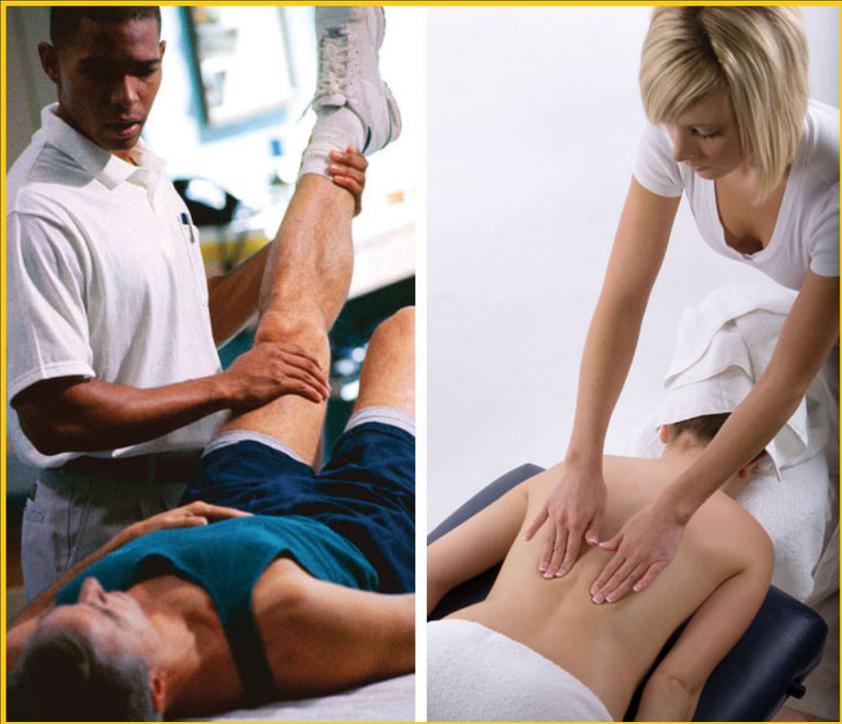


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FabJob Guide to
**Become a
Massage
Therapist**



SHARON A. ALFONSO, LMT

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Massage Therapist?

“I feel blessed to have found my way into this profession... if God has a plan for us, then this is the work I was meant to do. After 18 years, I still love doing massage, having the opportunity to interact in such an intimate way with so many people and to give them the simple, yet powerful effects of human touch...”

— *Barbara Lasky,*
Massage Therapist

Massage is as old as humanity. Whenever we hurt ourselves, or have sore muscles, our first instinct is to rub the spot that hurts. But being a massage therapist is much more than rubbing where it hurts.

A massage therapist is a health professional who uses various techniques and principles of soft tissue manipulation applied to the body to help an individual to a state of relaxation and well-being; recover from illness and injuries; ease stress; or gain relief from chronic pain. In that capacity, the therapist uses his or her hands, fingers, forearms and elbows to provide massage to the soft tissues of the body,

using various techniques to achieve results. (Information about specific techniques is covered in Chapter 2 of this guide.)

Today, more and more people turn to massage therapy to give them relief from many conditions. Some of the conditions massage is commonly used to help with include:

- stress
- back pain, neck pain, whiplash
- insomnia
- arthritis
- chronic headaches
- high blood pressure
- depression and anxiety
- recovery from strains and sprains
- recovery from surgery and illness

Consequently, a massage therapist has to know a lot more than just how to rub where it hurts! A massage therapist needs to be trained in anatomy and physiology, pathologies, massage techniques, and much more.

Therapists can practice in many different ways, from a very clinical approach to a more holistic attitude in treating clients. Therapists today also have a wide variety of choices as to where they can practice. A massage therapist may work independently (as a sole practitioner or sole owner), as an independent contractor within another business, in a group practice with other massage therapists, or as an employee. A massage therapist can practice part-time doing 10 or fewer massages per week, or full-time, doing 15 massages and up per week.

The income for a massage therapist can vary widely (as will be discussed in later chapters). While you may make a good living as a massage therapist, it will definitely enrich your life in many other ways. Helping people to overcome years of chronic pain, heal from injuries,

and stay healthy are just some of the ways a career in massage therapy can benefit you, the practitioner.

The ranks of massage therapy are filled with people from all walks of life, and the reasons people become a massage therapist are many and varied. Some make a total career switch, leaving jobs they have found unfulfilling for years. Many individuals who are massage therapists have always been interested in the healthcare field, but felt traditional roles (such as nursing or becoming a doctor), were not quite what they were looking for. Whatever the reasons, a career in massage therapy can be one of the most fulfilling careers there is.

“For many years I did catering and worked with food service, then worked in a chiropractic office. Being a massage therapist has reduced my stress level tremendously...I always love my work and feel very fulfilled by what I do.”

— *Cathryn Wright,
Massage Therapist*

1.2 The Growing Industry

Now is a terrific time to become a massage therapist. Whether you are interested in medical massage or spa therapies, corporate or sports settings, all areas of the massage industry are expanding.

Since the early 1980s, the massage therapy industry has seen a steady increase; however, it is the last decade that has seen the most explosive growth. According to the American Massage Therapy Association’s Fact Sheet at press time:

- Research estimates that massage therapy was a \$12.1 billion industry in the country in 2015.
- By comparison, in 2005, massage therapy was projected to be a \$6 to \$11 billion a year industry.
- It is estimated that there are 325,000 to 375,000 massage therapists and massage school students in the United States.
- From 2011 to 2015, revenue from alternative/complementary healthcare providers, which includes massage therapists, increased 14 percent, and employment increased 19 percent.

Revenue growth is projected to continue at an average rate of 3.6 percent per year through 2020.

- Between July 2015 and July 2016, surveys indicate that roughly 43.8 – 57.6 million adult Americans (19 - 25 percent) had a massage at least once.

Along with pointing out that the median pay for massage therapists is almost \$20 per hour, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that:

- Employment of massage therapists is projected to grow 26 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. Continued growth in the demand for massage services will lead to new openings for massage therapists.
- As more states adopt licensing requirements and standards for massage therapists, the practice of massage is likely to be respected and accepted by more people as a way to treat pain and to improve overall wellness.
- Similarly, demand will likely increase as more healthcare providers understand the benefits of massage and these services become part of treatment plans. However, demand in some healthcare settings will be tempered by limited insurance coverage for massage services.

Massage therapy in Canada has followed a similar trend with significant increases in the number of therapists practicing there, with demands for massage therapy in conventional healthcare settings such as community based multidisciplinary healthcare clinics and hospitals growing as well.

The spa industry is exploding and massage therapy is one of their top draws. In a recent survey of health clubs, when asked to name their five most profitable services, massage therapy came in at number two!

More and more doctors are referring patients for massage therapy and professional and amateur athletes alike are using massage therapy to help them heal from injuries and increase their performance. Massage therapy has been used at the Olympics for many years, and high school and college sports teams are demanding massage.

Corporations are using seated massage to help employees reduce stress and sick time. Welcome Wagon packets now contain information about local massage therapists. Massage therapy is everywhere you look.

With such growing demand for massage therapy, there is a growing demand for therapists. According to Greg Hurd, Director of Career Development and Outreach for Bancroft School of Massage Therapy, "All areas of massage therapy are growing and expanding...we have over 100 businesses on our job board on a regular basis and we will fill only about a quarter of those jobs..." making this a perfect time to begin your career as a massage therapist.

1.3 Is a Career in Massage Therapy for You?

Massage Therapy is one of the most rewarding and satisfying careers there is, but how do you know if it's the right career for you? Try this simple self-test to see if you are well-suited for a career in massage therapy:

1. Do you like working with people? Yes No
2. Can you work quietly, without much conversation? Yes No
3. Do you enjoy working independently? Yes No
4. Are you compassionate and/or empathetic? Yes No
5. Do you enjoy caring for others? Yes No
6. Do you enjoy helping others? Yes No
7. Are you self-motivated? Yes No
8. Do you have strong communication skills? Yes No
9. Can you accept feedback without taking it personally? Yes No
10. Do you have good time management skills? Yes No
11. Can you keep information confidential when needed? Yes No

If you answered “yes” to eight or more of the above questions, then a career in massage therapy may indeed be for you.

“I became a massage therapist at the urging of a woman for whom I was working as a companion. Towards the end of her long struggle with MS...she began to want more touch from me, so I tried learning massage from books and practicing on her (much to her delight and with the full support of her nursing staff). At one point, she simply looked at me during a massage and said “You should do this!” I asked her if she meant “for a job”, and she said yes. A few months later, I was enrolled in massage therapy school.”

— *Rhonda Henry*
Massage Therapist

1.4 The Lives We Touch

The very nature of massage therapy engenders intimacy. Clients grow to trust their therapists, and over time, may tell them details about themselves and their lives that they wouldn’t necessarily tell others. Client confidentiality is essential in any client/therapist relationship.

As a massage therapist, you are dealing with people who are feeling vulnerable (either because of stress, pain, and/or emotional issues) and healthy boundaries between client and therapist, as well as good communication skills, are an important part of the client/practitioner relationship. Some clients come and go, and others become friends for life. Massage therapy is unique in that we literally “touch” the lives of those we meet. That touch engenders a trust that demands and deserves respect.

Massage therapy changes the lives of those who practice it:

“Becoming a massage therapist has completely changed my life and led me to opportunities I never thought possible. In the last seven years of practicing, I have become motivated to go after the things I want. I look forward to every day, eager to do my work. Being a massage therapist has helped me to understand people better and has given me the opportunity to meet, and help, some wonderful and challenging individuals. Through being a massage therapist, I have gained the confidence to deal with life on my own terms. If I had never

become a massage therapist, none of this would have been possible, including this book!”

— *Sharon Alfonso, LMT*
All's Well Massage Therapy

“[Being a massage therapist] helps me practice my own good health habits, urges me to be calmer and less stressed as a model for my clients, gives me reasonable pay for very flexible hours and reminds me of the fantastic healing power of our bodies. I feel that massage truly helps people come into balance, relax into their bodies, let go of trauma and stress, builds immune function, gives people a peep into a world that is not constantly demanding of them, sometimes gives them an hour to sleep. It can often help with issues that they’ve been to dozens of doctors for, to no avail...”

— *Sue Painter, M.Ed, LMT*
Touch Therapy Center, Knoxville, TN

“Doing massage...brings me back to a place where I feel calm, focused, purposeful, and mindful. More often than not, it also brings me to a place where I feel deeply, deeply joyful. Coming to this place over and over again through the course of my work is akin to spiritual practice for me; it gives a meaning and sustenance to my life that I had not thought possible.”

— *Rhonda Henry*
Massage Therapist

And those who receive it:

“Just before retiring from my job (nearly 20 years ago at the age of sixty-six), I had a bad fall on the job, injuring my neck and shoulder. Over time, I began developing all kinds of symptoms, and not just pain, either. I began to have major problems focusing, concentrating, and remembering things, and I had vision problems that I had never had before. I felt like I was in a haze...sort of like seeing through a grey veil, but it encompassed my mind, too. It was getting so bad, I had slipped into a terrible depression. During this time, I began to have physical therapy from a woman who also happened to be a massage therapist. One day, she performed some friction and deep tissue massage at the base of my skull...after just a few treatments, my symptoms disappeared! My concentration got markedly better, I no longer needed glasses to read the paper, and my range of motion in

my neck and shoulder are much better, too. That was many years ago, and I still receive treatment to this day. I truly believe massage therapy saved my life...”

— *Ralph M.*
Massage Therapy Client

Throughout your career you will likely touch the lives of many people – enhancing their well-being, reducing stress and tension, helping prevent disease, and restoring health.

1.5 Inside This Guide

The following pages will give you a step-by-step guide to getting started and succeeding in this rewarding, satisfying, and challenging career.

Chapter 2, *Preparing for a Career in Massage Therapy*, covers important preliminary steps to prepare you for becoming a massage therapist. It gives information about deciding what kind of massage to practice, how to get training, and requirements for practicing in your area.

Chapter 3 focuses on *Getting Hired*. It explains the difference between working as an employee or independent contractor, and gives advice on how to find job openings, how to prepare a resume, what to expect during an interview, and how to create a job.

If you would like to *Start Your Own Massage Therapy Practice*, you will find good advice in Chapter 4 on setting up your office and getting ready to open for business. In Chapter 5, you will discover practical tips for *Finding and Keeping Clients*.

The guide also includes an appendix which is a glossary of massage therapy terms.

By applying the information in this guide – generously shared by dozens of successful massage therapists – you’ll be well on your way to your own fab job as a Massage Therapist!

You have reached the end of the free sample of the *FabJob Guide to Become a Massage Therapist*. To order and download the complete guide go to <https://fabjob.com/program/become-massage-therapist/>.