baseline level.

Massage therapy has been shown to be effective in:

- Soothing chronic back pain better than other complementary therapies.³¹
- Boosting the body's immune system functioning.³²
- Decreasing the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome.³³
- Reducing anxiety and lowering blood pressure in stroke patients.³⁴
- Easing post-operative pain.³⁵
- Reducing headache frequency.³⁶
- Easing alcohol withdrawal symptoms.³⁷
- Decreasing pain and anxiety in hospitalized cancer patients.³⁸

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) is a non-profit, professional association with more than 54,000 members throughout the United States and in some 27 countries. The association is directed by a volunteer Board of Directors chosen through its national election and encourages members to participate through its 52 chapters.

The American Massage Therapy Association provides information about massage therapy to the public. The association also helps consumers and healthcare professionals locate qualified 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.amtamassage.org and toll-free at 888-843-2682 [888-THE-AMTA].

¹ Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. *2004 National Health Expenditure Projections 2004-2014*. Barnes P, Powell-Griner E, McFann K, Nahin R. *CDC Advance Data Report #343*. Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use Among Adults: United States, 2002. May 27, 2004.

² From data compiled by AMTA 2005.

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004-2005 Occupational Outlook Handbook.

⁴ AMTA 2005 Consumer Survey.

⁵ AMTA 2005 Industry Survey.

⁶ Based on a comparison of results of an AMTA 2005 Industry Survey and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. November 2004. *National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*.

⁸ AMTA 2005 Industry Survey.

⁹ The Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation. November 2005.

¹⁰ National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork. *Consumers' Guide to Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork*.

¹¹ AMTA 2005 Industry Survey.

¹² American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA).

¹³ AMTA 2005 Consumer Survey.

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ International Spa Association, 2004 Industry Survey.

¹⁶ Ives, Jean. "Massage is in Business." *Massage Therapy Journal*. Winter 2004.

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami.

¹⁹ Ives, Jean. "Massage is in Business." *Massage Therapy Journal*. Winter 2004.

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ *ibid*

²² *ibid*

²³ AMTA 2005 Consumer Survey.

²⁴ AMTA 2005 Industry Survey.

²⁵ National Survey conducted by the Health Forum/American Hospital Association 2003.

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ AMTA 2005 Consumer Survey.

²⁸ America's Health Insurance Plans, 2002 AHIP Survey of Health Insurance Plans.

²⁹ The National Institutes of Health, Web site: www.clinicaltrials.gov

³⁰ Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. August 2004.

³¹ Preyde, M. Effectiveness of Massage Therapy for Subacute Low-back Pain: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *CMAJ*. 162(13):1815-20; Jn 27, 2000.

³² Field, T., Hernandez-Reif, M., Ironson, G. Massage Therapy Effects on Breast Cancer. (*unpublished*); 1998. Ironson, G., Field, T., et.al. Massage Therapy is Associated with Enhancement of the Immune System's Cytotoxic Capacity. *Intern. J. Neuroscience*. 84:205-217; 1996. Zeitlin, D., et.al. Immunological Effects of Massage Therapy During Academic Stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine*. 62:83-87; Jan/Feb 2000.

³³ *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*. 2004.

³⁴ *Complementary Therapies in Nursing & Midwifery*. 2004, Vol. 10, pp. 209-216.

³⁵ *Pain Management Nursing*. June 2004, Vol. 5, No. 2. pp.59-65.

³⁶ *American Journal of Public Health*. October 2002.

³⁷ *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. April 2005, Vol. 11, No. 2. pp. 311-313.

³⁸ *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 2002, Vol. 34, No. 3.