



AMTA 2018 MESSAGE PROFESSION RESEARCH REPORT



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Introduction

Current landscape of the massage therapy profession

The 2018 Massage Profession Research Report

Welcome to the 11th annual *Massage Profession Research Report*, AMTA's collection and analysis of current market data and trends that impact the massage therapy environment.

AMTA, as the most trusted name in the massage profession, publishes this report to provide massage therapy professionals with current information and research to help them better run their practice and make informed business decisions. This report is a major AMTA Member benefit that helps you scan the current market, including consumers, therapists, employers and schools, without a large investment of resources and time.

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 2017:

- The **AMTA Consumer Survey** was commissioned by AMTA to poll American adults on their use of massage therapy.
- 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, 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

The massage profession saw several positive metrics in the past year, one of the key being that there were more massages given than the year prior. As more massages are given, therapists also reported that they saw increases in their annual income from massage therapy. There was extensive growth in the spa and massage franchise or chain industry, as well as new developments in outcall massage mobile applications.

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

Consumers of Massage Therapy

- The percentage of adult American consumers who received a massage was consistent to the prior year at 19%.
- The average number of massages consumers obtained was 3.8 in 2017.
- Approximately 47.1 million people had a total of 179 million massages in 2017, an 8% increase from the 166 million massages received by 43.8 million Americans in 2016.

Consumers continued to believe in the efficacy of massage as 89% considered massage to be effective in reducing pain and 87% believed massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.

The primary reason consumers obtained massage continued to be for medical, health and wellness purposes – pain relief, soreness/stiffness and recovery from injury - with 43% of massage consumers getting their last massage for these reasons, down from 50% in 2016.

The Massage Therapy Profession

On average, massage therapists worked 24.2 hours per week in 2016, a slight decrease from the 24.3 hours per week they worked in 2016. Massage therapists saw an average of 45 clients each month in 2017, similar to years past. Over the past few years, the gross annual income from massage therapy has increased. The average therapist has a gross income of \$26,216 from massage in a given year, up from previous years.

Between 2016 and 2017, the estimated number of massage therapists grew by 1% to 357,060. The number of massage therapists increased 27% over the past ten years, with an increase of 56% in licensed states. Most massage therapists were female (89%), had a different profession prior to becoming a therapist (80%), had formal education beyond a high school diploma (90%) and were sole practitioners at least part of the time (72%).

Health Care and the Massage Industry

The health care industry continued to offer employment opportunities for massage therapists in a variety of settings, and these opportunities may increase in the future. The health care industry is projected to become the largest employment sector of the US economy by 2024, surpassing even government employment.

Massage therapists supported the integration into healthcare, with 97% believing massage should be integrated with healthcare. But, how that integration looks varied greatly. The two most prevalent ways therapists preferred to see healthcare integration was by having massage prescribed or referred by healthcare providers, or by having massage therapists work on a team with other complementary practitioners.

Seventy-three percent of Americans believed that massage should be considered a form of healthcare, up from 71% in 2016.

Consumers are talking with their health care providers about massage, and those providers are recommending massage to their patients, especially physicians, chiropractors, and physical therapists.

Consumers went to many locations for massage for medical and health reasons, but tended to go to traditional healthcare locations for massage for more intricate health issues.

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.

Training and Education of Massage Therapists

Massage therapists reported an average of 665 hours of entry-level of education, with most therapists having more education than is required for licensure in their state.

Across all schools, the average number of graduates was 67 per year across all locations. Larger corporations cited an average of 274 graduates per year across an average of 6 campuses.

Massage therapy schools reported their top challenges as difficulty in attracting students, followed by marketing their programs or school. Sixty-four percent of schools reported in 2017 as being accredited, down from 74% in 2016.

Seventy-two percent of schools offered financial aid to their students in 2017. To address the difficulty that some graduates may have in obtaining employment after graduation, 82% of schools offered some form of job placement services to students.

The average massage teaching experience of instructors in entry level programs was 10 years, with 28% of teachers having 5 years or less of experience.

Over 50% of schools have an attrition rate of less than 10%, meaning that more students are staying enrolled in their program than in previous years.

Section 1 — Consumers of Massage Therapy¹

Consumer use of massage therapy is one of the most important factors used to determine the health of the massage profession. How frequently, for what purpose, and at what type of locations consumers get massage affects the demand for massage therapists, as well as the earning potential of existing therapists.

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

Key Concerns:

How will the economy and slow population growth affect massage therapists and the programs that train them?

How can therapists market their skills to the demographic groups who are seeking massage?

How can we gear our practice towards the markets most likely to grow?

Key Findings:

- Nineteen percent of American adults received a massage in 2017.
- Overall population growth is small in the U.S., and the population continues to age.
- Consumers continue to believe in the efficacy of massage, and are recommending massage to friends and family.
- Use of massage for health and medical reasons decreased slightly in 2017, but is still the most prevalent reason why consumers get massage.
- Consumers with higher household incomes tend to get massage at a higher rate than those with lower household incomes.

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. What drives consumer use of massage therapy?

1D. Who gets massage?

1E. Why do consumers get massage?

1F. 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 relatively slow rate

The U.S. population grew to an estimated 326.3 million in 2017, up from 323.1 million in 2016. That's a population growth of 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.

The U.S. population continued to age

The median age of the U.S. population increased slightly to 37.8 years in 2015, up from 37.7 years in 2014. The increase in median age was driven by the aging baby boomer population, those born between 1946 and 1964. As shown in the table below, the median age is expected to steadily increase over the next several decades.

Year	Median age of U.S. population
2000	35.3
2015	37.8
2020	39.6
2040	40.8
2060	42.2

Figure 1. Median current and projected age of U.S. population

Highlights from Figure 1

The U.S. population is projected to continue aging at a steady rate over the next several decades.

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

Apply the Research:

1. The US population is growing at an extremely slow rate. Consider how this will affect your practice in the future.
2. How will the aging population affect the techniques and equipment needs of your massage therapy practice?

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

The economy has recovered substantially since the economic recession beginning in 2008. The unemployment rate in November 2017 was 4.1 percent, less than half of the peak unemployment rate of 10 percent in October 2009.³ Twenty-three states saw a decrease in unemployment in the past year, twenty-five states remained steady, and only two states saw an increase in unemployment from October 2016 through November 2017.⁴ Over the past year, average hourly earnings for all employees have risen by 0.2%.⁵ With decreased unemployment and increased wages, that is a positive sign for consumers and their ability to afford massage.

The Federal Reserve increased interest rates in December, 2017, the 3rd time that rates increased in the year.⁶ This is an indicator of a stable and growing economy. The Consumer Price Index grew by 2.2 percent over the 12 month period ending November 30, 2017, meaning that consumers are spending more on goods and services than in the previous year.⁷

Health Care revenue rising

In the five years from 2012-2017, revenue from alternative healthcare providers, which includes massage therapists and chiropractors, increased 22 percent, and employment increased 16 percent. Revenue growth is projected to continue at an average rate of 3.3 percent per year through 2022.⁸

1C. What drives consumer use of massage therapy?

The percent of Americans getting a massage was the same as last year.

The 2017 AMTA Consumer Survey results show that:

- Nineteen percent of all adult Americans had at least one massage in 2017, the same percent as in 2016.
- Forty-two percent of adults reported that they have had a professional massage in their life.
- Consumers who received massage in the past year received an average of 3.8 massages in 2017.
- Roughly 47.1 million people had a total of 179 million massages in the U.S. in 2017, compared to 43.8 million people having a total of 166.4 million massages in 2016.
- The change in the total number of massages represents an 8% increase from 2016 to 2017.
- As the economy has improved, this has correlated to an increase in massage use by consumers.

During the past ten years, consumer use moved from a high of 24% in 2007 to overall declines for several years and now to 19% in 2017 (See Figure 2).

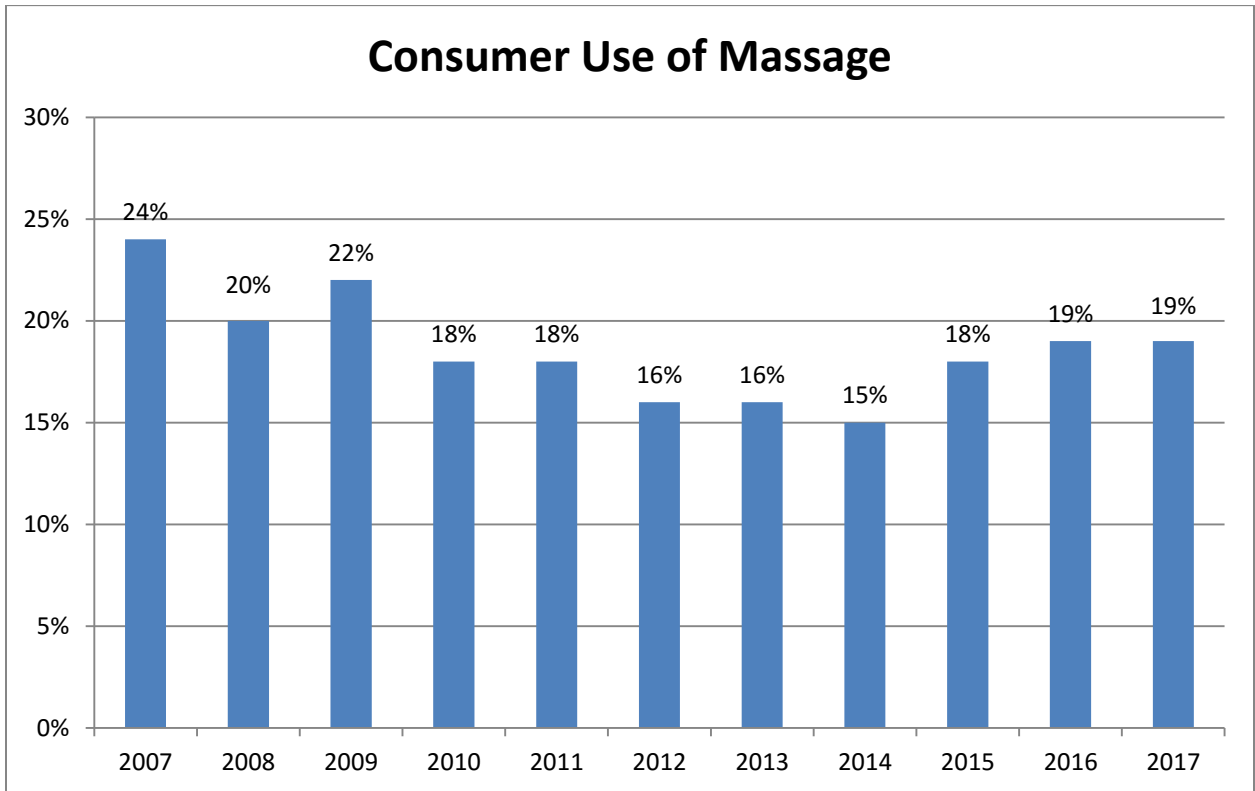


Figure 2. Total use of massage among adult U.S. population

Highlights from Figure 2

Massage use by consumers is consistent from 2016, but up from the low of 15% in 2014.

Consumers continued to believe in the efficacy of massage:

- Eighty-nine percent of consumers agreed that “Massage can be effective in reducing pain.”
- Eighty-seven percent of consumers agreed that “Massage can be beneficial to your health and wellness.”
- Seventy-three percent of consumers agreed that “Massage therapy should be considered a form of health care.”
- Sixty-seven percent of all consumers said they have or would recommend massage to a relative or to someone they knew in 2017.
- Thirty-one percent of consumers expected to get a massage in the next 12 months.

1D. Who gets massage?

Gender, age, education and income all affect the likelihood of consumers using massage. The average massage consumer was female, had a household income over \$50,000 and did not have children under 18 in the household, a description that has not changed in several years.

Of those consumers who received massage in 2017:

- Fifty-nine percent were women.
- Forty-four percent had a child under 18 living in their household.
- Sixty-two percent earned more than \$50,000 per year.
- Forty-nine percent were college graduates.
- Fifty percent were 44 years of age or younger.

Women – Fifty-nine percent of all massages in 2017 were received by women, down slightly from 60% in 2016.

- Twenty-one percent of adult women got at least one massage in 2017, down from 22 percent last year.
- Female massage consumers received an average of 3.8 massages in 2017, down from 4 massages in 2016.
- Male massage consumers received an average of 3.8 massages in 2017, up from 3.5 massages in 2016.
- Sixteen percent of men got a massage in 2017, the same as in 2016.

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

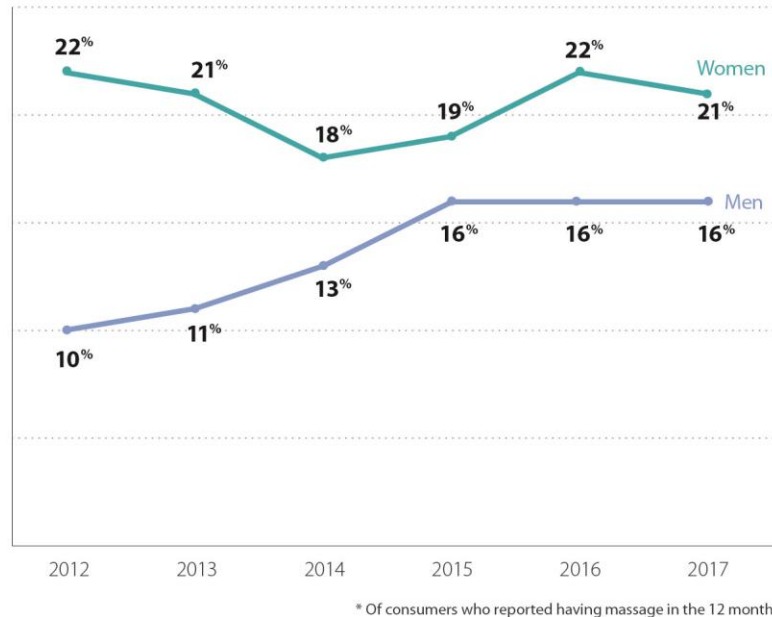


Figure 3. Total use of massage among U.S. population by gender

Highlights from Figure 3

Women slightly decreased their use of massage in 2017.

Men used massage at the same rate in 2017 as they did in 2016 and 2015.

Households with children - Forty-four percent of all massage consumers had a child under 18 in their home in 2017.

- Usage among households with no children increased to 19% in 2017, from 18% in 2016.

Household Income – Thirty-nine percent of all massage consumers had a household income of \$100,000 or more in 2017, and 34% of consumers in households with an income of \$100,000 or more had a massage in 2017.

- Fifteen percent of Americans that had a household income between \$75,000 and \$100,000 received a massage in 2017, down from 30% in 2016.
- Seventeen percent of Americans that had a household income between \$50,000 and \$75,000 received a massage in 2017, down from 23% in 2016 and consistent with 2014 data.
- Twenty-four percent of Americans that had a household income between \$35,000 and \$50,000 got a massage in 2017, up from 17% in 2016.

- Nine percent of Americans that had a household income of less than \$35,000 got a massage in 2017, up from 8% in 2016.

College graduates – Forty-nine percent of consumers who got a massage in 2017 were college graduates.

- Twenty-eight percent of all college graduates received a massage in 2017, down from 31% in 2016. College graduates received an average of 4.3 massages in 2017, up from the 3.3 massages they received in 2016.

Level of consumer education	Massage use in 2012	Massage use in 2013	Massage use in 2014	Massage use in 2015	Massage use in 2016	Massage use in 2017
Completed college	22%	24%	22%	30%	31%	28%

Figure 4. Total use of massage among college graduates from 2012 to 2017

Highlights from Figure 4

Massage use among this demographic declined slightly from 2016 levels.

Those 18 to 34 years old – Twenty-eight percent of massage consumers were between 18 and 34 years old.

- Eighteen percent of all Americans 18 to 34 received a massage in 2017 compared to 21% in 2016.
- On average, this group received 3.5 massages in 2017, up from 2.3 massages in 2016.

Those 35 to 44 years old – Twenty-two percent of massage consumers were between 35 and 44 years old.

- Twenty-six percent of all Americans between 35 and 44 years old received a massage in 2016, tied for the highest of any age group. Last year, 31% of this age group received a massage.
- This age group received an average of 3.1 massages in 2017, down from 4.1 massages in 2016.

Those 45 to 64 years old – Thirty-eight percent of all massage consumers were between 45 and 64 years old.

- Twenty-one percent of all those 45 to 64 received a massage in 2017, up from 17% in 2016.
- Twenty-six percent of those 45 to 54 years old received a massage in 2017 compared to 19% in 2016. Massage consumers in this age group received an average of 4.2 massages in 2017.
- Sixteen percent of those 55 to 64 years old received a massage in 2017, up from 15% in 2016. Massage consumers aged 55 to 64 received an average of 6 massages in 2017, up from 5.4 massages in 2016, and the highest of any age group.

Those aged 65 plus – Twelve percent of all massage consumers were 65 years or older.

- Eleven percent of all Americans aged 65 or older received a massage in 2017, up from 9% in 2016.
- On average, the massage consumers in this group received an average of 2.9 massages in 2017, down from 4.9 massages in 2016.

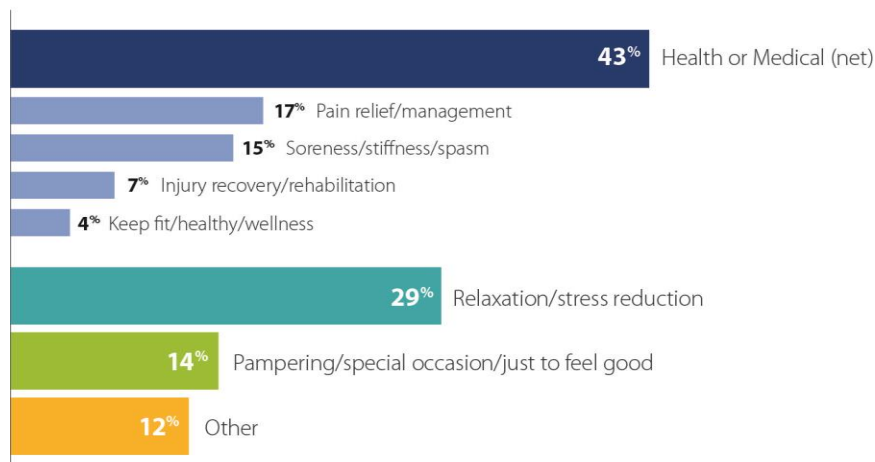
Apply the Research:

1. Male and female massage consumers use massage at different rates. How does this affect a massage practice?
2. How can you effectively market the benefits of massage to different age groups of consumers to maximize their client base?
3. How will your massage practice adapt to accommodate different age groups of consumers?

1E. Why do consumers get massage?

The primary reason consumers got massage continued to be for medical or health reasons – pain relief, soreness/stiffness and recovery from injury.

Primary reasons for receiving last massage



*Received massage within past 12 months

Figure 5. Primary reasons for receiving last massage in 2017

Highlights from Figure 5

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

29% of consumers received their last massage for relaxation and stress reduction.

Only 14% of consumers received their last massage for pampering.

Medical or health care reasons – Use of massage for medical or health reasons decreased in 2017- 43% of massage consumers say they got their last massage for medical or health reasons, down from 50% in 2016.

- Forty-eight percent of men and 39% of woman received their last massage for a medical or health reasons.
- Fifty-two percent of massage consumers who had not completed college got their last massage for a medical or health reason in 2017.
- Fifty-five percent of massage consumers who earn less than \$35,000 per year got their last massage for a medical or health reason in 2017.
- Fifty-five percent of massage consumers 65 or older got their last massage for a medical or health reason in 2017.

- Of consumers who got a massage for medical or health reasons in 2017, 17% stated that the massage was part of a treatment plan put together by a doctor or medical provider, down from 31% last year.

The top medical or health care reasons for getting their last massage in 2017 were:

Pain relief/pain management - Seventeen percent of massage consumers got their last massage in 2017 for pain relief/pain management, down from 23% in 2016.

- Twelve percent of massage consumers 18 to 34 years of age got their last massage for pain relief/management, down from 29% in 2016. Of those 65 years plus, 26% got their last massage for pain relief/management.
- Men and women both decreased their use of massage for pain relief/management, with 17% of each gender getting their last massage for pain relief or management in 2017. Last year, 25% of men and 22% of women said they got their last massage to relieve or manage pain.
- The number of Americans who had ever used massage therapy for pain relief was 29% in 2017, up from 28% in 2016.

Injury recovery/rehabilitation – Seven percent of massage consumers got their last massage for injury recovery/rehabilitation, down from 12% in 2016.

- Seven percent of consumers aged 18 to 34 got a massage for injury recovery or rehabilitation in 2017, unchanged from 2015 and 2016.
- Eleven percent of consumers 65 and older got a massage for injury recovery or rehabilitation in 2017.

For soreness/stiffness/spasms – Fifteen percent of massage consumers got their last massage for soreness/stiffness/spasms in 2017, up from 11% in 2016.

- Twenty-two percent of male consumers received their last massage for soreness/stiffness/spasms in 2017, up from 11% in 2016.
- Ten percent of seniors (65+) who received a massage in 2017 got their last massage for soreness/stiffness/spasms, down from 15% in 2016.

Americans' beliefs about medical applications of massage	2014	2015	2016	2017
Massage can be effective in reducing pain.	92%	91%	89%	89%
Massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.	91%	90%	88%	87%

Figure 6. Americans' belief about massage from 2014 to 2017

Highlights from Figure 6

Consumers' beliefs about medical applications of massage have remained steadily high over the past four years.

Relaxation/stress reduction – Twenty-nine percent of massage consumers got their last massage for relaxation/stress reduction in 2017, up from 28% in 2016 but still down from 33% in 2015.*

- Thirty-three percent of massage consumers who were college graduates got their last massage for relaxation/stress in 2017, down from 35% a year ago.
- Twenty-seven percent of massage consumers in households with three or more people had their last massage for relaxation/stress reduction, up from 22% in 2016.
- Twenty-six percent of massage consumers with household incomes over \$100,000 got their last massage for relaxation or stress reduction in 2017, down from 37% in 2016.
- Twenty-seven percent of male massage consumers got their last massage for relaxation or stress reduction in 2017, unchanged from 2016.
- Thirty-one percent of female massage consumers got their last massage for relaxation/stress reduction in 2017, up from 28% in 2016.

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

Pampering/just to feel good/special occasion - Fourteen percent of massage consumers received their last massage for pampering/just to feel good/special occasion in 2017, the same as in 2016.

- Eight percent of male massage consumers received their last massage for pampering reasons in 2017, down from 13% in 2016.
- Eighteen percent of female massage consumers received their last massage for pampering reasons in 2017, up from 10% in 2015.
- Fourteen percent of consumers 65 years or older who received massage did so for pampering reasons, up from 5% last year.

Apply the Research:

1. Many consumers are using massage for medical and health reasons. How do you help consumers see the medical and health applications of massage therapy?
2. Massage for stress increased slightly in 2017. In what ways do you educate consumers on the benefits of massage on stress reduction?

1F. Where are consumers getting massage?

Consumers went to an average of over 2.5 different locations for massage in a given year.

Thirty-nine percent of massage consumers got a massage at a spa in 2017, and 23% got their last massage at a spa. Sixteen percent of massage consumers reported receiving their last massage at a massage therapist's office or location in 2017, but 39% of massage consumers visited a massage therapist's office in 2017. The next most popular locations to receive massage were massage franchises or chains, your home or home of someone you know, and hotel/resort/cruise. Note that some consumers may not see the distinction between a spa, franchise, and often a massage therapist's office. (See Figure 7 to show where consumers got their last massage, and where they received any massage in the past year.)

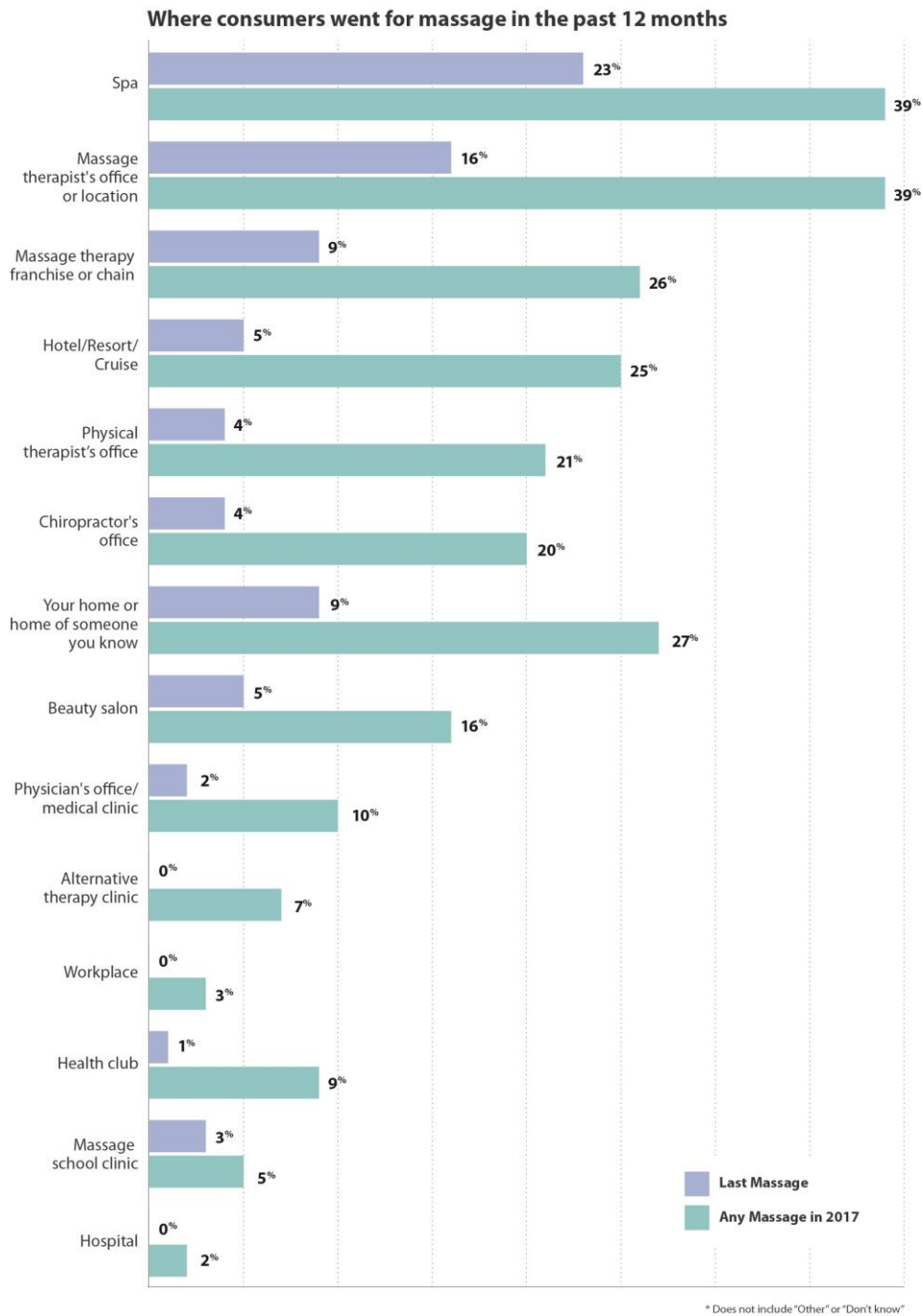


Figure 7. Where did you get massage in 2017?

Highlights from Figure 7

39% of consumers got a massage at a therapist's office or location in 2017.

39% of consumers got a massage at a spa in 2017.

Spas – Twenty-three percent of all massage consumers received their last massage at a spa in 2017, up from 22% in 2016.

- Twenty-nine percent of female massage consumers got their last massage at a spa in 2017 compared to 23% in 2016. Forty percent of female massage consumers got a massage at a spa in 2017.
- 15% of men got their last massage at a spa in 2017, down from 21% in 2016, and up from just 2% in 2012. Thirty-seven percent of male massage consumers got a massage at a spa in 2017.

Massage Therapist's office/location - Thirty-nine percent of massage consumers got a massage at a massage therapist's office/location in 2017, yet only 16% received their last massage at this practice type.

- Twenty-nine percent of massage consumers with a household income between \$75,000 and \$100,000 got their last massage at a massage therapist's location or office in 2017. Fifteen percent of massage consumers with a household income between \$35,000 and \$50,000 got their last massage at a massage therapist's office in 2017. Fifteen percent of consumers with household income below \$35,000 got their last massage at a massage therapist's office in 2017.
- Nineteen percent of men who got a massage in 2017 got their last massage at a massage therapist's office/location, up from 18% last year.
- Thirteen percent of women massage recipients in 2017 received their last massage at a massage therapist's office, down from 17% in 2016.

Massage Therapy Franchise or Chain – Nine percent of massage consumers received their last massage at a name brand chain in 2017, unchanged from 2016. But, 26% of massage consumers visited a massage franchise or chain in 2017.

- Ten percent of female massage consumers got their last massage at a name brand chain in 2017, up from 9% last year.
- Eight percent of men got their last massage at a name brand chain in 2017, down from 10% in 2016.
- Nineteen percent of massage consumers aged 35 to 44 got their last massage at a name brand chain in 2017.
- Note that some consumers may not differentiate between a spa and a massage franchise or chain.

Your Home or the Home of Someone You Know – Nine percent of massage consumers received their last massage at their home or the home of someone they know in 2017, up from 5% last year. Overall, 27% of massage consumers had a home based massage in 2017.

- Fifteen percent of male consumers got their last massage in their home or the home of someone they know in 2017, up from 5% in 2016.
- Five percent of females got their last massage in their home or in the home of someone they know in 2017, unchanged from 2016.
- Twenty-seven percent of consumers with a household income of between \$50,000 and \$75,000 received their last massage in their home or the home of someone they know in 2017.

Hotel/Resort/Cruise – Five percent of massage consumers got their last massage at a hotel, resort, or cruise in 2017, down from 7% in 2016. But, 25% of massage consumers got a massage at a hotel/resort/cruise in 2017.

- Four percent of male consumers received their last massage at a hotel, resort, or cruise in 2017, down from 12% last year.
- Five percent of women received their last massage at a hotel, resort, or cruise in 2017.
- Thirteen percent of consumers with household income \$100,000 or more got their last massage at a hotel, resort, or cruise in 2017.

Apply the Research:

1. Spas continue to be a prominent location for receiving a massage. It is important to be familiar with how the spa experience sets the standard for consumer expectations, and how you can use components of spas to enhance your massage practice.
2. Consider how your work setting can affect the clientele you attract, and how to effectively market to new clients in different demographics. Visit amtamassage.org/consumersurvey to access the full AMTA Consumer Survey results.

Section 2 — The Massage Therapy Profession⁹

Knowing the latest trends in the massage profession helps schools give students the most current information on which to make decisions regarding their massage therapy careers.

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

Key Concerns:

How can you prepare to respond to changes occurring in the massage profession?
Are you informed about compensation, hours and requirements of various work settings, etc.?
In what ways are the demographics of your practice consistent with those of the profession?

Key Findings:

- Most massage therapists are women, have some college experience and previously worked in another profession.
- Average hourly earnings vary greatly based on massage setting. Therapists working in their clients' homes earned the most at \$75.37 per hour.
- Gross annual income from massage therapy has continued to slowly increase the past several years.
- Referrals from current clients continue to be the most prevalent way consumers find massage therapists.
- The spa industry as well as national massage chains has seen above average location and revenue growth for several years.

These questions will be answered:

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

2A. Who is practicing massage therapy?

Over the last decade, the number of massage therapists increased by 27%.

According to the 2017 AMTA Industry Survey, massage therapists in the U.S. are:

- **Mostly female** — Eighty-nine percent of massage therapists are women, unchanged from 2016.
- **Have a median age of 46 years old**— The median age of a massage therapist increased from 45 years old in 2016.

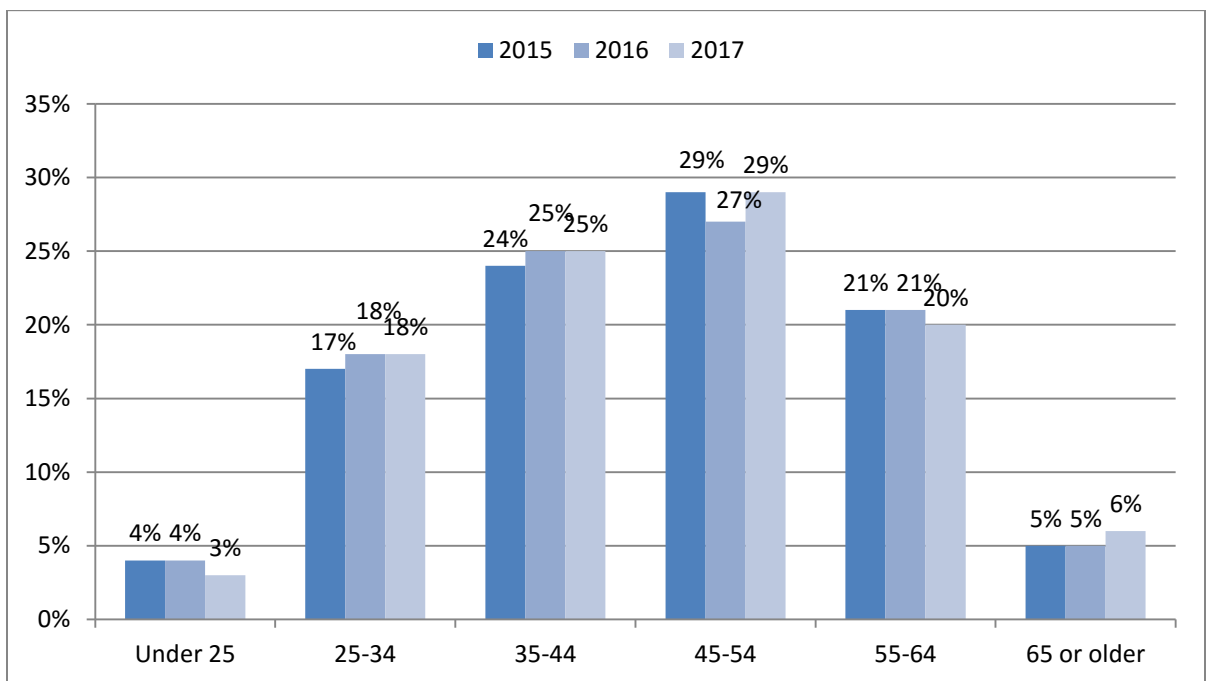


Figure 8. Age of Massage Therapists

Highlights from Figure 8

The number of therapists aged 25-44 remained constant from 2016 to 2017.

- **Educated** — Thirty-seven percent of massage therapists have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher and 90 percent have achieved formal education levels above a high school diploma or GED. This has been fairly consistent over the past several years. (See Figure 9)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Education (Non-Massage)					
High school grad or less	12%	12%	9%	10%	10%
Some college	26	25	25	24	26
Associate’s Degree	20	18	19	19	18
Technical/vocational certificate	11	10	11	10	10
Bachelor’s degree	24	26	27	28	27
Master’s degree	7	7	8	8	8
Doctorate	1	1	2	1	2

Figure 9. Massage therapists’ education

Highlights from Figure 9

27% of massage therapists have completed a bachelor’s degree.

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

Most massage therapists are coming from another profession

- **Sole practitioners and independent contractors are most likely to have had a different occupation** prior to becoming a massage therapist. (See Figure 10 for more information).
- Therapists working as full-time employees are slightly **more likely to enter massage therapy as their first profession.**

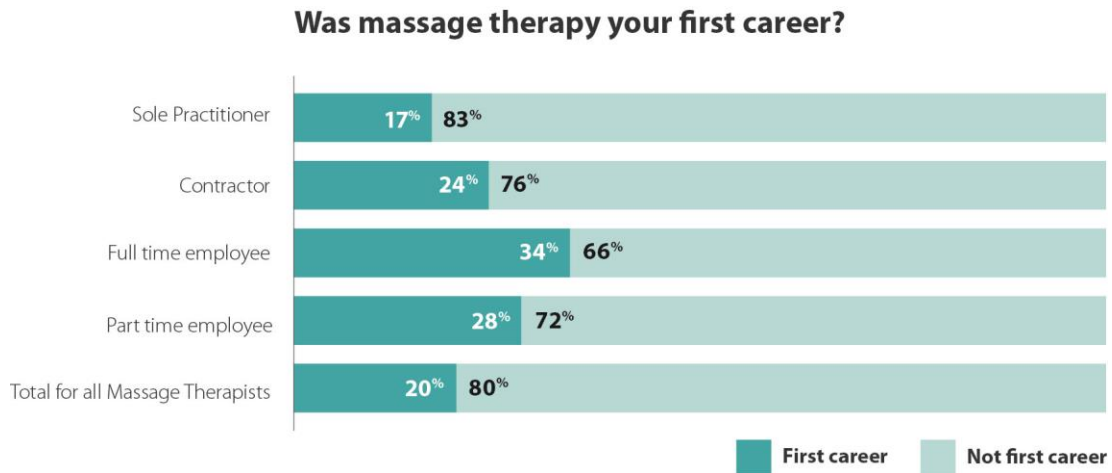


Figure 10. Was massage therapy your first career choice?

Highlights from Figure 10

34% of full time employees are working in massage therapy as a first career.

Sole practitioners and contractors are the most likely groups to have had another career prior to massage therapy.

The number of massage therapists in the U.S. grew over the last decade¹⁰

Over the past ten years, the estimated number of massage therapists increased 27%.

Between 2016 and 2017, the number of estimated massage therapists grew by 1% to 357,060. The majority of growth in the profession continued to originate in licensed states. Note that even though a massage therapist is licensed to practice, many therapists drop out of the profession, retire, or are temporarily not practicing. These therapists may still be registered as a licensed therapist with their state. This group of licensed but inactive therapists may account for up to twelve percent of all licensed massage therapists.

Figure 11 illustrates the growth of the total estimated number of massage therapists over time.

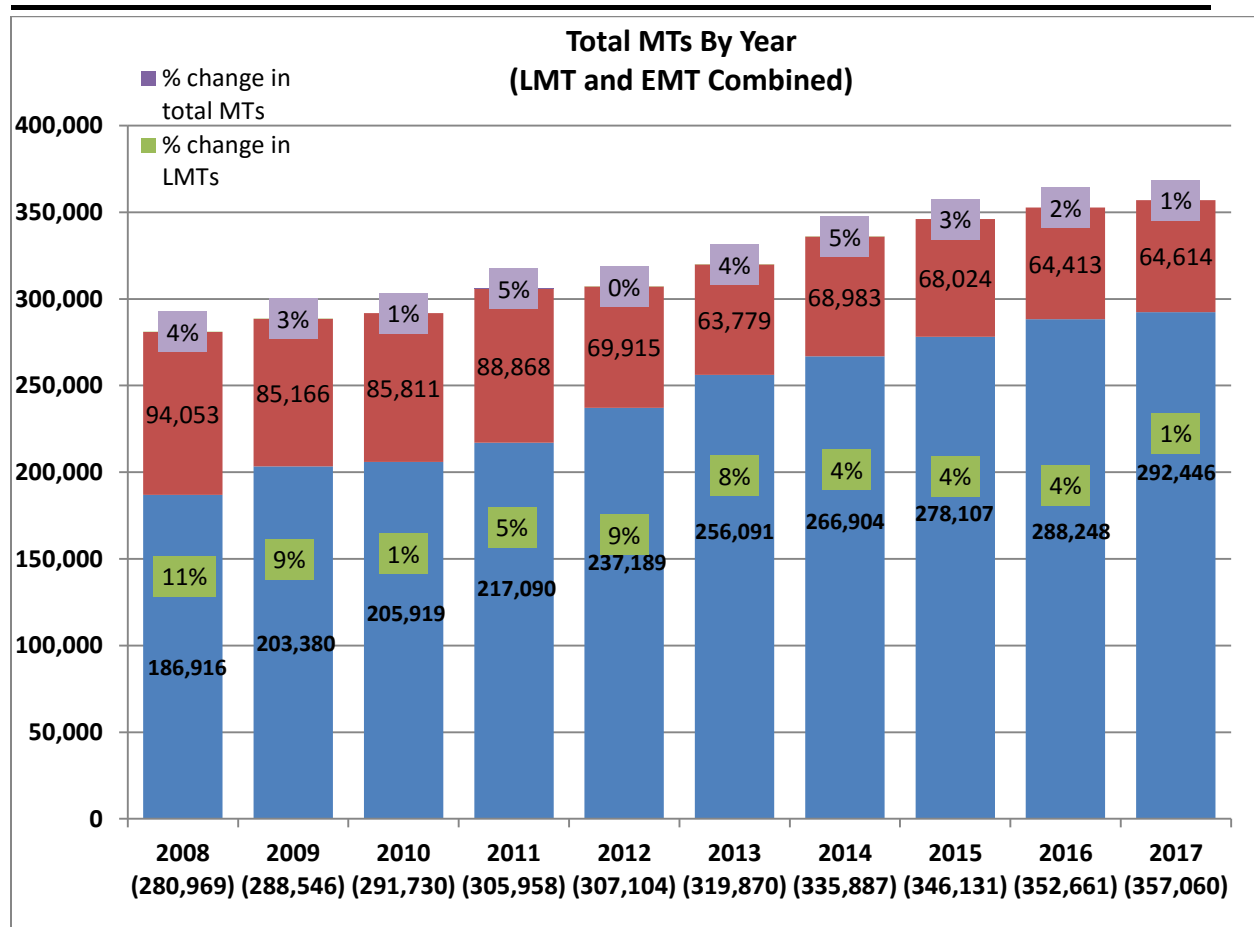


Figure 11. Total number of massage therapists in the U.S.

Highlights from Figure 11

In 2017 there were an estimated 357,060 massage therapists in the United States, which is up from 352,661 therapists in 2016.

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

Apply the Research:

1. How does the increase in licensed massage therapists benefit schools, current and future massage therapists, and the entire profession?
2. How can you use prior work experience and skills to benefit your massage practice now?

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

Massage therapists' compensation per hour had increased.

How much are clients paying for massage?

- In 2017, clients paid an average of \$72.13 for one hour of massage, an increase of \$0.49 from 2016.
- Hotels, resorts and cruises charged clients the most, an average of \$114.66 per hour.
- Therapists working out of their home charged the least, an average of \$63.35 per hour.

Average hourly earnings of massage therapists increased in the past year

Therapists working in their client's homes made the most, an average of \$75.37 per hour. Those working in massage only franchises and chains made the least, an average of \$22.00 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.

Massage therapists earned tips at a slightly higher frequency in 2016 as in 2015. Sixty-two percent of therapists reported receiving tips over 60% of the time in 2016 versus 60% in 2015.

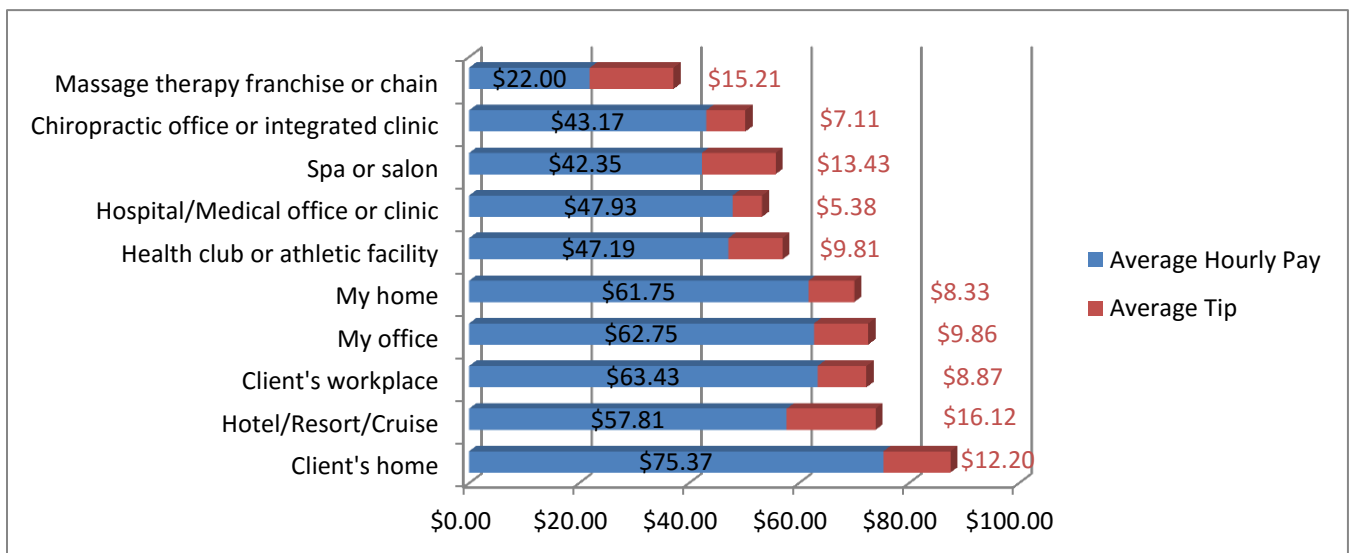


Figure 12. Average 2016 hourly pay and tips for massage therapists by work setting, reported in 2017.

Highlights from Figure 12

Therapists who worked in their clients' homes made the highest hourly wage in 2016.

Therapists who worked in hotels, resorts, and cruises made the highest tips in 2016.

Average income from massage therapy continues to increase

Massage therapists are making more income year over year from massage as can be seen in the table below. 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.

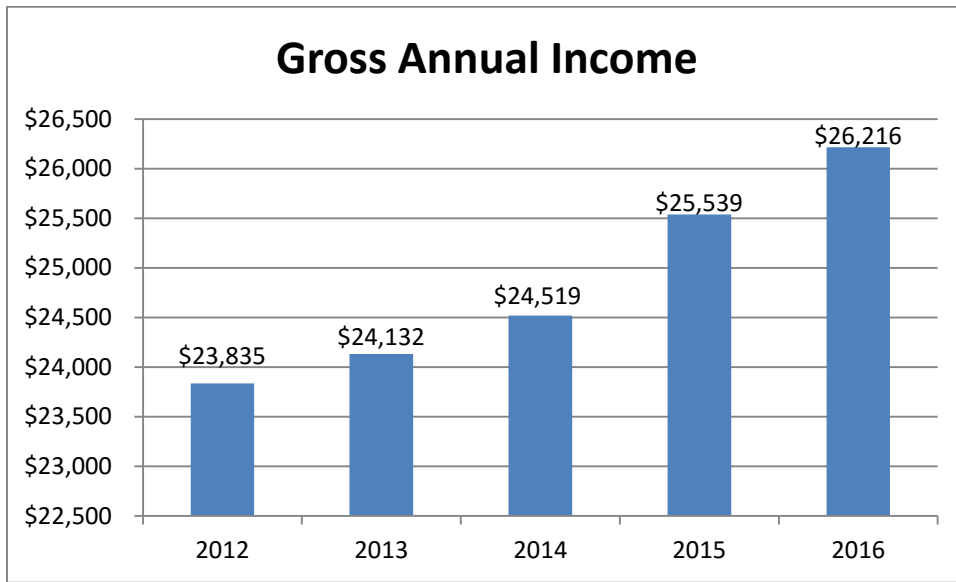


Figure 13. Gross annual income from massage therapy for therapists making at least \$100 from massage in a given year

Highlights from Figure 13

Gross annual income from massage therapy increased 2.6% from 2015 to 2016, as reported in 2017

Massage therapy accounted for nearly 77% of the typical therapist’s household income for 2016.

Sixty-three percent of therapists earned all of their annual income from practicing massage therapy, up from 62% in 2015.

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 opposed to net income as reported by individual massage therapists.

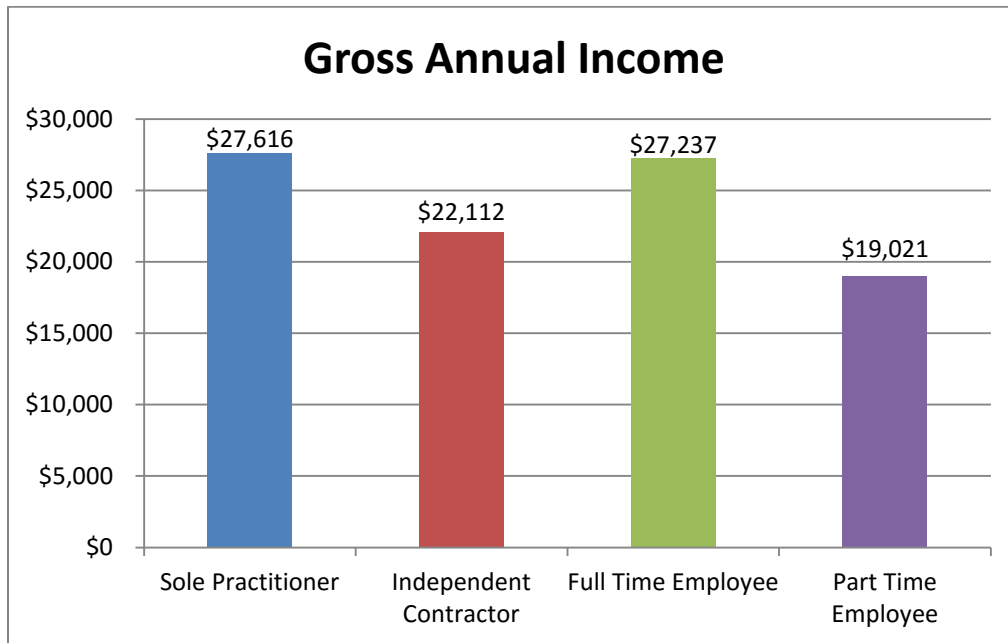


Figure 14. Gross Annual Income of massage therapists in different work settings

Highlights from Figure 14

Sole practitioners earned the highest annual income, closely followed by full time employees.

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 15, therapist pay is shown as a percentage of the rate the client is charged.

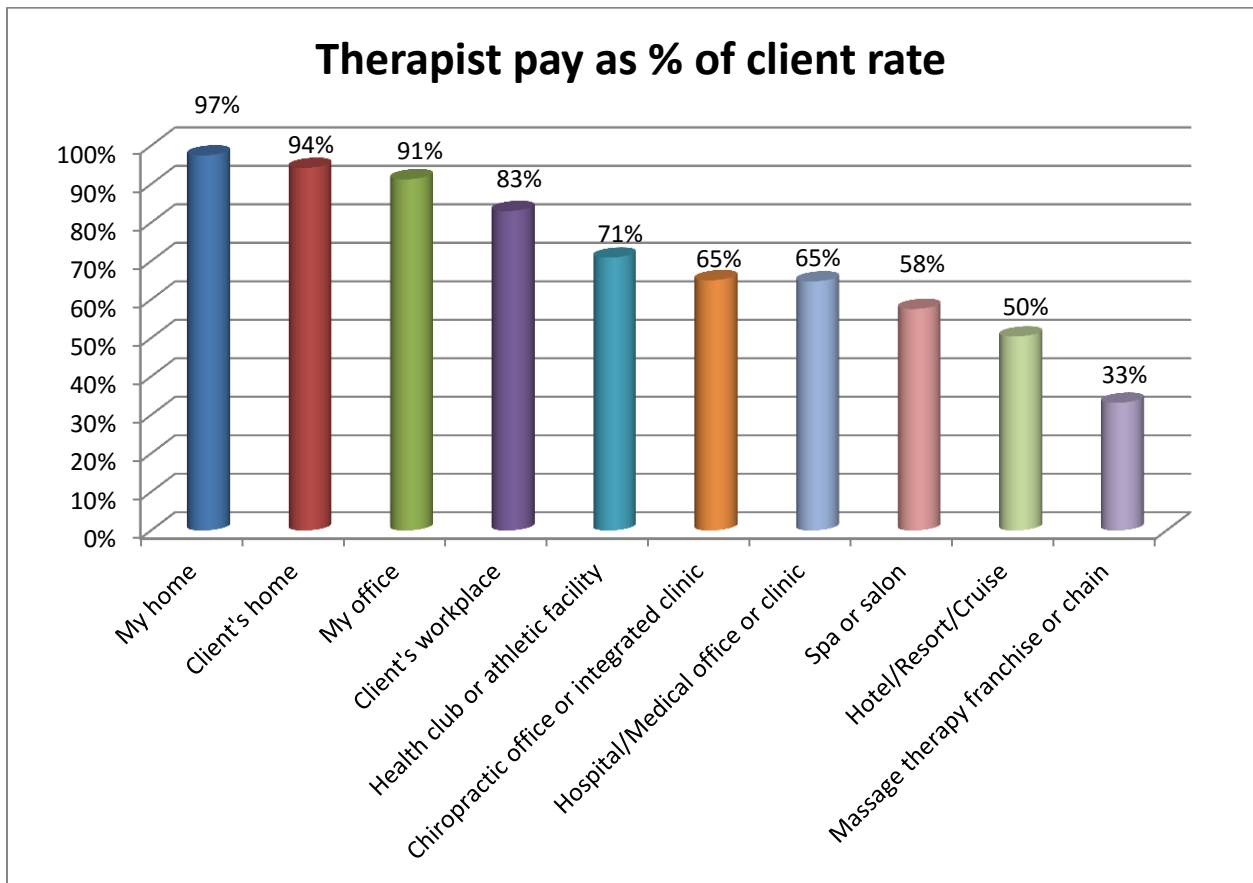


Figure 15. Therapist pay as percentage of client rate in different work settings

Highlights from Figure 15

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

Massage therapists are working a similar number of hours as compared to last year

On average, massage therapists worked 24.2 hours per week in 2017, down slightly from 24.3 hours per week in 2016. Forty-two percent of massage therapists said they would like to work more hours, down slightly from 47% last year.

Massage therapists were paid for 19.5 of the 24.2 average hours they worked per week in 2017, or 81% of the time they spent at work. This is up from 74% of work time paid in 2016. These increases over 2016 numbers are statistically significant.

Massage therapists continued to depend heavily on repeat clients

In 2017, massage therapists saw an average of 45 clients each month, similar to previous years. Repeat clients made up 73% of massage therapists' appointments in 2017 with new clients comprising the remaining 27%.

	Total Clients (#)	% New Clients	% Repeat Clients
Total	45	27%	73%
Sole Practitioner	46	23%	77%
Contractor	48	33%	67%
Full time employee	62	38%	62%
Part time employee	45	33%	67%

Figure 16. New and repeat clients seen by massage therapists

Highlights from Figure 16

The majority of clients that massage therapists saw in a month were repeat clients (73%).

Full time employees saw the most clients of all work settings over the course of a month (62 clients per month).

Where consumers find massage therapists and therapists find clients

Massage therapists obtain clients from many sources. In 2017, both massage therapists and their clients cited referrals as the primary method they used to locate each other. Massage therapists have promoted their practices less through community/local events than in previous years. Of particular note, the use of locator services increased significantly from 2016 to 2017 on both the part of the therapist and client. See Figure 17 on the following page.

	<i>% of consumers find therapists via this medium</i>	<i>% of therapists who promote via this medium</i>
Referrals by clients	80%	45%
Internet/websites	52	49
Social media	47	47
Community/local events	37	38
Professional networking with other providers	34	26
Locator service	29	24

Figure 17. Where consumers found therapists and where therapists promoted their services.

Highlights from Figure 17

Therapists promoted via client referrals much less often in 2017, even though referrals remained their top source of new clients.

As shown in Figure 18, massage therapists were active in referring clients to each other, although down from previous years.

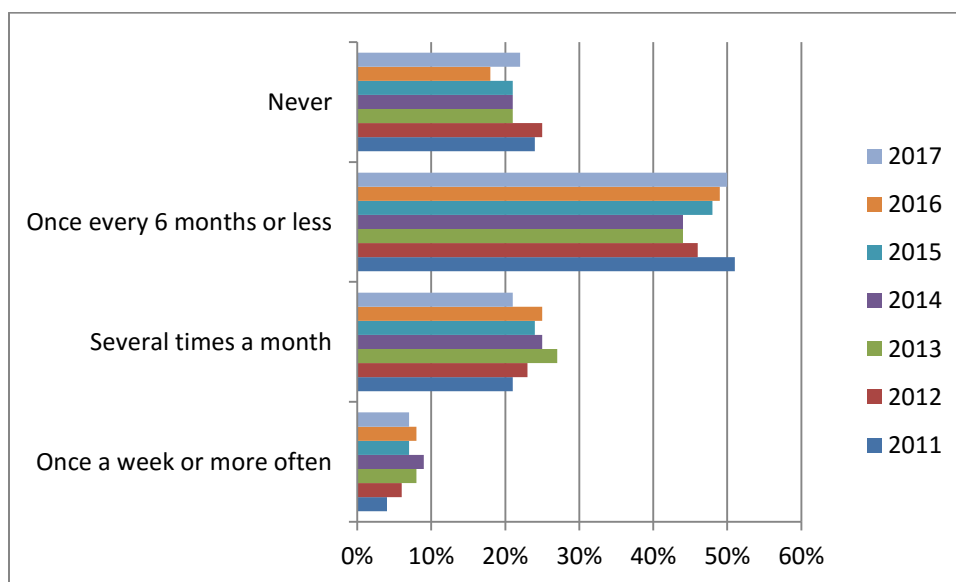


Figure 18. Frequency of receiving referrals from other massage therapists

Highlights from Figure 18

Massage therapists received referrals from other massage therapists less frequently in 2017 than in 2016.

Massage business continued to improve for sole practitioners and independent contractors

Sixty percent of sole practitioners and independent contractors indicated that their business improved in 2017, consistent with 2016 data. Nine percent of sole practitioners and contractors reported that business declined over the past year, the same as in 2016, and compared to 12% in 2015 and 11% in 2014.

Apply the Research:

1. Staying on top of pay trends in different work settings can help you negotiate pay and decide how much to charge for your massage services.
2. Due to the unique work schedule most massage therapists have, it's important that you are aware that the hourly and annual pay do not reflect a "typical" 9-5, 40 hour work week.
3. How do you keep clients returning to your practice regularly? How can you get them to come back more frequently or more habitually?
4. Massage therapists frequently refer clients to one another. Make sure you are networking with other massage therapists in case you need to refer a client to another therapist.

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

When working as full or part time employees, 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 both full and part time employees in 2017 was free or discounted massages.
- Life insurance was the least offered benefit to both full and part time employees. Figure 19 below shows the different benefits available to full and part time employees.

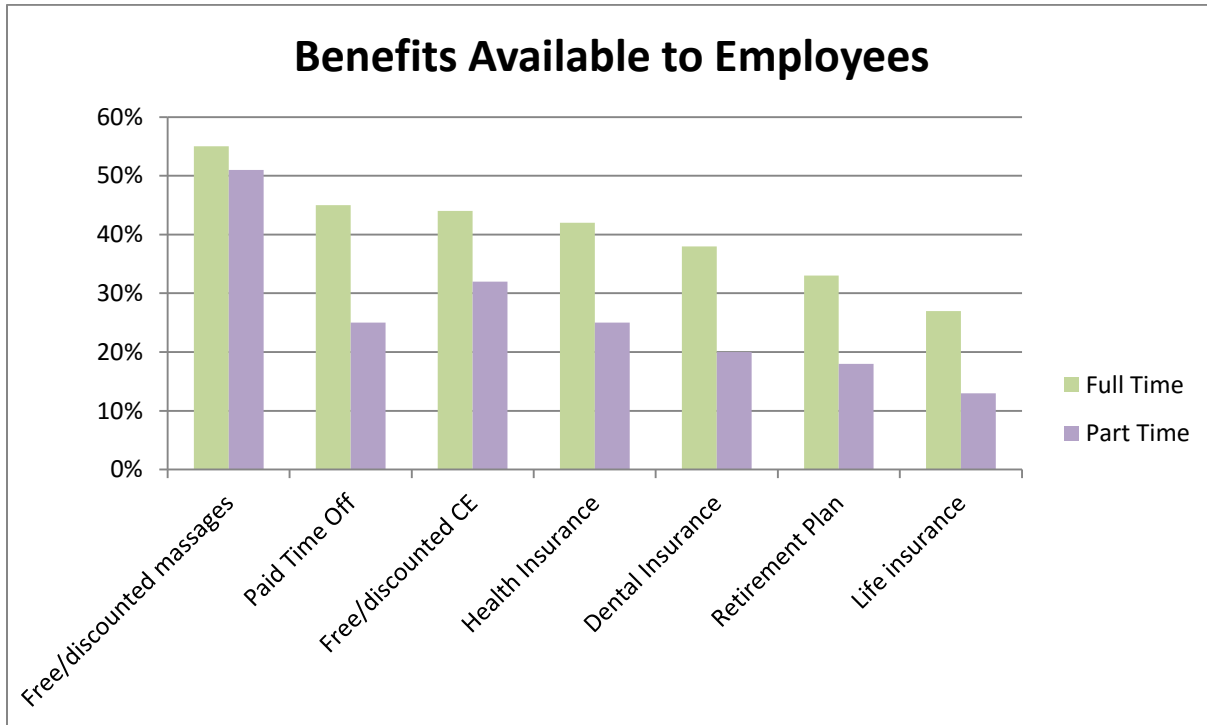


Figure 19. Benefits available to employees through their employers

Highlights from Figure 19

Paid time off is much more prevalent among full time employees.

Full time employees generally have a wider range of benefits available to them.

Apply the Research:

1. Spend time researching all benefits available to you through your employer, and plan for how to obtain any needed benefits or insurance not provided by an employer.
2. Consider the costs that are incurred by an employer to provide benefits to employees, and how this is an additional form of compensation to their salary or wages and tips.

2D. Where are massage therapists practicing?

The percentage of massage therapists who say they are sole practitioners increased from 2016.

AMTA's research on the massage industry in 2017 shows that massage therapists:

- Continued to travel to their clients' homes to provide massage. Providing massage in the client's home decreased slightly from 2016 to 2017 to 44%.
- Provided massage in their offices more often, at 42% in 2017 as compared to 38% in 2016.
- Provided massage in their homes less often. Massage provided in therapists' homes decreased to 29% in 2017 from 32% in 2016.

See Figure 20 for the visual representation of this data.

In what type of massage setting do you work?

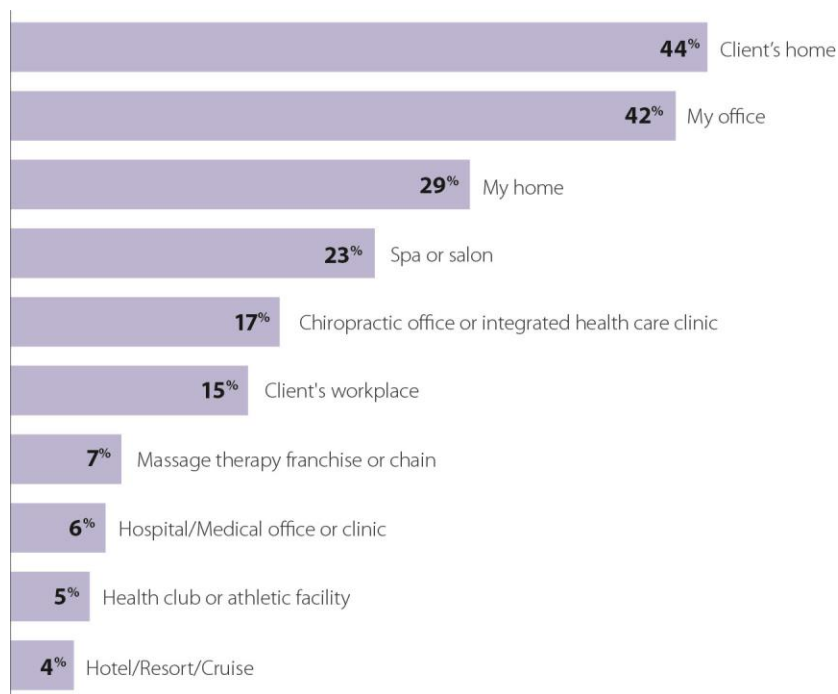


Figure 20. Massage therapists' work settings in 2016

Highlights from Figure 20

The average therapist works in about two settings.

Massage therapists worked in many different employment/practice arrangements. Figure 21 below shows the most common types of employment/practice.

Type of Massage Therapist

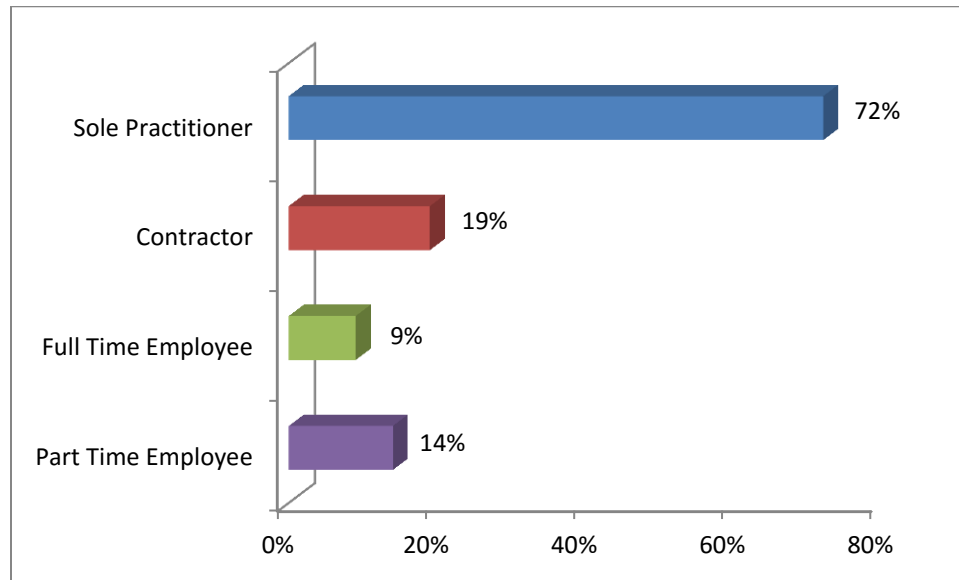


Figure 21. Massage therapists' self-described employment/practice arrangements

Highlights of Figure 21: Seventy-two percent of massage therapists described themselves as sole practitioners, a number that had been decreasing over the past few years, but increased significantly from 2016 to 2017. Full and part-time employees, meanwhile, have been relatively consistent as compared to last year. Note that 14% of therapists worked in more than one practice arrangement.

Massage therapists worked slightly fewer hours in 2017 than in 2016

The average work week of massage therapists was 24.2 hours in 2017, a decrease from the 24.3 hours reported in 2016. Seventy-two percent of those hours were spent performing massage. The other time was spent on marketing, performing general business tasks, filing for insurance reimbursement, and other tasks. See Figure 22 for more details.

Massage therapists said their ideal work week would be 35 hours, an increase of over 10 hours from their current work week.

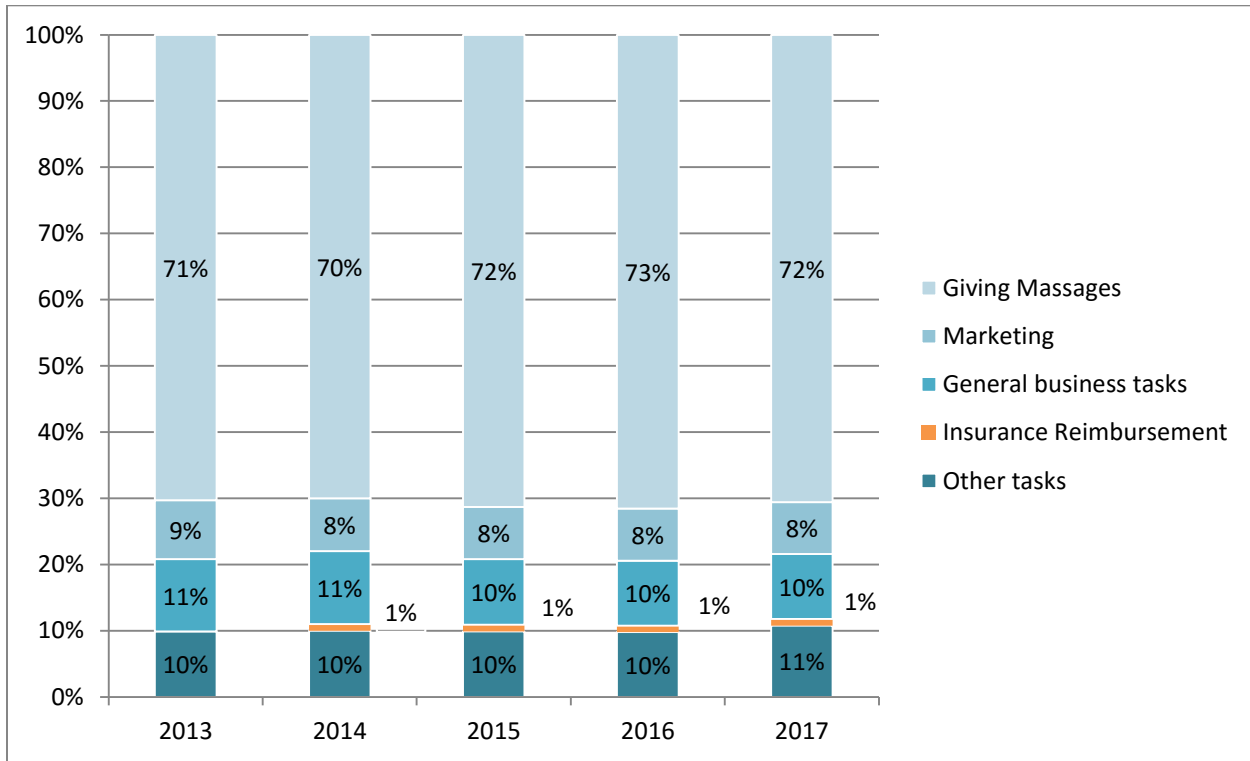


Figure 22. An average work week of a massage therapist
 (Note: because of rounding, totals may equal more than 100%)

Highlights from Figure 22

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

In 2017, massage therapists spent 72% of their workweek providing massage.

Apply the Research:

1. Massage therapists often work in many different settings. How do you adapt to working in multiple environments?
2. Revisit your daily schedule of massage appointments, marketing, business, and other assorted tasks to make sure you're making efficient use of your time. Go to www.amtamassage.org/careerguidance to get resources to help you get started.

2E. How are therapists using technology in their practice?¹¹

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, 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, process payments, host a website or communicate on social media to promote the practice, take continuing education courses online, and various other uses. Massage therapists use an average of 2.5 devices to aid them in the daily operation of their massage practice.

Devices used by massage therapists in their practices

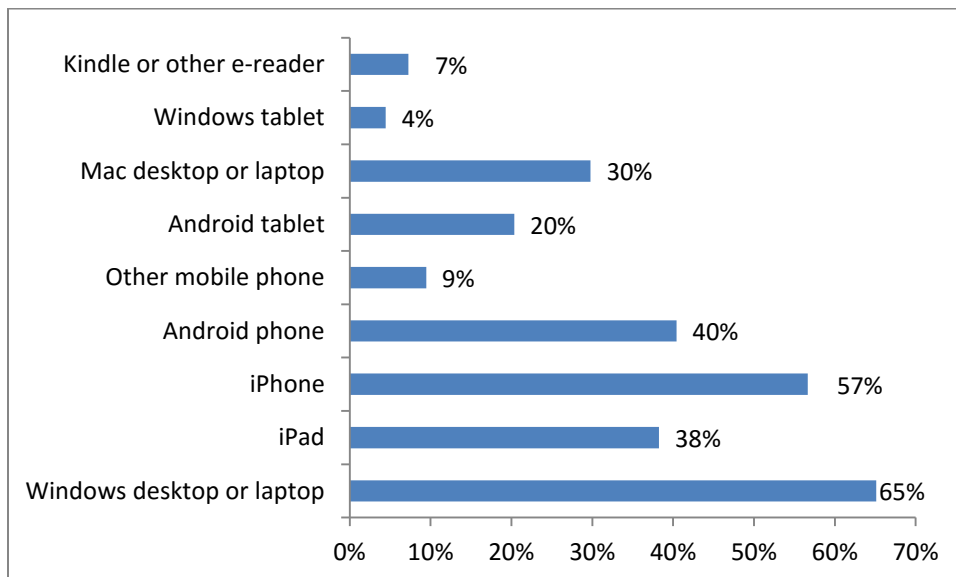


Figure 23. Technology used by massage therapists for their practice

Highlights from Figure 23

Massage therapists used desktop or laptop computers and smartphones most often to manage their practices in 2017.

Fifty-eight percent of massage therapists had websites for their practices, and an additional 20% planned to start one within the next six months. The number of therapists with a website for their practice remained constant, and the number planning to start one within six months increased 5% from 2016 data. For those therapists that were employees, 55% reported that their employer had a website for the business, a 22% decrease from 2016.

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 24 below for more details.

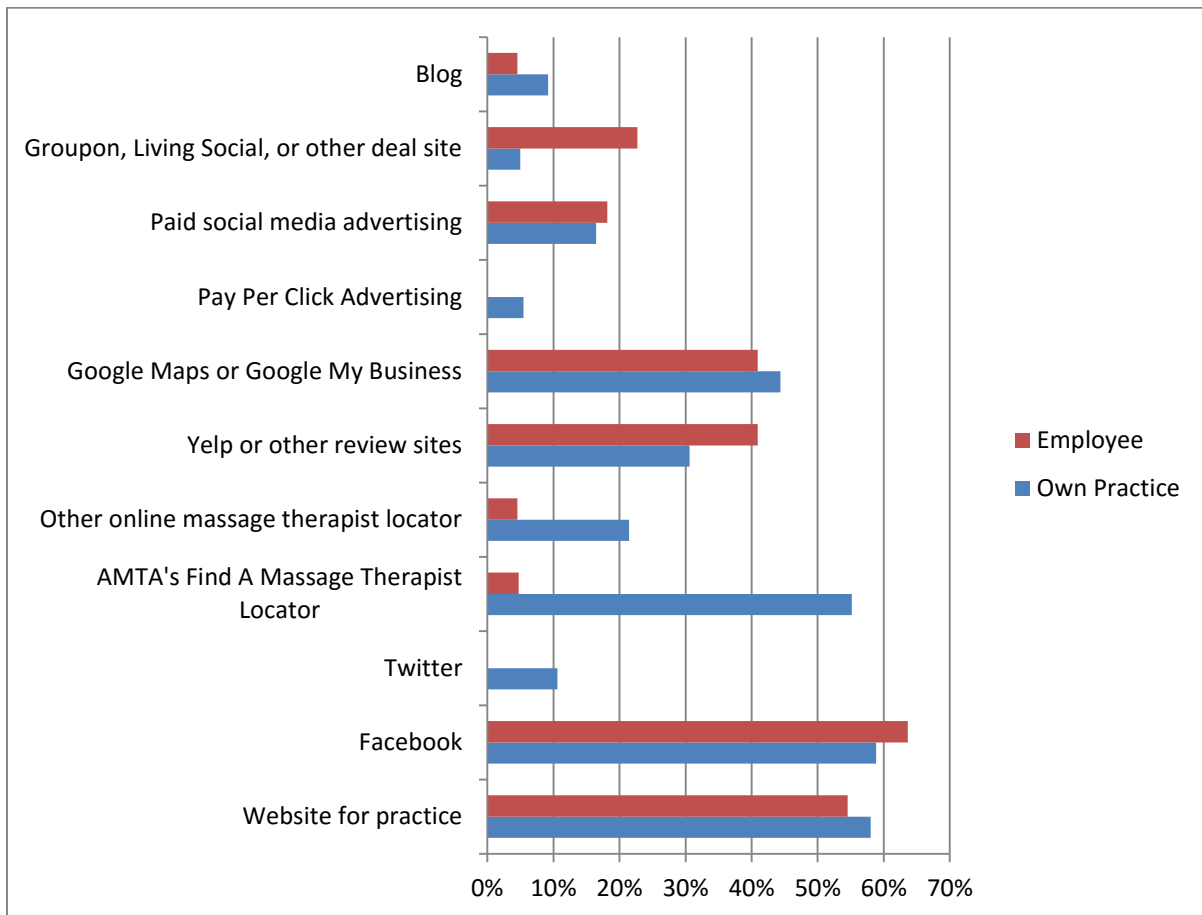


Figure 24. Online promotion tools used by employers of massage therapists

Highlights from Figure 24

Therapists working as employees said their employers most used practice websites, Facebook, Yelp or other review sites, and Google Maps or Google My Business to promote the practice.

Therapists who owned their own practice most used Website, Facebook, and locator services to promote their practice.

Massage therapists also used other digital tools to facilitate the management of their practices. See Figure 25 below.

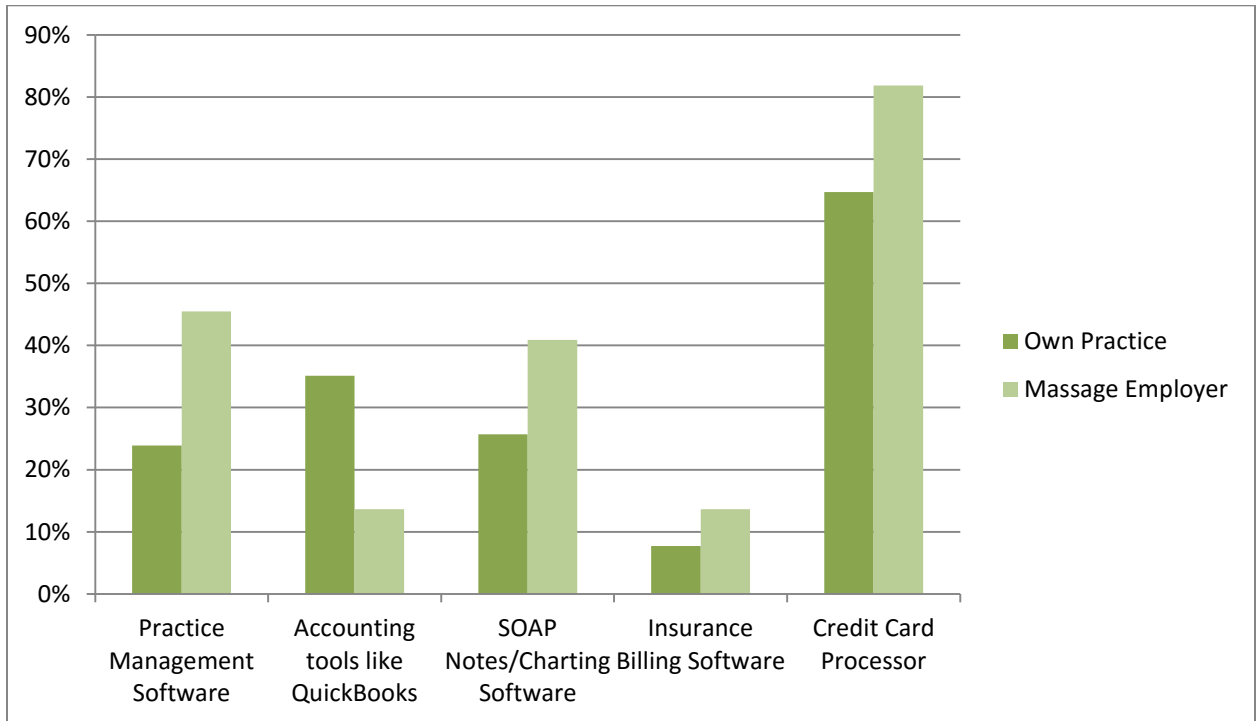


Figure 25 Digital tools to facilitate practice management

Highlights from Figure 25

Employers of massage therapists were more likely to use practice management software, SOAP Notes/Charting Software, Insurance Billing Software and Credit Card Processors than therapists running their own practice.

Therapists running their own practice were more likely to use an accounting tool like QuickBooks to manage their practice than employers of massage therapists.

Ninety-one percent of massage therapists owned a web-enabled smartphone. Therapists use their phone for a variety of functions, with texting being the most widely used among therapists, followed by phone calls, and then browsing the internet.

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 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%	24%	49%	3%	1%	14%
Twitter	6%	11%	4%	3%	0%	76%
LinkedIn	21%	7%	17%	6%	1%	49%
Pinterest	1%	27%	12%	4%	0%	56%
Instagram	3%	20%	13%	3%	0%	60%
Google+	13%	15%	17%	5%	0%	49%
Snapchat	1%	18%	0%	2%	0%	78%
YouTube	5%	22%	23%	5%	0%	45%

Figure 26. Social media used by massage therapists

Highlights from Figure 26

Massage therapists used Pinterest, Facebook, and YouTube mostly for personal use. LinkedIn and Google+ were the most commonly used for professional purposes only. Facebook, and YouTube were most used for both professional and personal reasons.

Massage therapists used social media sites for a variety of different reasons, both professional and personal. Figure 27 shows the main reasons.

Why Massage Therapists use Social Media

Keep in touch with friends and family	89%
Find old friends or coworkers	41%
Keep in touch with clients	40%
Network with other massage therapists	42%
Promote massage practice	50%
Follow businesses or causes I care about	60%
Catch up on news	43%
Research trends in the massage therapy industry	51%

Figure 27 Reasons massage therapists use social media

Highlights from Figure 27

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

Social media were not used as frequently for keeping in touch with clients, finding old friends or coworkers, or networking with other massage therapists.

Apply the Research:

1. More massage therapists are integrating technology into their practices in new and innovative ways. How can you use your current technology to benefit your practice in another way?
2. A website is a crucial marketing tool that contributes heavily to the success of massage businesses. Inventory your practice website to make sure the information is current and relevant to your clients.
3. Social media resources are increasingly important in everyday business as well as social life. How do you use social media to promote your practice and keep in touch with clients?

2F. What's the latest on the spa industry and massage therapy?¹²

According to the ISPA 2017 U.S. Industry Big Five Study, covering 2016 activity, spa visits and revenue increased as compared to 2015.

Spa visits increased in 2016

- Spa visits increased 2.5% from 2015 to 2016, and surpassed 180 million for the first time.
- Spa industry revenue reached \$16.8 billion in 2016.
- Revenue per spa establishment has increased over the past several years but is still below 2001 numbers, when the revenue was \$1.024 million per establishment.

Year	Estimated spa visits	Estimated spa industry revenue	Spa revenue per establishment
2009	143 million	\$ 12.3 billion	\$ 594,000
2010	150 million	\$ 12.8 billion	\$ 642,000
2011	156 million	\$ 13.4 billion	\$ 673,000
2012	160 million	\$ 14.0 billion	\$ 701,000
2013	164 million	\$ 14.7 billion	\$ 728,000
2014	176 million	\$ 15.5 billion	\$ 750,000
2015	179 million	\$ 16.3 billion	\$ 775,000
2016	184 million	\$ 16.8 billion	\$ 788,000

Figure 28. Information on spa revenue and visits

Highlights from Figure 28

Spa visits increased 29% from 2009 to 2016.

Estimated revenue for the spa industry increased 37% from 2009 to 2016.

Spa revenue per establishment increased 33% from 2009 to 2016.

The number of spa locations continues to increase

The number of spa locations increased by 240 locations from 2015 to 2016. (See Figure 29).

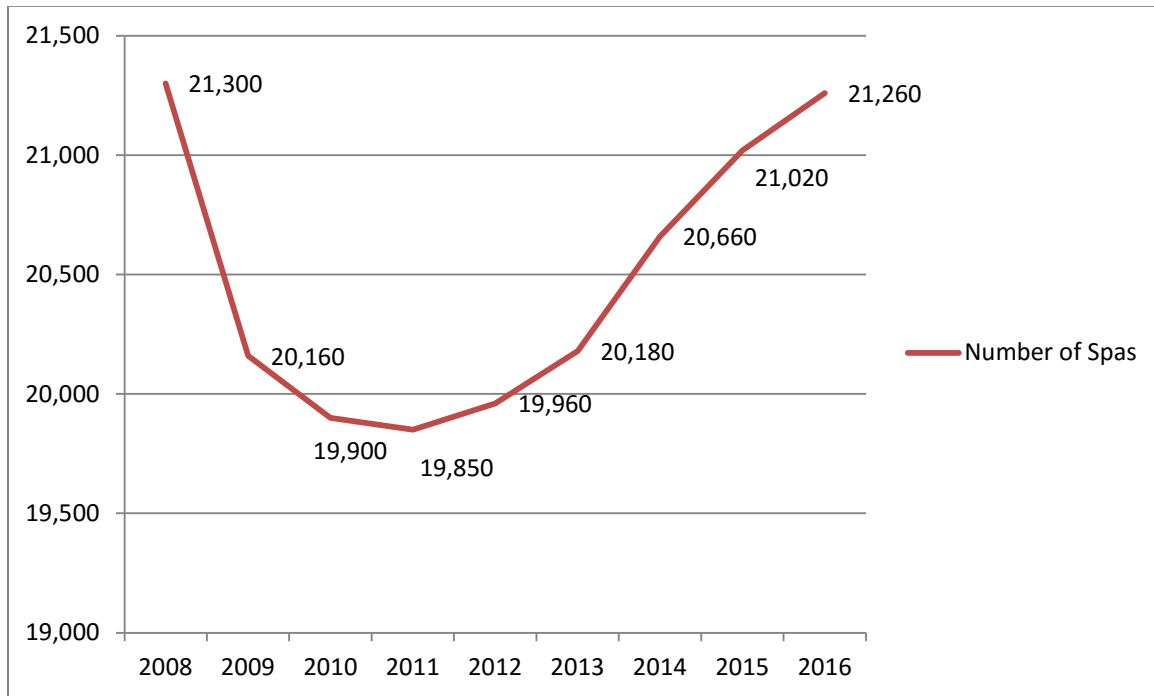


Figure 29. Growth in Spa Locations (US)

Highlights from Figure 29

The number of spa locations grew 1.1% from 2015 to 2016.

Other findings regarding the spa industry:

- Average revenue per spa visit increased 0.6% to \$91.30 per visit in 2016.
- Total employment in the spa industry as a whole increased 1.6% to 365,200 in May 2017, from 359,300 in May 2016. The number of full-time employees increased 2.3% over this time period to 165,800. Part-time employment increased 4.2% to 164,500. The number of contract employees in the spa industry declined 11.4% to 35,000. Note that at any given time, there are upwards of 30,000 open positions within the spa industry.
- Massage therapy is the highest revenue generating spa service, comprising an average of 35.6% of annual revenue for a typical spa. Skin care treatments and hair and nail treatments were the second and third highest revenue generators for spas.

- Ninety-two percent of spas provide massage therapy treatments, encompassing a variety of techniques, including deep tissue, sports, Swedish, pregnancy, and hot stone massages. These modalities have been consistently offered over the past several years in more than nine out of every ten spas in the country. Massage therapy is the second most commonly offered spa service, closely following skin care services.
- Most spas are single location operations. The ISPA report says that 56% of spas surveyed self-identified as single location. Another 18% said they are one of several locations with the same owner in the same region. Franchises were another 17% of spas. The remaining 10% are affiliated with a corporate headquarters.
- Eighty-eight percent of spas were confident that revenue would continue to increase in 2017.
- Revenue growth is expected to be 1.7% per year from 2016 to 2021 for the spa industry.¹³
- Female clients provided 52.7% of spa industry revenue, and comprised 77% of the client base for spas. In the past few years, there has been an increase in the number of male clients at spas, largely due to increased marketing to men.¹³

Massage therapists' employment in spas is down slightly

- AMTA research shows that 23% of massage therapists worked in spas or salons in 2017, down from 26% in 2016.⁹

Apply the Research:

1. The spa industry continues to expand. Consider how this upward trend in activity is beneficial for all massage therapists, not just those working in spas.
2. Getting enough qualified employees is a major issue for spas. If you're looking for a new work setting, start with AMTA's Career Success Series and online Career Assessment Quiz, available at amtamassage.org/careerguidance.

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

Results of the 2017 AMTA Industry Survey indicate national chains continued to expand and provide steady employment and work experience for many massage therapists.

National massage chains continued to expand and diversify their services

National massage chains have been growing for the past several years. In 2017, this growth continued, with most major massage chains opening new locations.

Per the 2017 AMTA Consumer study, 26% of massage consumers had a massage at a franchise or chain in the previous 12 months, and 9% 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

Seven percent of massage therapists worked at national massage chains in 2017, down slightly from 2016 numbers. 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 over 1,170 locations in 49 states. They have also expanded into Canada and Australia. Franchises sell a membership model where individuals can sign up to get massages every month. Massage Envy is the largest employer of massage therapists in the country, with more than 25,000 massage therapists and estheticians employed by the company. Massage Envy offers an annual membership for \$59 per month at most locations which includes a 50-minute massage. Currently, there are more than 1.65 million members that have signed up for this program. Massage Envy Spa locations also offer therapeutic facials for just \$10 more than a massage session at most locations.

Elements Therapeutic Massage employs over 3,000 massage therapists at their over 240 locations in 34 states plus Canada. Elements' Wellness Program carries a monthly fee of \$59 at most locations, which includes one hour-long Swedish or deep tissue massage, and members receive discounts of at least \$20 on each additional massage. Other Wellness Program benefits include the ability to roll-over unused massage sessions, the ability to pass on monthly massages to a family member or significant other, and online members-only specials. Non-member pricing for a one-hour massage is approximately \$89.

Massage Heights originated in San Antonio, Texas in 2004. The company has 156 locations in 23 states and Canada, and has aggressive growth planned for the United States and internationally in the next five years. The company has a membership model where members pay a rate of \$49.99 per month at most locations for one 50-minute massage, which includes a complimentary aromatherapy treatment. Additional massages can be

purchased for \$39.99, which is half off the non-member rate. Facials and other skin care services are also offered at Massage Heights locations.

Hand and Stone has over 370 locations in 28 states plus Canada. The company is headquartered in Pennsylvania, was founded in 2004, and began franchising in 2006. Hand and Stone offers monthly memberships which include an hour massage or signature facial for \$59.95 at most locations. Additional sessions can be purchased at discounted rates, and members are able to roll over unused sessions from month to month.

Outcall massage services managed through companies like **Soothe** and **Zeel** allow consumers to request massage at their homes 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 50 cities in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia with dozens more in the works. Zeel operates in over 60 cities in the United States.

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

Apply the Research:

1. Massage chains strive to offer a consistent consumer experience regardless of where the franchise is located. How does this benefit the owner, the employee, and the consumer?
2. Massage franchises are able to get consumers to sign up for multiple sessions using their membership model. What are the pros and cons of this approach to a massage practice?

If you have suggestions or need additional information, contact us at research@amtamassage.org.

Section 3 — Health Care and the Massage Profession

Consumers continue to seek massage for medical and health reasons. As the health care industry continues to grow, health care providers are more commonly viewing massage therapy as a legitimate 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?
- Where are consumers going for massage for health related issues?
- In what ways is massage therapy being integrated into various health care environments?

Key Findings:

- The healthcare industry is projected to become the largest employment sector of the US economy within the next decade.
- Ninety-seven percent of massage therapists think that massage should be considered a part of healthcare.
- Forty-three percent of Americans who got a massage in the last year got their last massage for a health or medical reason.
- Consumers are going to many different sorts of locations, even spas or massage franchises for pain relief/pain management issues.
- Consumers report that healthcare providers are encouraging them to get massage.
- Sixty-four percent of Americans would like their healthcare plan to cover massage.

These questions will be answered:

- 3A. Is the health care industry growing?
- 3B. How are consumers using massage as part of an integrated approach to health care?
- 3C. Where are consumers getting massage for health and wellness?
- 3D. What changes are occurring with massage and insurance?

3A. Is the health care industry growing?¹⁴

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

- Healthcare positions are expected to have the fastest job growth and add the most job growth between 2016 and 2026. Healthcare will surpass state and local government during the decade as the largest employment sector of the US economy.
- Between 2016 and 2026, nearly 1 in 4 new jobs will be in healthcare support occupations, healthcare practitioners, or technical occupations around healthcare. These sectors will add an estimated 2.3 million jobs to the economy in the coming decade.
- Continued increases in both the overall size of the healthcare 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 healthcare services.

Massage therapists have supported the integration of massage in health care. This integration continues to grow and more scientific research is being conducted on the efficacy of massage.

Massage therapists continue to support integration of massage therapy into health care⁹

Ninety-seven percent of massage therapists think their profession should be considered part of health care, consistent with last year's data. Therapists indicated the following as the most important ways to accomplish this integration. Percentages are of respondents listing item as their top choice:

- Massage prescribed or referred by health care provider (33%)
- Massage therapists working as part of a health care team alongside other complementary practitioners (30%)
- Massage therapists working as part of a health care team within a hospital or clinic (14%)
- Making massage available in hospitals (12%)
- Having massage billed to third party insurance (12%)

Additionally, 54% of therapists believe that the massage therapy profession is respected by traditional healthcare providers, versus 25% who feel it is not respected.

Clinical studies on the efficacy of massage are ongoing

AMTA continues to leverage its existing relationships within the health care industry to forge new partnerships with major organizations conducting research studies on the efficacy of massage. The results of these studies will provide more evidence-informed research about massage therapy. Increasing the base of clinical knowledge and research about massage therapy will further enhance the integration of massage therapy into health care and will increase its use by patients.

AMTA has continued to provide up-to-date information on massage therapy research to governmental agencies and national healthcare organizations to reinforce that massage therapy is a valuable and effective approach to pain and other health issues. A meta-analysis of massage therapy for pain conducted by the Samueli Institute, with support from the AMTA and the Massage Therapy Foundation released in 2016 established a new benchmark for massage therapy research. The study showed that massage therapy can provide significant improvement for pain, anxiety and health-related quality of life for those looking to manage their pain.

AMTA has also continued to partner with Team Roger C. Peace to co-sponsor its paracycling team and fund the gathering of data on the impact of massage therapy on the conditioning and performance of these professional athletes.

The Massage Therapy Foundation promotes research literacy and capacity in the profession by granting funds for research and educational initiatives related to massage therapy, by providing direct consultation to the medical and research communities, and by educating massage therapists about the world of research.

There are many resources you can use to access current and past studies on the efficacy of massage:

amtamassage.org/research

massagetherapyfoundation.org

wellnessevidence.com

pubmed.gov

nccih.nih.gov

biomedcentral.com

Apply the Research:

1. Brush up on how to read and interpret clinical research studies, and how to use research results to market their massage practice to consumers.
2. It is vital for massage therapists to be knowledgeable about the latest research on the efficacy of their work. Read the information in this report and visit massagetherapyfoundation.org for the latest information on clinical research on massage.
3. Visit amtamassage.org/research for resources to share with potential clients on ways massage can be effective for a variety of health conditions. AMTA offers client resources explaining massage research at amtamassage.org/clientresources.

3B. 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 2017. Americans solidly believe in the benefits of massage.

Consumer use of massage for medical and health reasons declined slightly from 2016 to 2017

Forty-three percent of American massage consumers got their last massage for medical or health reasons per the *2017 AMTA Consumer Survey*, down from 50% in 2016.

- **Overall, 89% of Americans believed that massage can be effective in reducing pain and 87% believed that massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.** These numbers were similar to the past several years.
- **Seventy-three percent of Americans believe that massage should be considered a form of healthcare.** Females and younger Americans were more likely to consider massage as a form of healthcare than males or older Americans, a trend that has not changed in several years.
- **Male consumers increased their use of massage for medical and health reasons in 2017 as female consumers decreased their use of massage for the same reasons.** Women decreased their use of massage for medical and health reasons in 2017, with 39% getting their last massage for medical or health reasons compared to 53% in 2016 but consistent with 2015 data. Forty-eight percent of male consumers got their last massage for a medical or health reason in 2017, up from 46% in 2016.
- **Consumers 55 and older increased their use of massage for medical and health reasons in 2017.** Forty-one percent of massage consumers aged 18-34 got their last massage for a medical or health reason in 2017, unchanged from 2016. Forty-one percent of consumers aged 35-44 got their last massage for a medical or health reason in 2017, down from 56% in 2016. The 45-54 age group experienced a large decrease in use of massage for medical or health reasons, to 37% in 2017, down from 63% in 2016. Fifty-nine percent of consumers in the 55-64 age bracket and 55% of consumers 65 and over got their last massage for a medical or health reason in 2017.
- **Consumers of all ages are using massage as a form of pain relief.** In 2017, 17% of consumers had their last massage for pain relief, down from 23% in 2016. Male and female consumers were equally likely to have had their last massage for pain relief, with 17% of each group getting their last massage for pain relief. Massage consumers 65 and older were the most likely to have had their last massage for pain relief, at 26%. Consumers aged 45-54 were the second most likely to have had their last massage for pain relief, at 20%. Just 12% of massage consumers aged 18-34 got their last massage for pain relief in 2017.

- **Eighteen percent of all consumers surveyed discussed massage therapy with their doctor or health care provider in 2017, up from 17% in 2016.**
- **Women were more likely than men to discuss massage therapy with their doctor or healthcare provider.** In 2017, more women and the same percentage of men reported discussing massage therapy with their healthcare provider. (See Figure 30 for more information). The conditions most likely to lead consumers to talk to their doctor or healthcare provider about massage included pain relief or pain management (36%), injury recovery or rehabilitation (19%) and soreness, stiffness or spasm (12%).

Have you ever discussed massage therapy with your doctor or other healthcare provider?

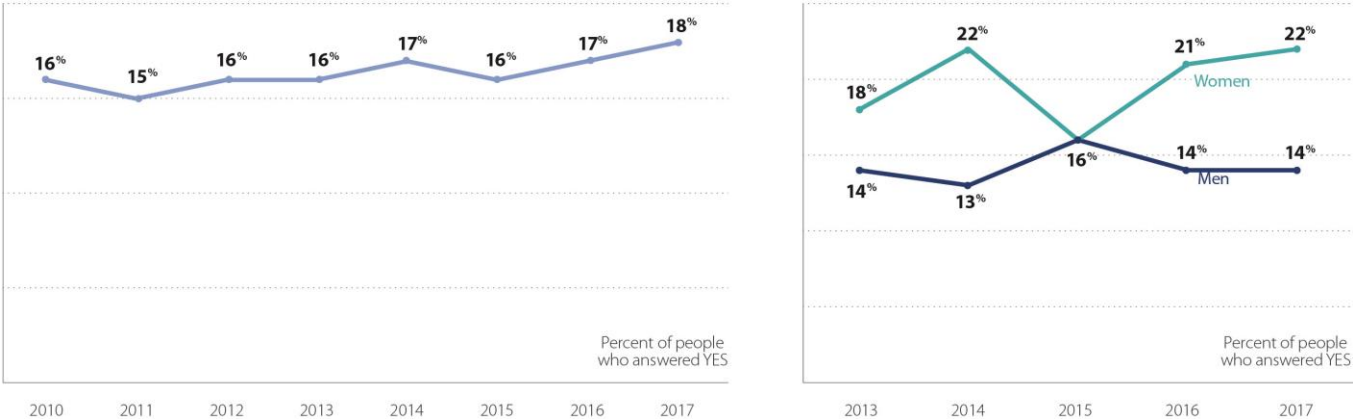


Figure 30. Consumers who discussed massage therapy with their health care providers

Highlights from Figure 30

18% of consumers discussed massage therapy with their doctor or healthcare provider. More women than men discussed massage therapy with their doctor or healthcare provider.

Consumers are being encouraged by medical professionals to get massage.

AMTA’s consumer research showed that of adult Americans who discussed massage therapy with their doctor or healthcare provider, 9% were referred to a massage therapist (down from 12% in 2016), 17% were strongly recommended to get a massage by their healthcare provider (21% in 2016), and 33% were encouraged to get a massage (up from 30% in 2016). Only 4% of those surveyed reported that their healthcare provider discouraged them from getting a massage.

For those consumers that talked with their doctor or healthcare professionals about massage, different groups recommended massage at varying rates. Figure 31 shows the percentage of American adults who received recommendations for massage by the type of health care professional.

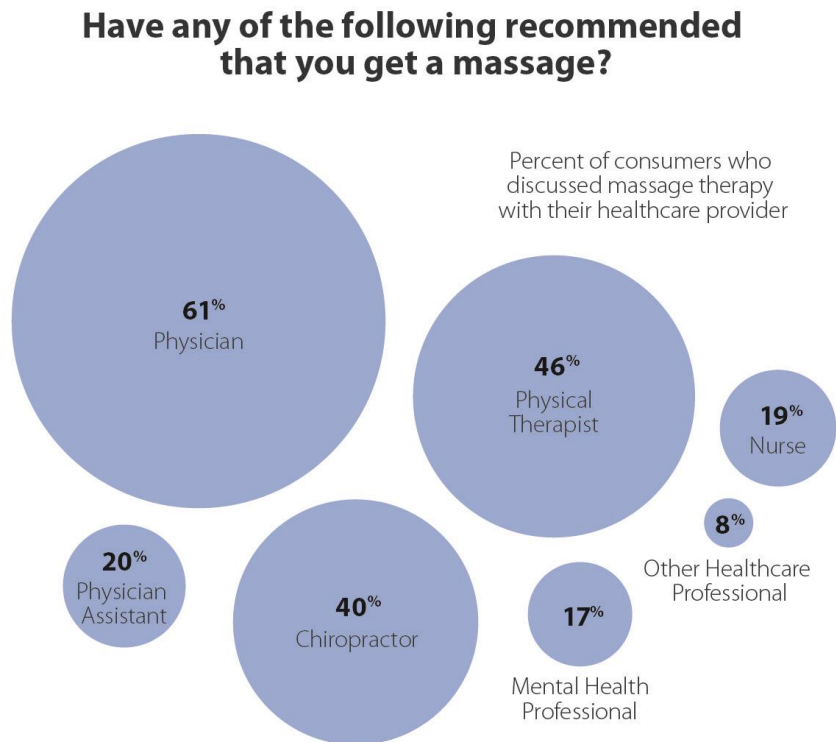


Figure 31. Health care professionals who recommended massage.

Highlights from Figure 31

Physicians were the most likely healthcare professionals to recommend massage, with 61% of physicians recommending massage to their patients when discussing massage therapy with a patient.

Massage therapists continued to receive referrals from health care professionals⁹

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 healthcare providers.

<i>Type of Health care Professional</i>	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Hospitals and Medical Offices	53%	52%	56%	55%	54%
Chiropractors and Integrated Health Clinics	70%	71%	71%	70%	71%
Other Health Care Professionals	73%	71%	75%	73%	72%
Other Massage Therapists	79%	77%	79%	82%	78%

Figure 32. Percentage of massage therapists who received referral at least once every 6 months by category of referring health care professional

Highlights from Figure 32

Massage therapists reported a slight decrease in referrals from other massage therapists from 2016 to 2017.

Apply the Research:

1. The number of consumers who discuss massage therapy with their doctor or healthcare professional has remained constant over the past few years. How do you leverage relationships with healthcare professionals and consumers in your area to include massage therapy as part of a discussion about healthcare?
2. Network and communicate with medical professionals so you can grow your network and find referral sources for your practice. Find resources at www.amtamassage.org/careerguidance.

3C. Where are consumers getting massage for health and wellness?¹

When seeking massage therapy for general medical or health reasons, consumers went to a variety of massage business locations. When confronted with higher level medical needs such as injury recovery or rehabilitation, consumers were more likely to go to a medical office or establishment for massage therapy.

Consumers go to many settings for medical and health reasons

Physician's offices, medical clinics and chiropractor's offices are not the only places consumers go for massage for medical or health reasons.

Overall, 43 percent of Americans got their last massage for a medical or health reason.

- 46 percent of consumers who got their last massage at a **beauty salon** said they did so for medical or health reasons.
- 58 percent of consumers who got their last massage at a **chiropractor's office** did so for medical or health reasons.
- 69 percent of consumers who got their last massage at a **physician's office or medical clinic** did so for medical or health reasons.
- 60 percent of consumers who got their last massage at a **massage therapist's office or location** did so for medical or health reasons.
- 54 percent of consumers who got their last massage at a **physical therapist's office** did so for medical or health reasons.
- 10 percent of consumers who got their last massage at a **spa** did so for medical or health reasons.
- 41 percent of consumers who got their last massage at **their home or a home of someone they know** did so for medical or health reasons.
- 52 percent of consumers who got their last massage at **massage franchise or chain** did so for medical or health reasons.

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

The number of massage therapists receiving insurance reimbursement increased in 2017

Twenty-two percent of massage therapists were reimbursed by insurance for massage, up two percent from last year. Insurance reimbursement includes multiple types of insurance, not only health insurance.

For practicing massage therapists, 8% were reimbursed by health insurance (either private payer or public system), 8% by auto insurance, 5% were reimbursed through worker's compensation, and 3% accepted other insurance reimbursement.⁹

Americans would like their health care plans to cover massage

According to AMTA's 2017 Consumer Survey, 64% of adult Americans would like to have their health insurance plan cover massage, unchanged from 2016 data.

Seventy-five percent of Americans aged 35-44 would like to have their health insurance plan cover massage, higher than all other age brackets, but down from the 83% who said this last year. At 46%, the 65 and older age bracket was significantly less likely than all other age brackets to want their health insurance to cover massage, consistent with last year's data. Of those wanting their healthcare plan to cover massage, 58% would be willing to pay higher premiums for massage coverage.

Five percent of consumers surveyed indicated that the payment for their last massage was covered by insurance (health, auto, or worker's compensation insurance), the same as in 2016.

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

The 2017 AMTA Industry Survey provides information on insurance reimbursement for auto, medical, worker's compensation and other insurance.

- Insurance reimbursement makes up between 7% and 29% of the total revenue for the average therapist that accepts insurance. Those that accept private payer medical insurance having the highest percentage of total revenue from insurance, and those that bill workers comp insurance have the lowest percent of total revenue from insurance.
- Depending on the type of insurance, the average amount of reimbursement received varied widely.

The average amount of reimbursement increased for auto and worker's compensation insurance increase last year, and declined for medical and "other" insurance. Insurance reimbursement is determined by each state and healthcare policy and not all states permit insurance reimbursement for massage provided by a massage therapist. 2016 was the first

year where private payer and public system health insurance were broken out into separate categories.

	Average Reimbursement for One Hour of Massage			Worthwhile for Business		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Auto Insurance	\$87	\$87	\$99	85%	94%	86%
Health Insurance	\$51	See Below	See Below	77%	See Below	See Below
Private Payer Health	N/A	\$70	\$65	N/A	82%	79%
Public System Health	N/A	\$56	\$33	N/A	67%	56%
Worker's Compensation Insurance	\$67	\$82	\$85	76%	84%	82%
Other Insurance	\$60	\$65	\$61	80%	57%	75%

Figure 33. Insurance reimbursement by type of insurance

Note that in 2016 “Health Insurance” was broken up into private insurance vs. public system insurance

Highlights from Figure 33

75% of massage therapists accepting “other” types of insurance reimbursement in 2017 found it worthwhile for their business, up nearly 20% from 2016.

Studies show that patients are paying out of pocket for massage in health care settings and insurance companies are covering a comparatively small portion of massage.

AMTA’s 2017 Industry Study shows that:

- Massage therapists working in a hospital, medical office or clinic were paid by patients 36% of the time, by insurance 9% of the time, and by the facility 55% of the time.
- Therapists employed in a chiropractic office or integrated health care clinic were paid by patients 38% of the time, by insurance 7% of the time, and by the facility 55% of the time.

Apply the Research:

1. State insurance reimbursement policies change from year to year. Make sure to research your state’s rules regarding insurance reimbursement.

Section 4 — Training and Education of Massage Therapists¹⁵

Over the past few years, massage schools have been diversifying their course offerings to include 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?
- What kinds of financial aid are schools offering to students?
- How can schools support new teachers?
- What benefits do schools provide to teachers?

Key Findings:

- The average number of graduates reported per school across all campuses was 67.
- The average amount of initial in-class education that therapists have is 665 hours.
- Fifty-four percent of schools had difficulty in attracting students.
- Forty-nine percent of schools have a student attrition rate over 10%.
- Seventy-two percent of schools offer some form of financial aid to students.

These questions will be answered:

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

4A. What changes are occurring in length of programs and types of training?
In 2017 the average massage therapist reported having received slightly fewer hours of initial training than was reported in 2016.

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

Sixty-eight percent of massage therapists reported they graduated from an individually owned, private, for-profit massage therapy school, consistent with 2016 data.⁹

In 2017, 15% of therapists reported graduating from a corporate school compared to 14% the previous year and 17% reported graduating from a public institution (community college, city college, state college/university), down slightly from 18% last year.⁹

The total hours of massage therapists' initial training decreased in 2017

The average amount of initial training reported by massage therapists on the *2017 AMTA Industry Survey* was 665 hours, a decrease of 8 hours from 2016. Below is a breakdown of hours of initial training. (See Figure 34 below.)

Hours of Initial Training	Percentage of Massage Therapists							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Less than 500	13%	20%	20%	15%	12%	10%	13%	15%
500-600	32	32	30	36	34	35	30	31
601-700	16	14	12	12	13	15	14	14
701-900	23	21	24	24	26	25	28	26
901-1,000	8	8	7	8	9	10	9	8
More than 1,000	6	6	7	6	6	5	7	7
Average Number of Hours	660	619	632	642	661	671	673	665

Figure 34. Hours of initial training.

Highlights from Figure 34

Most of the therapists that have less than 500 hours of initial training are more experienced therapists that were grandfathered in to their state license.

Only 15% of massage therapists have less than 500 hours of initial training.

See Figure 35 for initial training hours by work setting. Massage therapists working in health clubs/athletic facilities and chiropractic office/integrated health clinic reported the highest average initial training hours.

	Average initial training hours
Sole Practitioner	668
Independent Contractor	669
Full Time Employee	738
Part Time Employee	712
My home	684
My office	664
Client's home	681
Client's workplace	687
Massage therapy franchise or chain	693
Spa/salon	693
Health club/athletic facility	744
Hospital/medical clinic/office	683
Chiropractic office/integrated health clinic with other CAM providers	735
Hotel/resort/cruise	732

Figure 35. Hours of initial training by therapists working in different work settings.

Highlights from Figure 35

All work settings had average initial training hours well above the 500 required by most states for licensure.

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

- Eighty-eight percent of surveyed schools offer a basic certificate/diploma in massage therapy, down from 95% last year.
- Twenty-two percent offer an associate degree in massage therapy, up from 21% in 2016.
- Forty-two percent of schools are offering continuing education in massage therapy.

For more information refer to Figure 36.

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



Figure 36. Type of massage therapy program(s) or education schools offer (Respondents could select multiple answers; numbers do not add to 100%)

Highlights from Figure 36

The vast majority of schools offer a basic certificate or diploma in massage therapy. Very few schools offer a bachelors degree in massage therapy.

Courses geared to work settings

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

- Eighty-two percent of schools offered a class about massage therapy as a sole practitioner.
- Seventy-nine percent of schools offered a course on providing massage therapy in medical locations.
- Seventy-two percent of schools offered a course on massage therapy provided in spas.

Distance learning

According to the *2017 AMTA School Survey*, 17% of schools offer online courses for their entry level program, down from 20% in 2016. Of schools that offer online courses for their entry level program:

- The average number of courses offered online was three.
- No schools are solely using online learning in their entry level programs.
- Eleven percent of schools use online learning for continuing education programs, up from 9% in 2016.

4B. What are recent school trends and demographics?

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

The results of the 2017 AMTA School Survey show variations across schools in massage therapy training. These include:

- Number of locations
- Graduates per year
- Program hours
- Cost
- Year established

	Overall Average	School Type			Age of School	
		Individually Owned	Part of Larger Corporation	Public Institution	2001 or Newer	2000 or Older
Average number of locations	2	2	6	1	2	2
Average number of graduates per year for all locations	67	54	274	19	25	91
Average in-class supervised hours required (entry-level program)	601-700	601-700	701-800	601-700	601-700	601-700
Average clinical hours required (entry-level program)	81-100	81-100	81-100	81-100	81-100	81-100
Average cost-per-hour of entry level program before financial aid	\$14-\$16	\$14-\$16	\$20 or more	\$11-\$13	\$11-\$13	\$14-\$16
Length of Operation						
2001 or newer	39%	39%	42%	41%	100%	0%
2000 or older	61%	61%	58%	59%	0%	100%

Figure 37. School profile information from 2017 AMTA School Survey

Highlights from Figure 37

Schools established in 2000 or before have much higher numbers of graduates than schools that were established more recently.

Number of locations

Most massage schools had two locations in 2017. Schools that are part of a larger corporation had an average of six locations.

Graduates per year

The average number of graduates was 67 per school, although schools varied greatly on the number of graduates with some schools reporting less than 10 per year, and others with hundreds of graduates per year.

Program hours

Schools required an average of 601-700 in-class, supervised hours, and an additional 81-100 clinical hours on top of that, the same hours required in 2016. Massage therapists cited an average of 665 hours of entry-level training.

Cost

The average cost for a massage program was between \$14 and \$16 per hour before factoring in financial aid, up from \$11-\$13 last year.

- Schools that are part of a larger corporation charged the most, an average of \$20 or more per hour. Public institutions changed the least at \$11-\$13 per hour.
- Newer schools charged less than older schools.

Year Established

Thirty-nine percent of the schools participating in the *2017 AMTA School Survey* were established in the year 2001 or after, compared to 31% last year. Of those schools:

- Sixty-one percent are individually owned schools.
- Public institutions/community colleges make up 28% of the respondent base.
- Schools that are part of a larger corporation make up 11% of the respondent base.

4C. What challenges are schools facing?

Difficulty attracting students and marketing their school/programs remain the biggest challenges for schools.

All Schools

Across all three categories of massage schools, the top challenges cited were difficulty marketing the school or program and difficulty in attracting students. These challenges have not changed over the past several years.

Individually-owned massage schools

The biggest challenges for these schools are **attracting students** and **marketing their schools or program**. Forty-nine percent of individually-owned schools said they had difficulty attracting students compared to 59% last year. Twenty-four percent said they had difficulty in marketing their school or program, down from 49% last year.

Massage schools as part of larger corporations

Their biggest challenge remains attracting students, as has been the main challenge for the past several years. Their next biggest challenges were competing with other massage schools, and finding qualified teachers.

Public institutions with separate massage programs

Sixty-seven percent of public schools said marketing their program was challenging in 2017, compared to 53% in 2016. Fifty-eight percent of public schools said they had difficulty attracting students to their programs in 2017, down from 60% in 2016.

What are the biggest challenges affecting your school?

TOP CHALLENGES AFFECTING MASSAGE SCHOOLS	TOTAL	School Type		
		1	2	3
Difficulty in attracting students	54%	49%	67%	58%
Difficulty in marketing school and programs	39%	24%	44%	67%
Difficulty in competing with other massage schools	24%	18%	56%	25%
Difficulty keeping in touch with alumni	23%	20%	22%	29%
Difficulty in finding qualified teachers	22%	14%	56%	25%
Difficulty in retaining qualified teachers	12%	6%	44%	13%
Difficulty in offering financial aid	11%	16%	0%	4%
High student dropout rates	11%	4%	44%	13%
Difficulty teaching students with diverse needs	7%	8%	0%	8%
Difficulty in obtaining/retaining school accreditation	7%	8%	11%	4%
High cost of products and services needed for my school	6%	10%	0%	0%
Lack of current information about industry trends, facts, demographics	6%	4%	22%	4%
Rising insurance costs	4%	6%	0%	0%
Difficulties in finding employment for graduating students	2%	2%	11%	0%
Difficulty in developing my curriculum	2%	4%	0%	0%
Difficulty in evaluating students and/or the entire school	2%	2%	0%	4%
Lack of guidelines/hiring practices for teachers	2%	0%	11%	4%
Insurance access	2%	4%	0%	0%
Difficulty providing training to students	1%	0%	11%	0%

1. Individually Owned
 2. Part of Larger Corporation
 3. Public Institution

Figure 38. Top challenges affecting massage schools

Interpreting Figure 38

Schools mentioned many other challenges beyond those listed on the previous chart. Most open-ended responses encompass a wide variety of topics, but include rising costs, government regulations and licensure issues, and alumni not updating the school when they have obtained employment.

4D. How many schools are accredited?¹⁶

*Sixty-four percent of schools report being accredited.*¹⁵

Between 2014 and 2017, the total number of massage schools accredited by nationally-recognized accrediting organizations declined 11% while the number of campuses in these accredited institutions declined 30%. 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.

In the past year many schools have either gone out of business or ceased their massage program as the government is being more strict with schools that allow federal funding, especially for-profit institutions, which could lead to a decline in the number of accredited schools listed below. (See Figure 39.)

Accrediting Organization	2014 Numbers		2015 Numbers		2016 Numbers		2017 Numbers	
	Institutions	Campuses (Including Main)	Institutions	Campuses (Including Main)	Institutions	Campuses (Including Main)	Institutions	Campuses (Including Main)
ABHES	39	65	36	57	32	43	33	39
ACICS	56	197	57	182	49	156	46	117
ACCET	23	73	22	73	23	75	17	44
ACCSC	77	142	71	119	71	117	66	107
COMTA	49	68	49	57	48	60	49	58
NACCAS	72	122	66	115	68	97	71	104
Total	316	667	301	603	291	548	282	469

Figure 39. Accreditation numbers

Highlights from Figure 39

Three percent fewer institutions were accredited in 2017 than in 2016.

Fourteen percent fewer campuses were accredited in 2017 than in 2016.

4E. 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.

6	Average number of part-time instructors currently employed
2	Average number of independent contractors currently employed
2	Average number of full-time instructors currently employed
87%	Have part-time instructors (up from 84% in 2016).
72%	Have full-time instructors (up from 64% in 2016).
39%	Have independent contractors (down from 49% in 2016).

Figure 40. Number of instructors in massage therapy schools

Highlights from Figure 40

Schools relied more heavily on part time instructors in 2017.

Instructor teaching experience

Massage instructors had an average of 10 years of teaching experience within massage therapy, down from 12 years cited in 2016 but consistent with 2015 data.

Experience of massage therapy instructors related to massage therapy

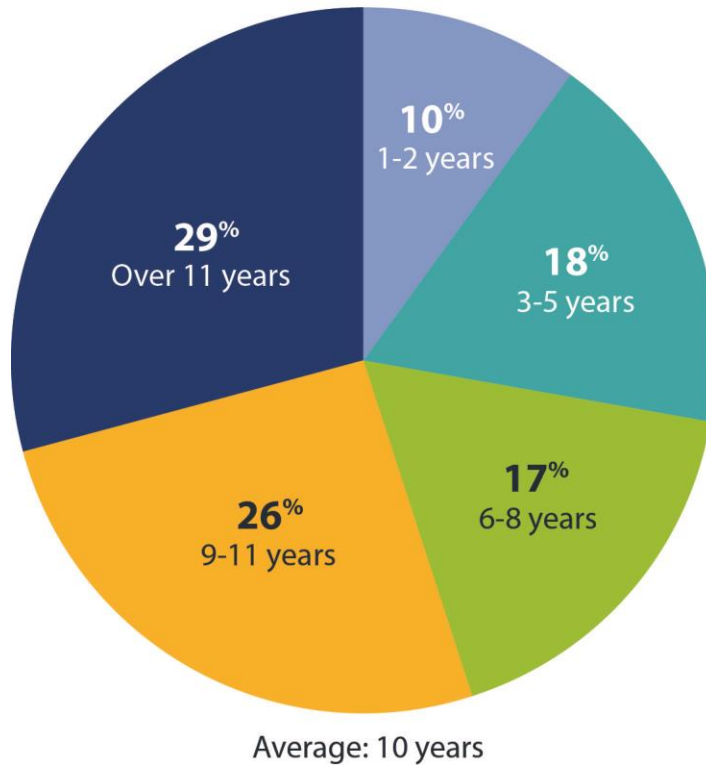


Figure 41. Experience of massage therapy instructors related to massage therapy

Highlights from Figure 41

Nearly a third of massage therapy instructors have more than 11 years of teaching experience related to massage.

Average teaching experience unrelated to massage declined to 6 years in 2017, from 8 years in 2016. Schools may want to consider providing massage therapy teacher training for new instructors without experience in massage therapy instruction.

What qualifications do massage schools look for in instructors?

In their instructor hiring requirements, massage schools focus on massage therapy experience first. Figure 42 provides more detail regarding hiring requirements for instructors.

General Hiring Requirements by School Type				
	Total	<u>Individually Owned</u>	<u>Part of Larger Corporation</u>	<u>Public Institution</u>
Experience as a practicing massage therapist	90%	92%	100%	82%
Current status as a practicing massage therapist	63%	61%	67%	64%
Teaching experience	50%	51%	33%	54%
Experience in specific modalities	44%	42%	33%	50%
Require massage instructor training	23%	29%	11%	14%
Bachelors degree	27%	19%	0%	54%
Associate degree	22%	7%	33%	50%

Figure 42. General hiring requirements by school type

Highlights from Figure 42

Across all school types, 63% require instructors to be a practicing massage therapist.

Hiring requirements shifted in 2017

More schools required experience as a practicing massage therapist in 2017 than in 2016. Overall, more schools are requiring bachelors or associates degrees of their instructors, although this varies widely by school type.

Hiring challenges

Thirty-eight percent of schools said they had trouble hiring instructors for their program compared to 26% last year. Of those schools that had difficulty hiring instructors:

- Seventy-one percent of schools said they found instructor candidates lacking in teaching experience, down from 80% last year.
- Sixty-eight percent said they found instructor candidates lacking curriculum development skills, down from 75% in 2016.
- Sixty-five percent said they found instructor candidates lacking in classroom management skills.

Teacher Training

Seventy-six percent of all schools surveyed provided teacher training in 2017, down from 84% in 2016. Of those schools that provided teacher training:

- Ninety-two percent provided in-service training, down from 98% last year.
- Seventy-five percent provided a peer/monitor relationship compared to 74% last year.
- Forty-two percent provided reimbursement for continuing education compared to 44% last year.
- Twenty-five percent provided other support and resources in order to help improve teacher's skills.

How much are instructors paid?

According to the *2017 AMTA Massage School Survey*, which surveyed instructor pay for 2016, average hourly pay was \$29 per hour, with public institutions paying more than individually owned and corporate schools. The average annual salary of teachers was \$43,110 per year. Schools vary in how they pay instructors, with some paying per year, some per class, and some per hour. Here is more information on the breakdown of massage therapy instructor pay in 2016:

	<u>All Schools</u>	<u>Individually Owned</u>	<u>Part of Larger Corporation</u>	<u>Public Institution</u>
Average Annual Instructor Salary	\$43,110	\$29,333	\$39,750	\$52,720
Average Instructor hourly wage	\$29	\$29	\$25	\$32

Figure 43. 2016 Average instructor pay

What percentage of schools provide benefits to instructors?

Fifty-three percent of schools provided benefits to their instructors in 2017 compared to 42% last year. Public institutions are much more likely to offer benefits than other types of schools. Of those schools that provided benefits to instructors:

- Eighty-five percent provided medical insurance compared to 77% last year.
- Seventy-four percent provided retirement services compared to 63% last year.
- Seventy-two percent provided dental insurance, up from 63% last year.
- Sixty-five percent provided vision insurance and 46% provided life insurance.

See Figure 44 for more information about benefits available to full and part time faculty.

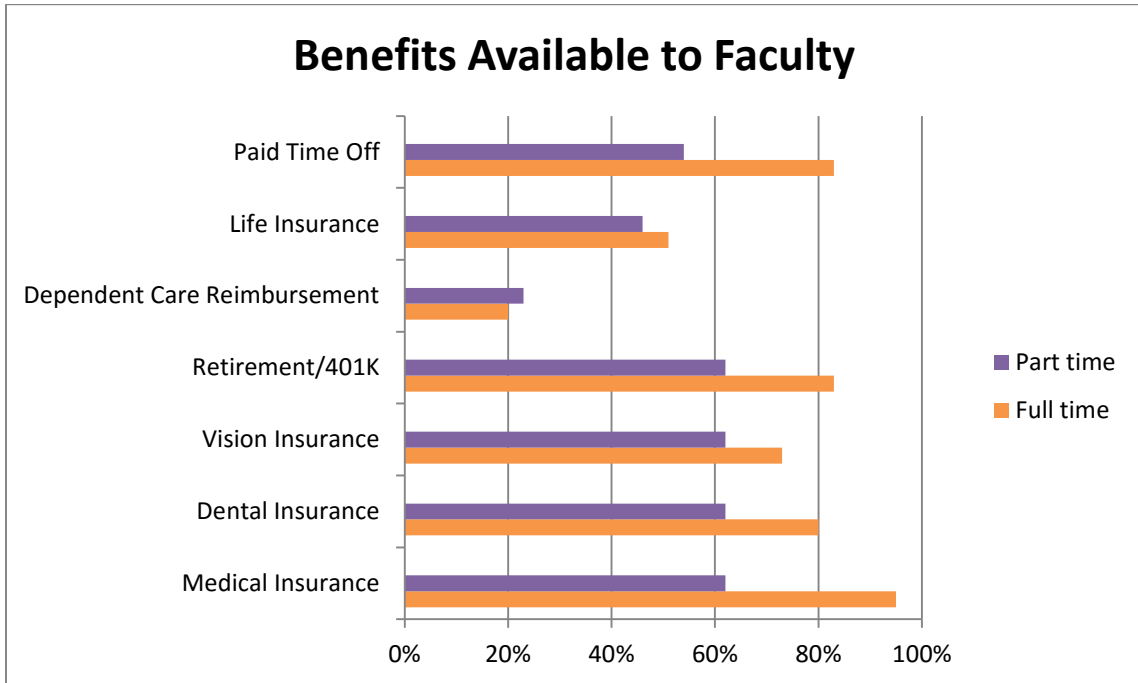


Figure 44. Benefits available to full and part time faculty.
Independent contractors are not shown in this graph due to small sample size.

Highlights from Figure 44

Part time faculty were equally likely to have medical, vision, and dental insurance and retirement benefits available in 2017

4F. What is occurring with new graduates?

Some recent graduates may find it difficult to find a job in massage therapy as they begin their career. Schools with a formal placement program continue to see a large percentage of students finding employment.

Number of graduates per school

According to the *2017 AMTA Massage School Survey*, massage schools had an average of 67 students graduate from their school across all campuses in a given year.

Schools continue to help new graduates find jobs

While getting ready to graduate, some students may find it difficult to obtain employment in massage therapy or to start their own practice. This is one of the major reasons why new therapists leave the profession. In light of this, 82% of schools now offer some kind of job placement service to their students:

- Forty-six percent of schools provided a job board or bank that students can use to look for jobs in 2017, down from 65% last year.
- Thirty-six percent of schools offered a formal placement program for graduates in 2017, up from 29% in 2016.
- Fifty-nine percent of schools have a placement rate of over 80%.

Some of the specific job placement services schools provided to students include assistance with resume writing, cover letter writing, interviewing skills, and career development courses and seminars. Additionally, many schools with a formal job placement program have a career services department that establishes relationships with massage therapy businesses, provides externships and holds job fairs for students at their school. Overall, schools work hard to ensure their graduates have good massage therapy positions available to them upon graduation.

4G. Who are today's students?

Student demographics and attrition rates remained steady in the last year.

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, 90% of applicants are admitted to a massage therapy program.
- Eighty-seven percent of massage programs require a high-school diploma from incoming students.
- Sixty-two percent of schools require that prospective students be interviewed prior to admittance to the program.
- Twenty-five percent of schools look at standardized test scores for applicants to the program.
- Twenty-two percent of schools require applicants to provide a written essay with their application materials.

Massage students are more evenly distributed in age

The median age of massage students is 26-30 years old, similar to years past. Fifty-nine percent of students are under 30 years old. There are slightly fewer students above 46 years old than in the previous year. The age distribution of massage students is shown in figure 46. Most schools report the highest percentage of massage students are between 21 and 25 years of age.

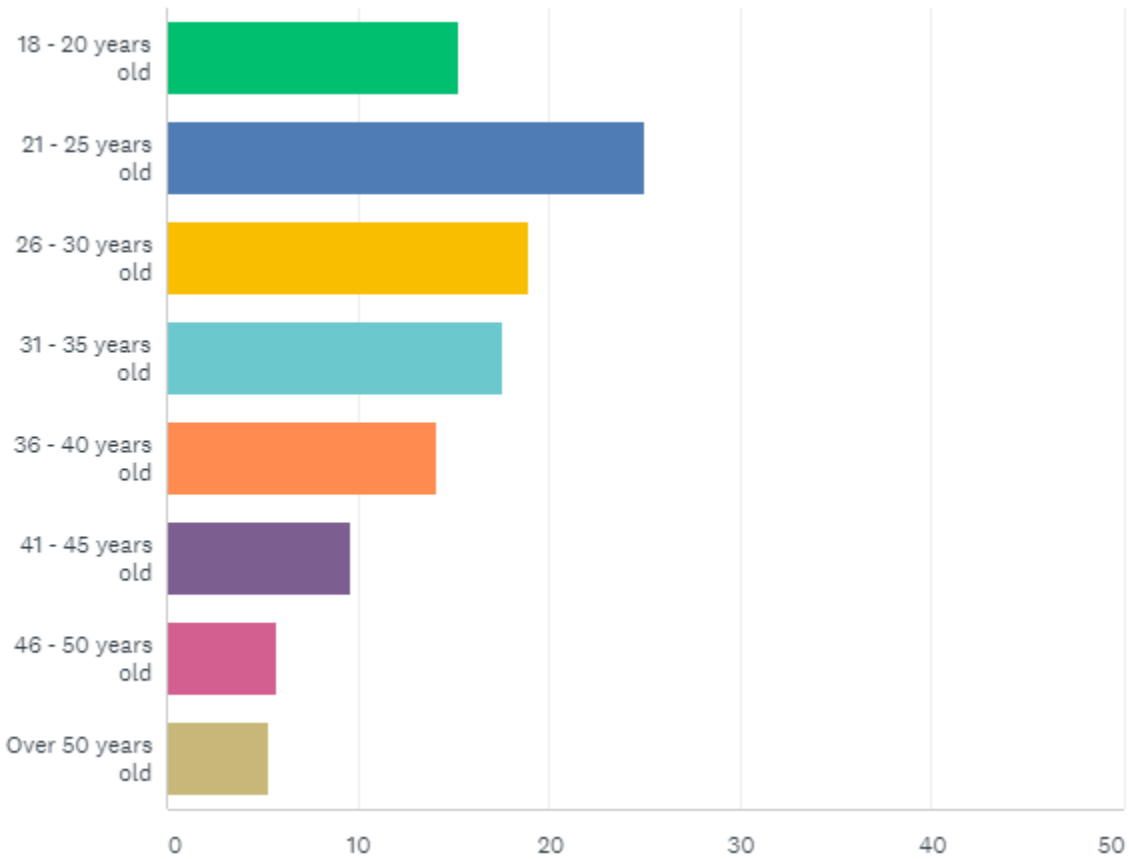


Figure 45. Age of massage students

Highlights from Figure 45

Almost two-thirds of massage students were 30 or under in 2017.

Massage therapy students are mostly female

Seventy-eight percent of massage therapy students are female with male students making up 22% of the student body. This reflects a slight shift from the 80% female, 20% male split that has been seen over the past several years.

Student attrition rates are improving

Few students drop out of massage programs prior to graduation.

- Fifty-one percent of schools said their attrition rate was less than 10% in 2017, up from 40% in 2016.
- Twenty-four percent of schools cited attrition rates between 10 and 20% in 2017.
- Ten percent of schools had an attrition rate above 30%, up from 6% last year.

- Fifty-four percent of individually owned massage schools had attrition rates of less than 10% in 2017. Forty-eight percent of public institutions and 44% of corporate schools had attrition rates of less than 10% in 2017.

The most prevalent reason why students do not complete their massage program is personal reasons. Other reasons include not being able to meet academic rigor, financial issues, and students determining that massage is not for them.

Schools are offering financial aid to students

The 2017 *AMTA Schools Survey* indicated that the percentage of schools offering financial aid to students was 72%, the same as in 2016. An additional 7% of schools said they intend to offer financial aid in the future but do not do so at this time. Of schools that offered financial aid:

- Ninety-five percent offered federal programs, up from 90% in 2016.
- Eighty-five percent offered payment plans, up from 83% in 2016.
- Seventy-six percent offered loans, up from 60% in 2016.
- Seventy-three percent offered scholarships, up from 46% in 2016.
- The most commonly mentioned other form of financial aid was VA or military aid, followed by other bursary and 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 health care?,” and where otherwise specified, are from the **2017 AMTA Consumer Survey** and previous years’ **AMTA Consumer Survey**, unless otherwise noted.

2017 AMTA Consumer Survey. CARAVAN® Opinion Research Corporation International conducted the annual consumer survey during July 20-23, 2017, among a combined national probability sample of 1,005 adults (504 contacted via land line phone, 501 contacted via cell phone), aged 18 and older, living in private households in the continental United States. The survey has indicated margins of error at the 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus three percent. Commissioned by AMTA, this is the 21st annual massage therapy survey of American consumers.

2. All data in Section 1A are from U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division and American Fact Finder
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey.” Released December 2017.
4. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “State Employment & Unemployment Summary, November 2017.” Released December 22, 2017.
5. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Real Earning Summary, November 2017.” Released December 13, 2017.
6. Federal Reserve, “Raising Rates: Implementation Note.” Released December 13, 2017.
7. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Consumer Price Index Summary.” Released December 13, 2017.
8. IBIS World, “Alternative Health Care Providers in the U.S.,” Published June 2017.
9. 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 **2017 AMTA Industry Survey** and previous years’ **AMTA Industry Survey**, unless otherwise noted.

2017 AMTA Industry Survey. Association Metrics conducted the annual AMTA Industry Survey during October 2017. A total of 1,045 qualified surveys were received. The survey has indicated margins of error at the 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus three percent. The objectives of the *AMTA Industry Survey* are to gain insight into the profession in order to provide AMTA members, consumers, and other professional with “state-of-the-industry” information by tracking and benchmarking, among other trends: information on massage therapists working in different work settings, their income, compensation, requirements, practices, training, education, demographics, and more. The *2017 AMTA Industry Survey* is the 13th annual survey on the massage therapy profession.

10. Data compiled from state licensing boards and estimates of massage therapists in unlicensed states.
11. All data in “Technology and the Massage Practice,” and where otherwise specified, are from the **2017 AMTA Technology Survey**, unless otherwise noted.

2017 AMTA Technology Survey. AMTA staff conducted the 9th annual Technology Survey in October 2017. An electronic survey was emailed to 15,000 professional and graduate massage therapists. A total of 271 responses were received. The survey has indicated margins of error at the 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus six percent.

12. ISPA, “2017 U.S. Spa Industry Study.” Released October 2017.
13. IBIS World, “Health & Wellness Spas in the U.S.” Published June 2016.
14. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Outlook Handbook – Healthcare Occupations.” Updated October 2017.
15. All data in “Section 4 – Training and Education of Massage Therapists” are from the **2017 AMTA Massage School Survey**, unless otherwise noted.

2017 AMTA Massage School Survey. AMTA staff conducted an annual Massage School Survey in September 2017. An electronic survey was emailed to 1,111 massage school contacts. A total of 122 surveys were received. The survey has indicated margins of error at the 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus eight percent. This is the 11th 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
ACCSC: Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges
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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500 Davis Street, Suite 900, Evanston, IL 60201
amtamassage.org | 877-905-2700