

# Massage Therapy

## *fast* Facts



### The Business of Massage

- ABMP estimates 293,531 trained therapists provide massage and bodywork in the United States.<sup>i</sup>
- Fourteen percent of U.S. adults visited a massage therapist in 2008, and 42 percent have received a professional massage sometime in their life.<sup>ii</sup>
- Consumers in 2009 had a positive response to a massage, with 80 percent reporting favorable feelings about their most recent experience.<sup>iii</sup>
- The median price for a one-hour massage is \$65 (Harstad Strategic Research 2009 Consumer Survey).
- A higher proportion of American adults received at least one massage therapy session in 2009 than accessed chiropractic or physical therapy services. Most physical therapy services and many chiropractic treatments are reimbursed by health insurance, while more than 90 percent of massage therapy sessions are paid out of the client's pocket.<sup>iv</sup>
- The number of state-approved schools is 1,568. (ABMP survey of state-approved massage schools, 2009).
- The Society for Human Resource Management reported in 2007 that 13 percent of its 210,000 member companies offer workplace massage. An earlier *Working Mother* article found 77 percent of the top 100 U.S. companies offered massage at work.

- There are as many as 250 known types of massage and bodywork, with new massage modalities emerging every year.<sup>v</sup>
- In the 43 states with licensing (including D.C.), uniform rules apply throughout each particular state, though the detailed requirements vary. Local requirements in the current eight non-licensed states vary considerably.<sup>vi</sup>

### Consumer Perspectives

- Spas employ an estimated 303,700 people in the United States—[www.experienceispa.com](http://www.experienceispa.com).
- Swedish massage therapy is the most requested service in spas and spas are the most common place to receive a massage (43 percent of all sessions.) (ISPA 2008 Global Consumer Survey and Harstad Consumer Research 2009).
- Revenues for the U.S. spa industry in 2007 were \$10.9 billion, up from \$9.4 billion in 2006. This represents an average annual growth of 18 percent—[www.experienceispa.com](http://www.experienceispa.com).
- Women make up the majority of spa consumers (69 percent), according to the ISPA 2006 Spa-goer Study.

### Benefits of Massage

- Massage therapy is a safe and effective way to reduce pain and improve function in adults with **osteoarthritis of the knee**, reports a 2006 study in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

### Choosing a Massage Therapist

Call ABMP at 800-458-2267 for a referral or visit [www.massagetherapy.com](http://www.massagetherapy.com) for:

- A 250-item glossary and searchable 1,000-story archive to learn about the types of massage that best suit your needs.
- Practitioners listed by massage type and location. As a condition of membership, ABMP practitioners agree to follow the ABMP code of ethics; their training and credentials are verified by ABMP.
- Complete information on what to expect during a massage session.
- A state-by-state listing of regulation and training requirements for massage therapy.

Associated Bodywork  
& Massage Professionals

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Golden, CO 80401

Mailing address:  
PO Box 1869  
Evergreen, CO 80437

800-458-2267  
[www.massagetherapy.com](http://www.massagetherapy.com)



- The *Annals of Internal Medicine* reported in 2003 that massage therapy was **effective for treating persistent back pain**, as did a 2000 report by the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*.
- Research has shown massage reduces **carpal tunnel syndrome** symptoms. *The Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, 2004.
- Premature infant massage in the NICU was reported in *Neonatal Network* to be effective in **increasing weight gain**, improving **developmental scores**, **shortening hospital stays** and improving parent-baby bonding (2003).
- Pediatric healthcare staff report **increasing hospital use of complementary and alternative medicine**, including massage and energy work (*Advance for Nurses*, April 2007).
- Touch Therapy Institute at the University of Miami reports its massage therapy studies indicate effectiveness in:
  - \* **Reducing mothers' risk** for premature delivery and postpartum depression; improved sleep for babies.
  - \* **Reduced pain** from migraines and arthritis.
  - \* **Reduced aggression** in adolescents and **less hyperactivity** in adolescents with ADHD.
  - \* **Greater alertness** in autistic children.
  - \* **Better lung function** in asthmatic children.
  - \* **Decreased glucose levels** in diabetic children.
  - \* **Less stress and improved performance** for employees receiving work-site massage.
- Massage therapy has been shown to strengthen the **immune system**, according to research published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, 1996, and *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 2000.
- In 2005, *Cancer Control* reported massage therapy effectively **reduced stress and anxiety in cancer patients**, with a promising outlook for pain control and management of other symptoms.
- **Oncology** patients show less pain, fatigue, nausea, anxiety and depression following massage therapy, according to a study by Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, 2004, and a report in the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 2002.
- Women with lymph node dissection receiving arm massage had **less pain** and surgery-related discomfort, according to a 2004 *Cancer Nursing* article.
- Forty-eight percent of respondents to a *Consumer Reports* survey rated massage therapy as “very helpful” in **relieving back pain**. The survey revealed pain relief was a top motivator for those seeking massage. (*Consumer Reports*, May 2009)
- Touch may **help alleviate symptoms of depression** according to the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. Researchers suggested the release of oxytocin and relaxing aspects of massage help improve this condition. (March 2010).
- A study in the *Journal of Clinical Nursing* indicates weekly hand and foot massage is **helpful to the bereaved** in resolving grief. (April 2010).
- A recent study published in *Depression and Anxiety* showed patients **halved their anxiety symptoms and stress** after a series of 10 massages.

## About ABMP

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals is the largest national professional membership association serving the massage therapy profession.

Founded in 1987 and headquartered in Golden, Colo., ABMP is employee-owned and has more than 73,000 massage therapist, student and school members.

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Consumers can locate qualified practitioners nationwide at [www.massagetherapy.com](http://www.massagetherapy.com).

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> January 2010 analysis was based on state licensing lists, totals from primary membership organizations [ABMP and AMTA], and state populations. General receptivity toward massage in particular regions was also factored in.

<sup>2</sup> Harstad Strategic Research 2009 National Consumer Survey of 602 adults 21 years and older, conducted January 6-11.

<sup>iii</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>iv</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>v</sup> Massage, bodywork and somatic therapies are often complex mixtures of holistic healing practices involving physical, emotional and spiritual components. The definitions in the *Massagetherapy.com* glossary ([www.massagetherapy.com/glossary](http://www.massagetherapy.com/glossary)) have been compiled from a wide variety of sources over two decades. Some were supplied by developers of techniques, others by associations and educational institutions. Still others are a blend of data gleaned from several sources.

<sup>vi</sup> Compiled from state websites, not including the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories. For more information, visit [www.massagetherapy.com/media](http://www.massagetherapy.com/media) and click on “Public Policy and Licensing.”