



2014 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.

The Massage Therapy Profession

- Continuing economic uncertainty in the U.S. resulted in an AMTA estimate that massage therapy was an \$8 to \$10 billion industry in the country in 2013.²
- By comparison, in 2005, massage therapy was approximately a \$6 to \$11 billion a year industry.¹
- It is estimated that there are 300,000 to 350,000 massage therapists and massage school students in the United States.²
- According to the U.S. Department of Labor in 2012, employment for massage therapists is expected to increase 20 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than average for all occupations.³
- Between July 2012 and July 2013, roughly 35 million adult Americans (16 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 (88 percent).
- At a median age of 44 years old. Forty-one percent were younger than 35 in 2013.
- Most likely to be members of a professional organization.
- Most likely to be sole practitioners
- Working an average of 15 hours per week providing massage. (Excludes time spent on other business tasks such as billing, bookkeeping, supplies, maintaining equipment, marketing, scheduling, etc.)
- Charging an average of \$65 for one hour of massage vs. \$62 in 2012.
- Earning an average wage of \$31 an hour (including tips) for all massage related work.
- Heavily dependent on repeat clients.
- Likely to provide massage therapy in a number of settings, including clients' home/office, spa/salon, their own office, a healthcare setting, health club/athletic facility, or massage therapy only franchise or chain.

Massage Therapy as a Career

- In 2013, the average gross annual income for a massage therapist (including tips) was estimated to be \$21,871⁶
- While massage therapists work in a variety of work environments, sole practitioners account for the largest percentage of practicing therapists (62 percent). Sixty-five percent work at least part of their time at a client's home/business/corporate setting, 38 percent at their office, 35 percent at their home, 26 percent in a healthcare setting, and 26 percent in a spa setting.⁵
- Eighty-two percent of massage therapists started practicing massage therapy as a second career.⁵
- Fifty-two percent of massage therapists say they would like to work more hours of massage than they currently do.⁵
- Forty-four percent of massage therapists also earn income working in another profession.⁵
- Of those massage therapists who earn income working in another profession, 13 percent practice other forms of bodywork, 10 percent work in other forms of health care, 7 percent teach/write/lecture and 6 percent do movement therapy.⁵

Education and Credentials in the Massage Therapy Profession

- There are more than 360 accredited massage therapy schools and programs in the United States.²
- Massage therapists have an average of 642 hours of initial training.⁵
- The vast majority of massage therapists (92 percent) have taken continuing education classes.⁵
- Massage therapists take an average of 21 hours of continuing education per year.⁵

State Regulation of the Massage Therapy Profession

- Currently, 44 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. However, AMTA supports the authority of regulatory boards to determine examination(s) appropriate for their state.
- AMTA supports fair and consistent licensing of massage therapy in all states.

Who Gets Massage, Where and Why?

- According to the 2013 AMTA consumer survey, an average of 16 percent of adult Americans received at least one massage between July 2012 and July 2013, and an average of 26 percent of adult Americans received a massage in the previous five years.⁶
- In July 2013, 21 percent of women and 11 percent of men reported having a massage in the past twelve months.⁴
- Spas are where most people continue to receive massage, with 17 percent of those surveyed in July 2013 saying they had their last massage at a spa.⁴

The primary reason people received massage was for medical or health reasons.⁴

- Forty-three percent of adult Americans who had a massage between July 2012 and July 2013 received it for medical or health reasons such as pain management, soreness/stiffness/spasms, injury rehabilitation, or overall wellness, a number that did not change from 2012.
- Eighty-eight percent agree that massage can be effective in reducing pain.
- Thirty-two percent of massage consumers had a massage for relaxation/stress reduction between July 2012 and July 2013.

Massage and Healthcare

More Americans discussing massage with their doctors or health care providers.

- In July 2013, more than fifty million American adults (16 percent) had discussed massage therapy with their doctors or health care providers in the previous year, a number that did not change from 2012.⁴
- Of those 16 percent who discussed massage with their doctor or healthcare provider, 62 percent of their doctors or health care providers strongly recommended massage therapy/encouraged them to get a massage, compared to 50 percent in 2012. While physicians led the way in recommending massage (53 percent vs. 61 percent in 2012), chiropractors (42 percent vs. 43 percent in 2012) and physical therapists (41 percent vs. 38 percent in 2012) also recommended massage therapy when their patients discussed it with them.⁴
- More referrals come from chiropractic offices than other sources, with 12% of massage therapist respondents reporting receiving referrals at least once per week, and another 26% receiving referrals several times per month. Fifty-three percent of massage therapists received at least one referral every 6 months or less from a hospital or medical office in 2013.⁵

Massage therapists and consumers favor integration of massage into healthcare.

- More than half of adult Americans (58 percent) would like to see their insurance cover massage therapy.⁴
- The vast majority of massage therapists (96 percent) believe 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 fatigue⁷
- Low back pain⁸
- Osteoarthritis of the knee⁹
- Reducing post-operative pain¹⁰
- Boosting the body's immune system functioning¹¹
- Decreasing the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome¹²
- Lowering blood pressure¹³
- Reducing headache frequency¹⁴
- Easing alcohol withdrawal symptoms¹⁵
- Decreasing pain in cancer patients¹⁶
- Fibromyalgia¹⁷

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. AMTA's Massage Therapy Tour is traveling the continental U.S. from July 2012 through 2014 to educate the public on the health benefits of massage therapy.

¹ Data compiled by American Massage Therapy Association 2013.

² 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*.

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook* <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/massage-therapists.htm>

⁴ 2013 and 2012 AMTA Consumer Surveys

⁵ 2013 AMTA Industry Survey

⁶ AMTA Consumer Surveys 2003-2013

⁷ 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

⁸ Preyde M. (2003) Effectiveness of massage therapy for subacute low back pain: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Soft Tissue Manipulation*, 8, 4 . 10.

⁹ Perlman AI, Sabina A, Williams AL, Njike VY, Katz DL. (2006) Massage Therapy for Osteoarthritis of the Knee. *Arch Intern Med.* 166(22):2533-8.

¹⁰ Piotrowski, M., Paterson, C., Mitchinson, A., Kim, H. M., Kirsh, M., Hinshaw, D. B. (2003) Massage as Adjuvant Therapy in the Management of Acute Postoperative Pain: A Preliminary Study in Men. *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*, 197(6), 1037-1046.

¹¹ Rapaport, M. H., Schettler, P., Bresee, C. (2010) A Preliminary Study of the Effects of a Single Session of Swedish Massage on Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal and Immune Function in Normal Individuals. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 16(10), 1-10.

¹² Field, T., Diego, Miguel, Cullen, Christy, Hartshorn, Kristin, Gruskin, Alan, Hernandez-Reif, Maria, Sunshine, William. (2004). Carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms are lessened following massage. *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies.* 8:9-14. <http://www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/pdf/Massage%20and%20carpal%20tunnel%20syndrome.pdf>

¹³ Hernandez-Reif M, Field T, Krasnegor J, Theakston H, Hossain Z, Burman I (2000). High blood pressure and associated symptoms were reduced by massage therapy. *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, 4, 31 . 38.

¹⁴ Quinn C, Chandler C, Moraska A. Massage Therapy & Frequency of Chronic Tension Headaches. (2002) *American Journal of Public Health.* 92(10):1657-61

¹⁵ Reader M, Young R, Connor JP. (2005) Massage therapy improves the management of alcohol withdrawal syndrome. *J Altern Complement Med.* 11(2):311-3. PMID: 15865498.

¹⁶ American College of Physicians. (2008) Massage Therapy May Have Immediate Positive Effect On Pain And Mood For Advanced Cancer Patients. *Science Daily* 16 September. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/09/080915174534.htm>.

¹⁷ Castro-Sánchez, A.M., Matarán-Peñarocha, G.A., Granero-Molina, J., Aguilera-Manrique, G., Quesada-Rubio, J.M., Moreno-Lorenzo, C. (2011). Benefits of massage-myofascial release therapy on pain, anxiety, quality of sleep, depression, and quality of life in patients with fibromyalgia. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med.* 2011:561753.

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