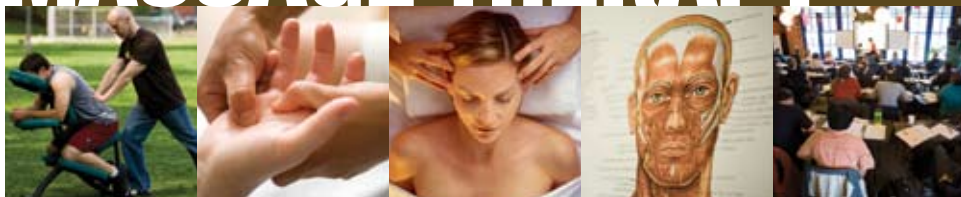


THE MESSAGE THERAPY



LITTLE BOOK

**A GUIDE
TO HELP YOU
FIND THE RIGHT
MESSAGE THERAPY SCHOOL**



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A LOOK AT MASSAGE THERAPY

As rapid advances in science and technology usher efficiency into our lives, this increasing convenience can sometimes usher out the chance to connect with others and receive the kind of personal attention that brings substance to our daily experiences.

When any solution or service is just a mouse click or phone call away, it's no wonder we grow isolated.

Even a face-to-face visit to the family physician can feel rushed and impersonal, as we hop on and off the table in mere minutes, hoping for a thorough diagnosis. Perhaps it's this deprivation of one-on-one connection that drives people to massage therapists. Or maybe, along with the increased accessibility of information, more people are becoming open to the power of prevention rather than waiting until health issues are an emergency. Or perhaps it's as simple as one friend saying to

another, "I had a massage today, I feel great."

Although we may never pinpoint the primary reason why, one thing is certain: More people are turning to massage therapy than ever before. According to two separate surveys conducted in 2006, one commissioned by the American Massage Therapy Association and one by the Association of Bodywork & Massage Professionals, 39 million Americans receive a massage annually. That's more than one out of every six people, marking an increase of 25 million individuals since 1996



and almost 9 million from 2004. The same surveys showed that nearly twice as many doctors recommended massage therapy to their patients in 2006 than five years ago, and nine million more people discussed the subject with their health-care providers.

The numbers make clear that massage therapy has grown in popularity, bursting into private practices, onto spa menus, and even into medical settings.

Massage therapy has been a growing trend in American culture, with 39 million American adults – more than one out of every 6 – getting a massage annually. While relaxation is still a motivation for Americans to integrate massage into their routines (26 percent), using massage therapy for medical purposes (30 percent) such as injury recovery, pain reduction, headache control, and for overall health and wellness, is even more prevalent, according to a recent survey commissioned by the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA).

“The massage therapy use for men increased by 5.3 million from 2004 to 2006”

“1 in 6 American adults received a massage during 2006”

“Twice as many doctors recommended massage therapy to their patients in 2006”

SOURCES: THE ASSOCIATED BODYWORK & MASSAGE PROFESSIONALS, AND THE AMERICAN MASSAGE THERAPY ASSOCIATION

IS MASSAGE THERAPY

FOR YOU?

Along with proper training, certain personality traits can lead to success for those who wish to enter the growing and evolving field of massage. A friendly nature, bolstered by strong communication skills and an innate ability to empathize, will go a long way toward developing a loyal client base.

The successful massage therapist should be willing to work on nearly anyone, no matter their shape, size, gender or physical attributes. For the individual who wishes to provide healthy touch, appearances should always be trumped by the sincere desire to enhance the health and wellness of each and every client.

Besides an enthusiasm for the good health of others, a number of prospective massage therapists enter the profession in hopes of enjoying flexible hours, and perhaps opening their own private practice. With an entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to stay organized, these goals are not out of reach. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, three-quarters of all massage therapists worked flexible schedules in 2004, and about two-thirds of these professionals reported self-employment.



Whether working in a private practice, a spa or any other wellness setting, a standard massage session will include certain elements. For instance, a new client will typically fill out an intake form, so the massage therapist has a general understanding of painful areas, medical issues and reasons the client is seeking healthy touch. Next, the massage therapist will leave the session room so the client can undress and get settled under a sheet or blanket on the table. The practitioner will then begin the massage, attempting to gear the session toward the individual needs of the client, focusing on any specific areas of stress or pain, and checking in to make sure the client is comfortable with the pressure and nature of the touch.

Before a massage therapist can start working on clients, he or she must comply with any state or local laws that apply to massage. That's why it's important to know the laws that govern massage in your state before enrolling in massage school, because certain states require more formal education hours than others to earn a massage therapy license or credential. Currently, 38 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian provinces regulate massage.

HOW TO CHOOSE A MASSAGE THERAPY SCHOOL



As the popularity of massage continues to increase, so do the options in massage-therapy education. With a checklist of standards in hand, the savvy student-to-be can navigate the options and choose the right school. One of the first things to look for is a high level of expertise among instructors. A good massage-therapy school should be swift to share this information with inquirers.



A significant number of graduates who pass state licensing exams is another benchmark for the best massage schools, as are job placement services and success rates. Be sure to check the accreditation of each massage school as well, for a high-quality program will be accredited by an agency approved by the United States Department of Education.



A top-notch massage school also should be licensed to operate by the state in which it's located, and be on the list of approved massage schools in that state. A majority of the states that regulate massage require graduation from one of these approved schools in order to sit for the massage licensing exam.

If a massage school is involved with industry associations, it's usually a good sign the staff is dedicated to keeping up with advances in the field of massage, as well as the ever-changing laws and regulations that govern it.



THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN VISITING A MASSAGE SCHOOL:

1. LEVEL OF EXPERTISE OF FACULTY
2. LICENSING EXAM PASSING RATE
3. CAREER SERVICES ASSISTANCE
4. ACCREDITATIONS
5. STATE LICENSING
6. CONTENT OF CURRICULUM
7. PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

One look at a school's curriculum will speak volumes about whether it's the right one for you. Prospective massage therapists should look for massage programs that offer a solid foundation in massage therapy techniques and approaches to wellness.

This is your education, so don't be shy about asking questions and researching the options before enrollment. Quality massage therapy schools will be proud to prove their worth.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER GRADUATION FROM MASSAGE SCHOOL

When courses and hands-on hours have been completed, and exams are passed, the massage-school graduate is greeted by surprisingly diverse job options.

More and more, health-related organizations of all kinds are employing massage therapists. From the office of a psychologist, oncologist or chiropractor to a high-end spa, Pilates studio or multi-practitioner clinic, healing hands are in demand. Whether a massage therapist wishes to practice relaxation massage or perform massage in a hospital, there is a place for the well-educated therapist.

Keeping these valuable skills well-honed and continuing to add new

touch techniques to the toolbox is an important part of life after massage school. Besides serving as a great way to maintain skills and gain knowledge, a certain number of continuing education hours are usually required to renew a massage license in the states that regulate the field. Membership in professional massage organizations often requires continuing education, too. Check to see if your massage school can support the quest to continue learning post-graduation.



THE FUTURE OF THE MASSAGE PROFESSION

“Check to see if your massage school can support the quest to continue learning post-graduation”

Increasing awareness of the widely applicable benefits of massage, coupled with a rapidly expanding aging population, should continue to drive the demand for healthy touch. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of massage therapists is expected to increase faster than the national average through 2014.

With the abundance and diversity of job opportunities for skilled massage therapists, it's possible to take a massage career in nearly any direction desired. Working full-time, part-time, in private practice, in a spa, in a hospital—all these options and more are possible with the right skills and a positive attitude.

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Schools of Massage Therapy

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Chicago, IL 60602

Cortiva Institute
Chicago School of Massage Therapy
McHenry County 100 South Main St
Crystal Lake, IL 60012

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Pennsylvania School of Muscle Therapy
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Humanities Center School of Massage
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