

Massage Therapy—How to Make A Lucrative Living As A Massage Therapist



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Introduction To Massage Therapy

Massage therapy can be a benefit for those that experience injuries. It can even help prevent future injuries from afflicting you. Massage Therapy has been around for more than 2,500 years. It was considered as a form of natural healing by the Eastern Indians, Egyptians, Greeks, Japanese, Chinese and Romans. This was before history was recorded.

During the mid 1800s, the Western region started using massage techniques. At that time, the methods used were from the Swedish people. After the advance of Western medicine, massage therapy wasn't used as much.

However, in the 1970s, it peaked once again, in particular for those that were in the sports massage industry. Nowadays, more people are seeking treatments for their ailments that are not dependent on drugs or surgery. Because of this, more massage therapists are in demand now more than ever.

Having a career as a massage therapist is very up and coming. It is being marketed as a career that can pay you a nice amount per hour. Being a massage therapist can allow you to be flexible in the hours you want and how many clients you want to have.

Massage therapy is steadily in demand in the United States and other parts of the world. It is becoming one of the most sought out wellness treatments. Some people are using massage therapy in lieu of other medicines. However, massage therapy should be treated as a supplement, not a replacement for quality medical care.

Having a massage can help to reduce stress in your body, relieve tension in your muscles and helps to reduce pain in your body. More people are taking this opportunity to indulge in a massage because they're working longer hours and some just need to get some relief from the everyday cares that consume them.

Massage therapy involves the working of muscles, tissue, ligaments and joint areas of your body. It can help to give relief to soft tissue that makes your body uncomfortable. It is also used when a person has overworked their muscles or experiencing chronic pain in their body. Because of this, more massage therapists are needed in the wellness industry.

The Role Of A Massage Therapist

Massage therapists can be employed to do a number of other things besides the ones listed above. It can be used to relieve pain from arthritis and it can be used for therapy for people that have paralysis on their body.

It can be used to relieve chronic tension symptoms other than muscle tension. The benefits for people opting for this type of therapy include circulation improvement, increased joint flexibility, and reduction of fatigue in your body and also from a mental standpoint.

Even using it for a cold or the flu can be beneficial. It can help to revive the immune system. It is considered a holistic healing method that uses manipulation of tissues in order to achieve the desired result.

Since there are so many people that are suffering from different ailments, massage therapy has become more of necessity for some rather than just a luxury. Back in the day, only those who could afford to would go to a spa for a massage.

Massage therapists can start out in spas, physician's offices, hospitals, sports teams, cruise ships and airports. Even Corporate America has gotten in on the wellness industry by hiring massage therapists to give massages to their employees at company cost.

They eventually end up having their own business, either in private practice or opening up their own spa with employees. Either way, having a business of their own can make for lucrative profits.

Massage Therapy School

In order to incorporate a lucrative living as a massage therapist, you will need some training. That will require going to massage therapy school. The cost to go can start in the mid four figures to the mid five figures (\$5,000 - \$15,000). However, if opt to go to a private college, the costs will be much more.

Make sure that the school you attend is accredited. You need to be at an educational facility where your classes will be honored elsewhere. Some of the classes that you are required to take are:

Anatomy

Physiology

Ethics

Business Practices

CPR & First Aid

Chair Massage

Table Massage

Aromatherapy Massage

Massage Therapy Certification

Medical Massage

Shiatsu

Sports Massage

As you're looking for a school to attend, you will need to find out the requirements to be a massage therapist in your area. There may be different requirements for each state, county, city or town. If you're looking to do it on a profession level (which is recommended if you're looking to make a lucrative living from this), find out what the licensing requirements are.

The majority of the states in the United States mandate that you are licensed in order to practice massage therapy and related wellness practices. Then there may be some states that don't have requirements for professional licenses. However, there may be certain cities or counties that do. The best thing to do is to check all jurisdictions in your area.

In addition to the classes previously listed, the majority of massage schools implement the teaching of Swedish massage. In order to get a license, you should have at least 500 hours of educational training or classroom experience. It's important that you research very thoroughly to find a massage school that will meet your needs.

With that, you can also take continuing education classes. You don't have to take them right away, but they will help you increase your client base if you are knowledgeable about more things. Some of these classes include:

- Therapy for Massage Fibromyalgia
- Prenatal Massage
- Reflexology
- Legal Issues (good to know, especially for your own business)
- Healing Energy for Infectious Diseases

How A Massage Therapist Can Start A Business

A massage therapist must want to have their own practice for more than just making money. They have to be dedicated to the profession. They should also be knowledgeable in alternative and natural health.

Massage therapy can provide people with a sense of peace. You as a massage therapist would want to enhance your career by learning new massage techniques. Specializing in a niche of massaging not only can help you make a lot of money, but provide you with different clientele as well.

If you're looking to make massage therapy your career, you must be up to the challenge. You should be physically fit to do this, because it will require a lot of movement from you. It can also be a demanding profession.

For this reason, most massage therapists will start out working part time as opposed to full time. Massage therapy is more than just using your hands to relieve a person's pain and discomfort. They have to set aside time to set up for each customer. This can take up to a half hour to do.

When massage therapists start working, they can work for an hourly rate or take a salary. The average salary for a massage therapist is \$41,000 to \$58,000. If you have your license and you are certified, of course, you will make more.

The hourly rates for massage therapy can run from \$30 to \$100 an hour, depending on several factors: location, services and other miscellaneous things come into play. The more experienced the massage therapist is, the more they can stand to make.

When you have decided it is time to branch out on your own, make sure that you have enough funds to start. You must get the right equipment in order to start your business on the right foot. Since the massage room is where you will be engaged with your clientele, you have to make sure that you have the proper supplies and related equipment to get the job done.

For your massage room you will need the following furniture and supplies:

- Massage tables
- Chairs
- Stools
- Sound machines for music
- Shelves
- Blankets
- Hand sanitizer
- Table warmer
- Sheets
- Face cradle covers
- Pillow cases

When looking for massage tables, look for portable tables that are of good quality. Don't concern yourself with trying to get the cheapest thing that's available. Look for something that will be comfortable for the clients.

The client's well being should be first and foremost. The tables should be flexible and include a headrest that can be adjusted to different heights. There should also be a protective case included.

You want to get tables that have plenty of foam. Foam will help to make the table soft to lie on. The foam should also make the table sturdy and long lasting. It should be able to endure all kind of conditions. Make sure that you have a warranty with the product.

Using a sound machine can create a soothing atmosphere for the client as they lie on the table getting a massage. It will make a difference between in how they view the entire massage therapy experience. Find something that will help the client to enjoy their visit.

As a massage therapist, you will need different types of massage oils that you will use on the client. You will also need a showcase of additional products to market to your clientele.

You will also need office supplies for the reception area, along with cleaning supplies and other miscellaneous items. The therapist will also need a business license and liability insurance.

Marketing Your Business

After you've set up your equipment, and hired your receptionist, and an assistant or two, you'll want to get ready to open. Before the actual opening of your massage therapy business, you must learn how to market it effectively in order to get clients.

In order to be and remain competitive, you have to stand out. To do that, you have to offer multiple services. Some of the clientele may not want regular massage therapy. They may want something like a trigger point massage. It's important to diversify and set yourself apart from other massage therapists.

In fact, marketing this type of business is an ongoing thing. You can always ask your current clients to pass the word. Word of mouth can be very effective. However, the ball will still fall in your court.

There are some things that you should know while you're working to market your massage therapy business. Location, location, location, could not be truer. You want your clients to be able to get to your location without having to drive an hour or more to get there. It should be in an area where clients will be attracted like a magnet.

It should have plenty of room and not be cramped where people are stepping on each other. It's also important to have a name that will click with your future clientele. Don't choose anything silly or trendy. The name should reflect what your business is about. It should make people want to know more about what your massage therapy business offers.

The most important thing you can do to market your business is to let your future clientele know how they will benefit from your massage therapy services. Let them know what it's about and how they will feel after they get a massage.

Let them know what you specialize in. There are different types of massage therapy, and just saying "massage therapy" is too general. Put it in a way where they can understand exactly what you do. People want details because general information doesn't help them much, especially since there are specialized niches within it.

You will provide value and credibility to yourself when you are more detailed. People won't be wondering about what services you offer. Create brochures and pass them out. Leave some in your facility for people to get.

Tell everything about you that relates to your business. Let them know that you're certified as a professional massage therapist. That alone will give you a boost in your value and credibility.

Get testimonials from previous clients when you worked at the previous spa or other facility, prior to branching out on your own. Let them know that if they want to make an appointment they'll have to do it as soon as possible because your spaces fill up very quickly.

That's what's called using the "scarcity" tactic. You're not trying to scare anyone, but you want them to make a decision as fast as they can. More often than not, this tactic works. Use the internet to market and advertise your business.

Submit or have someone else submit online ads to get more exposure. Send in commercials to the radio stations. In exchange for that, offer some of the employees a free facial. That's a breeding ground for additional testimonials.

If you're creating brochures for your massage therapy business, it should be as professional as possible. Use quality paper when creating your brochures. The more professionalism you put in your brochures,

Explain what kind of massages you are skilled in. If you specialize in Swedish massage, then mention and the benefits that come along with it. Some of the clientele may not know what a Swedish massage is. It's important to be very clear and concise with your brochure information.

With the benefits, let them know what to expect. The focus is to let them know what this particular massage can do for them. How will it help them personally? They're coming to get their needs met and they need to know how you will fulfill that.

So you can say things like, "relieve muscle tension" or "you can have flexible joints". They want to know how massage therapy, whatever type it is, will help them.

However, you can't just list a benefit and think that they'll come flocking to your door. The benefit has to match the problem that they're having. The benefits should relate to that. When explaining this in your brochure, avoid using big words that they can't understand, better yet pronounce.

Just state it in simple plain English so that they can relate to what you are telling them. You can say something like:

- With a trigger point massage, you will be able to be free of muscle pain.
- My massage therapy treatments will provide you with more flexibility.
- A deep tissue massage will remove knots from your hand.

When you put it this way, the clientele will more than likely want to gravitate toward you and use your services. Using your qualifications to get clients will not work. Anyone can say that they went to this school and received an education.

The question to that is, what did you do after that? How did you use the education to your advantage? Do you have any experience, say from working in a spa or related facility?

Complimentary Massages

It's not going to matter how much education you've had. If you don't have the skills and the expertise behind you, then you can forget about attracting clients. Creating brochures is really for the client's benefit. They need to know what your massage therapy services are about. They need to know if they can feel trusted coming to you for massage therapy.

Another way to market your business is to offer complimentary massages. Let people try them out and see how they like them. Inquire with the human resources department at some of the office buildings that have companies as tenants. Pass out your business card and invite them to come to your facility. You can offer them a percentage off on services for their first visit.

You may or may not get a lot of clientele on the first round, but even if you get one it's a start. You have to work your way up towards a lucrative business as a massage therapist. Besides, if the person that took you up on you offer enjoyed the full massage treatment, then that person will pass the word on to other people.

Others will know about your services and the good treatment she received from you. Within a matter of months, you'll have so many clients that you'll have to hire additional help.

The key to keeping your massage therapy business afloat is to get the client's trust. If they don't trust you, they won't be back. Then there are some who just for whatever reason won't come back anyway.

You have to continue to work at it and do what you can in order to have a successful and lucrative business. Don't look for the trappings of fast money. You're always going to have to market in order to keep your business up and running. Eventually you will find those that enjoy massage therapy and will come back time and time again.

When you get those clients that continue to come back, since they like the service, they will refer you to others. They'll tell everyone that they know about your services. This is the type of client you should be rewarding every now and then with free or 50% of massages. That person or persons will be loyal clients for life.

Building Your Clientele

Learning to build your clientele is the main way to make lucrative profits. However, you can't just build it up. You have to find ways to keep them coming back to you, hopefully for a long time to come.

Here are some suggestions massage therapists can use to build up their clientele:

- First of all, they have learned to trust you. You have to be genuine in want the best for your clients. They have to know that you have their best interests in mind. They shouldn't be patronizing your business just so you can get money from them. They should be benefiting from your expertise as a massage therapist.
- Explain to them how massage therapy treatments work. You can do that by finding out more about the client. You can advise them of what services can work for their health issues. You don't want to discuss general things about massage therapy. Find out what their needs are and be sensitive to them. By all means, don't start talking about yourself.
- Each time your client comes for their treatment, ask them how they are feeling. Find out if there is anything that is ailing them in their health. Listen to how they sound and how they act. Just like a beautician, massage therapists have to listen to their clientele. This is important if you want them to continue coming back.
- After the treatment is finished, the client may decide to come back again. In addition to thanking them for coming, offer them tips on what they can do between that time and the next massage treatment. They will definitely know by now that you are really looking out for their well being.
- Loyal clients will go out of their way to help you get more business. They feel good about telling other people about you and what you have to offer. They relate their massage treatment experiences to others in hopes that they will make an appointment with you. For that, you should show your gratitude with more than just a thank you. Give your client a nice gift and let them know how much you appreciate them.

Doing these things will certainly help to bring more clients to your business. It just goes to show that you don't have to be outrageous in order to boost your business. Sometimes, the small things that you do outweigh the larger tasks.

Make your initial impression to potential clients count. Even if they decide not to give you any business, you will have left a mark on them that they may think about coming back at a later time. When they ask about a fee, advise them of it and let them know that the fee is guaranteed. Also advise them if they're not satisfied with the treatment that they don't have to pay for it.

Try to make the hours convenient for them. Most people work during the day, and they can't just take off when they want. Advise them that you can accommodate them during later hours. Also let them know what kind of payments you accept for your business so there won't be any surprises.

Other Ways To Market Your Business

Here are some more ways that you can market your massage therapy business:

- Business cards
- Cold calling
- Direct mailings
- Displays
- Health and Wellness Fairs
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Networking with other people
- Yellow Pages
- Press releases
- Radio ads
- Signage
- Television ads
- Article writing and marketing

Massage Techniques

Whatever methods you use, keep tabs on which ones worked better and which ones didn't do well. Then you can eliminate the ones that were flops and continue to use the ones that were not successful.

In order to stay in business, a massage therapist has to know more than one massage technique. The more techniques they are skilled at, the more money they can stand to make. There is too much competition and you can be knocked out of the ball park for not being more diversified in your business.

Here are some different massage therapy techniques that are popular with clients:

Swedish Massage

This massage was created by a gym instructor from Sweden named Pehr Henrik Ling. He started this technique at the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics. The Swedish Massage is used in table massage.

There are five different types of strokes that are incorporated with this massage:

- **Effleurage** – This stroke is used for lubricant application. It is also used to get your clients to get familiar with your touch. This French word means glide or flow. That is what you are doing when you use this stroke.

You allow your hands to get deep into the skin and the muscles. This can be done in the same area a few times. Go with the shape of the client's body, using this stroke over the entire area that is being massaged.

This stroke can also be used for detecting muscles tightness. Using Effleurage can help to remove toxins from your body. This stroke can be performed with one or both hands. There should be a continuous blood flow to the client's heart as you apply the strokes.

- **Petrissage** – This is a kneading stroke. Put the client's soft tissue in your hand and lift it, then squeeze it, and release it. Repeat the process for the affected area. This stroke has to be performed in a slow and firm manner.

This kneading stroke disposes of toxins and waste from the soft tissues. Blood along with oxygen replaces it and provides nourishment.

- **Friction** – This stroke is also called a compression because you are pushing down and squeezing the tissue. Along with this is the compression stroke that provides more circulation. In order to work this, you slide your hands in a back and forth motion across the client's skin.
- **Vibration** – This stroke deals with shaking. It involves rocking with a rhythm at a slow pace. You can use your fingertips or hands. Some therapists will use electrical items. However, it is not necessarily prudent to use anything electrical.

They can cause your client's skin to become numb and without feeling. In addition to that, the therapist may lose nerves in their hand. You can do this vibration stroke in one of three ways: rocking, coarse, or fine.

With the fine version, it works with the digestive system. For the coarse version, another word for this method is jostling. This method helps to loosen muscles in your joints.

- **Tapotement** – This stroke is considered as a light blow or touch. It has a rhythmic method in which the edge of the palm is used. You can also use the heel of the hand. It is used as a stimulator. It is also used to relieve cramped muscles.

With Swedish massages, a massage therapist will have to use oils in order for the treatment to be effective.

Shiatsu

Shiatsu is a Japanese version of a massage. The word means “finger pressure”. So Shiatsu is a finger pressure massage. This type of massage uses the holistic method. It is considered to be part of traditional Chinese medicine. In this case, the belief is that imbalances from natural energy flow cause people to become ill.

Massage therapists that use this method use their fingers and pressure from their palms of their hands. They do this to open up pathways of energy. If someone’s nervous system is out of whack, Shiatsu is used to cure that or at least bring peace to that area of the body. It is also responsible for circulation improvement, relaxing muscles and gets rid of stress.

This method is performed by adding pressure to the affected area using a rhythmic motion. It is considered to be a more localized pressure. The finger pads put pressure on the majority of this treatment and not the whole palm.

When applying this massage, there may be tenderness in some of the affected areas. This is described as “good pain”. However, if a client should feel real pain during this process, they should let their therapist know immediately. They can adjust the pressure that they are applying to the client and alleviate their discomfort.

Shiatsu is used to alleviate a lot of ailments. Some of them are listed here:

- PMS
- Headaches
- Stress
- Injuries
- Arthritis
- Constipation
- Indigestion
- Neck pain
- Shoulder pain
- Back pain

When you go for your Shiatsu treatment, it will be conducted on a low massage table or you will be lying on the floor. You don't use massage oil with this particular massage. You also keep on your clothes. It's a good idea to wear something comfortable when you come for your massage treatment.

You should not consume any heavy meals before the Shiatsu treatment. This can cause you to feel sluggish and you won't get the benefits from having the massage session.

If this is your first session, it's a good idea to get there at least 15 – 20 minutes prior to your appointment time. You will have to fill out paperwork and you don't want to run into your time doing that. You also want to have a chance to relax for a few minutes, regardless of whether or not you're filling out paperwork.

If you fall under one of the following categories, it is advised that you do not engage in Shiatsu:

- Recently had surgery
- Skin ailment that is infectious or wounds that are open

- If you have inflamed or broken skin
- Fractures
- Osteoporosis – check with your physician
- Cancer treatments
- Pregnant women – check with your doctor

Acupressure

Acupressure is a massage therapy treatment that is similar to acupuncture, but without the needles. Manual pressure is used with the fingertips on specific areas of the body. This is derived from traditional Chinese medicine which employs energy from the body called “chi”.

This energy connect with invisible parts of energy flow. This is called meridians. There are supposedly at least 14 of them that have connections with some of our other organs. Acupressure points are situated on those meridians. The belief is that health ailments and diseases run rampant when chi flow is blocked on any of the meridian points.

To alleviate that, the therapist will apply pressure to an acupressure point in one area of your body to heal another area. That may sound strange, but that’s how acupressure works. Some people thinks that pressure in one area can release endorphins, which are chemicals in a person’s body that relieve the affected area of natural pain.

The purpose of acupressure is to relieve people of certain ailments. Some of them are:

- Headaches
- Menstrual cramps

- Nausea from pregnancy, surgery or chemotherapy
- Muscle tension
- Muscle pain

Using acupressure has been found to get rid of nausea symptoms. There is a certain meridian point in the wrist area where you can apply pressure to get rid of nausea.

Acupressure is conducted with the client lying on a massage table. Pressure is applied with the finger, knuckle or thumb. The pressure should be firm, but gentle in touch. Every half minute the pressure increases.

When doing it with the wrist, the palm should be facing upwards. The thumb should be where the hand meets the wrist. Using the measurements of two fingers, the thumb should be placed there.

You may feel pressure during the treatment, but you should never feel pain. If you do, let your therapist know immediately.

There are some people with certain ailments that shouldn't have this treatment or they should proceed with caution:

- Pregnant women - consult your doctor
- No acupressure treatment should be done on bruises or open wounds

- Anyone that has thin blood should not do this unless advised to do so
- Bone ailments, injuries, diabetes – if a person is suffering from any of these, they should not do it unless advised to do so

After the treatment, the client may feel sore at those particular points and may also experience lightheadedness. Both of these are temporary side effects.

Trigger Point Therapy

This massage therapy treatment works on treating muscles and layers of muscle attachments. This treatment is also responsible for dealing with surface muscles, ligaments, and connective tissues. This massage therapy is similar to acupressure. The majority of the methods used in Trigger Point Therapy are also used in acupressure.

Trigger points can be found up and down the client's body near the muscle area. For the most part, they can be found in the axial muscles. These muscles are responsible for side to side body movement. Trigger points can also be found in one than more location of the body.

With these points, pain is found in certain areas. These areas are referred to as reference zones. The pain in these areas is usually deep and it can be continuous or it will come around for a while, leave, and then come back again. If a trigger point is worked, it can be inflicted with pain.

There are two types of trigger points, active and latent. Active points consist of nagging pain. Latent points don't experience pain until the affected area is pressed.

Trigger point therapy is one of the most popular massage therapy treatments that is being used.

In a treatment session, there is an examination that is conducted. This examination includes focusing on the pain area and where discomfort is being felt. The massage therapist main focus is to look for poor posture, and straining of the muscles.

The client has to be relaxed in order for the treatment to be successful. The therapist can recognize the trigger points because they will be tender, hard or knotty.

After the therapist has found the trigger points, the area will feel pressure and what is called skin twitching. Trigger point therapy is also used to get rid of muscle spasms and cramps.

Sports Massage Therapy

Athletes would greatly benefit from this type of massage therapy. This type of massage therapy is worth the investment for a massage therapist. Just doing this alone could prove to be a lucrative career.

Athletes are competitive in nature because they are supposed to be. Each one wants to do better or outdo the other person. The main goal is to win, whether it's in baseball, basketball, football or any of the numerous sports that people compete in. Having a sports massage can help the athlete get a head up on their competitors.

Professional athletes from all kinds of sports employ massage therapists and they see the results. Athletes see great benefits in having a massage therapist. Their ability to compete is increased. It also enhances their flexibility. The massage therapist will instruct the athlete to incorporate things like stretches, releasing muscle tension and muscle trigger points.

Since there are many athletes in different sports, the techniques are going to be different. The therapist should familiarize themselves with the sport in question. This way, they will know what areas to give attention to.

Massage therapists that are getting into the sports business have to get familiar with the athletes that they will be working with. They can ask questions such as in what areas are they experiencing pain. Therapists should not attempt to stretch any of the muscles because that can damage the muscle fibers.

If athletes have sore muscles, this type of therapy will benefit them greatly. It will help them to alleviate the soreness very quickly. The athlete can move on to the next event or go to practice after they've had their massage therapy treatment. In addition to that, this treatment can help an athlete to get rid of soreness after daily workouts.

Having massage therapy for athletes was probably the best thing that ever happened to them. It definitely plays a big part in them playing their sport. The massage therapists that are hired to take care of the athletes usually travel with them when they go on the road.

They are considered to be part of the team. They provide massages prior to the game and after the game. They also do it during practice days. As long as there's a massage therapist around, the athletes can be assured of playing better games.

It's important for the massage therapist to know how an athlete's body is designed. They need to be able to connect with bones and muscle. They also need to be familiar with trigger points and scar tissue. They'll have to deal with that when providing treatments to the athletes.

The therapist needs to know where to release trigger points on the athletes for a better performance. The more techniques they are able to incorporate with the athletes, the better chance they have of making more money. It's important that the massage therapists are versatile. All of the athletes don't encounter the same problems with their muscles and joints.

If an athlete has cramps, the therapist should allow them to stretch the area against the resistance. The muscle will relax and relieve the cramps. The therapist needs to know what area to hold in place while the client stretches.

The therapist should instruct the client to drink sports drinks such as Gatorade or other sports drinks. This will help the athlete replenish minerals in their system. It will also keep them hydrated. The therapist should also advise them to eat bananas for potassium.

When messaging the athletes, you should not use any lubricants. This must be a quick process that will energize them. This will help them to be able to compete better. At the end of the massage, you can use tapping or slapping methods to get their muscles in shape.

As a massage therapist, you should work hard to help the athletes as much you can. Once they see that your techniques are working for them and making them compete better, they will remember who helped them.

They will also spread the word about your good work to others. Word of mouth is one of the best ways that your business can grow.

In order to get more business, you'll want to offer complimentary services by volunteering at other sports events. The ones that you offer free services to give them your business card and offer them a percentage off on any service for their first visit.

When you hear of other sports events, talk to the people in charge as soon as possible and advise them that you would like to offer complimentary services of your massage therapy treatments.

Thai Massage

This massage was originally created in India, but the techniques were influenced by the people of Thailand. It was known as a part of Thai medicine. Monks had even got a taste of this massage back in the day. Thai massage is different than the regular massages. In fact, it is more invigorating and severe than other massage forms.

It is also known as Thai yoga massage. The therapist uses different parts of their body to incorporate stretches that are similar to yoga. Some people have even compared Thai massage to yoga.

With this massage treatment, mobilization of the joints, compression of muscles and acupressure are also used.

The therapist has a padded mat available for the client to use. The mat is placed on the floor. The client gets to keep on their clothes, so no oil is used. The clothing should be comfortable.

This type of massage treatment is used for the following:

- More circulation
- More energy
- More flexibility

- Stress reliever
- Mind and body focus

There are some people that should not engage in this particular massage therapy:

- Pregnancy – consult with your doctor
- Post-surgery
- Cancer treatments
- Rash or skin irritation
- Bruises or open wounds

The massage therapists will be able to inform the client of these precautions prior to setting the session.

The therapist should inform their client to be prepared to be there at least one to three hours. The average massage treatment can last from an hour to two hours.

The therapist will be responsible for providing the client with the following information:

- Get to the facility at least 15 – 20 minutes early to fill out paperwork. Even if you're not filling out paperwork, the client should get there early so that they can relax.

- The therapist should have the health information of the client. This will help them determine whether or not they are a candidate for a Thai massage.
- The therapist should advise the client of any pain or if they're feeling uncomfortable.
- The therapist should advise the clients not to eat heavily prior to the massage treatment.

Prenatal Massage (Pregnancy massage)

A prenatal massage (or pregnancy massage) therapy treatment is for women that are expecting a child. This type of massage is not the same as traditional massages. With this massage treatment, the expectant mother's body must be placed a certain way.

Pillows and padding are used for support. This helps to maintain a safe haven for the mother and unborn child. The therapist will recommend that this type of massage not be administered to pregnant women until their first trimester has ended.

As the therapist works on the expectant mother, there are some areas of the body that they cannot work on as well as some other massage techniques. For the pregnant clients, massage therapy treatments help to relieve stress, joint and muscle pains and reduce arm and leg swelling.

A prenatal massage also helps to relieve back pain. Back pain for an expectant mother usually comes from the extra weight that they carry with the unborn child. This is a good alternative for them because they're not allowed to take certain medications during their pregnancy.

The massage therapist can provide comfort and support to the unexpected mother by applying that special human touch. Not only will they have relief, it can also boost their self-esteem.

In order for a therapist to work in this arena, they should be certified and have training in massage treatments for pregnant women. The therapist will know what areas to work on and make the environment secure for the mother and unborn child.

Reflexology

This type of massage has to do with the feet. There are certain areas on the feet and hands that connect with certain parts of the body. For instance, with the ball of the foot, there is a connection with the heart and the chest. With the heel of the foot, there is a connection with the lower back and intestinal area.

When a massage therapist uses this massage treatment, they apply pressure to the reflex areas. This works to bring health to those body parts and other organs. When pressure is applied, energy will travel through a pathway.

Reflexology can be relaxing and the client should not experience pain. If they do or they feel uncomfortable, advise the therapist as soon as possible. They will work with the client to help them stay in their “zone”.

If there are reflex points that are sore, the therapist will use pressure to alleviate the soreness. If the client starts to feel a tickling sensation on their feet, the therapist will apply pressure to them.

People use reflexology for different reasons, such as:

- Insomnia
- Arthritis
- Sports injuries
- Headaches caused by tension
- PMS
- Constipation
- Back pain

- Stress

Reflexology is used to increase circulation, alleviate pain, comfort feet and provide a relaxing atmosphere for the client.

Reflexology is a supplemental treatment and should not replace medical treatment.

The therapist will consult with the client about their basic health. There are certain things that may not qualify the client for this massage treatment. It's important that the therapist know as much as possible so they won't be put in a situation where the client omits something from their health history.

If the client is cleared to have the massage treatment, they will have to remove their shoes and socks. They have to sit in a reclining chair or lie on a massage table. The client is not required to remove their clothing.

The therapist will examine the client's feet to stimulate certain points and check for tenderness or tension. The therapist warms up the feet by using pressure. They may use a lubricant, either lotion or oil.

After the treatment, the client usually feels relaxed. Sometimes they get so relaxed, they get sleepy.

It's important that the therapist knows how to perform this massage technique the right way in order to get the best results for the client.

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is a massage therapy treatment that incorporates herbal medicine. This massage treatment using plant and herb oils. Plant oils have been around since Egyptian days. These oils have also been found in countries such as China and India.

In North America and Europe, aromatherapy is very popular. In addition to being used in holistic treatments, it is also used in spas and sold as products such as massage oil and other products that are used for massage therapy treatments.

There are some ailments that can be treated by using Aromatherapy:

- Earaches
- Indigestion
- Headaches
- Flue
- Muscle pain
- Joint pain

The essential oils used are from the leaves, stems, buds, branches and other parts of plants. These items go through the process of being distilled by steam and water.

The therapist uses this massage technique on clients by letting the client take off their clothes. They don't have to remove everything if they don't want to. The client will lie on a padded massage table. There will be music playing for relaxation.

The client will have a sheet or blanket to cover them. The therapist uses the essential oils to massage the part of their body that is undressed. The treatment lasts for about an hour. The client will be allowed to put their clothes back on.

If a client wants to use essential oils at home, they can do so. They have to be under a therapist's supervision. If the client takes them, they will have to be taken orally.

Conclusion

Should you decide to have a career as a massage therapist, this guide has provided the information on what you need to do. You have to remember that diversity is the key to making this a lucrative career for yourself. Before you know it, you could be looking at a six figure salary.

Massage therapy is in great demand now, and people are willing to pay the price to be relaxed and fulfilled. It can be rewarding, but you have to make it rewarding by marketing yourself, catering to your clients needs and providing a wide array of services.

Who knows? This career path could turn into something where you're working for celebrities and other VIPs. It's up to you to make your career as a massage therapist the way you want.

Resources

<http://www.massagetherapy101.com/>, Resources for massage therapists

<http://www.bodyworkbiz.com/index.php>, Marketing resources for massage therapists

<http://www.massageresource.com/>, Resources for massage therapists

<http://www.circlesoflight.com/massage-therapy/>, Resources for massage therapists

http://www.schoolsgalore.com/categories/1/massage_therapy_schools.html, Information about massage therapy schools

<http://www.message-therapy-oil-supply.com/resources/massage-bodywork.html>, Massage resources

<http://www.message-therapy-oil-supply.com/>, Aromatherapy supplies

<http://www.naturalhealers.com/>, Massage therapy schools