

2003 Massage Therapy Consumer Survey Fact Sheet

Following are findings of a telephone survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation International, Princeton, NJ, and commissioned by the American Massage Therapy Association® (AMTA®). The survey was conducted August 14-17, 2003 among a national probability sample of 1,015 adults (513 men and 502 women) ages 18 and older, living in private households in the continental United States. The survey has a confidence level of plus or minus 3 percent.

This is the seventh annual survey of American consumers commissioned by AMTA. Opinion Research Corporation conducted its first telephone survey of consumers on massage in June 1997.



We're with you all the way.

Massage for Pain Relief

- Ninety-one percent of respondents agreed that massage can be effective in reducing pain.
- Nearly half (47 percent of those polled) have had a massage at some time to relieve pain; 58 percent of those in the 18-24 age range have ever had a massage for pain relief as have 58 percent of those ages 35-44.
- Massage follows medication as the most sought-after form of pain relief: 33 percent for medication followed by 14 percent for massage therapy.
- Among seniors who had a massage within the last five years, 18 percent did so specifically for pain relief.

Jump in Use of Massage

- More than one in five adults surveyed (21 percent) received a massage within the past 12 months – a three-point jump from last year and a 13-point jump since 1997. Twenty-two (22) percent of those ages 55-64 have had a massage within the last 12 months compared with 13 percent last year.
- Thirty-two percent of respondents received a massage within the past five years. More than one third (39 percent) of respondents in the 45-54 age range had a massage within the same time period – a twelve-point jump since 2002.
- Twenty-eight percent of adults expect to get a massage within the next year, compared with 25 percent who said so a year ago.

Seniors Use of Massage is on the Rise

- Half (51 percent) of those 65 and older who got a massage within the past five years did so to reduce pain, for injury or muscle soreness, or as part of a physical therapy regimen.
- Eighty-four percent of seniors believe massage can be effective in reducing pain.
- Eighty-three percent of seniors believe massage can be beneficial to health.

Reasons for Getting Massage

- Ninety percent of respondents agree that massage can be beneficial to one's health; 99 percent of 18-24 year olds and 95 percent of 25-34 year olds agreed with this statement.
- Sixty-nine percent of those polled view massage as more than just a luxury – 73 percent of women believe this to be true.
- Nearly one third of adults polled (29 percent) say they would seek massage for stress relief.
- Among those who had a massage in the past five years, more than one out of five (22 percent) got a massage for relaxation or stress relief.
- Among those who had a massage in the past five years, one quarter (25 percent) received massage for injury-related reasons, muscle soreness or pain management.

American Massage Therapy Association®

820 Davis Street, Suite 100 Evanston, IL 60201-4464 phone (847) 864-0123 fax (847) 864-1178 www.amtamassage.org

Positive View of Massage by Healthcare Providers

- Nearly one in five of those polled (19 percent) say they have discussed massage therapy with their doctor or healthcare provider, up from 14 percent in 2002.
- For those who discussed massage therapy with their healthcare providers, 62 percent of the providers *strongly recommended or encouraged* their patients to get a massage.

Americans' View of Massage Therapists

- More than half of those polled (52 percent) view the role of massage therapists as health care professionals, up from 36 percent one year ago.
- Of those polled, 80 percent view massage therapists as providing a stress reduction service, 69 percent see them as providers of an alternative and complementary health care service and 60 percent see them as members of a healthcare team.

Where Americans are Getting Their Massages

- People receive massage in a variety of locations, from their homes to massage therapists' offices to spas – only 19 percent received their last massage at a spa.
- Sixteen percent received their last massage in the massage therapist's location, while the third most common locations for where people received their last massage were in either a chiropractor's office or a beauty salon (eight percent each).
- Asked to list their top three choices for where they would prefer to receive a professional massage, 29 percent of respondents prefer their homes, 29 percent prefer a spa, 23 percent prefer the massage therapist's location.

Regional Differences

- Among those who had a massage within the past five years, the North Central region saw the biggest jump from 2002 – from 22 percent responding this way in 2002 to 33 percent in 2003.
- More people in the West and Northeast, 34 percent and 29 percent respectively, expect to get massage within the next 12 months (vs. 31 percent and 25 percent respectively in 2002).
- Twenty-five percent of respondents in the South and North Central regions expect to get a massage in the next year.

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) is a professional association of more than 46,000 members. AMTA professional members have demonstrated a level of skill and knowledge through education and/or testing and must meet continuing education requirements to retain membership.

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 its Find a Massage Therapist® national locator service. The free national locator service is available via AMTA's Web site at www.amtamassage.org and toll-free at 888-843-2682 [888-THE-AMTA].

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