

Demand for Massage Therapy

Use and Acceptance Increasing

The massage therapy profession and the public's use of massage continue to grow in quantity as well as quality. The most significant growth is in medical practitioners' and consumers' interest in and appreciation for massage therapy as an effective integrative and complementary modality. Mainstream acceptance of massage therapy continues its strong trend. Since 1997, the number of adult Americans who say they had a massage from a massage therapist in the previous 12 months jumped from 8% to 18%.



We're with you all the way.

Acceptance Continues to Grow

A total of 18% of the adult U.S. population had a massage in the past 12 months.¹

The percentage of American adults receiving one or more massages from a massage therapist in the previous year (18%) more than doubled since 1997 (8%).²

Among people who had experienced severe back, neck or shoulder pain, the rate of use of massage therapy increased from 14.6% in 1996 to 19.4% in 1999.³

The massage explosion can be attributed partly to the growing population of tired, aging, not-quite-as-limber-as-they-once-were baby boomers, partly to an increased awareness of the effects of stress and of the physiological benefits of "pressing the flesh."⁴

Doctors and consumers are turning more and more to massage as an adjunct to regular health practices.⁵

More working-class professionals are using massage therapy to relieve stress and treat sore muscles. Massage therapists that once served only elite professionals or athletes see a wider range of clientele.⁶

The Number of Massage Therapists Continues to Grow

The number of massage therapists in the United States, including students, is between 260,000 and 290,000.

This compares to approximately 120,000 – 160,000 in 1996.⁷

American Massage Therapy Association's membership increased more than fourfold since 1990, to over 46,000 members today.⁸

Massage Is Mainstream

Massage is popular among consumers of all ages, with people ages 25 to 34 reporting the highest usage at 24% in the past 12 months. Rates of usage for other groups are: ages 18-24 (21%); ages 35-44 (18%); ages 45-54 (18%); ages 55-64 (13 %); age 65+ (14%).⁹

Adults in the 65+ age group who had a massage in the previous 12 months increased from 11% in 2001 to 14% in 2002.

Those who seek massage therapy from a trained professional average 7 visits per year.¹⁰

Massage is slightly more popular among women (20%) than men (16%).¹¹

Consumers visit massage therapists 114 million times each year.¹²

A total of 28% of adults say they had a massage in the past five years, compared with 17% in 1997.¹³

Over the past five years, massage is popular among people with some college education (31%) and people with only a high school education (20%), but more popular among college graduates (33%).¹⁴

American Massage Therapy Association®

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Massage Is at Work with Employees

An increasing number of corporations, small businesses and municipalities have found on-site massage to be a low-cost benefit with high payoff.¹⁵

The Investor Relations Group, Inc., of New York, offers each of its 15 full-time and part-time employees a weekly 15-minute massage, because it makes a difference in retention and employee morale.¹⁶

Among organization benefits managers, 8% report that massage is an employee benefit.¹⁷

At Boeing and Reebok, headaches, back strain and fatigue fell since the companies started bringing in massage therapists.¹⁸

By including 15 minutes of free massage therapy once each week, the Calvert Group, an investment firm in Bethesda, MD, reduced its turnover rate to 5% in an industry where the norm is 20%.¹⁹

Massage and Medicine

Among emergency room patients, 31% report they have used massage in the past for painful conditions.²⁰

Among complementary and alternative medicine practices surveyed, medical practitioners ranked massage therapy highest (74%) in terms of being perceived as always or usually effective. The next closest was acupuncture at 67.7%.²¹

Of the 14% of adults who spoke to their doctors or other healthcare providers in the past 12 months about massage therapy, 76% report that the conversation was favorable about massage and 19% report the conversation was neutral. Of those people, 30% report that their physicians recommended massage therapy, compared to 26% in 2001.²²

HMO members using complementary and alternative medicine services rate their satisfaction with HMO-defined acupuncture, naturopathic, and massage benefits as high.²³

Statistics about Health Care and Massage Therapy

The cost of health care in the United States is estimated to reach \$2.2 trillion by 2008 from \$1.6 trillion in 1998.²⁴

Consumers spend between \$4 and \$6 billion annually on visits to massage therapists –

Approximately 27% of the \$21.2 billion spent on unconventional healthcare in 1997.²⁵

About 18% of the 629 million annual visits to alternative healthcare providers are to massage therapists.²⁶

Among Fortune 200 companies, 14% offer massage as part of their employee benefit program.²⁷

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