

Massage is a healing art as well as a science. The practice of the profession of massage therapy is defined as engaging in applying a scientific system of activity to the muscular structure of the human body by means of stroking, kneading, tapping and vibrating with the hands or vibrators for the purpose of improving muscle tone and circulation. It requires a balance of academic and technical knowledge, clinical skills, manual dexterity, sensitivity, and awareness. Nearly everyone has the innate resources to touch another with care and confidence. However, it takes a sincere desire to help others, along with a commitment to the time, energy, and focus necessary for the training process in order to become a solid practitioner.

Massage Therapists practice in a variety of settings, such as private offices or massage therapy clinics, chiropractors' or doctors' offices, holistic health clinics, health clubs and fitness centers, spas, nursing homes and hospitals, with sports teams, and sports medicine facilities. Some massage therapists have portable equipment and work at their clients' offices or homes. Recently, massage therapists have appeared in some rather innovative settings, such as storefronts, shopping malls, and airports.

Massage therapy has a broad number of applications. Its range includes **relaxation, stress reduction, health promotion, pain management, injury recovery**, and working with **specific maladies**. Practitioners may choose to focus on one of these areas. Another specialization factor is clientele. Some examples are athletes, the elderly, office workers, and performers (e.g., dancers). Another area of specialization is technique. Some practitioners focus on a particular technique and base their practice on that technique. However, the majority of massage therapists tend to use several techniques in their work and may place the emphasis of their practice on something other than technique.

Because of the physical and emotional demands of doing massage therapy, massage therapists commonly work less than 40 hours a week. Each individual's capacity will vary, of course. A relatively large percentage of practitioners practice part-time, i.e., generally considered as less than 10 hours a week.

Salary Information:

- Massage Therapy, Associate in Applied Science
\$21,000 Median Salary (Follow-up Study, Monroe Community College Graduates, 2008)
- **Massage Therapists for the Rochester, New York area:**
\$24,200 Median Salary Range (Career One Stop, 2008)
- A Massage Therapist in a major metropolitan area may charge \$35 to \$60 an hour, and \$25 to \$50 elsewhere. Income levels for massage therapists vary by region of the country, experience and size of practice.

Additional Information:

- American Massage Therapy Association: www.amtamassage.org

