



## 2011 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

- In 2005, massage therapy was projected to be a \$6 to \$11 billion a year industry.<sup>1</sup>
- AMTA estimates that in 2010, massage therapy was a \$12-17 billion industry.<sup>2</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 in 2010, employment for massage therapists is expected to increase 19 percent from 2008 to 2018, faster than average for all occupations. However, this is one percentage point lower than their forecast in 2006.<sup>3</sup>
- Between July 2009 and July 2010, roughly 48 million adult Americans (18 percent) had a massage at least once.<sup>4</sup>
- The economy affected the number of people who had a massage from July 2009 to July 2010 (down 4 percentage points from 2008-2009).<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 (87 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 15 hours a week providing massage. (Excludes 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 \$41 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.
- Use an average of eight modalities/techniques
- Eighty-eight percent (88 percent) of massage therapists provide Swedish massage, followed by 84 percent who provide deep tissue massage, 55 percent trigger point, and 53 percent sports massage.

### Massage Therapy as a Career

- In 2010, the average annual income for a massage therapist (including tips) who provides approximately 15 hours of massage per week was estimated to be \$31,980, compared to \$37,123 for 2009. The reduction in income reflects both a decrease in the number of average hours worked and lower numbers for consumer use of massage in 2010.<sup>6</sup>
- While massage therapists work in a variety of work environments, sole practitioners account for the largest percentage of practicing therapists (65 percent). Thirty-nine percent work at least part of their time at a client's home/business/corporate setting or their home, 26 percent in a spa setting and 25 percent in a healthcare setting.<sup>5</sup>
- Nearly three-fourths (73 percent) started practicing massage therapy as a second career.<sup>5</sup>
- Forty-seven percent of massage therapists say they would like to work more hours of massage than they presently do.<sup>5</sup>
- More than half of massage therapists (57 percent) also earn income working in another profession.<sup>5</sup>
- Of those massage therapists who earn income working in another profession 23 percent practice other form of bodywork, while 22 percent work in education and 18 percent work in healthcare.<sup>5</sup>

### Education and Credentials in the Massage Therapy Profession

- There are more than 300 accredited massage schools and programs in the United States.<sup>8</sup>
- Today there are nearly 90,000 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 (92) 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 660 hours of initial training.<sup>5</sup>
- The vast majority of massage therapists (97 percent) have taken continuing education classes.<sup>5</sup>
- Massage therapists take an average of 22 hours of continuing education 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 Therapy Profession

- Currently, 43 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.
- AMTA supports fair and consistent licensing of massage therapy in all states.

## Who Gets Massage, Where and Why?

- According to the 2010 AMTA consumer survey, an average of 18 percent of adult Americans received at least one massage between July 2009 and July 2010, and an average of 28 percent of adult Americans received a massage in the previous five years.<sup>6</sup>
- In July 2010, 25 percent of women and 10 percent of men reported having a massage in the past twelve months.<sup>4</sup>
- Spas are where most people continue to receive massage, with 24 percent of those surveyed in July 2009 saying they had their last massage at a spa.<sup>4</sup>

**While the use of massage decreased in 2010, people still recognize it as an important element in overall health and wellness.<sup>4</sup>**

- Twenty-nine (29) percent of adult Americans who had a massage between July 2009 and July 2010 received it for medical or health reasons.
- Of those that have ever had a massage, fifty-four (54) percent say they've used massage therapy at least one time for pain relief.
- Of the people who had at least one massage in the last five years, 31 percent reported they did so for health conditions such as pain management, injury rehabilitation, migraine control, or overall wellness.
- Eighty-six (86) percent agree that massage can be effective in reducing pain.
- Eighty-five (85) percent agree that massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.

**Consumers are increasingly seeking massage for stress reduction and relaxation.**

- In July 2010, 40 percent of adult Americans said they had at least one massage in the last five years to reduce stress or relax—up from 22 percent reported in 2007.

## Massage and Healthcare

**Healthcare providers promoted the benefits of massage to their patients slightly less in 2010.**

- In July 2010, over thirty-nine million American adults (16 percent) had discussed massage therapy with their doctors or health care providers, compared to 18 percent in 2009.<sup>4</sup>
- Of those 16 percent, 31 percent of their health care providers strongly recommended massage therapy, compared to 35 percent in 2009. While physicians led the way in recommending massage (50 percent vs. 55 percent in 2009), chiropractors (35 percent vs. 48 percent in 2009) and physical therapists (42 percent vs. 40 percent in 2008) also recommended massage therapy when their patients discussed it with them.<sup>4</sup>
- Nearly three quarters of massage therapists (73 percent) indicate they receive referrals from health care professionals, averaging 1.5 referrals per month.

**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.<sup>4</sup>
- The vast majority of massage therapists (96 percent) believe massage therapy should be considered part of the health care 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 the largest non-profit, professional association serving more than 56,000 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](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> Data compiled by American Massage Therapy Association 2009.

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

<sup>4</sup> 2010 and 2009 AMTA Consumer Surveys

<sup>5</sup> 2010 AMTA Industry Survey

<sup>6</sup> AMTA Consumer Surveys 2003-2010

<sup>7</sup> Based on a comparison of results of an AMTA 2010 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 2007

<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>12</sup> Preyde M. (2003) Effectiveness of massage therapy for subacute low back pain: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Soft Tissue Manipulation*, 8, 4 – 10.

<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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<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.  
<http://www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/pdf/Massage%20and%20carpal%20tunnel%20syndrome.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<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.

<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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