

# Massage Therapy

## *fast* Facts



### The Business of Massage

- ABMP estimates 320,000 trained therapists provide massage and bodywork in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
- There are more than 250 known types of massage and bodywork.<sup>2</sup>
- Spas employ an estimated 338,600 people in the United States. Massage services are provided at 88 percent of spas.<sup>3</sup>
- Sixty-eight percent of massage consumers in 2012 received their massage at a spa (including franchise spas) or independent therapist's office, with a minority receiving massage at hair salons, hotels, medical practices, or other locations.<sup>4</sup>
- The median price for a one-hour massage in 2012 was \$60.<sup>5</sup> This hasn't changed significantly since 2005. Prices vary by geographic location; in general, prices are higher in large metropolitan areas.
- Revenue for the U.S. spa industry continues to grow: \$12.8 billion in 2010, up from \$12.3 billion in 2009 and \$10.9 billion in 2007.<sup>6</sup>
- There are 1,267 state-approved massage training programs in the United States.<sup>7</sup>
- Massage therapists are licensed in 44 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C. Requirements vary considerably among licensed states.<sup>8</sup>

### Consumer Perspectives

- Consumers in 2012 had a positive response to massage, with 75 percent reporting very favorable feelings about their most recent experience.<sup>9</sup>

- Sixteen percent of U.S. adults visited a massage therapist in 2012, and 37 percent have received a professional massage sometime in their life.<sup>10</sup>
- A higher proportion of U.S. adults received at least one massage therapy session in 2012 than accessed chiropractic or physical therapy services, even though most physical therapy services and many chiropractic treatments are reimbursed by health insurance, while most massage therapy sessions are not.<sup>11</sup>
- Women make up the majority of both massage consumers (60 percent)<sup>12</sup> and spa visitors (78 percent).<sup>13</sup>
- Seventy percent of consumers surveyed cited relaxation or stress relief, and 49 percent cited pain, soreness, or injury rehabilitation as reasons they visited a massage therapist in 2012.<sup>14</sup>
- Even non-consumers tend to view the profession favorably, with 58 percent of those who have never had a massage associating it with positive therapeutic effects and relaxation.<sup>15</sup>

### Benefits of Massage

Research has shown that massage therapy has a beneficial effect on the following:<sup>16</sup>

- Acute pain (headache, pre- and postoperative); chronic back and neck pain; bone, joint, and muscle pain; nerve impingement pain (sciatica, carpal tunnel); noninflammatory pain.
- Balance, range of motion, flexibility.
- Circulatory disorders.
- Constipation, other digestive disorders.
- Fibromyalgia.
- Immune function.
- Loss of sleep, relaxation.

### Choosing a Massage Therapist

Visit [massagetherapy.com](http://massagetherapy.com) for:

- A 250-item glossary and searchable 1,000-article archive to learn about the types of massage or bodywork that best suit your needs.
- Practitioners listed by massage type and location. All ABMP practitioners have agreed 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 regulations and training requirements for massage therapy.

### Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

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- Nausea and fatigue associated with cancer treatment.
- Reduced hospital stays for surgery patients and premature babies.
- Reduced workplace health-related expenses.
- Stress, anxiety, depression, mood disorders, agitated behavior.
- Support for rehabilitation from substance abuse.
- Wellbeing, self-esteem, self-awareness.

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 Canadian study showed a combination of exercise and therapeutic massage is effective in providing short-term improvement of sub-acute and chronic low-back pain.<sup>17</sup>

In a study of migraine sufferers, massage therapy reduced the duration and intensity of pain, reduced depression, and increased functional status and quality of life when combined with exercise, stress management, and relaxation therapy.<sup>18</sup>

Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami ([www.miami.edu/touch-research](http://www.miami.edu/touch-research)) reports its massage therapy studies indicate effectiveness in:

- Reducing risk of premature delivery and postpartum depression.
- Improving sleep for babies.
- Reducing pain from migraines and arthritis.
- Reducing aggression in adolescents and hyperactivity in adolescents with ADHD.
- Increasing alertness in autistic children.
- Improving lung function in asthmatic children.
- Reducing glucose levels in diabetic children.
- Reducing stress and improving performance for employees receiving workplace massage.



## 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 serves more than 82,000 professional, student, and school members.**

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

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> February 2013 estimate based on state licensing lists, totals from primary membership organizations (ABMP and AMTA), and state populations.

<sup>2</sup> Massage, bodywork and somatic therapies are often complex mixtures of holistic healing practices involving physical, emotional, and spiritual components. Definitions compiled from a wide variety of sources over two decades can be found at [www.massagetherapy.com/glossary](http://www.massagetherapy.com/glossary).

<sup>3</sup> International Spa Association (ISPA) 2011 U.S. Spa Industry Study.

<sup>4</sup> Harstad Strategic Research 2013 National Consumer Survey of 610 adults 21 years and older, conducted January 6-9, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> ISPA, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> ABMP survey, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Compiled from state websites. For more information, visit [www.massagetherapy.com/media](http://www.massagetherapy.com/media) and click on "Public Policy and Licensing."

<sup>9</sup> Harstad, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> ISPA, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Harstad, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> For complete citations, see ABMP's "Position Statement Submitted to the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council," available at [www.abmp.com/home/Position\\_Statement\\_Dec\\_10.pdf](http://www.abmp.com/home/Position_Statement_Dec_10.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> L. Brosseau et al., "Ottawa Panel Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines on Therapeutic Massage for Low-Back Pain," *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies* 16, no. 4 (2012): 424-55.

<sup>18</sup> M. Lemstra et al., "Effectiveness of Multidisciplinary Intervention in the Treatment of Migraine: A Randomized Clinical Trial," *Headache* 42, no. 9 (2002): 845-54.