



# American Massage Therapy Association

500 Davis Street, Suite 900, Evanston, IL 60201-4695

## 2008 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 265,000 to 300,000 massage therapists and massage therapy 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 2006 and June 2007, almost a quarter of adult Americans (24 percent) had a massage at least once in the last 12 months.<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.
- Predominately female (85%).
- In their early-40's, 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 \$60 for one hour of massage.
- Earning an average wage of \$39 an hour (including tip) for all massage related work.
- Giving an average of 41 massages per month.
- Working in the industry on average for seven 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-two percent of massage therapists provide Swedish massage, followed by 70 percent who provide deep tissue, 43 percent trigger point, and 40 percent sports massage.

### Massage Therapy As A Career

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

- The average annual income for a massage therapist (including tips) who provides 15 hours of massage per week is \$30,000, compared to \$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 (76 percent).<sup>5</sup>



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- Seventy-six percent (76%) started practicing massage therapy as a second career.<sup>5</sup>
- Fifty-one percent (51%) of massage therapists say they would not want to work more hours of massage than they presently do.<sup>5</sup>
- More than half of massage therapists (57%) also earn income working in another profession.<sup>5</sup>
- Of those massage therapists who earn income working in another profession, twenty-four percent work in healthcare while 21 percent practice other forms of body work and 20 percent work in education.<sup>5</sup>

## Education Is Valued in the Massage Therapy Profession

- Currently there are 313 accredited massage schools and programs in the United States.<sup>7</sup>
- Today there are more than 87,000 Nationally Certified massage therapists. To become Nationally Certified, a massage therapist must demonstrate mastery of core skills and knowledge, pass an exam, uphold the organizations Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and take part in continued education.<sup>8</sup>
- Eighty-nine percent (89%) 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 688 hours of initial training.<sup>5</sup>
- The majority of massage therapists (91%) have taken continuing education classes.<sup>5</sup>
- The average number of hours spent in continuing education is 22 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 (i.e. pregnant women, geriatric, and athletes).<sup>5</sup>

## State Regulation Of The Massage Profession

- Currently, 38 states and the District of Columbia regulate massage therapists.<sup>7</sup>
- In the 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 And Why<sup>4</sup>

- According to the 2007 AMTA Consumer Survey, almost a quarter of all adult Americans (24 percent) had a massage at least once in the last 12 months and 34 percent of adult Americans received a massage in the last five years.
- Forty-three percent of women and 25 percent of men have had a massage in the last five years.
- Baby boomers have more massages with respondents aged 45 to 64 having an average of seven massage during the past 12 months compared to those aged 18 to 44 who had an average of five.

**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-third of adult Americans say they've used massage therapy at least one time for pain relief.



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- Of the people who had at least one massage in the last five years, 30 percent report they did so for health conditions such as pain management, injury rehabilitation, migraine control, or overall wellness.
- Eight-seven percent agree that massage can be effective in reducing pain.
- Eighty-five percent agree that massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.

## Massage and Healthcare

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

- Almost one in five adult Americans (19 percent) report discussing massage therapy with their doctors or healthcare providers.<sup>4</sup>
- Of those 19 percent, more than half (58 percent) said their doctor strongly recommended or encouraged it.<sup>4</sup>
- More than half of massage therapists (63%) receive referrals from healthcare professionals.<sup>5</sup>

### Massage therapy usage in hospitals is also on the rise.

- The number of hospitals offering massage therapy has increased by 30 percent in two years (from 2004 to 2006).<sup>9</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>9</sup>
- Sixty-seven percent of hospitals with massage therapy programs offer massage to their staff for stress management.<sup>9</sup>

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

- Over half of adult Americans (59 percent) would like to see their insurance cover massage therapy.<sup>4</sup>
- Ninety-five percent of massage therapists agree massage therapy should be integrated into healthcare.<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:

- Massage therapy for cancer-related fatigue.<sup>10</sup>
- Massage for chronic low back pain.<sup>11</sup>
- Massage therapy for osteoarthritis of the knee.<sup>11</sup>
- Massage after surgery to help with post-operative pain.<sup>11</sup>
- Research has also shown massage to be effective in:
  - Boosting the body's immune system functioning.<sup>12</sup>
  - Decreasing the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome.<sup>13</sup>
  - Reducing anxiety and lowering blood pressure in stroke patients.<sup>14</sup>
  - Reducing headache frequency.<sup>15</sup>
  - Easing alcohol withdrawal symptoms.<sup>16</sup>
  - Decreasing pain and anxiety in hospitalized cancer patients.<sup>17</sup>



# American Massage Therapy Association

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) is a non-profit, professional association with more than 57,000 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. The association also helps consumers and healthcare professionals locate professional massage therapists nationwide, through AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist<sup>®</sup> 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].

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<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*.

<sup>2</sup> From data compiled by AMTA 2007.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook.

<sup>4</sup> 2007 AMTA Consumer Survey

<sup>5</sup> 2007 AMTA Industry Survey

<sup>6</sup> Based on a comparison of results of an AMTA 2007 Industry Survey and the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

<sup>7</sup> American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA).

<sup>8</sup> The National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork. *Consumers' Guide to Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork*.

<sup>9</sup> National Survey conducted by the Health Forum/American Hospital Association 2006.

<sup>10</sup> The National Institutes of Health, Website: [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov)

<sup>11</sup> 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.*

<sup>12</sup> *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies. 2004*

<sup>13</sup> *Complementary Therapies in Nursing and Midwifery. 2004, Vol. 10, pp. 209-216.*

<sup>14</sup> *American Journal of Public Health. October 2002.*

<sup>15</sup> *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine. April 2005, Vol. 11, No. 2. pp.311-313.*

<sup>16</sup> *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 2002, Vol. 34, No. 3.*

\*Note: This information was last updated 12/07