



# American Massage Therapy Association

## 2009 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

In 2005, massage therapy was projected to be a \$6 to \$11 billion a year industry.<sup>1</sup>

It is estimated that there are 280,000 to 320,000 massage therapists and massage school students in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

Between August 2007 and June 2008, a fifth of adult Americans (20 percent) had a massage at least once.<sup>4</sup>

### Who is Today's Massage Therapist?

#### Today's massage therapists are...<sup>5</sup>

Most likely to enter the massage therapy profession as a second career.

Predominantly female (88 percent).

In their early-40s, on average.

Most likely to be members of a professional organization.

Most likely to be sole practitioners.

Working an average of 19 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 \$41.50 an hour (including tips) for all massage related work.

Giving an average of 41 massages per month.

Working in the industry an average of 6.3 years.

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-nine percent (89 percent) of massage therapists provide Swedish massage, followed by 82 percent who provide deep tissue massage, 52 percent trigger point, and 49 percent sports massage.

### Massage Therapy as a Career

#### Massage therapy can be a rewarding and flexible career

In 2008, the average annual income for a massage therapist (including tips) who provides 15 hours of massage per week was \$31,500, 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.<sup>6</sup>

While massage therapists work in a variety of work environments, sole practitioners or independent contractors account for the largest percentage of practicing therapists (92 percent). Forty-four percent

work at least part of their time at a client's home/business/corporate setting, 29 percent in a spa and 27 percent in a healthcare setting.<sup>5</sup>

Eighty-two percent started practicing massage therapy as a second career.<sup>5</sup>

Forty-nine percent of massage therapists say they would not want to work more hours of massage than they presently do.<sup>5</sup>



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More than half of massage therapists (58 percent) also earn income working in another profession.<sup>5</sup> Of those massage therapists who earn income working in another profession, 26 percent work in healthcare, while 21 percent practice other forms of body work and 20 percent work in education.<sup>5</sup>

### Education and Credentials Valued In the Massage Therapy Profession

There are over 300 accredited massage schools and programs in the United States.<sup>8</sup> Today there are 91,000 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.<sup>9</sup> Ninety-two percent of massage therapists strongly or somewhat agree there should be minimum education standards for massage therapists.<sup>5</sup> Massage therapists have an average of 633 hours of initial training.<sup>5</sup> The vast majority of massage therapists (92 percent) have taken continuing education classes.<sup>5</sup> The average number of hours spent in continuing education is 25 per year.<sup>5</sup> 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).<sup>5</sup>

### State Regulation of the Massage Profession Rapidly Growing

Currently, 42 states and the District of Columbia regulate massage therapists or provide voluntary state certification.<sup>8</sup> 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 therapists, this task may fall to local municipalities.

### Who Gets Massage, Where and Why?

According to annual AMTA consumer surveys since 2003, an average of 21 percent of adult Americans received at least one massage each year and an average of 32 percent of adult Americans received a massage in the previous five years.<sup>6</sup> In July 2008, 45 percent of women and 21 percent of men reported having a massage in the past five years.<sup>4</sup> Spas are where most people now receive massage, with 23 percent of those surveyed in 2007 saying this is where they had their last massage.<sup>4</sup>

**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.**

Almost one-quarter of adult Americans say they've used massage therapy at least one time for pain relief.<sup>4</sup>

Of the people who had at least one massage in the last five years, 31 percent report they did so for health conditions such as pain management, injury rehabilitation, migraine control, or overall wellness. Thirty-six percent sought massage for stress relief and 38 percent said they would consider using massage therapy for stress relief or stress management. Eighty-eight percent agree that massage can be effective in reducing pain. Eighty-seven percent agree that massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.



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## Massage and Healthcare

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

In July 2008, thirteen percent of adult Americans reported discussing massage therapy with their doctors or healthcare providers.<sup>4</sup>  
Of those 13 percent, more than half (57 percent) said their doctor strongly recommended or encouraged it.<sup>4</sup>

More than half of massage therapists (69 percent) receive referrals from healthcare professionals.<sup>5</sup>

### **Massage therapy usage in hospitals is common.**

The number of hospitals offering massage therapy increased by 30 percent from 2004 to 2006.<sup>10</sup>  
Of the hospitals that have massage therapy programs, 71 percent indicate they offer massage for patient stress management and comfort, while more than two-thirds (67 percent) utilize massage for pain management.<sup>10</sup>  
Sixty-seven percent of hospitals with massage therapy programs offer massage to their staff for stress management.<sup>10</sup>

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

Over half of adult Americans (60 percent) would like to see their insurance cover massage therapy.<sup>4</sup>  
Ninety-six percent of massage therapists agree massage therapy should be considered part of the healthcare field.<sup>5</sup>

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

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) is a non-profit, professional association with 58,000 members. The association is directed by a volunteer Board of Directors chosen by its members through a national election and encourages members to participate through its 51 chapters.

The American Massage Therapy Association provides information about massage therapy to the public and it helps consumers and healthcare 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](http://www.FindaMassageTherapist.org) or toll-free at 888-THE-AMTA [888-843-2682].

<sup>1</sup> 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*.



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- <sup>2</sup> Data compiled by American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) 2008.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*
- <sup>4</sup> 2008 and 2007 AMTA Consumer Surveys
- <sup>5</sup> 2008 AMTA Industry Survey
- <sup>6</sup> AMTA Consumer Surveys 2003-2008
- <sup>7</sup> Based on a comparison of results of an AMTA 2008 Industry Survey and 2006 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics data.
- <sup>8</sup> American Massage Therapy Association
- <sup>9</sup> The National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork
- <sup>10</sup> National Survey conducted by the Health Forum/American Hospital Association 2006
- <sup>11</sup> Currin, J. Meister, E.A. (2008) A hospital-based intervention using massage to reduce distress among oncology patients. *Cancer Nurs.* 31(3):214-21.  
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- <sup>13</sup> 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.
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- <sup>16</sup> 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.  
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- <sup>18</sup> Quinn C, Chandler C, Moraska A. Massage Therapy & Frequency of Chronic Tension Headaches. (2002) *American Journal of Public Health.* 92(10):1657-61
- <sup>19</sup> 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.



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<sup>20</sup> 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>.

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