

AMTA 2021 MASSAGE PROFESSION RESEARCH REPORT

NSBMT - Board Meeting
March 31, 2021
Agenda Item 15b



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Introduction

Current landscape of the massage therapy profession

The 2021 Massage Profession Research Report

Welcome to the 14th annual *Massage Profession Research Report*, AMTA's collection and analysis of current data and trends that shape the massage therapy environment.

AMTA, the most trusted name in the massage profession, publishes this report to provide massage therapy school administrators and educators with current information and research to help them better run their schools, make informed business decisions, and educate students on current trends in the profession. This report is a major AMTA School Member benefit that helps you review current information on the massage market, including consumers, therapists, employers and schools, all in one document.

Four Annual Research Studies

In the pages that follow, you'll find results of four benchmark surveys that track the state of the profession through 2020:

- The **AMTA Consumer Survey** was commissioned by AMTA to poll American adults on their use of massage therapy. See appendix for a change in methodology on the most recent survey.
- The **AMTA Industry Survey** asked working massage therapists about everything from compensation, to hours, to type of work environment.
- The **AMTA Technology Survey** obtained input from massage therapists about their use of technology for individual and professional purposes.
- The **AMTA Massage School Survey** acquired feedback from massage school administrators about students, faculty, programs offered, and more.

This report provides timely and relevant data on the state of the massage profession, including the impact of COVID-19 on the profession, compiled from the results of these surveys and supplemented by U.S. government statistics and information found in industry and/or business publications. For methodology and confidence intervals of these surveys, see the Appendix. AMTA is pleased to conduct the research detailed above, compile the results, and provide this report for the betterment of the entire massage profession.

We'd love to hear from you.

Let's work together to inspire the next generation of massage therapists. If you have suggestions or need additional information, please contact us anytime at research@amtamassage.org.

Executive Summary

During 2020 and into 2021, the massage profession had been dealing with the impact of COVID-19. This health crisis has led to major changes with massage schools, employers, massage practitioners, and consumers. This report will investigate the impact of COVID-19 on different areas of the profession, as well as provide information on standard metrics that are reported each year.

Here is a summary of key findings for each section of this report.

Consumers of Massage Therapy

Twenty-one percent of American adults received a massage in the past 12 months ending June 2020, with the average massage consumer getting 3.5 massages during this time period.

COVID-19 has had an impact on consumer use of massage. Forty-nine percent of massage consumers stated that they have had to cancel their plans or appointments for massage because of COVID-19. Of consumers that have ever gotten a massage, 92% expect to get a massage in the future, with most expecting to get a massage within the next year.

Consumers continued to believe in the efficacy of massage as 92% considered massage to be effective in reducing pain and 93% believed massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.

The primary reason consumers obtained massage continued to be for health and wellness purposes, or for stress relief. Sixty-three percent of massage consumers had a massage in 2020 for health or wellness reasons. Of these, 49% had their last massage for a health or wellness reason. Forty-five percent of massage consumers got a massage for relaxation/stress in 2020, with 27% getting their last massage for this reason.

The Massage Therapy Profession

Because of COVID-19, 86% of massage therapists ceased practicing at some point in 2020. This was especially prevalent in March and April of 2020, as most of the states implemented restrictions on businesses, including massage therapy. As restrictions have loosened, during November of 2020, upwards of 79% of therapists reported that they were back to work. Note that there are vast differences in the percent of therapists working depending on the city or state in which a therapist practices. On average, therapists are seeing a 35% decline in the number of clients they see in an average week.

Between 2019 and 2020, the estimated number of massage therapists grew by less than 1% to 363,155. The number of massage therapists increased 19% over the past ten years. It is likely that the number of therapists may decline in the coming year as the number of new

graduates coming out of massage schools are down, as many schools were closed for some time in 2020.

Most massage therapists identify as a sole practitioner at least part of the time (72%), are female (88%), had a different profession prior to becoming a therapist (83%), and had formal education beyond a high school diploma (90%).

Health Care and the Massage Industry

The health care industry continued to offer employment opportunities for massage therapists in a variety of settings. The health care industry is projected to become the largest employment sector in the coming years, with nearly one in four new jobs occurring in healthcare.

Massage therapists supported the integration of massage into health care, with 95% believing massage should be integrated with health care. But, how that integration looks varied greatly. The two most prevalent ways therapists preferred to see health care integration was by having massage therapists work on a team with other complementary practitioners, or by having massage prescribed or referred by health care providers.

Eighty-three percent of Americans believed that massage should be considered a form of health care, up from prior years.

Consumers are talking with their health care providers about massage, and those providers are recommending massage to their patients, especially physicians, physical therapists and chiropractors. Pain relief/pain management, soreness/stiffness/spasms, and relaxation/stress reduction were the reasons consumers were most likely to discuss massage with their healthcare provider.

The growing number of referrals from health care professionals as cited by both massage therapists and consumers indicated increased integration of massage therapy in health care environments.

Twenty percent of massage therapists were reimbursed by insurance for massage. For practicing massage therapists, 8% were reimbursed by health insurance (either private payer or public system), 9% by auto insurance, 6% were reimbursed through worker's compensation, and 4% accepted other insurance reimbursement.

Training and Education of Massage Therapists

During 2020, 54% of schools had either closed or cancelled classes at some point because of COVID-19. By October 2020, 91% of schools were open and holding classes. Many schools have shifted to providing more online education, with 47% of schools offering some online learning for their entry-level program.

Massage therapists reported an average of 677 hours of entry-level of education, with most therapists having more education than is required for licensure in their state.

Ninety-five percent of massage schools offer a certificate in massage therapy, with 40% also offering continuing education courses in massage.

Across all schools, the average number of graduates was 33 per year across all locations. Fifty-five percent of schools reported decreased enrollment because of COVID-19.

The top challenges cited for schools were dealing with COVID-19 issues followed by difficulty in attracting students.

Section 1 — Consumers of Massage Therapy¹

Consumer use of massage therapy is the engine that drives the massage profession. The number of consumers and the frequency consumers receive massage impacts the employment of massage therapists, the earning potential of therapists, and the demand for new therapists coming out of massage school.

This section provides information on the latest data and trends in the U.S. population, overall economy and factors around consumer use of massage therapy.

Key Concerns:

- What changes do massage consumers want to see because of COVID-19?
- How can we market our practices to the demographic groups who are most likely to seek massage?
- How can we gear our massage practice towards the markets most likely to grow?
- How can this information help us make our massage therapy program more attractive to prospective students?

Key Findings:

- Twenty-one percent of American adults received a massage in the past 12 months ending June 2020.
- Almost half of regular massage consumers had to cancel plans to get a massage because of COVID-19.
- Overall population growth is small in the United States.
- Consumers continue to believe in the efficacy of massage.
- COVID-19 greatly impacted consumer use of massage in 2020. The effects of the pandemic will not be fully realized for some time.

These questions will be answered:

- 1A. What changes are taking place in the overall U.S. population?
- 1B. What is the current state of the U.S. economy?
- 1C. How has COVID-19 impacted consumer use of massage therapy?
- 1D. What drives consumer use of massage therapy?
- 1E. Who gets massage?
- 1F. Why do consumers get massage?
- 1G. Where are consumers getting massage?

1A. What changes are taking place in the overall U.S. population?²

Consumers drive growth in the profession. Overall population growth has been low the past several years.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. population is growing, but at a slow rate

The U.S. population grew to an estimated 329.4 million in 2020, up from 328.3 million in 2019. That's a population growth of less than one percent. The population is projected to grow slowly over the next several decades as the number of births and international migrations are expected to be lower than in previous years.

As the 2020 Census was just completed and results are being released slowly in batches by the Census Bureau, there is not much information from the 2020 Census available at present. More current data from the 2020 Census will be summarized in future research reports.

For the latest information on U.S. population and economic trends, refer to the U.S. Census Bureau data at www.census.gov.

1B. What is the current state of the U.S. economy?

The strength of the economy is one of the main factors that impacts massage consumption. When the economy is strong, consumers are more likely to get a massage than in uncertain economic times.

As COVID-19 has impacted every aspect of daily life in the US, its effects on the economy as a whole are far-reaching, and will probably not be fully realized or understood for several years. With shelter-in-place orders enacted in many states across the country in the early months of 2020, massage consumption came to a sudden halt for several months. Additional peaks of the virus in the summer months and again in the fall caused varying degrees of shutdown measures to be reemployed. Economic relief for those out of work and struggling due to the pandemic was passed in March of 2020, and was the only economic relief passed as of December 2020. Many Americans are still struggling to pay for basic needs like food, housing, and utilities. The pandemic has forced many people to either work from home, risk their health by going to work, or put their work life on hold to take care of family members.

The unemployment rate in November 2020 was 6.7%, up from 3.5% a year ago.³ The pandemic created an increase in unemployment early in 2020, spiking to a peak of 14.7% in April and declining in the following months. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 21.8% of employed people were working remotely due to the pandemic, and an additional 14.8 million people were unable to work due to their employer closing or losing business.

The Federal Reserve predicts that, absent additional economic relief from the government, economic growth could continue to be sluggish or stagnant altogether. Due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19 on every aspect of both the American and global economies, the Federal Reserve indicated that it is planning to leave interest rates at 0 in order to help stabilize the economy.⁴ Due to economic uncertainty affecting every sector of the economy, many consumers are spending only what is absolutely necessary for housing, food, and other essential supplies, saving the balance of their income for an unknown future. Discretionary spending on top of essentials has been very low throughout most of 2020 as people are unsure about their own economic stability. If the COVID-19 crisis ends in the near-term, there will be many consumers that have large amounts of savings, and this pent-up demand may help speed up the economic recovery. The Consumer Price Index grew by 1.2% over the 12 month period ending October 31, 2020, meaning that consumers are spending slightly more on goods and services than in the previous 12 months.⁵

1C. How has COVID-19 impacted consumer use of massage therapy?

Because of the COVID-19 crisis, massage use in the US has been at a standstill at points. Every week that massage therapists didn't work equated to roughly \$270 million leaving the massage profession. Consumers want to get back to having regular massage.

Forty-nine percent of massage consumers stated that they have had to cancel their plans or appointments for massage because of COVID-19. Of consumers that have ever gotten a massage, 92% expect to get a massage in the future, with most expecting to get a massage within the next year.⁶

Beyond time, consumers are looking at the status of COVID-19 and being comfortable with safety procedures as the most prevalent factors for them to go back to getting massage.



Figure 1. Considerations consumers would have when getting their next massage

Highlights from Figure 1

The majority of consumers would factor in the status of the COVID-19 crisis when getting their next massage.

What massage looks like today and might look like in the future is vastly different than it was before the COVID-19 crisis began. When asked about what precautions consumers may want to take or ask about, the following were the most prevalent.

Asking the therapist about sanitation standards	56%
Wearing a mask during my massage	44%
Requiring the therapist to wear a mask during my massage	42%
Asking the therapist if they have been tested or had COVID in the past	41%
Arriving exactly on time to my appointment or waiting outside the facility if I arrive early	25%
Requiring the therapist to wear gloves during my massage	18%
Asking about digital or contactless payment options	16%
Only doing chair-type (clothed) massage	15%
Requesting modalities or massage techniques that have less touch	6%

Figure 2. What precautions would consumers want to take, or ask about before their next massage.

Highlights from Figure 2

More than half of consumers would want to ask about sanitation standards before getting a massage.

Over 40% of consumers would want to wear a mask and have their therapist wear a mask.

1D. What drives consumer use of massage therapy?

Consumer use of massage was down in the first months of 2020.

The 2020 AMTA Consumer Survey results show that:

- Twenty-one percent of all adult Americans had at least one massage in the 12 months ending June 2020.
- Thirty-eight percent of adults reported that they have had a professional massage in their life.
- Consumers who received massage by June 2020 received an average of 3.5 massages.
- For the 12 month period ending June 2020, 21% of consumers received a massage. Consumer use of massage in calendar year 2019 was 28%.

Consumers continued to believe in the efficacy of massage:

- Ninety-two percent of consumers agreed that “Massage can be effective in reducing pain.”
- Ninety-three percent of consumers agreed that “Massage can be beneficial to your health and wellness.”
- Eighty-three percent of consumers agreed that “Massage therapy should be considered a form of health care.”
- Sixty-eight percent of all consumers said they have or would recommend massage to a relative or to someone they knew in 2020.

1E. Who gets massage?

Gender, age, education, and income all affect the likelihood of consumers using massage.

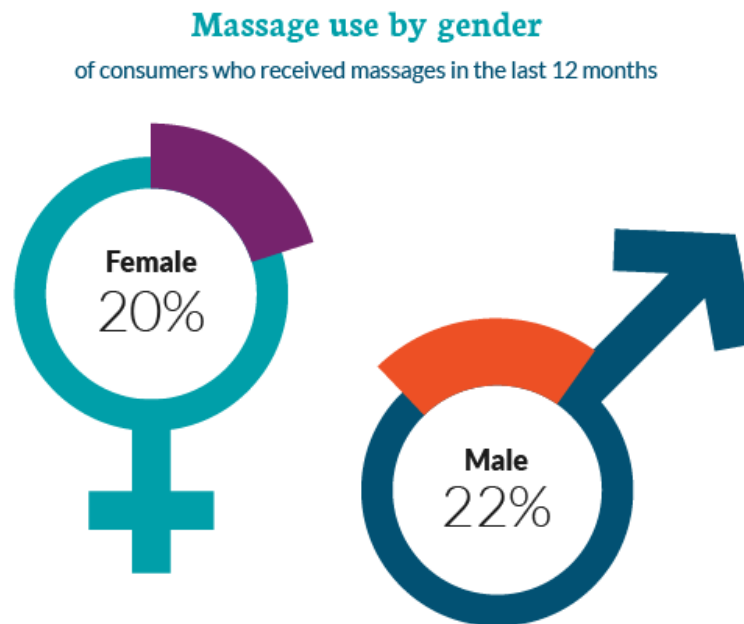


Figure 3. Total use of massage among U.S. population by gender

Highlights from Figure 3

Massage use in the last 12 months among male consumers was higher than use of female consumers in the same time period.

Households with children – Those consumers with children have a higher likelihood of getting massage. See figure 4 below.

Likelihood of getting a massage in households with children



Figure 4. Likelihood of getting massage in households with children

Highlights from Figure 4

A quarter of consumers with children under 18 got a massage, as compared to 19% of consumers without children under 18 who got a massage.

Household Income – Those consumers with a higher household income tend to get massage at higher rates than those with a lower household income. See Figure 5 below for details.

**Likelihood of getting a massage in households
by income**

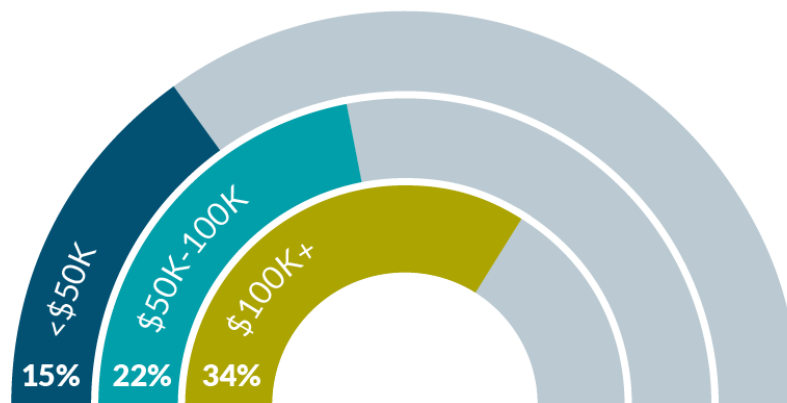


Figure 5. Likelihood of getting a massage by income

Highlights from Figure 5

Fifteen percent of Americans with a household income below \$50,000 had a massage in 2020.

22% of Americans with a household income between \$50,000 and \$100,000 received a massage in 2020.

34% of Americans with a household income of \$100,000 or above got a massage in 2020.

College graduates – Fifty-one percent of consumers who got a massage in 2020 were college graduates.

- Thirty-three percent of all college graduates received a massage in 2020, down from 39% in 2019.

Ages of message consumers

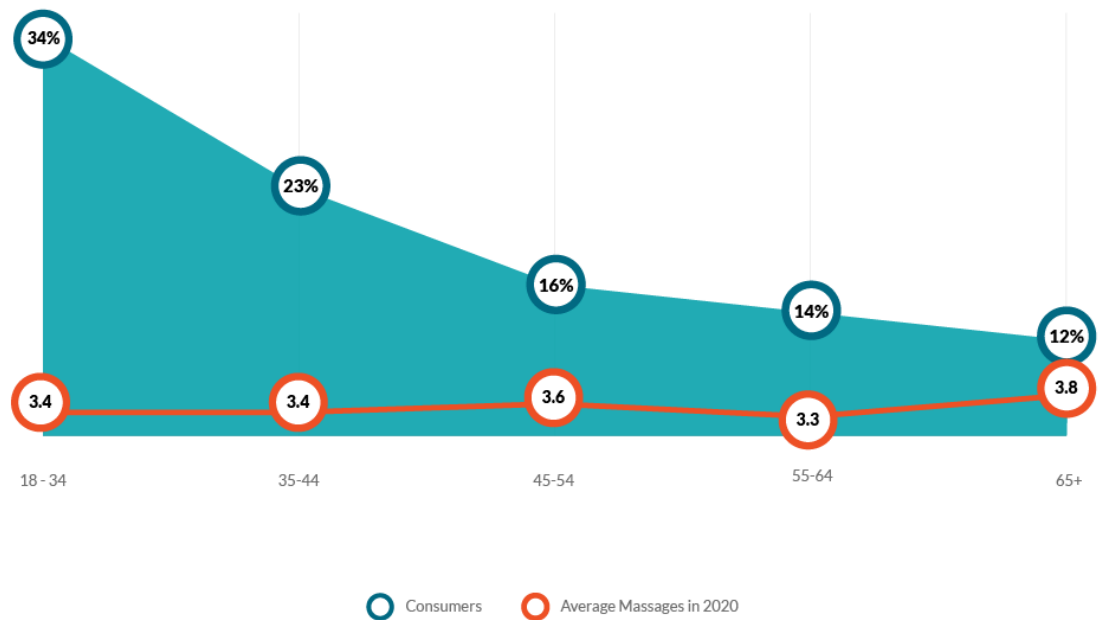


Figure 6. Total use of massage among U.S. population by age

Highlights from Figure 6

Consumers 65 and over got an average of 3.8 massages in 2020, the highest of any age group.

Younger consumers (18-34) were the most likely to use massage, with 34% of this age group getting a massage in 2020.

1F. Why do consumers get massage?

Consumers get massage for a variety of reasons. When asked about their last massage, most say they went for health or wellness reasons.

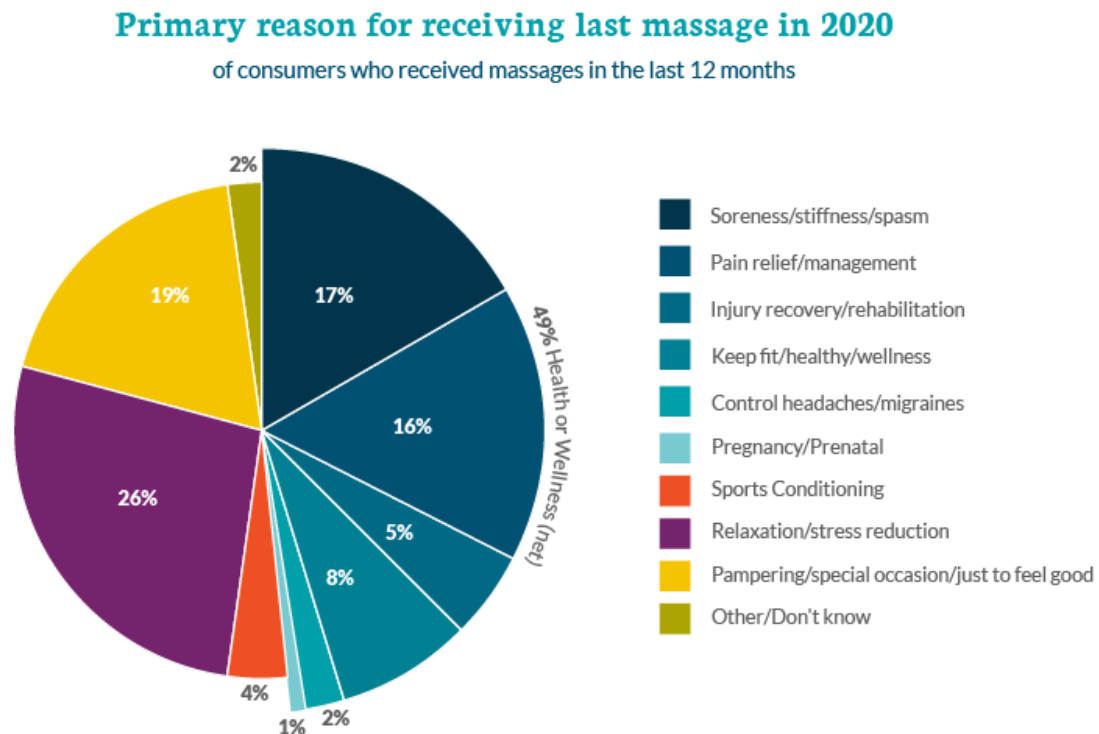


Figure 7. Primary reasons for receiving last massage in 2020

Highlights from Figure 7

Forty-nine percent of all consumers received their last massage for a health or wellness reason.

Twenty-seven percent of consumers received their last massage for relaxation and stress reduction.

Nineteen percent of consumers received their last massage for pampering.

See figure 8 for more detailed information about why consumers received any massage in 2020, not just their last massage.

Primary reason for receiving any massage in 2020

of consumers who received massages in the last 12 months

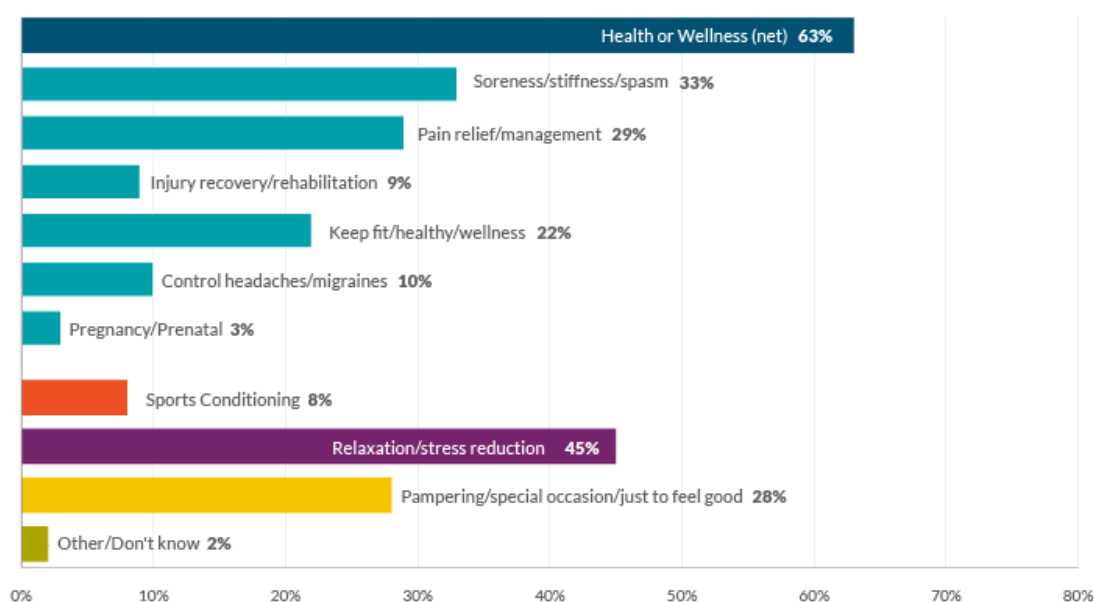


Figure 8. Primary reasons for receiving any massage in 2020

Highlights from Figure 8

Sixty-three percent of consumers received a massage in the 12 months ending June 2020 for a health or wellness reason.

Forty-five percent of consumers received a massage for relaxation and stress reduction.

Twenty-eight percent of consumers received a massage for pampering.

Health or wellness reasons – Sixty-three percent of massage consumers had a massage in the 12 months ending June 2020 for health or wellness reasons. Of these, 49% had their last massage for a health or wellness reason.

- Of massage consumers, 65% percent of men and 61% of women received a massage for a health or wellness reason.
- Sixty-eight percent of massage consumers who have a high school degree or less got a massage for a health or wellness reason in 2020.
- Seventy percent of massage consumers who earn \$100,000 or more per year got a massage for a health or wellness reason in 2020.

- Sixty-nine percent of massage consumers aged 45 to 54 got a massage for a health or wellness reason in 2020.
- Of consumers who got their last massage for health or wellness reasons in 2020, 30% stated that the massage was part of a treatment plan put together by a doctor or medical provider.

The top individual reasons for getting their last massage in the 12 months ending June 2020 were:

Relaxation/stress – Forty-five percent of massage consumers got a massage for relaxation/stress in 2020, with 27% getting their last massage for this reason.*

- Forty-nine percent of massage consumers who had not completed college got a massage for relaxation/stress in 2020.
- Forty-three percent of massage consumers in households with a child under 13 had a massage for relaxation/stress.
- Fifty-six percent of massage consumers with household incomes between \$50,000 and less than \$100,000 got a massage for relaxation/stress.
- Forty-seven percent of massage consumers aged 18 to 34 got a massage for relaxation/stress in 2020.

*For purposes of this report, relaxation and stress relief were not included under health or wellness reasons for massage.

For soreness/stiffness/spasms – Thirty-three percent of massage consumers got a massage for soreness/stiffness/spasms in 2020.

- Thirty-seven percent of male consumers and 30% of female consumers received a massage for soreness/stiffness/spasms in 2020.
- Thirty-nine percent of those over 65 who received a massage in 2020 got a massage for soreness/stiffness/spasms. Those massage consumers aged 18 to 34 were least likely to get a massage for soreness/stiffness/spasms, with 30% getting a massage for this reason.

Pain relief/pain management – Twenty-nine percent of massage consumers got a massage in 2020 for pain relief/pain management.

- Forty-three percent of massage consumers aged 55 to 64 got a massage for pain relief/management. Those massage consumers aged 35 to 44 were least likely to get a massage for pain relief/pain management, with 24% getting a massage for this reason.
- Twenty-six percent of men and 32% of women got a massage for pain relief or management in 2020.
- The number of Americans who have ever used massage therapy for pain relief was 25% in 2020.

Pampering/just to feel good/special occasion – Twenty-eight percent of massage consumers received a massage for pampering/just to feel good/special occasion in 2020, with 19% receiving their last massage for this reason.

- Twenty-one percent of male massage consumers and 35% of female massage consumers received a massage for pampering reasons in 2020.
- Forty-three percent of massage consumers over 65 years of age received a massage for pampering reasons in 2020, the highest percent of any age group.
- Thirty-nine percent of massage consumers with a household income of \$100,000 or above had a massage for pampering reasons.

To keep fit/healthy/for wellness/prevention/improve quality of life – Twenty-two percent of massage consumers received a massage for general wellness in 2020, with 8% receiving their last massage primarily for this reason.

- Twenty-six percent of male massage consumers and 18% of female massage consumers received a massage general wellness reasons in 2020.
- Twenty-eight percent of massage consumers aged 35 to 44 and the same percentage of consumers age 45 to 54 received a massage for general wellness reasons in 2020.

1G. Where are consumers getting massage?

Consumers go to an average of roughly two different locations for massage in a given year.

Forty-one percent of massage consumers got a massage at a spa in 2020, and 23% got their last massage at a spa. Twenty percent of massage consumers reported receiving their last massage at a massage therapist's office or location in 2020, but 38% of massage consumers visited a massage therapist's office in 2020. The next most popular locations to receive massage were massage franchises or chains, hotel/resort/cruise, and beauty salon. Note that some consumers may not see the distinction between a spa, franchise, and often a massage therapist's office. (See Figure 9 to show where consumers got their last massage, and where they received any massage in the past year.)

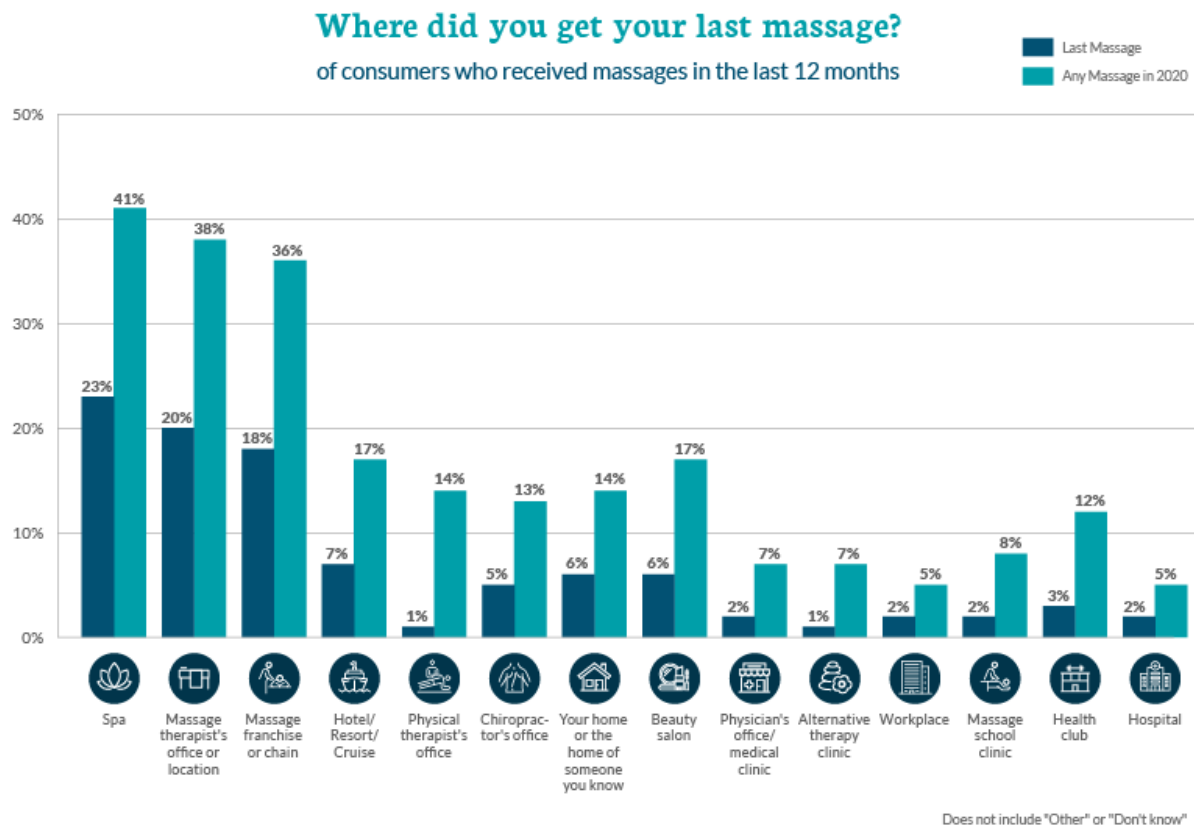


Figure 9. Where did you get massage in 2020?

Highlights from Figure 9

41% of consumers got a massage at a spa in the 12 months ending June 2020.

38% of consumers got a massage at a therapist's office or location in the 12 months ending June 2020.

Spas – Twenty-three percent of all massage consumers received their last massage at a spa in 2020.

- Twenty-four percent of female massage consumers got their last massage at a spa in 2020. Forty-two percent of female massage consumers got a massage at a spa in 2020.
- 23% of men got their last massage at a spa in 2020. Forty percent of male massage consumers got a massage at a spa in 2020.

Massage Therapist's office/location – Thirty-eight percent of massage consumers got a massage at a massage therapist's office/location in 2020, and 20% received their last massage at this practice type.

- Thirty-three percent of massage consumers aged 45-54 got their last massage at a massage therapist's location or office in 2020. Thirteen percent of massage consumers aged 18-34 got their last massage at a massage therapist's office in 2020.
- Twenty-four percent of massage consumers with a household income of less than \$50,000 got their last massage at a massage therapist's office/location.
- Nineteen percent of male massage consumers and 21% of female massage consumers received their last massage at a massage therapist's office.

Massage Therapy Franchise or Chain – Eighteen percent of massage consumers received their last massage at a name brand franchise or chain in 2020. But, 36% of massage consumers visited a massage franchise or chain in 2020.

- Twenty-one percent of female massage consumers and sixteen percent of male massage consumers got their last massage at a name brand chain in 2020.
- Twenty-two percent of consumers with a high school degree or less got their last massage at a name brand chain in 2020.
- Note that many consumers may not differentiate between a spa and a massage franchise or chain, especially since many national franchises or chains are now offering spa services along with massage services.

Your Home or the Home of Someone You Know – Six percent of massage consumers received their last massage at their home or the home of someone they know in 2020. Overall, 14% of massage consumers had a home based massage in 2020.

- Eight percent of male consumers got their last massage in their home or the home of someone they know in 2020.
- Five percent of females got their last massage in their home or in the home of someone they know in 2020.
- Twelve percent of consumers with a child between the ages of 13 and 17 got their last massage at their home or the home of someone they know in 2020.

Section 2 — The Massage Therapy Profession⁷

Knowing the latest trends in the massage profession helps schools provide students with the most current information to make decisions as they begin their massage therapy careers.

This section covers information regarding the massage therapy industry including employment, income, use of technology and work settings.

Key Concerns:

- What changes are occurring in the profession because of COVID-19?
- Are your students informed about compensation, hours and requirements of various work settings, etc.?
- Are your students proficient in technology they may need as they begin their career?

Key Findings:

- Because of COVID-19, upwards of 86% of therapists ceased working at some point during 2020, but as of November 2020, 79% of therapists were working.
- Therapists are changing their business practices because of COVID-19, such as spending more time cleaning and sanitizing their offices and treatment rooms.
- Most massage therapists are women, have some college experience and previously worked in another profession.
- Average gross annual income from massage therapy increased slightly in 2019 (as reported in 2020). This will likely decline because of COVID-19 when numbers are reported next year.
- Referrals from current clients continue to be the most prevalent way consumers find massage therapists.

These questions will be answered:

- 2A. How has COVID-19 impacted the massage profession?
- 2B. Who is practicing massage therapy?
- 2C. How much are massage therapists compensated for their work?
- 2D. What are some of the benefits available to massage therapists?
- 2E. Where are massage therapists practicing?
- 2F. How are therapists using technology in their practice?
- 2G. What's the latest on the spa industry and massage therapy?
- 2H. What impact are national massage chains having on the profession?

2A. How has COVID-19 impacted the massage profession?

COVID-19 had impacted therapists and led to changes in business practice.

The COVID-19 crisis has shaken up the massage profession. As of April 2020, 86% of massage therapists have stated that they have stopped practicing.⁸ By November, 2020, roughly 79% of therapists had stated they were back at work. Numbers do vary greatly state by state, as some areas of the country have more stringent or looser practice regulations because of COVID-19. In some states, upwards of 90% of therapists may be working, and in others it is less than 50%. As some therapists have ceased working, 16% have taken a job outside of massage. However, only about 1% of therapists do not see themselves practicing in the future.

Therapists are also seeing fewer clients on a weekly basis, only seeing about 65% of clients in an average week that they had seen pre-COVID.

Because of COVID-19, therapists are also changing their work practices; see figure 10 for detail on what changes therapists are making at their practices or in their place of employment.

Wearing a mask to provide massage	87%
More thorough cleaning/sanitation procedures	84%
Requiring clients to wear masks for massage	68%
Updating intake forms for clients asking about symptoms of COVID	65%
Longer times between clients	63%
Accepting fewer clients per day	53%
Requesting clients wait in their cars or outside the facility if they arrive early to an appointment	42%
Using contactless or digital payment methods	27%
Altered massage modalities/techniques to require less touch or avoid certain areas of the body	19%
Using digital intake forms instead of paper	18%
Changing work settings or venue where I provide massage	14%
Wearing gloves to provide massage	10%
Switching to disposable table coverings	9%

Figure 10. Percent of therapists that are making specific practice changes because of COVID-19

Highlights from Figure 10

The vast majority of therapists are wearing a mask during massage sessions and doing more thorough cleaning/sanitation practices because of COVID-19.

Along with changes in business practices, COVID-19 has also led to therapists to purchase additional supplies. See figure 11 for the percent of therapists that are buying specific supplies because of COVID-19.

Face masks	82%
Cleaning products	82%
Hand sanitizer	81%
Additional table linens or coverings	48%
Air purification systems	42%
Gloves	38%
Face shields	32%
Table guards	29%
Additional massage tables or other furniture	7%

Figure 11. Percent of therapists that are making specific supply purchases because of COVID-19

Highlights from Figure 11

Facemasks, cleaning products and hand sanitizer are being purchased by the majority of therapists because of COVID-19.

2B. Who is practicing massage therapy?

Over the last decade, the number of massage therapists increased by 19%.

According to the 2020 AMTA Industry Survey, massage therapists in the U.S. are:

- Mostly female — Eighty-eight percent of massage therapists identified as female.
- Educated — Forty-one percent of massage therapists have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher and 90% have achieved formal education levels above a high school diploma or GED. (See Figure 12)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Education (Non-Massage)					
High school grad or less	10%	10%	12%	10%	10%
Some college	24	26	23	21	22
Associate's Degree	19	18	19	20	19
Technical/vocational certificate	10	10	11	11	7
Bachelor's degree	28	27	29	27	30
Master's degree	8	8	6	8	10
Doctorate	1	2	1	2	1

Figure 12. Massage therapists' education

Highlights from Figure 12

41% of massage therapists have completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

90% of massage therapists have formal education beyond the high school level.

Most massage therapists are coming from another profession

- Therapists working as full-time employees are more likely to enter massage therapy as their first career.

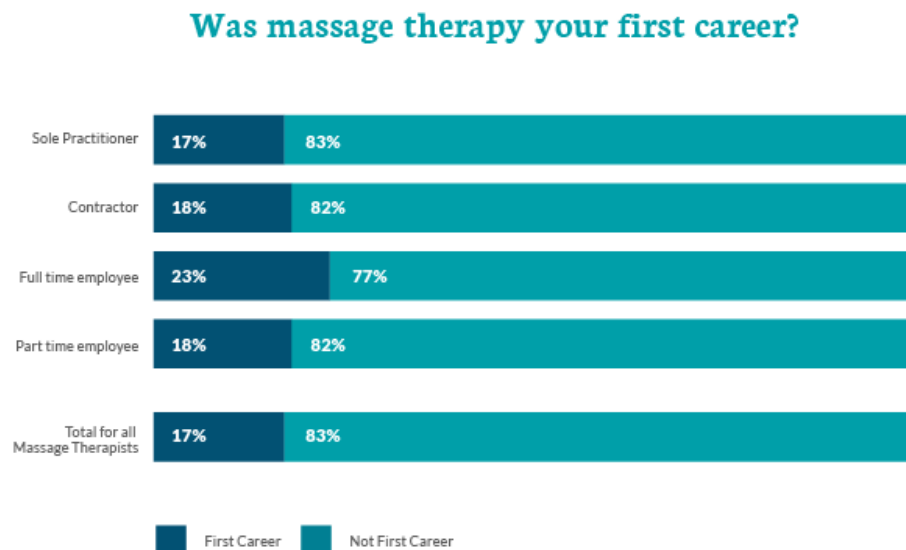


Figure 13. Was massage therapy your first career choice?

Highlights from Figure 13

23% of full time employees are working in massage therapy as a first career.

The number of massage therapists in the U.S. grew over the last decade⁹

Over the past ten years, the estimated number of massage therapists increased nearly 19%.

Between 2019 and 2020, the number of estimated massage therapists is up slightly. What growth that did occur continued to originate in licensed states. Note that even though a massage therapist may be licensed to practice, many therapists still legally able to practice may drop out of the profession, retire, or are temporarily not practicing, yet still show up on a listing of licensed therapists in a state. This group of licensed but inactive therapists may account for up to 12% of all licensed massage therapists. Because of COVID-19, it is likely that the number of therapists may decline next year as there has been a reduction in the

number of graduates entering the profession as many massage schools were closed for some time in the past year.

Figure 14 illustrates the growth of the total estimated number of massage therapists over time.

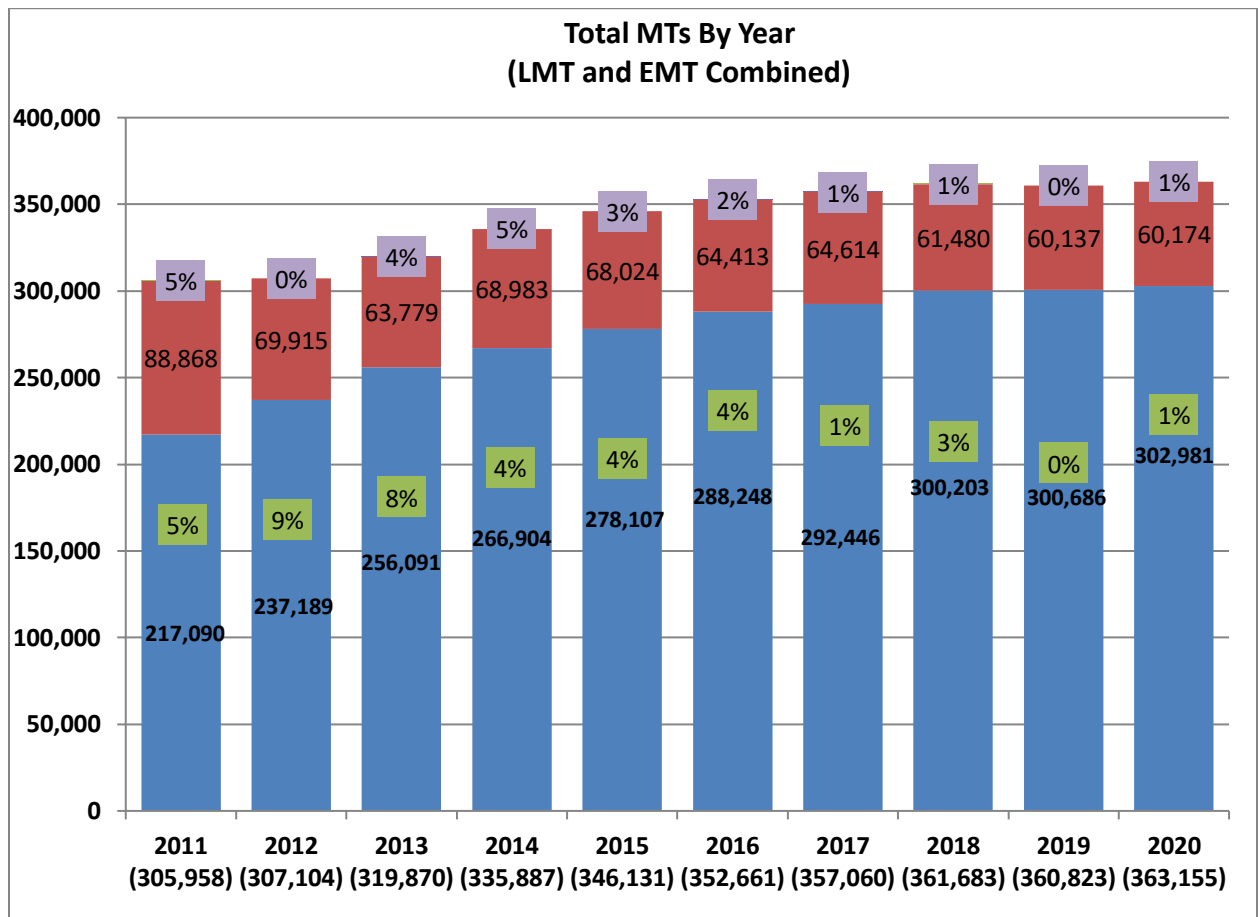


Figure 14. Total number of massage therapists in the U.S.

Highlights from Figure 14

In 2020 there were an estimated 363,155 massage therapists in the United States, which is up roughly 1% from 2019.

**LMT: licensed massage therapists, MT: massage therapists from non-licensing states*

2C. How much are massage therapists compensated for their work?

Massage therapists' compensation per hour increased over previous years.

How much are clients paying for massage?

- Clients paid an average of \$76.48 for one hour of massage, an increase of \$1.25 from the prior year.
- Hotels, resorts and cruises charged clients the most, an average of \$123.18 per hour.
- Hospitals/medical offices/clinics charged the least, an average of \$56.47 per hour.

Average hourly earnings vary greatly based on massage setting

Therapists working in their client's homes made the most, an average of \$80.59 per hour. Those working in massage only franchises and chains made the least, an average of \$22.48 per hour. Note that those therapists that have their own practice have higher expenses from those therapists that are employed. Expenses are not covered in these numbers.

Fifty-eight percent of therapists reported receiving tips over 60% of the time.

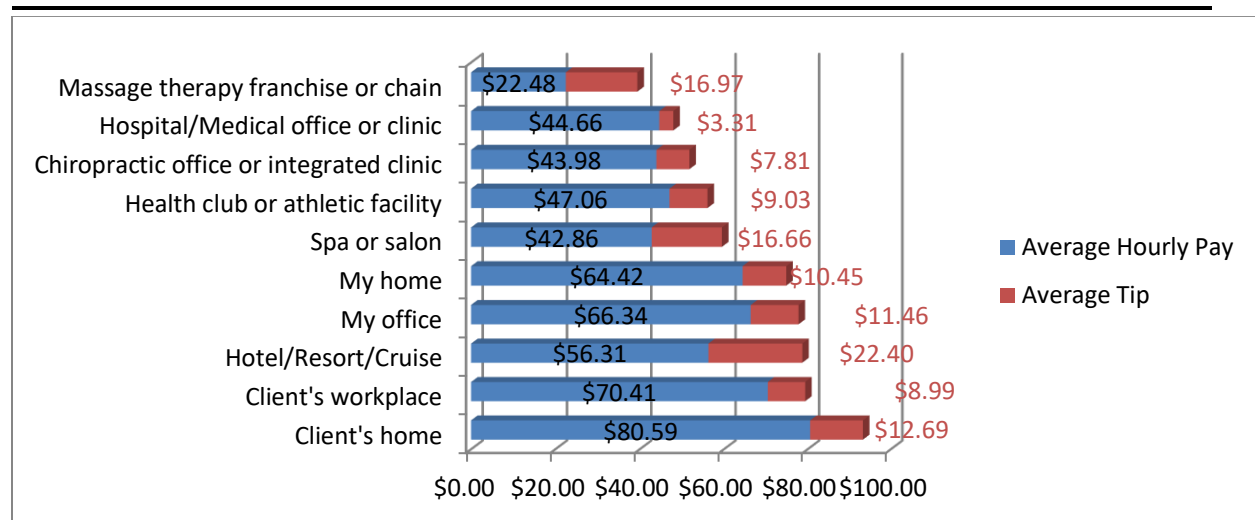


Figure 15. Average 2019 hourly pay and tips for massage therapists by work setting, reported in 2020.

Highlights from Figure 15

Therapists who worked in their clients' homes made the highest hourly wage in 2019.

Therapists who worked in hotels, resorts, and cruises made the highest tips in 2019.

Average income from massage therapy increased slightly in 2019

Massage therapists made more income in 2019 than ever reported before. Note that income varies greatly by type of practice, years in the profession as well as geographic region and other factors. Depending on their work setting or other factors, therapists will have to pay varying levels of taxes on their income, as well as pay for their supplies. This is particularly important for therapists practicing as sole practitioners, who are responsible for deducting their own taxes out of their pay, for purchasing all supplies, and for potentially renting space. Gross annual income does not include deductions for expenses.

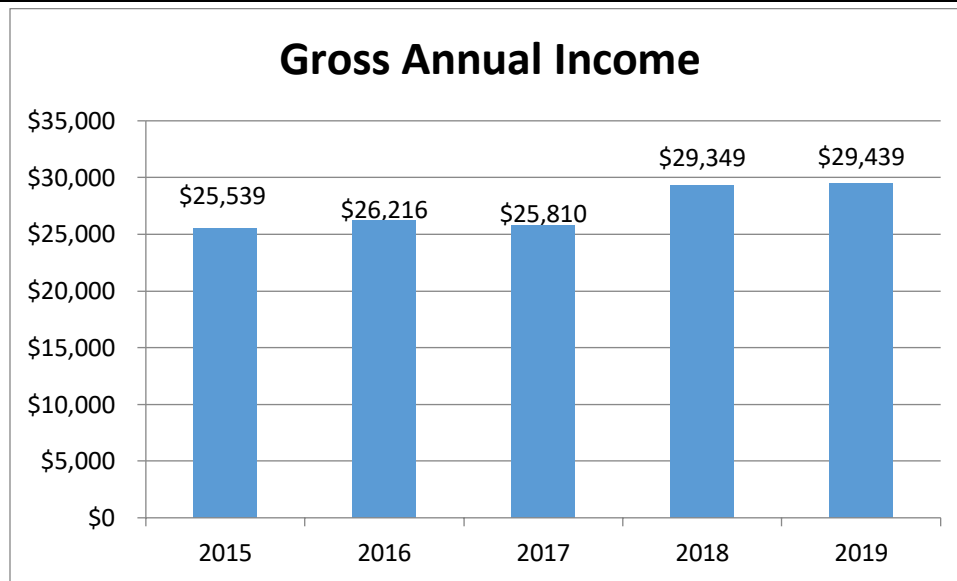


Figure 16. Gross annual income from massage therapy for therapists making at least \$100 from massage in a given year

Highlights from Figure 16

Gross annual income from massage therapy increased by less than 1% from 2018 to 2019.

Massage therapy accounted for nearly 69% of the typical therapist's household income in 2019.

Sixty-three percent of therapists earned all of their annual income from practicing massage therapy, similar to 64% as reported last year.

Annual income also varied by work setting, as outlined in the chart below. Note that these are national averages encompassing a wide range of geographies. Also, note that this is gross income as reported by individual massage therapists, as opposed to net income.

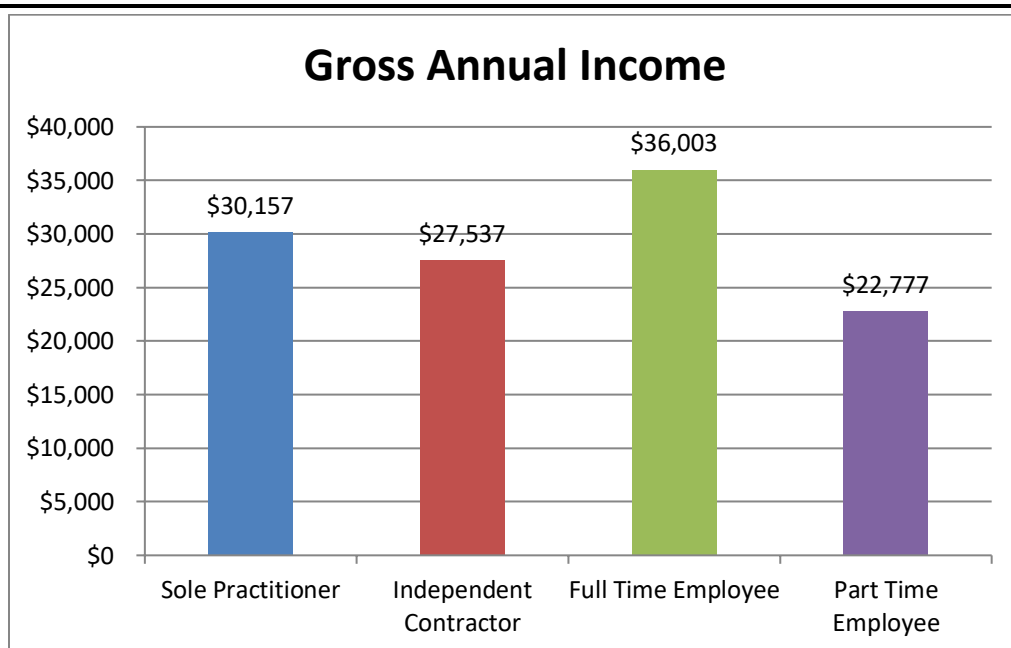


Figure 17. Gross Annual Income of massage therapists in different work settings

Highlights from Figure 17

Full time employees earned the highest annual income, followed by sole practitioners.

Most work settings involve some form of overhead, or costs that are incurred on the part of the employer or business owner. Therefore, when a client pays for a massage, part of the rate the client pays goes to covering facility rent, marketing, supply costs, and various other business expenses and profit. The rest goes to the therapist providing the service. In Figure 18, therapist pay is shown as a percentage of the rate the client is charged.

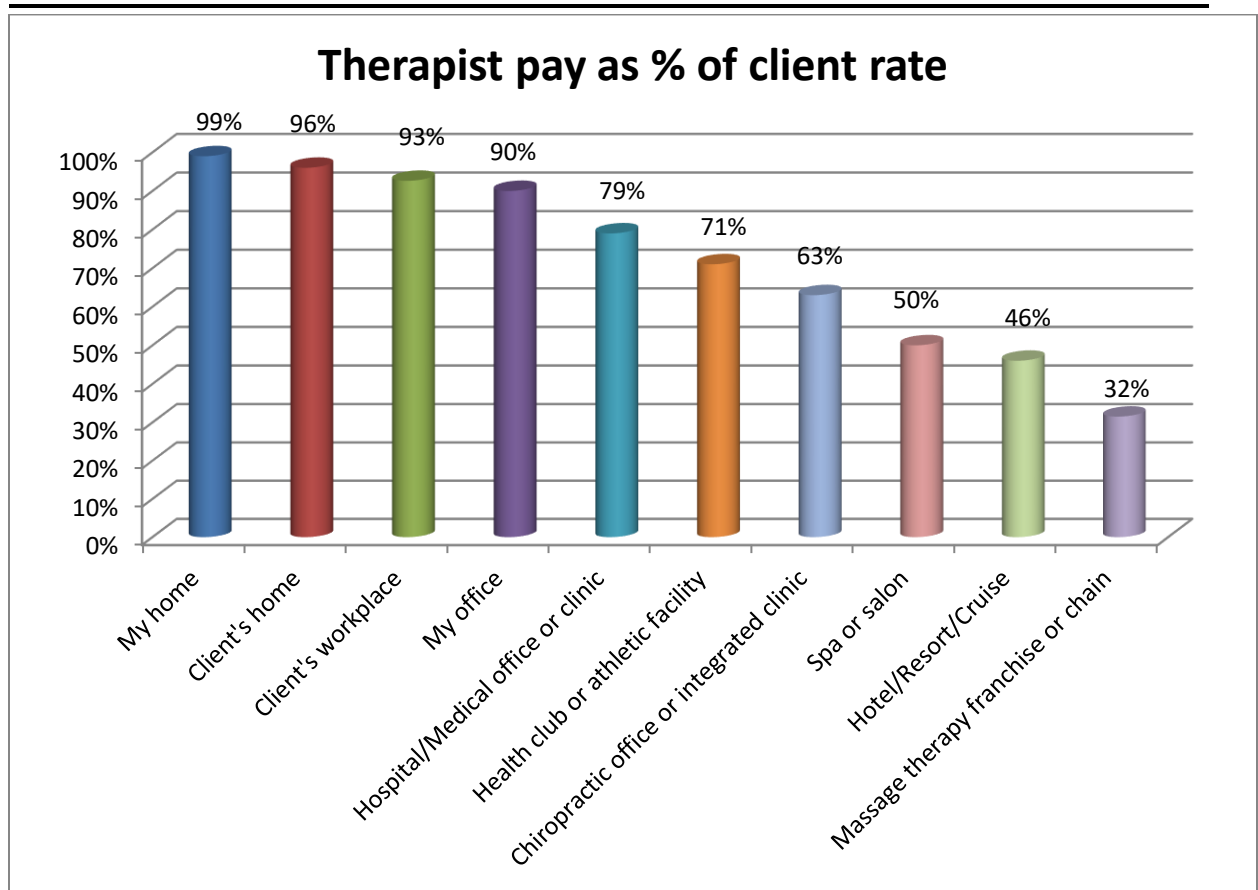


Figure 18. Therapist pay as percentage of client rate in different work settings

Highlights from Figure 18

Those settings that tend to have a larger number of sole practitioners tend to have a higher percent of pay to client rate.

Where consumers find massage therapists and therapists find clients

Massage therapists obtain clients from many sources. Referrals by clients is the most prevalent way that therapist find clients, although most do not actively promote via this medium. See Figure 19 for more detail.

	<i>% of consumers find therapists via this medium</i>	<i>% of therapists who promote via this medium</i>
Referrals by clients	90%	38%
Internet/websites	85	59
Social media	68	79
Community/local events	47	80
Professional networking with other providers	47	82
Locator service	45	81

Figure 19. Where consumers found therapists and where therapists promoted their services.

Highlights from Figure 19

The average therapist uses more than four outlets of communication to promote their practice.

As shown in Figure 20, massage therapists were active in referring clients to each other, although at less frequency than in years past.

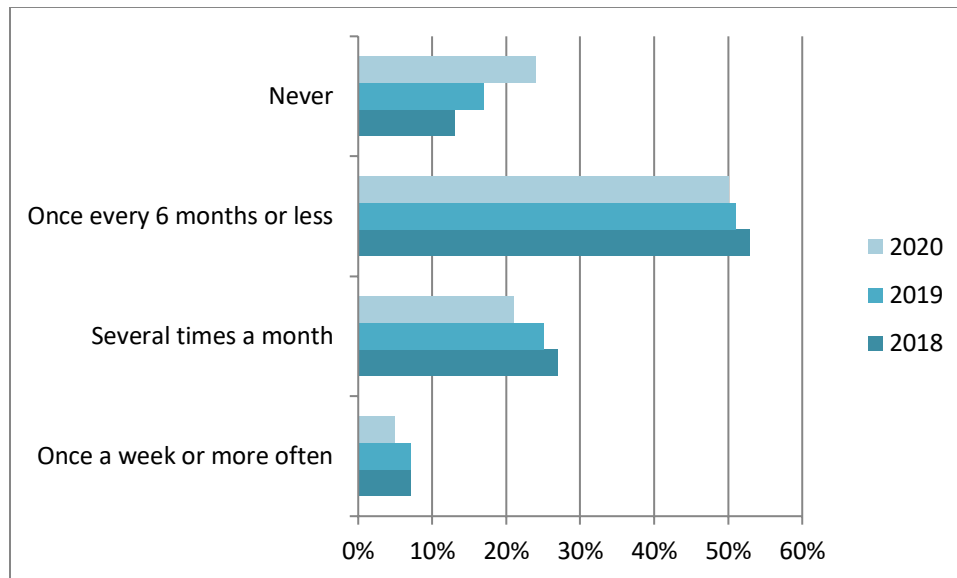


Figure 20. Frequency of receiving referrals from other massage therapists

Highlights from Figure 20

Massage therapists received referrals from other massage therapists less frequently in 2020 than in 2019.

2D. What are some of the benefits available to massage therapists?

When working as an employee, massage therapists may have several benefits available to them.

Massage therapists have many benefits available to them through their employers

- The most frequently offered benefit to employees in 2020 was free or discounted massages.
- Paid time off was the least offered benefit to employees.

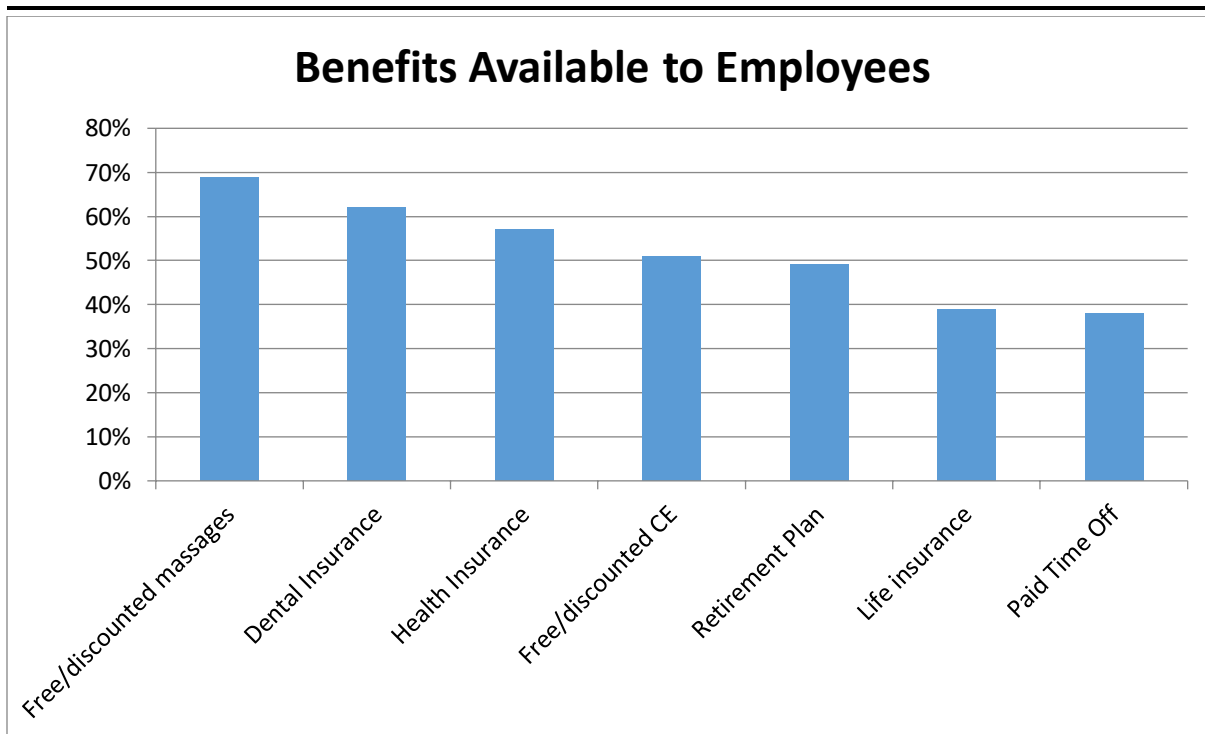


Figure 21. Benefits available to employees through their employers

Highlights from Figure 21

Paid time off and life insurance are the least prevalent benefits among employees.

2E. Where are massage therapists practicing?

Most massage therapists say they are a sole practitioner, at least part of the time.

AMTA's research on the massage industry in 2020 shows that massage therapists:

- Continued to travel to their clients' homes to provide massage. Providing massage in the client's home decreased slightly from 40% in 2019 to 38% in 2020.
- Forty percent of massage therapists provided massage in their offices, a decrease from 2019 numbers.
- Thirty-two percent of massage therapists provided massage in their homes.

See Figure 22 for the visual representation of this data.

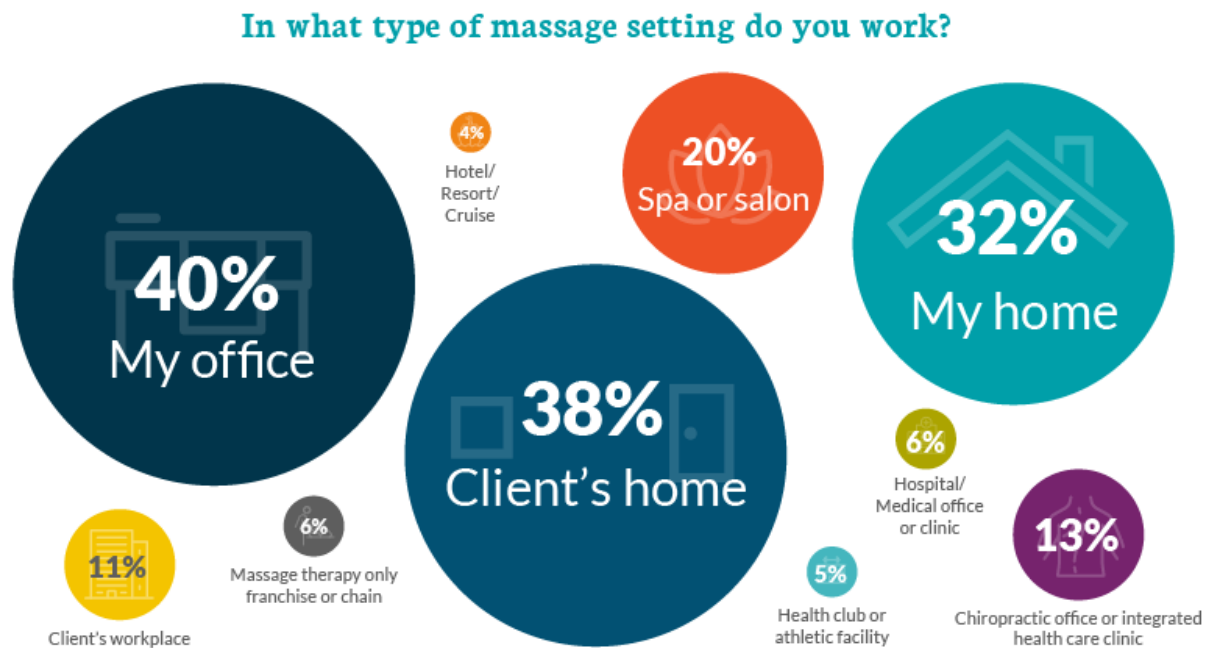


Figure 22. Massage therapists' work settings in 2020

Highlights from Figure 22

The average therapist works in about two settings.

Massage therapists worked in many different employment/practice arrangements. Seventy-two percent of massage therapists described themselves as sole practitioners. Full and part-time employees have been relatively consistent as compared to last year. Note that 11% of therapists worked in more than one practice arrangement. Figure 23 shows the most common types of employment/practice.

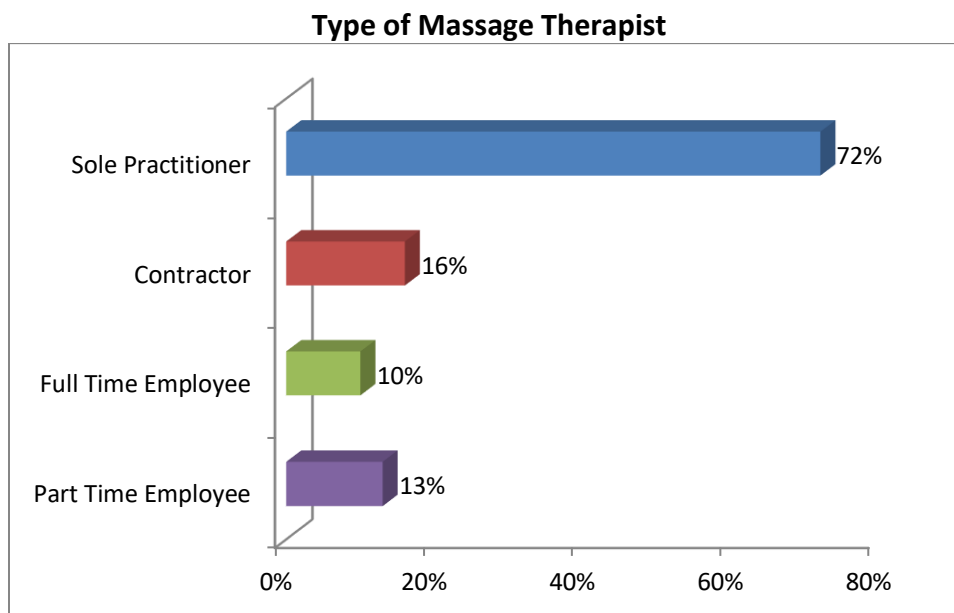


Figure 23. Massage therapists' self-described employment/practice arrangements

Highlights of Figure 23

Seventy-two percent of massage therapists described themselves a sole practitioner. Eleven percent of therapists work in more than one practice arrangement.

Massage therapists had been working more hours

The average work week of massage therapists was 27.2 hours in 2020, up from 26.6 last year. Sixty-eight percent of those hours were spent performing massage. The other time was spent on cleaning and sanitizing massage rooms and offices, marketing, performing general business tasks, filing for insurance reimbursement, and other tasks. See Figure 24 for more details.

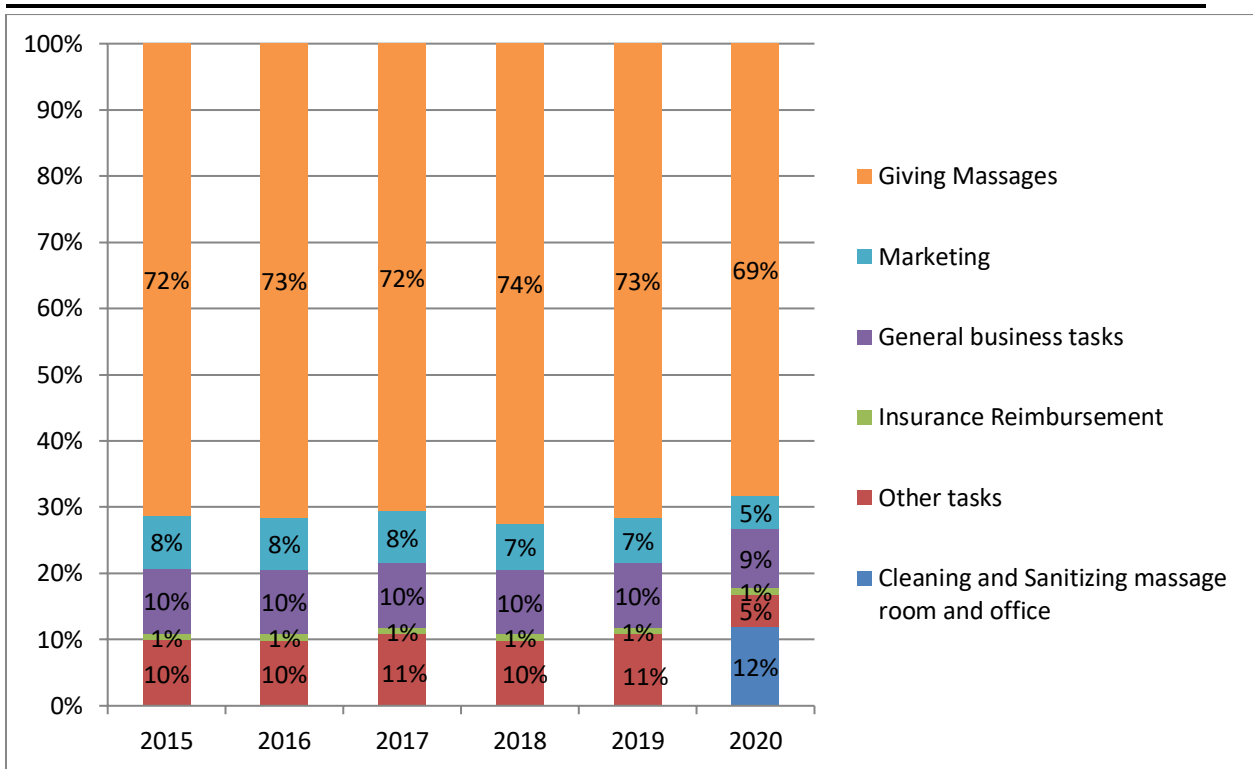


Figure 24. An average work week of a massage therapist
 (Note: because of rounding, totals may equal more than 100%)

Highlights from Figure 24

Insurance reimbursement has comprised a very small percentage of a massage therapist's workweek for the past several years (1%).

In 2020, massage therapists spent 12% of their time cleaning and sanitizing their massage room and office.

2F. How are therapists using technology in their practice?¹⁰

Massage therapists continue to use various technology tools with more frequency in their practices. As the pace of innovation and developments in technology continues to accelerate, and people rely on technology more in their daily lives, there are more options for massage therapists to leverage technology within their practices.

Technology can be used by the massage therapist to book appointments, field intake forms, process payments, provide background music during massages, host a website, take continuing education courses online, and various other uses. Massage therapists use an average of three devices to manage their massage practice.

Devices used by massage therapists in their practices

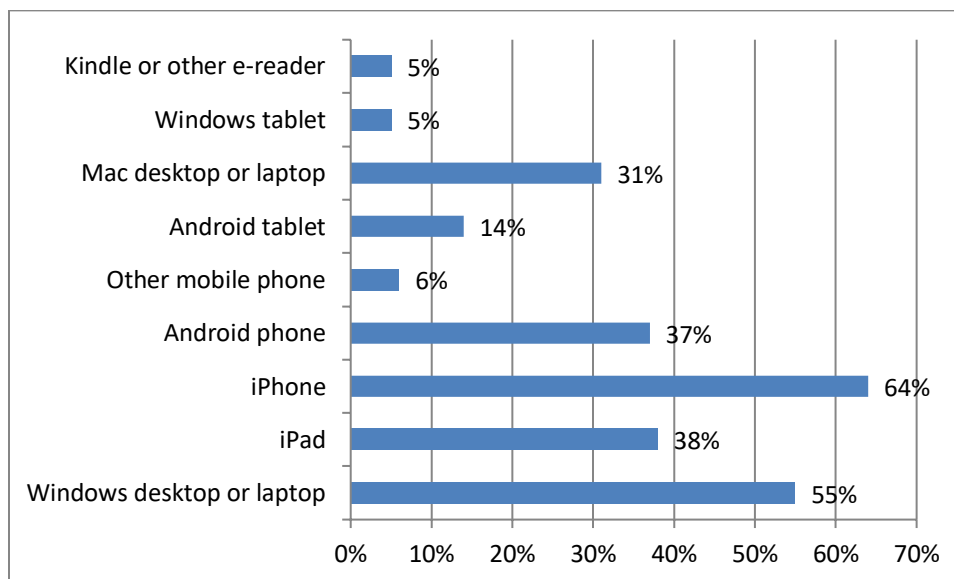


Figure 25. Technology used by massage therapists for their practices

Highlights from Figure 25

Massage therapists used iPhones and Windows desktop or laptops most often to manage their practices in 2020.

Sixty-three percent of massage therapists had websites for their practices, and an additional 10% planned to start one within the next six months. The number of therapists with an existing website for their practices remained steady from 2018 to 2020. For those therapists working as employees, 66% reported that their employer had a website for the business.

Online tools for promotion and management of practice

Massage therapists use a variety of tools to promote and manage their practices. We asked both massage therapists who have their own practices and those who are employees to tell us how they or their employers used technology to manage their business. Note that some employees may not know all the methods their employer uses to promote their business. See Figure 26 below for more details.

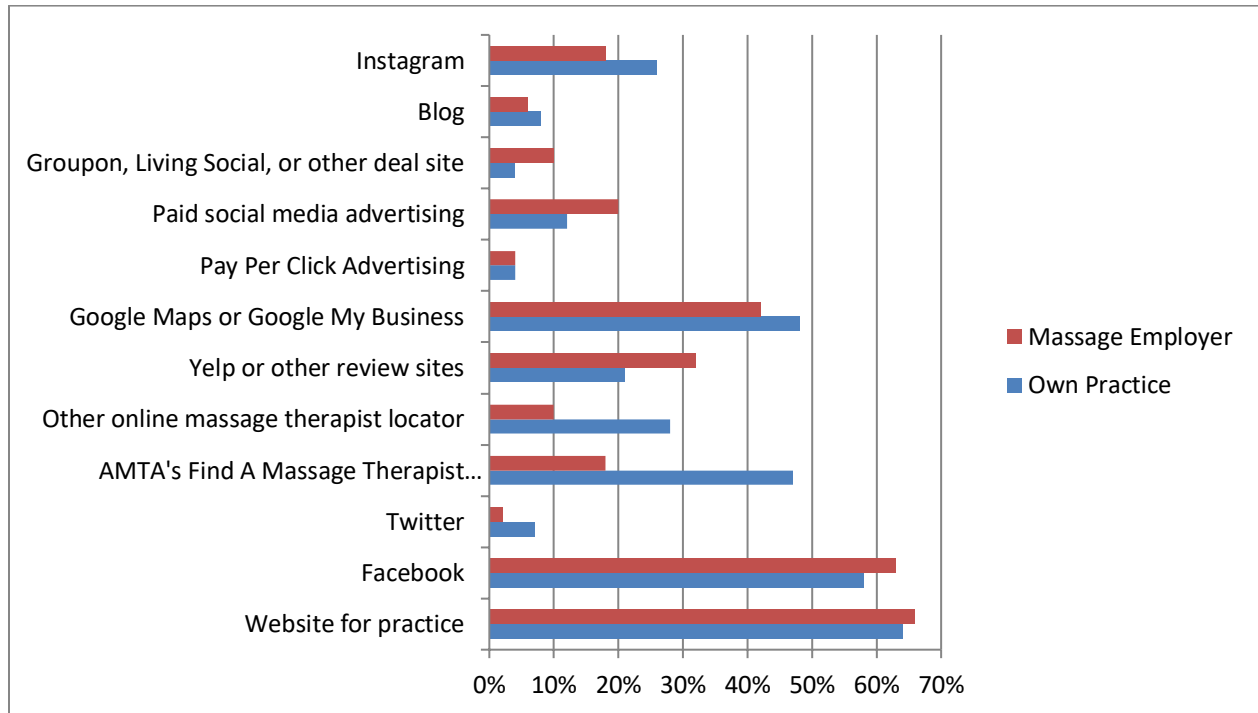


Figure 26. Online promotion tools used to promote massage

Highlights from Figure 26

Websites and Facebook remain the most prevalent tools used for therapist and employers to promote their practice.

Massage therapists also used other digital tools to facilitate the management of their practices. See Figure 27.

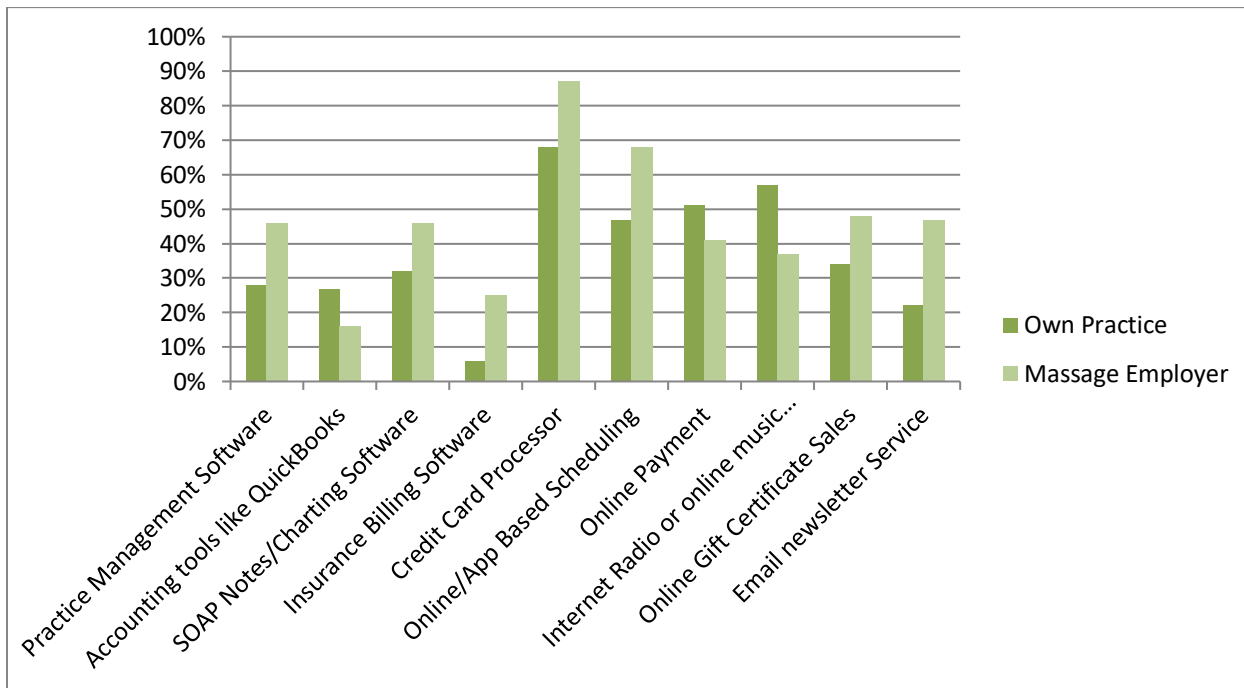


Figure 27 Digital tools to facilitate practice management

Highlights from Figure 27

Credit card processors are used by both employers and therapists that have their own practice.

Social Media Use by Massage Therapists

Massage therapists used a variety of social media for both professional and personal reasons. The table below shows which sites are used for which purposes. Facebook continues to be the most used social media outlet for therapists, with TikTok, Snapchat and Twitter being the least used.

Where and Why Massage Therapists Use Social Media						
	Mostly for Practice Use	Mostly for Personal Use	Use for Both	Plan to Use in Future for Massage Practice	Plan to Use in Future for Personal	Do not Use
Facebook	9%	22%	47%	2%	0%	20%
Twitter	2%	13%	3%	2%	1%	80%
LinkedIn	17%	9%	11%	5%	1%	57%
Pinterest	2%	28%	7%	1%	0%	61%
Instagram	7%	21%	18%	4%	1%	50%
Snapchat	0%	15%	1%	0%	1%	83%
TikTok	1%	6%	1%	1%	1%	91%
YouTube	6%	21%	21%	3%	1%	48%

Figure 28. Social media used by massage therapists

Highlights from Figure 28

Massage therapists used Pinterest, Facebook, and Instagram mostly for personal use. LinkedIn was frequently used for mostly professional purposes. Twitter, Snapchat and TikTok are not widely used among massage therapists.

Massage therapists used social media sites for a variety of different reasons, both professional and personal. Figure 29 shows the main reasons.

Why Massage Therapists use Social Media

Keep in touch with friends and family	81%
Follow businesses or causes I care about	59%
Promote massage practice	47%
Catch up on news	47%
Keep updated with news about COVID and massage	45%
Keep up with trends in the massage therapy industry	43%
Network with other massage therapists	39%
Find old friends or coworkers	35%
Keep in touch with clients	31%

Figure 29 Reasons massage therapists use social media

Highlights from Figure 29

Massage therapists used social media primarily for keeping in touch with friends and family.

Social media was not used as frequently for catching up on news or keeping in touch with clients.

2G. What's the latest on the spa industry and massage therapy?¹¹

According to the ISPA 2020 U.S. Industry Big Five Study, covering 2019 activity, spa visits and revenue increased for another consecutive year. This research includes activity before the COVID-19 pandemic and crisis.

Spa visits increased in 2019

- Spa visits increased 1.1% from 2018 to 2019.
- Spa industry revenue reached \$19.1 billion in 2019.

Year	Estimated spa visits	Estimated spa industry revenue
2010	150 million	\$ 12.8 billion
2011	156 million	\$ 13.4 billion
2012	160 million	\$ 14.0 billion
2013	164 million	\$ 14.7 billion
2014	176 million	\$ 15.5 billion
2015	179 million	\$ 16.3 billion
2016	184 million	\$ 16.8 billion
2017	187 million	\$ 17.5 billion
2018	190 million	\$ 18.3 billion
2019	192 million	\$ 19.1 billion

Figure 30. Information on spa revenue and visits

Highlights from Figure 30

Spa visits increased 28% from 2010 to 2019.

Estimated revenue for the spa industry increased 49% from 2010 to 2019.

The number of spa locations continues to increase

The number of spa locations increased by 270 locations from 2018 to 2019. (See Figure 31).

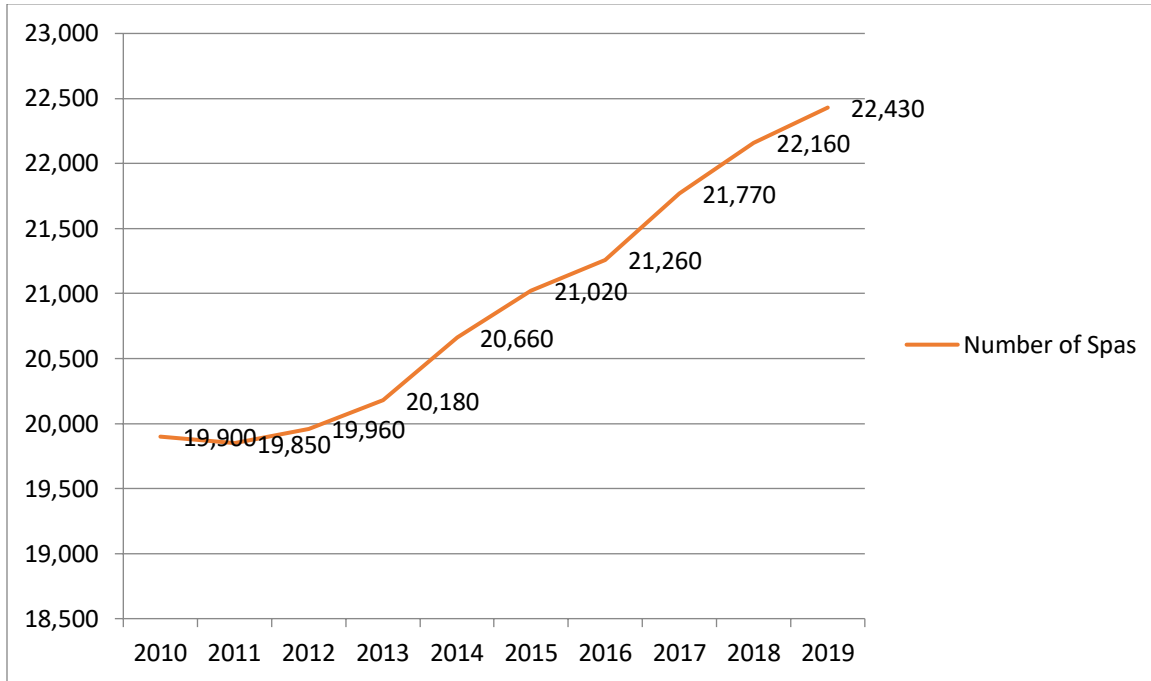


Figure 31. Growth in Spa Locations (US)

Highlights from Figure 31

The number of spa locations grew 1.2% from 2018 to 2019.

Other findings regarding the spa industry:

- Average revenue per spa visit increased 3.1% to \$99.50 per visit in 2019.
- Total employment in the spa industry as a whole increased 1.5% to 383,700 in December 2019, from 377,900 in May 2018. The number of full-time employees increased 3% over this time period to 177,100. Part-time employment increased 0.2% to 178,800. The number of contract employees in the spa industry increased 1.5% to 27,800.
- Spa visits by consumers decreased in 2020 due to the pandemic, with 85% of spas citing a drop in consumer visits in the third quarter of 2020.
- COVID-19 impacted spa staffing as well, with 32% of spas saying they were filling vacant positions only, and an additional 13% implementing or continuing an existing hiring freeze. Just 19% of spas said they were laying off employees in the third quarter of 2020.
- In 2020, because of COVID-19, any gains the spa industry had seen in the previous five years were mitigated.
- Revenue growth is expected to be 2.7% per year from 2020 to 2025 for the spa industry, as the economy is expected to improve during this time period.¹²

Massage therapists' employment in spas is down slightly

- AMTA research shows that 20% of massage therapists worked in spas or salons in 2020, down slightly from last year.⁷

2H. What impact are national massage chains having on the profession?

Franchises and chains continue to open new locations

National massage chains continued to expand

National massage chains have been growing for the past several years. In 2020, this growth was expected to continue, but COVID-19 led to reduced expansion of this market.

Per the 2020 AMTA Consumer study, 36% of massage consumers had a massage at a franchise or chain in the previous 12 months, and 18% of massage consumers stated they had their last massage in a franchise or chain. Note that some consumers may not differentiate between a spa and a national massage chain.¹

Six percent of massage therapists worked at national massage chains in 2020. Here again, some therapists may report that they work in a spa as opposed to a franchise or chain.

The main players in the massage chain market include:

Massage Envy was established in Arizona in 2002 and has roughly 1,150 locations in 49 states. Approximately 1.65 million consumers are members of Massage Envy locations. Massage Envy is the largest employer of massage therapists in the country, with more than 35,000 massage therapists and estheticians employed by the company.

Hand and Stone has over 470 locations throughout the United States and Canada. The company is headquartered in Pennsylvania, was founded in 2004, and began franchising in 2006.

Elements Therapeutic Massage employs over 3,000 massage therapists at their roughly 250 locations in the United State and Canada.

Massage Heights originated in San Antonio, Texas in 2004. The company has roughly 140 locations.

Outcall massage services managed through companies like **Soothe** and **Zeel** allow consumers to request massage at their homes, offices, or hotels. The companies vet the therapists, consumers, and process the payments. Consumers can schedule a massage in advance or get a therapist within an hour via a mobile app. Soothe operates in over 70 cities in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia with dozens more in the works. Zeel operates in roughly 77 cities in the United States.

There are dozens of other franchise concepts in the massage market that have developed over the past several years.

Section 3 — Health Care and the Massage Profession

Consumers continue to seek massage for health and wellness reasons. As the health care industry continues to grow, health care providers are more commonly viewing massage therapy as a beneficial option to address health concerns.

This section discusses dynamics of the health care industry and the participation of massage therapists in this sector.

Key Concerns:

- How is massage therapy being affected by the growth of the health care industry?
- How much are insurance companies reimbursing massage therapists?
- In what ways is massage therapy being integrated into various health care environments?

Key Findings:

- The health care industry is projected to become the largest employment sector of the US economy.
- Ninety-six percent of massage therapists think that massage should be considered a part of health care.
- Forty-nine percent of Americans who got a massage in the 12 months ending June 2020 got their last massage for a health or wellness reason.
- Consumers are going to many different sorts of locations, even spas or massage franchises for pain relief/pain management issues.
- Seventy-six percent of Americans would like their health care plan to cover massage.

These questions will be answered:

- 3A. Is the health care industry growing?
- 3B. What do massage therapists think about health care integration?
- 3C. How are consumers using massage as part of an integrated approach to health care?
- 3D. What changes are occurring with massage and insurance?

3A. Is the health care industry growing?¹³

Health care continues to be the fastest growing segment of the U.S. economy.

- Health care positions are expected to have the fastest job growth and add the most job growth between 2019 and 2029. Health care is projected to surpass state and local government during the decade as the largest employment sector of the US economy.
- Between 2019 and 2029, nearly 1 in 4 new jobs will be in health care support occupations, health care practitioners, or technical occupations around health care. These sectors will add an estimated 2.4 million jobs to the economy in the coming years.
- Consumer spending on health care increased 4.6% from 2018 to 2019, to \$11,582 per person. Health care spending comprised 17.7% of Gross Domestic Product or GDP in 2019. Of all health care spending, 61% is hospital care, physician and clinical services, and prescription drug purchases.¹⁴
- Continued increases in both the overall size of the health care industry and in consumer spending on health care demonstrate increased demand for health care related products and services. These trends are expected to continue as the U.S. population ages, leading to a greater demand for all health care services.

3B. What do massage therapists think about health care integration?

Massage therapists continue to support integration of massage therapy into health care⁷

Ninety-six percent of massage therapists think that massage should be considered part of health care. Therapists indicated the following as the most important ways to accomplish this integration. See Figure 32 for more information.

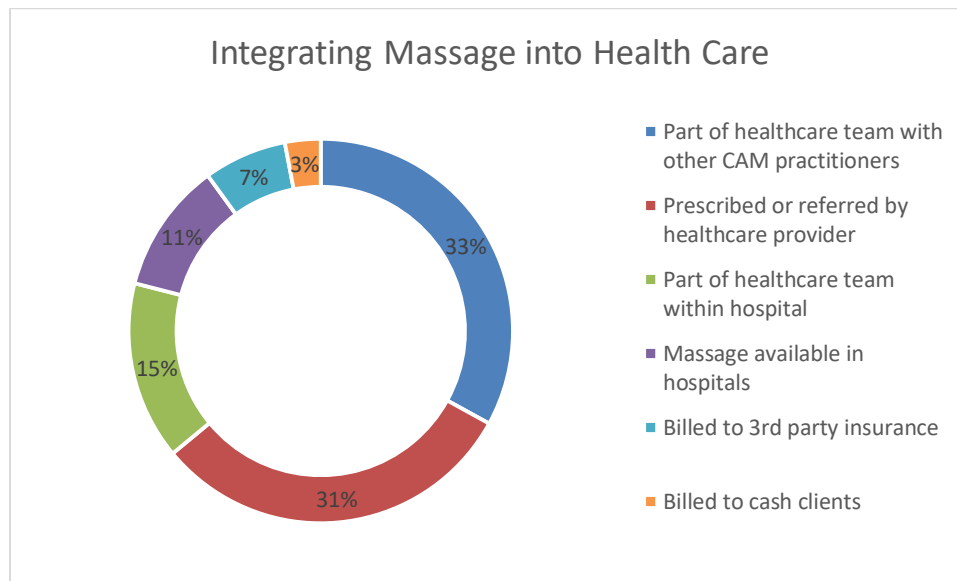


Figure 32. Therapist preference for health care integration

Highlights from Figure 32

The most prevalent way therapists would want to see integration into healthcare is through being a part of a healthcare team with other CAM practitioners.

Additionally, 58% of therapists believe that the massage therapy profession is respected by traditional health care providers, versus 22% who feel it is not respected.

AMTA support of integration of massage and health care

AMTA continues to expand its relationships so that massage therapy is recognized as a significant contributor to the field of health care. The association's efforts include public education on the efficacy of massage therapy and the professionalism of AMTA members; ongoing partnerships to advance massage therapy education and standards; expanding relations with a variety of health care associations/stakeholders to build respect for the profession; engaging state and federal government agencies and organizations to increase opportunities for continued integration of massage therapy into health care; and advancing massage therapy research through the association's support of the Massage Therapy Foundation. Despite the challenges that 2020 presented, AMTA continued to move the needle in support and promotion of the integration of massage therapy as part of the healthcare system.

AMTA's efforts in 2020 to achieve these goals included the following measures:

- In August, AMTA submitted a joint letter to the House of Representative's Energy & Commerce Committee encouraging hearings on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Pain Task Force and adoption of legislation to promote massage as well as other integrative therapies.
- In June, AMTA submitted a letter to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of a the CDC's *Request for Comment on Management of Acute and Chronic Pain* addressing the efficacy of massage therapy as a non-pharmacological approach to pain management.
- In May, on behalf of AMTA as a representative of the massage therapy profession, Massage Therapy Foundation President Doug Nelson served as a panelist at the Alliance to Advance Comprehensive Integrative Pain Management (AACIPM). In the virtual symposium, Nelson presented on the value of massage therapy in an integrative care environment. Additional presenters and attendees included the Veteran's Administration, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), United Health Care, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well as practitioner representatives from both major integrative care practices and patient advocacy groups.
- AMTA participated in a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) 'listening session' on the inclusion of complementary and integrative therapies for pain and subsequently sent follow up comments to CMS on the importance of massage therapy for patients with pain.
- In late 2020, AMTA submitted comments, on behalf of the massage profession, to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) as part of the agency's Request for Supplemental Evidence and Data Submissions concerning 'Treatments for Acute Pain: A Systematic Review.'

- Actively engaged in regular outreach with a bipartisan coalition (Voices for Non Opioid Choices) to support legislation to promote the Non-Opioids Prevent Addiction in the Nation Act (“NOPAIN Act”), which included AMTA-suggested language, and coordinated almost 9,000 grassroots letters of support from massage therapists across the country. Prior to COVID-19 closing the federal government, AMTA also participated in a Hill briefing to help grow support for the bill.
- AMTA staff successfully worked and communicated with a variety of states during the COVID-19 pandemic on the role of massage therapy as a legally recognized healthcare profession. The intent of these efforts were to (1) request that government officials cease using defamatory language when referencing massage therapy and massage therapists and (2) to educate states on massage therapy so the industry was properly categorized during re-opening guidance.
- AMTA maintained its representation, albeit virtually, as part of the American Medical Association’s (AMA’s) Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Editorial Panel and accompanying Health Care Professionals Advisory Committee (HCPAC). AMTA’s representatives provided input into decisions related to CPT code used by massage therapists. This is of direct benefit to massage therapists who seek insurance reimbursement.

3C. How are consumers using massage as part of an integrated approach to health care? ¹

Consumers maintained their use of massage for medical and health reasons in 2019. Americans solidly believe in the benefits of massage.

Over half of massage consumers used of massage for health and wellness reasons

Overall, 63% of American massage consumers received a massage for health and wellness reasons in 2020. Forty-nine percent of American massage consumers got their last massage for health and wellness reasons per the *2020 AMTA Consumer Survey*.

- Overall, 92% of Americans believed that massage can be effective in reducing pain and 93% believed that massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.
- Eighty-three percent of Americans believe that massage should be considered a form of health care.
- Consumers of all ages are getting massage for health and wellness reasons. All age brackets are using massage for health and wellness reasons. Figure 33 below shows the percentage of each age group who got their last massage for health and wellness reasons.

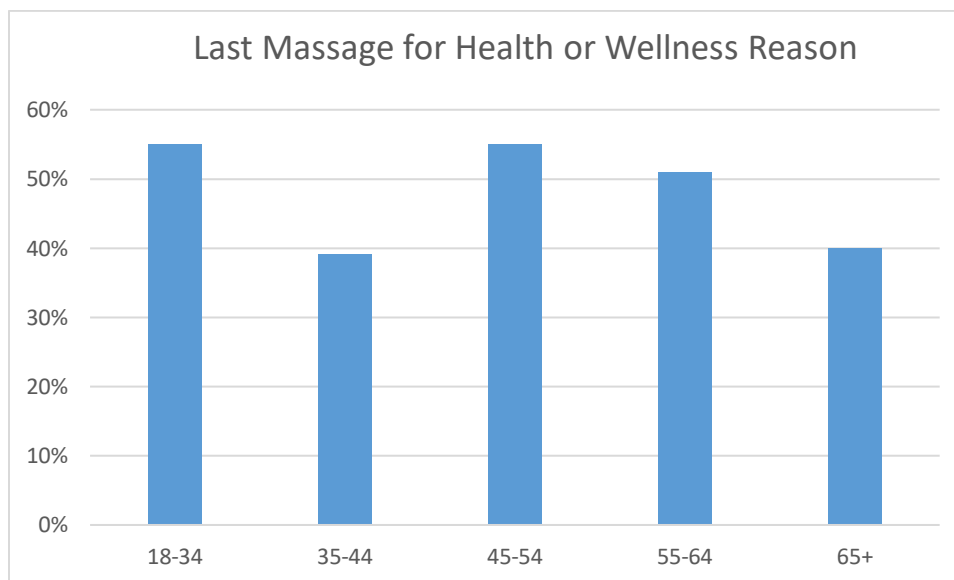


Figure 33. Consumers who got their last massage for health and wellness reasons

Highlights from Figure 33

In 2020, 55% of massage consumers 18-34 got their last massage for health and wellness reasons.

In 2020, 55% of massage consumers 45-54 got their last massage for health and wellness reasons.

In 2020, 51% of massage consumers 55-64 got their last massage for health and wellness reasons.

- Eighteen percent of all consumers surveyed discussed massage therapy with their doctor or health care provider in 2020.
 - Men were more likely than women to discuss massage therapy with their doctor or health care provider. In 2020, 20% of men and 17% of women reported discussing massage therapy with their health care provider.
-

Top medical concerns that drove you to discuss with doctor?

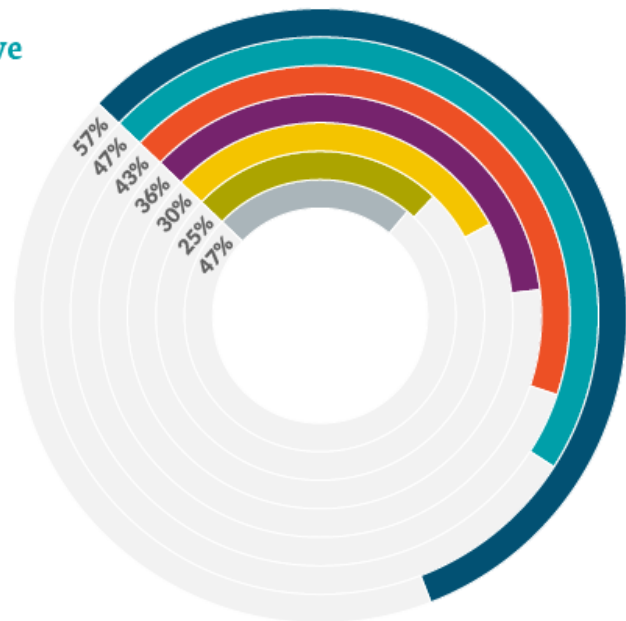
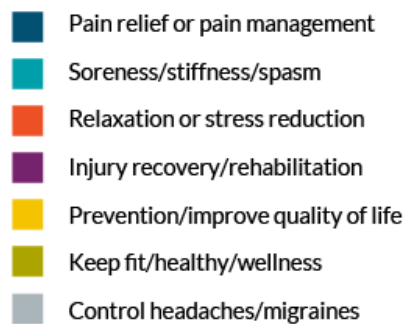


Figure 34. Medical concerns consumers discussed with their doctors

Highlights from Figure 34

Pain relief or pain management was the top concern that drove consumers to discuss massage with their doctors.

Consumers are being encouraged by medical professionals to get massage.

AMTA's consumer research showed that of American adults who discussed massage therapy with their doctor or health care provider, 25% were referred to a massage therapist, 24% were strongly recommended to get a massage by their health care provider, and 23% were encouraged to get a massage. Only 2% of those surveyed reported that their health care provider discouraged them from getting a massage.

For those consumers that talked with their doctor or health care professionals about massage, different groups recommended massage at varying rates. Figure 35 shows the percentage of American adults who received recommendations for massage by the type of health care professional.

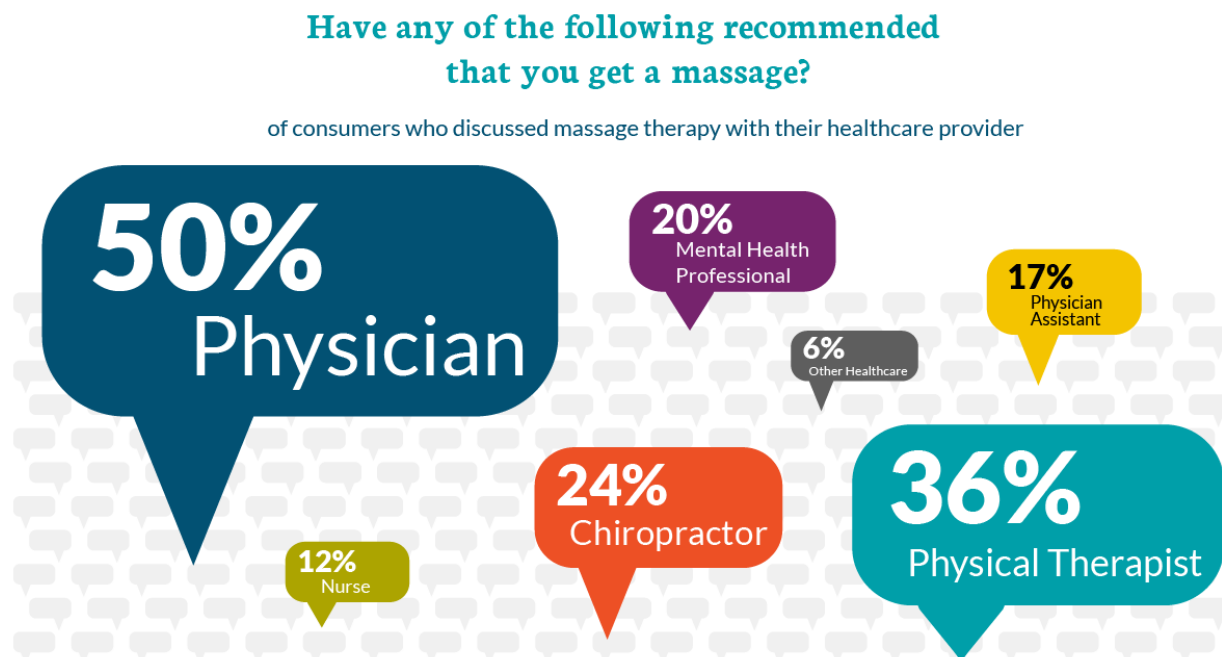


Figure 35. Health care professionals who recommended massage

Highlights from Figure 35

Physicians were the most likely health care professionals to recommend massage, followed by physical therapists and chiropractors.

Massage therapists continued to receive referrals from health care professionals⁷

In the previous section, consumers were asked about medical professionals referring them to massage therapists. This data is reported by practicing massage therapists, and trends the percent of therapists who received referrals from different health care providers.

Percentage of massage therapists who received referral at least once every 6 months by category of referring health care professional

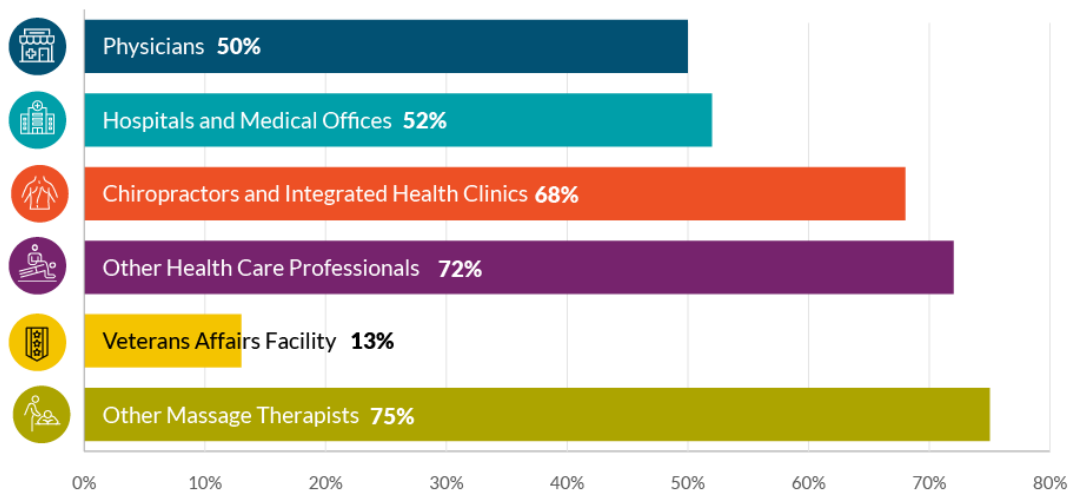


Figure 36. Percentage of massage therapists who received referral at least once every 6 months by category of referring health care professional

Highlights from Figure 36

Half of massage therapists received referrals from physicians at least once every 6 months

Three-fourths of massage therapists referred clients to another massage therapist at least once every 6 months

3D. What changes are occurring with massage and insurance?

Most Americans would like their health insurance to cover massage

Twenty percent of massage therapists were reimbursed by insurance for massage.

For practicing massage therapists, 8% were reimbursed by health insurance (either private payer or public system), 9% by auto insurance, 6% were reimbursed through worker's compensation, and 4% accepted other insurance reimbursement.⁷

Americans would like their health care plans to cover massage

According to AMTA's 2020 Consumer Survey, 76% of adult Americans would like to have their health insurance plan cover massage.

Eighty percent of Americans aged 45 to 54 would like to have their health insurance plan cover massage, higher than all other age brackets. Eighty-four percent of college graduates would also like their health insurance plan to cover massage. Additionally, 82% of those with a household income over \$100 thousand per year would like their health insurance plan to cover massage.

Thirteen percent of consumers surveyed indicated that the payment for their last massage was covered by insurance (health, auto, or worker's compensation insurance).

Massage therapists who use insurance reimbursement find it worthwhile for their business

The 2020 AMTA Industry Survey provides information on insurance reimbursement for auto, medical, worker's compensation and other insurance.

- Insurance reimbursement makes up an average of 28% of revenue for those therapists that accept insurance. Note that some therapists have less than 10% of their yearly revenue from insurance, and some have virtually all of their yearly revenue from insurance reimbursement.
- Depending on the type of insurance, the average amount of reimbursement received varied widely.

Note that reimbursement rates vary by state and plan, and not all states permit insurance reimbursement for massage provided by a massage therapist.

	Average Reimbursement for One Hour of Massage			Worthwhile for Business		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Auto Insurance	\$85	\$86	\$89	85%	88%	80%
Private Payer Health	\$60	\$69	\$72	84%	88%	80%
Public System Health	\$53	\$53	\$52	80%	92%	82%
Worker's Compensation Insurance	\$77	\$73	\$74	85%	87%	84%
Other Insurance	\$73	\$65	\$58	84%	90%	82%

Figure 37. Insurance reimbursement by type of insurance

Highlights from Figure 37

82% of massage therapists accepting other types of insurance reimbursement in 2020 found it worthwhile for their business.

AMTA's 2020 Industry Study shows that:

- Massage therapists working in a hospital, medical office or clinic were paid by patients 38% of the time, insurance 5% of the time, and the facility 57% of the time.
- Therapists employed in a chiropractic office or integrated health care clinic were paid by patients 42% of the time, insurance 7% of the time, and the facility 51% of the time.

Section 4 — Training and Education of Massage Therapists¹⁵

Massage schools continue to provide a diverse course offering that often includes continuing education and online classes.

This section takes an in-depth look at demographics, challenges and opportunities that affect massage therapy schools, teachers, graduates and students.

Key Concerns:

- How can schools attract more students?
- How are schools reacting to COVID-19?
- How can schools support new teachers?
- What benefits do schools provide to teachers?

Key Findings:

- Fifty-four percent of schools had either closed or cancelled classes at some point in 2020.
- Fifty-five percent of schools are seeing reduced enrollment numbers.
- Nearly half of schools are offering online courses for their entry-level massage program.
- The average number of graduates reported per school across all campuses was 33.
- The average amount of initial in-class education that therapists have is 677 hours.

These questions will be answered:

- 4A. How has COVID-19 impacted massage schools?
- 4B. What changes are occurring in length of programs and types of training?
- 4C. What are recent school trends and demographics?
- 4D. What challenges are schools facing?
- 4E. How many schools are accredited?
- 4F. What trends are happening with teachers?
- 4G. What is occurring with new graduates?
- 4H. Who are today's students and how are schools helping them succeed?

4A. How has COVID-19 impacted massage schools?

School have changed many of their procedures because of COVID-19.

Massage schools have been greatly impacted by COVID-19. Since March 2020, 54% of massage schools or programs have had to cancel classes or close their school at some point. As of October 2020, 91% of massage schools stated that they were open in some capacity.

Schools implemented many changes because of COVID-19. Beyond what is listed in Figure 38 below, a large number of schools also report that they have moved classes online, as well as implemented other procedures such as temperature check or requiring students wear gloves during hands-on instruction.

Enhancing cleaning and sanitation procedures in the school	90%
Requiring staff/teachers to wear masks in the school	90%
Requiring students to wear masks in the school	89%
Providing hand sanitizers throughout the school	88%
Increasing distance between students in classrooms	86%
Reducing the number of students in classrooms	64%
Staggering class times to minimize the number of people in the school at any given time	43%
Purchasing air purification systems for the school	27%

Figure 38. Percent of schools that have enacted the following procedures because of COVID-19.

Highlights from Figure 38

Most schools are enhancing their cleaning and sanitation procedures, as well are requiring masks within the school.

Schools have reported that enrollments are down because of COVID-19.

Although several schools are seeing increased enrollments over the past several months, 55% of schools are seeing declining enrolments that can be attributed to the COVID-19 crisis. This coincides with some schools being forced to close for several months, or cut the number of class offerings. Of schools seeing a decline in enrolment, the average amount of decline is roughly 25%.

4B. What changes are occurring in length of programs and types of training?
In 2020, the average massage therapist reported having received slightly more hours of initial training than was reported in 2019.

Most massage therapists graduated from an individually owned, private, for profit massage therapy school

Sixty-nine percent of massage therapists reported they graduated from an individually owned, private, for-profit massage therapy school.⁷

In 2020, 11% of therapists reported graduating from a corporate school and 15% reported graduating from a public institution (community college, city college, state college/university).⁷

A small number of therapists responded that they did not know what type of school they attended.

The total hours of massage therapists' initial training increased in 2020

The average amount of initial training reported by massage therapists on the 2020 AMTA Industry Survey was 677 hours, an increase of 10 hours from 2019. Below is a breakdown of hours of initial training.⁷ (See Figure 39)

Hours of Initial Training	Percentage of Massage Therapists				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Less than 500	13%	15%	16%	15%	16%
500-600	30	31	30	31	30
601-700	14	14	14	14	13
701-900	28	26	27	24	24
901-1,000	9	8	8	8	9
More than 1,000	7	7	6	8	8
Average Number of Hours	673	665	647	667	677

Figure 39. Hours of initial training.

Highlights from Figure 39

Most of the therapists with less than 500 hours of initial training are either more experienced therapists that were grandfathered in to their state license or therapists in unlicensed states.

Only 16% of massage therapists have less than 500 hours of initial training.

Schools are diverse in the type of massage therapy programs they offer

- Ninety-five percent of surveyed schools offer a certificate/diploma in massage therapy.
- Fourteen percent offer an associate degree in massage therapy.
- Forty percent of schools offer continuing education in massage therapy.

For more information, refer to Figure 40.

What type of massage therapy program(s) or education does your school/program currently offer?

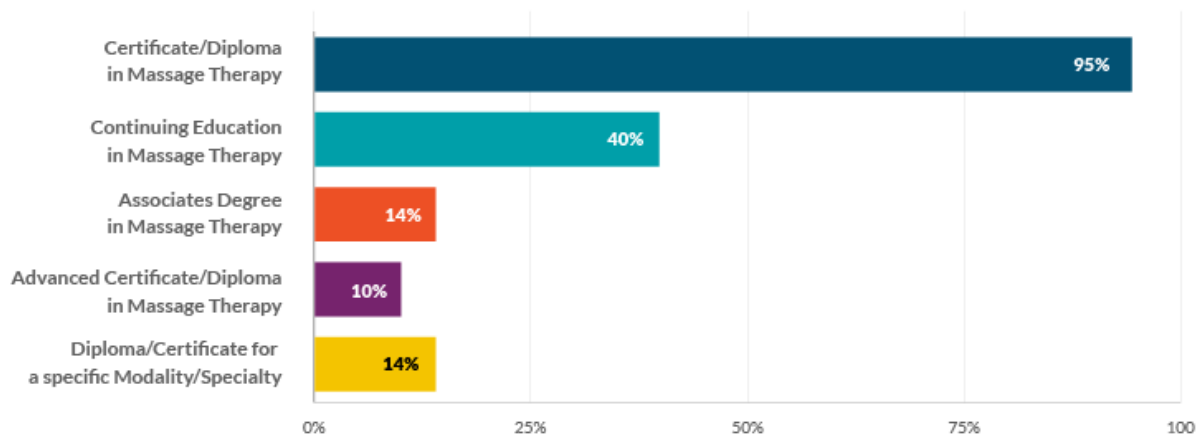


Figure 40. Type of massage therapy program(s) or education schools offer
(Respondents could select multiple answers; numbers do not add to 100%)

Highlights from Figure 40

The vast majority of schools offer a basic certificate or diploma in massage therapy.
Almost half of schools offer continuing education courses in massage therapy.

Courses geared to work settings

Ninety-four percent of schools offer at least one course that is specific to a massage therapy work setting.

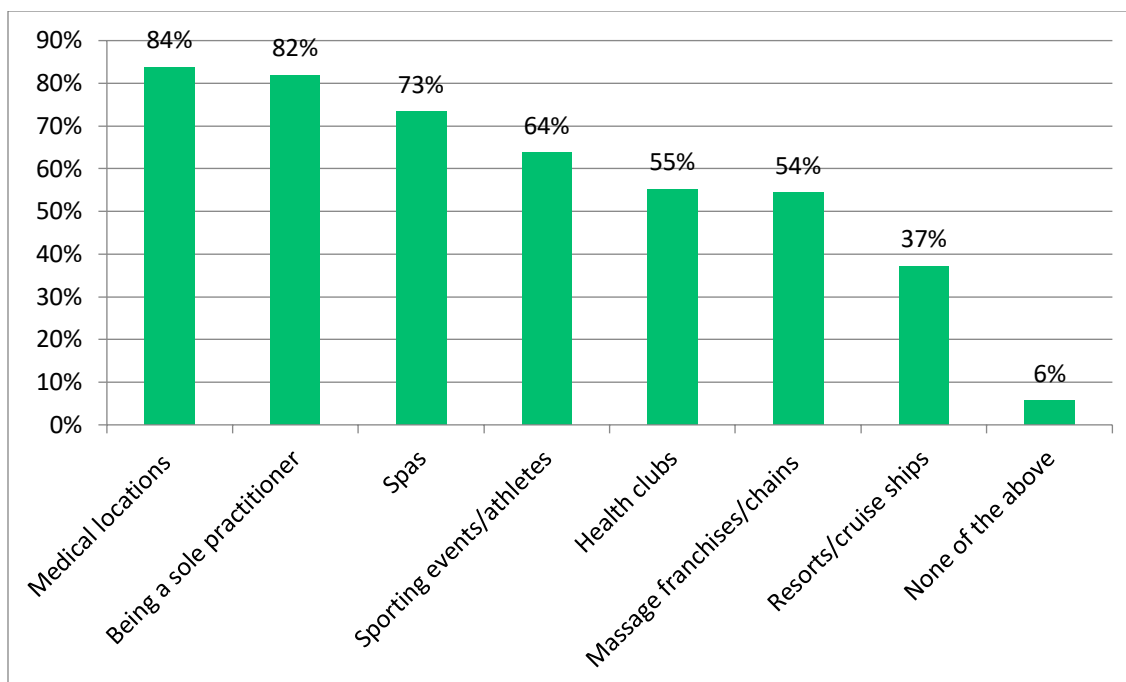


Figure 41. Does your school/program offer classes specifically geared toward employment in any of the following work settings?

(Respondents could select multiple answers; numbers do not add to 100%)

Highlights from Figure 41

Eighty-four percent of schools offer course on working in a medical setting (Hospital, chiropractic office, etc).

The vast majority of schools offer courses on being a sole practitioner.

Distance learning

According to the *2020 AMTA School Survey*, 47% of schools offer online courses for their entry-level program, up from 14% in 2019. Because of COVID-19, many schools have shifted courses to online, especially courses such as business, ethics, anatomy and physiology. Of schools that offer online courses:

- The average number of credit hours that online courses represented was 40.
- Twenty-nine percent of schools offer online courses as part of their continuing education offerings.

4C. What are recent school trends and demographics?

There is a wide variety of massage schools in the United States.

The results of the 2020 AMTA School Survey show variations across schools in massage therapy training. These include information about the number of locations, graduates per year, program hours, and cost.

- Average number of locations is two, with most schools having just one location, but may have over a dozen locations.
- Schools admit an average of 89% of applicants to their massage program.
- The average school admits 45 students per year across all campus locations, with an average of 33 graduates. Some schools report less than five graduates and some report upwards of 250 graduates per year.
- Average number of in-class supervised hours required (Entry-level program) is 601-700.
- Average number of clinical hours required (Entry-level program) is 81-100.
- Average cost-per-hour of entry-level program before financial aid is \$11-\$13, although many schools also charge \$14-\$16.
- Sixty-eight percent of massage therapy programs have a duration of between 7 and 12 months.

Schools are using a variety of methods to market their school.

Schools use an average of nearly five and a half different methods to market their school or massage program.

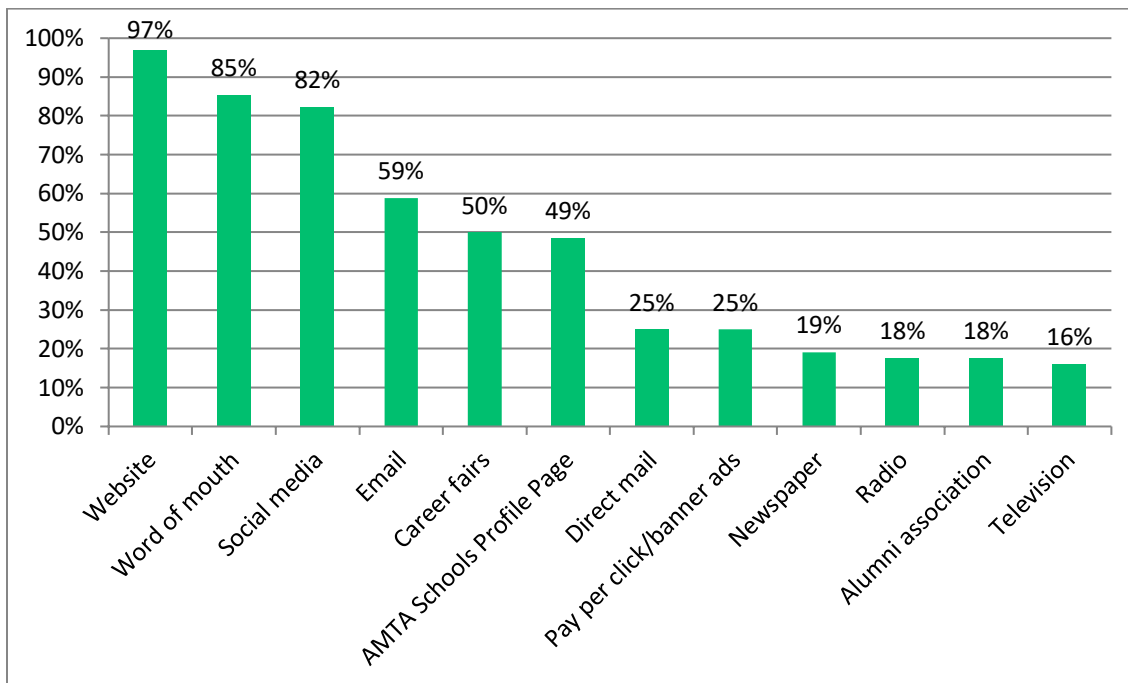


Figure 42. How do you market your massage school?

Interpreting Figure 42

Schools report that their website and word of mouth are the most prevalent ways they are promoting their schools.

When asked about the most effective way of recruiting new students, 38% of schools stated that word of mouth was the most effective method of getting new students, 32% chose website, 11% chose social media, 5% chose pay per click/banner ads, and others received less than 5% of responses.

Schools use a variety of social media channels to communicate with current student and prospective students

On average, schools use over two social media channels to market their programs.

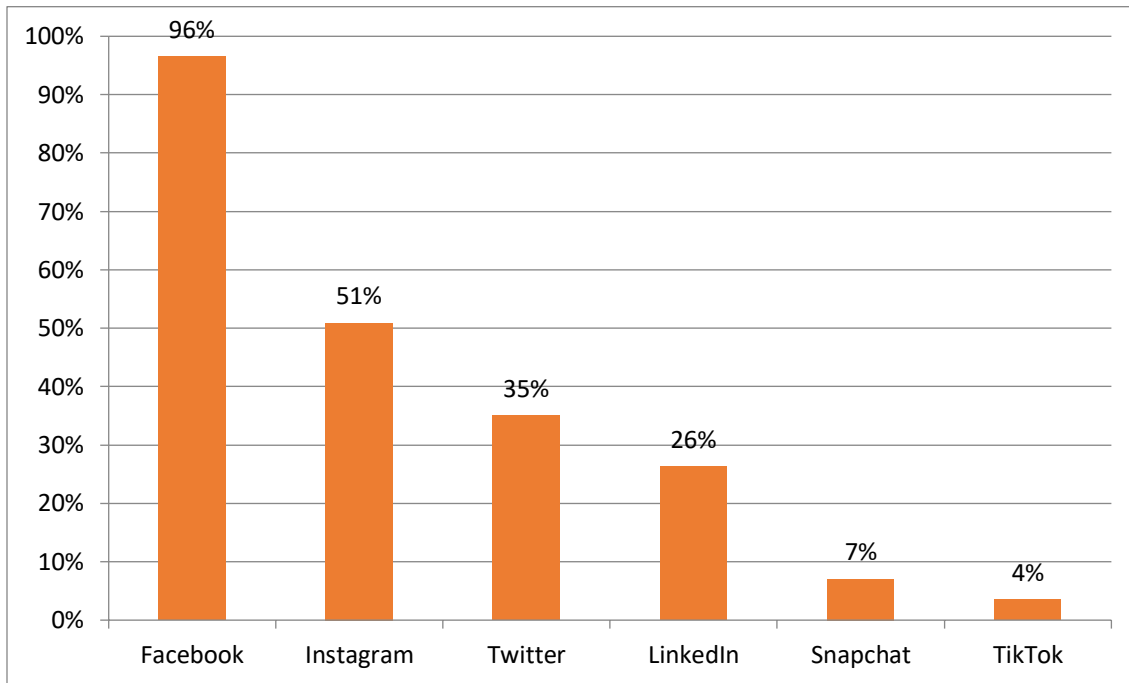


Figure 43. Social media platforms use to market your school

Interpreting Figure 43

Virtually all schools have a presence on Facebook, and more than half use Instagram to market their program.

4D. What challenges are schools facing?

Issues around COVID-19 are the most prevalent among schools this year.

In previous years, attracting students and marketing their school/program were the most challenging issues schools faced. These issues also show up in 2020, but adjusting to COVID-19 is the most pressing schools are facing.

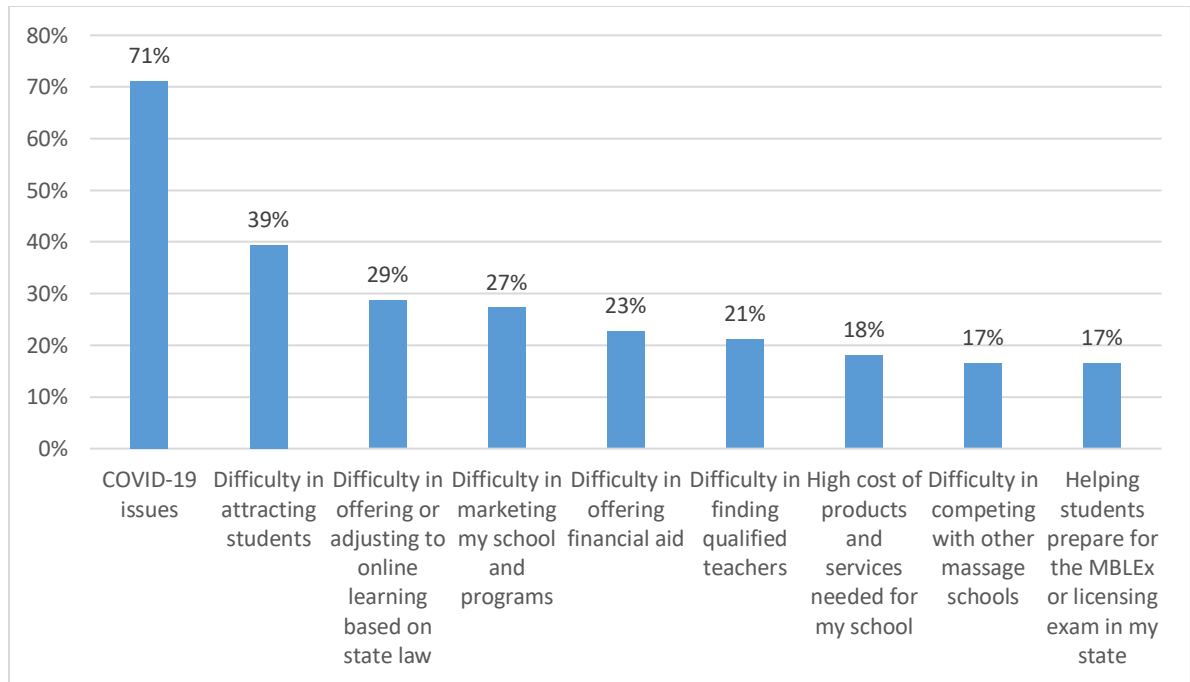


Figure 44. Top challenges affecting massage schools

Interpreting Figure 44

COVID-19 issues as well as difficulty in offering of adjusting to online learning are two of the top three challenges that schools are facing.

4E. How many schools are accredited?¹⁵

Sixty-five percent of schools report being accredited.

Between 2017 and 2020, the total number of massage schools accredited by nationally recognized accrediting organizations declined, although some accrediting bodies did see increases to the number of institutions and campus locations being accredited this past year. Note that this only includes those national accrediting agencies that list programs including massage therapy. There are many other national or regional accrediting bodies that have schools that may have massage programs. Note that schools that have programmatic accreditation through agencies such as COMTA will oftentimes also have institutional accreditation from another accrediting body.¹⁶

Accrediting Organization	2017 Numbers		2018 Numbers		2019 Numbers		2020 Numbers	
	Institutions	Campuses (Including Main)	Institutions	Campuses (Including Main)	Institutions	Campuses (Including Main)	Institutions	Campuses (Including Main)
ABHES	33	39	32	50	28	46	34	61
ACICS	46	117	9	17	5	8	3	3
ACCET	17	44	22	68	16	46	16	35
ACCSC	66	107	72	115	76	114	71	103
COMTA	49	58	46	54	49	55	54	61
NACCAS	71	104	84	115	71	115	84	117
Total	282	469	265	419	245	384	262	380

Figure 45. Accreditation numbers

Highlights from Figure 45

More institutions were accredited by major agencies in 2020 than in 2019, but slightly fewer campus locations were accredited.

4F. What trends are happening with teachers?¹⁵

Schools continued to rely on part-time instructors.

Fewer schools have full-time instructors than in the past.

2	Average number of full-time instructors currently employed
7	Average number of part-time instructors currently employed
6	Average number of independent contractors currently employed
70%	Have full-time instructors.
75%	Have part-time instructors.
33%	Have independent contractor instructors.

Figure 46. Number of instructors in massage therapy schools

Schools citing 0 instructors for any category were excluded from that category's average

Highlights from Figure 46

Schools are more likely to have part-time instructors than full time instructors.

Instructor teaching experience

Massage instructors had an average of 11 years of teaching experience within massage therapy.

Experience of massage therapy instructors

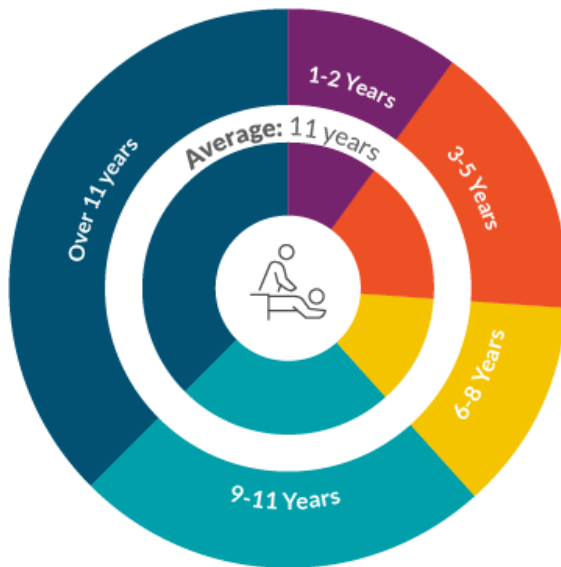


Figure 47. Experience of massage therapy instructors related to massage therapy

Highlights from Figure 47

Thirty-seven percent of massage therapy instructors have over 11 years of teaching experience related to massage.

What qualifications do massage schools look for in instructors?

In their instructor hiring requirements, massage schools focus on massage therapy experience first. Figure 48 provides more detail regarding hiring requirements for instructors.

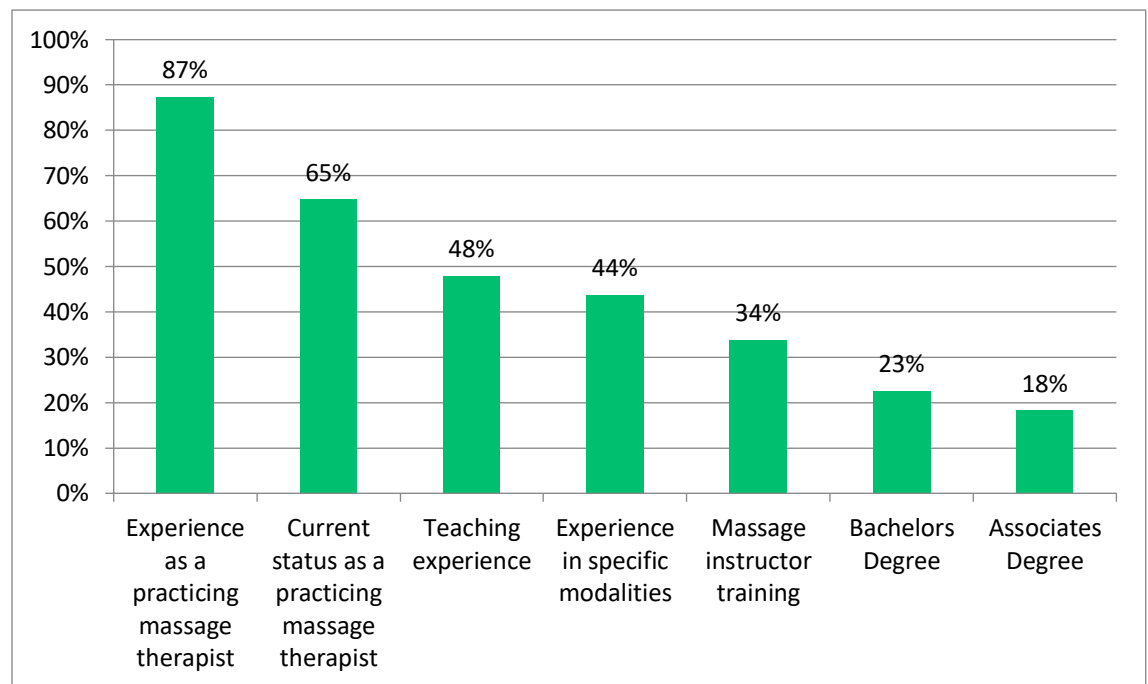


Figure 48. General hiring requirements

Highlights from Figure 48

Eighty-seven percent of schools require instructors to have experience as a practicing massage therapist.

Hiring challenges

Thirty-four percent of schools said they had trouble hiring instructors for their program. Of those schools that had difficulty hiring instructors:

- Seventy-one percent of schools said they found instructor candidates lacking in classroom management skills.
- Sixty-seven percent of schools said they found instructor candidates lacking in teaching experience.

- Curriculum development, course planning and knowledge of serving various learning styles were also mentioned by more than half of respondents as areas teachers may be lacking.

Teacher Training

Eighty-three percent of all schools surveyed provided teacher training in 2020. Of those schools that provided teacher training:

- Eighty-nine percent provided in-service training.
- Seventy-four percent provided a peer/monitor relationship.
- Thirty-five percent provided reimbursement for continuing education.

How much are instructors paid?

According to the *2020 AMTA Massage School Survey*, which surveyed instructor pay for 2019, average hourly pay was \$27 per hour. Some schools offered a yearly salary, which averaged \$29,875 per year. A small number of schools paid instructors on a per class basis, with an average of \$313 per class.

What percentage of schools provide benefits to instructors?

Forty percent of schools provided benefits to their instructors in 2020. Of those schools that provided benefits to instructors:

- Seventy-seven percent provided benefits to full-time instructors
- Thirty-five percent provided benefits to part-time instructors.
- Seventy-two percent provided a retirement plan to some instructors.
- Sixty-four percent offered medical insurance to some instructors.
- Sixty percent provided paid time off and dental insurance to some instructors.

4G. What is occurring with new graduates?

Schools with a formal placement program continue to see a large percentage of students finding employment.

Schools continue to help new graduates find jobs

While getting ready to graduate, some massage therapy students look to their school to help them find employment. In light of this, 90% of schools now offer some kind of job placement service to their students:

- Fifty-eight percent of schools provided a job board or bank that students can use to look for jobs in 2020.
- Twenty-three percent of schools offered a formal placement program for graduates.
- Sixty percent of schools have a placement rate of over 80%.

Some of the specific job placement services schools provided to students include hosting job fairs, providing assistance with resume writing, cover letter writing and interviewing skills.

4H. Who are today's students and how are schools helping them succeed?

The demographic profile of massage students remained consistent from 2019.

Schools use a variety of factors in the admission process

- Massage schools use many factors to determine if they are going to admit a student into the program. On average, 89% of applicants are admitted to a massage therapy program.
- Ninety-four percent of massage programs require a high-school diploma from incoming students.
- Seventy-seven percent of schools require that prospective students be interviewed prior to admittance to the program.
- Thirty-six percent of schools require applicants to provide a written essay with their application materials.
- Twenty-three percent of schools look at standardized test scores for applicants to the program.

Massage students have a variety of ages

The largest group of massage students are between 21 and 35 years old. The age distribution of massage students is shown in figure 49.

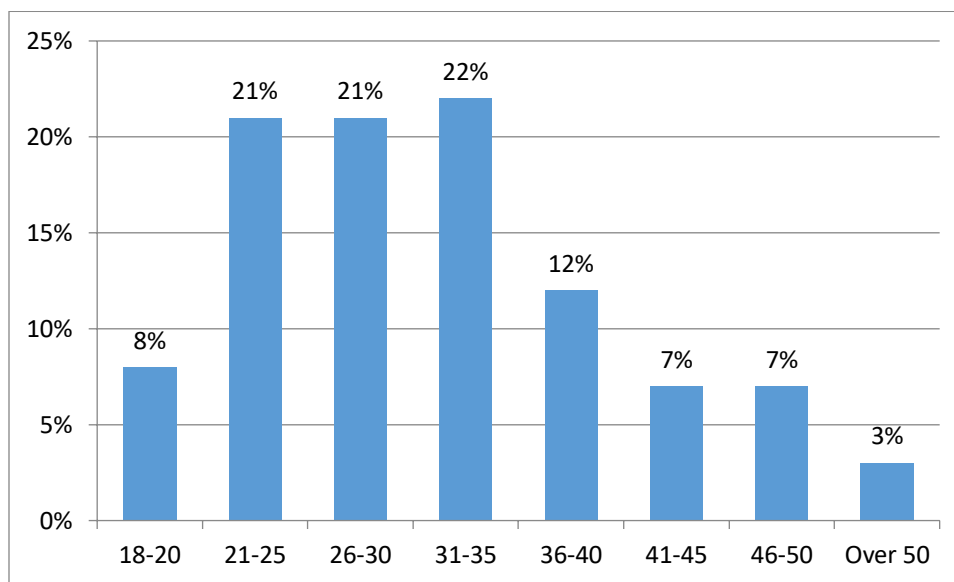


Figure 49. Age of massage students

Highlights from Figure 49

Fifty percent of massage students were 30 or under in 2020.

Massage therapy students are mostly female

Seventy-five percent of massage therapy students are female with male students making up 23% of the student body, and students not identifying as male or female at 2%.

Schools are offering financial aid to students

The 2020 AMTA *Schools Survey* indicated that the percentage of schools offering financial aid to students was 53%. An additional 6% of schools said they intend to offer financial aid in the future but do not do so at this time. See Figure 50 for more information about the types of financial aid being offered by massage schools.

Types of financial aid at schools that offer them

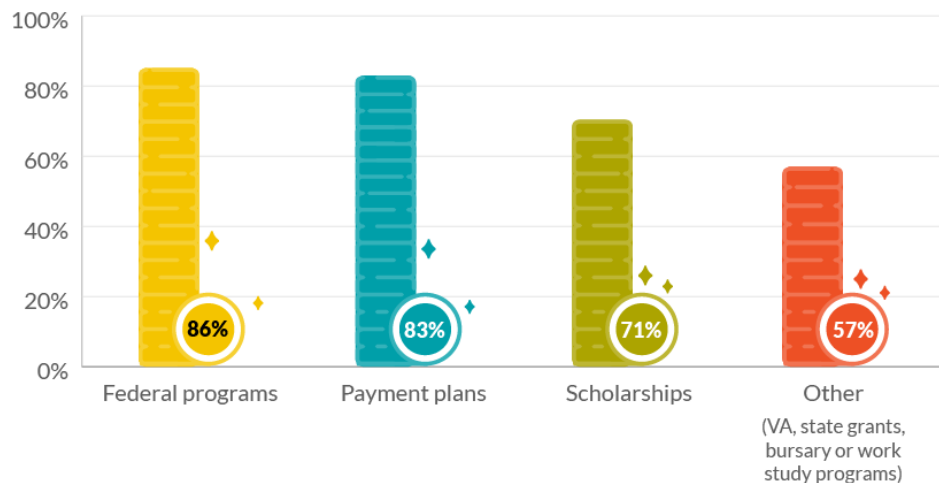


Figure 50. Types of financial aid offered

Highlights from Figure 50

Eighty-six percent of schools that offer financial aid use federal programs.

Eighty-three percent offer payment plans.

Seventy-one percent offer scholarships

Fifty-seven percent offer other forms of financial aid, including VA, state grants, bursary or work study programs.

Appendix

List of Sources

1. All data in “Section 1 – Consumers of Massage Therapy” and “Section 3C – How are consumers using massage as part of an integrated approach to healthcare?” and where otherwise specified, are from the **2020 AMTA Consumer Survey**, and previous years’ **AMTA Consumer Survey** unless otherwise noted.

2020 AMTA Consumer Survey. CARAVAN® ENGINE Insights conducted the annual consumer survey during July 10-12, 2020. The online omnibus study is conducted three times a week among a demographically representative U.S. sample of 1,000 adults 18 years of age and older.

2. All data in Section 1A are from U.S. Census Bureau.
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Employment Situation Summary.” Released December 2020.
4. Minutes of the Federal Open Market Committee, September 15-16, 2020.
5. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Consumer Price Index.” Released December 2020.
6. AMTA Consumer Research via SurveyMonkey Panel. AMTA ran a custom survey through SurveyMonkey’s panel of consumers in May 2020. 1,115 consumers responded to the survey.
7. All data in “Section 2 – The Massage Therapy Profession” and “Section 3 – Health Care and the Massage Profession,” and where otherwise specified, are from the **2020 AMTA Industry Survey** and previous years’ **AMTA Industry Survey**, unless otherwise noted.

2020 AMTA Industry Survey. The annual AMTA Industry Survey was conducted during September 2020. The survey has indicated margins of error at the 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus two percent. The **2020 AMTA Industry Survey** is the 16th annual survey on the massage therapy profession.

8. AMTA industry research, conducted April 2020. AMTA survey with massage therapists asking about their work status as a result of COVID-19.
9. Data compiled from state licensing boards and estimates of massage therapists in unlicensed states.
10. All data in “Technology and the Massage Practice,” and where otherwise specified, are from the **2020 AMTA Technology Survey**, unless otherwise noted.

2020 AMTA Technology Survey. AMTA staff conducted the 12th annual *Technology Survey* in October 2020. The survey has indicated margins of error at the 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus four percent.

11. ISPA, “2020 Big Five Executive Summary.” Released January 2020.
12. IBIS World Health & Wellness Spas in the US, updated June 2020.
13. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Outlook Handbook – Healthcare Occupations.” Updated September 2020.
14. Fortune, “U.S. Healthcare Costs Skyrocketed to \$3.65 Trillion in 2018.” Accessed December 2018.
15. All data in “Section 4 – Training and Education of Massage Therapists” are from the **2020 AMTA Massage School Survey**, unless otherwise noted.

2020 AMTA Massage School Survey. AMTA staff conducted an annual Massage School Survey in September and October 2020. An electronic survey was emailed to 2,156 massage school contacts. The survey has indicated margins of error at the 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus nine percent. This is the 14th annual survey conducted by AMTA on the trends and information pertaining to massage therapy schools in the United States.

16. Accrediting Organizations:

ABHES: Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools

ACICS: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

ACCET: Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training

COMTA: Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation

NACCAS: National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Art

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The American Massage Therapy Association® is the largest non-profit massage association in the United States. AMTA works to establish massage therapy as integral to the maintenance of good health and complementary to other therapeutic processes; to advance the profession through ethics and standards, continuing education, professional publications, legislative efforts, public education, and fostering the development of its professional, graduate, student, and school members.

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