



# JOB TASK ANALYSIS REPORT

## The Role of Massage Therapists

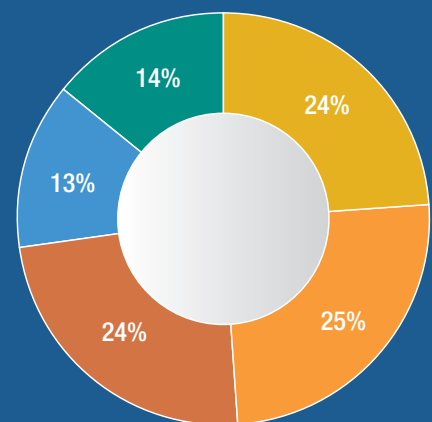
Massage therapy is a rewarding career path that offers flexibility, variety and opportunities to support clients' health and wellness. But what skills and knowledge are necessary to be successful in this field?

The National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork surveyed nearly 900 experienced massage therapists across the profession to better understand what they do. The results show that massage therapists are skilled professionals who require expertise in massage, but also anatomy and physiology, law and ethics, professional practice and more.

This information highlights the versatility and skill that massage therapists offer, while providing a career roadmap for those entering the profession.

## What do massage therapists do?

NCBTMB's analysis illustrates the skills and knowledge that experienced massage therapists use to support their clients and their business. Detailed information about specific tasks and knowledge is included in the survey results on page 5.



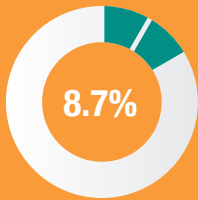
- Massage techniques and modalities
- Assessment, care planning, and documentation
- Anatomy, physiology and kinesiology
- Law and ethics
- Professional practice



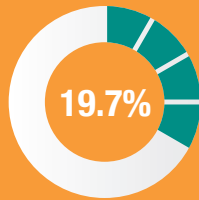
## Who are massage therapists?

**38.2%** OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS GIVE 11-20 HOURS OF MASSAGE A WEEK, AND NEARLY ONE-QUARTER (24.4%) GIVE 21-30 HOURS OF MASSAGE

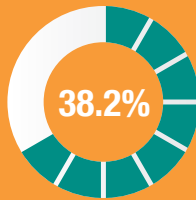
Other time is spent handling tasks such as business administration, documentation, professional development and more.



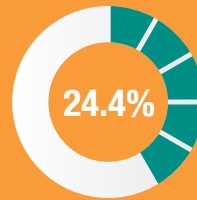
Less than 5



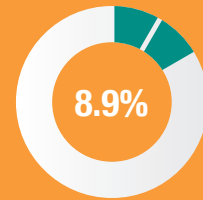
6-10



11-20



21-30

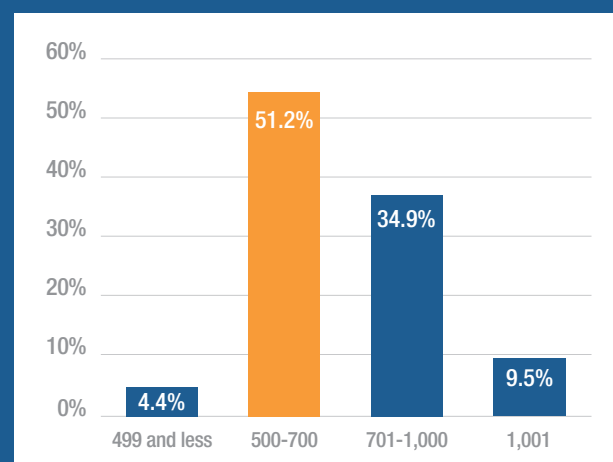


More than 30

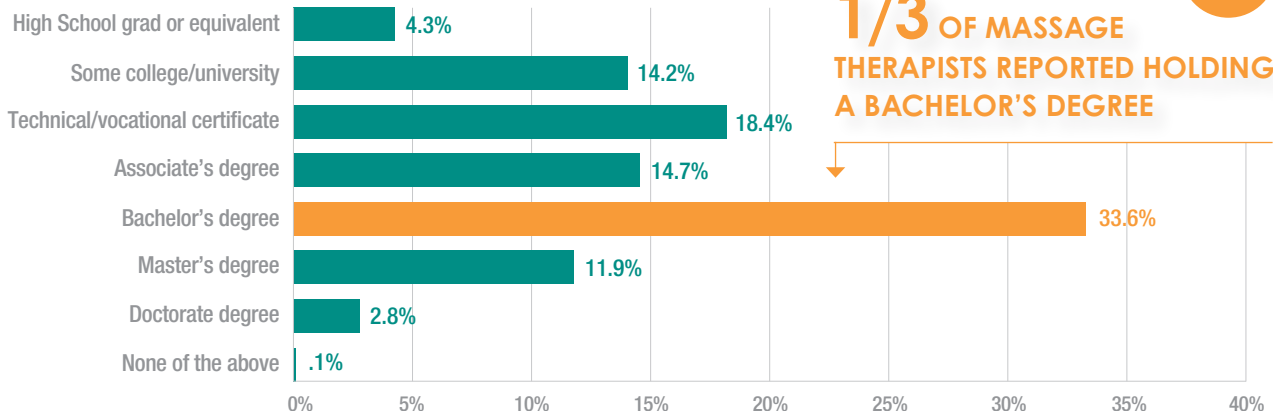
### HOW MANY TOTAL HOURS IN YOUR ENTRY-LEVEL MASSAGE PROGRAM WERE REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION?



**OVER 1/2** OF THOSE SURVEYED ATTENDED A 500-700 HOUR ENTRY-LEVEL MASSAGE THERAPY PROGRAM



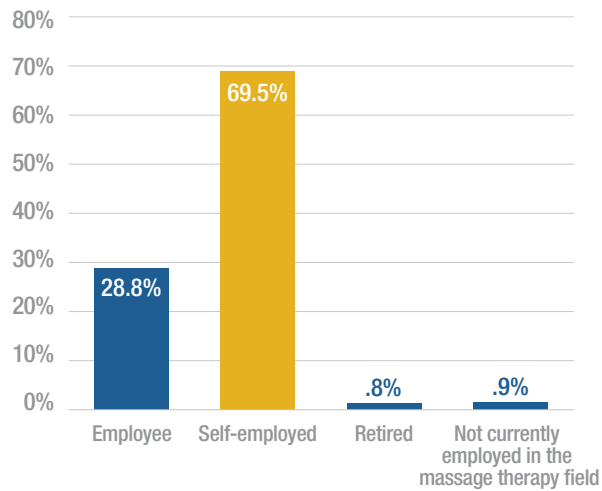
### WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED?



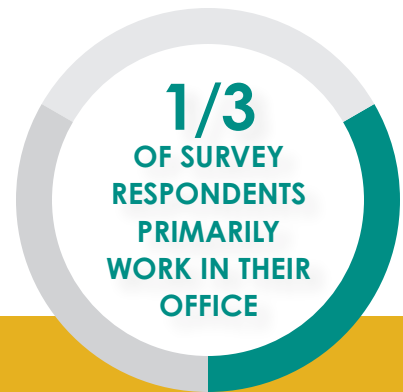
**1/3** OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS REPORTED HOLDING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE



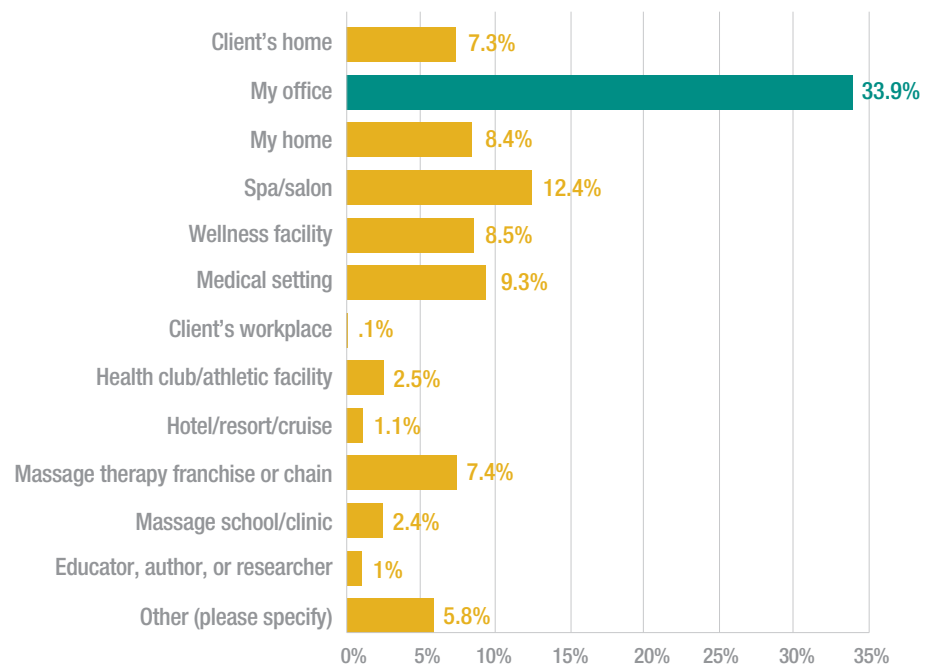
## WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN THE MASSAGE THERAPY FIELD?



**NEARLY 70%**  
OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS  
SURVEYED ARE SELF-EMPLOYED



## WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PRIMARY WORK SETTING?



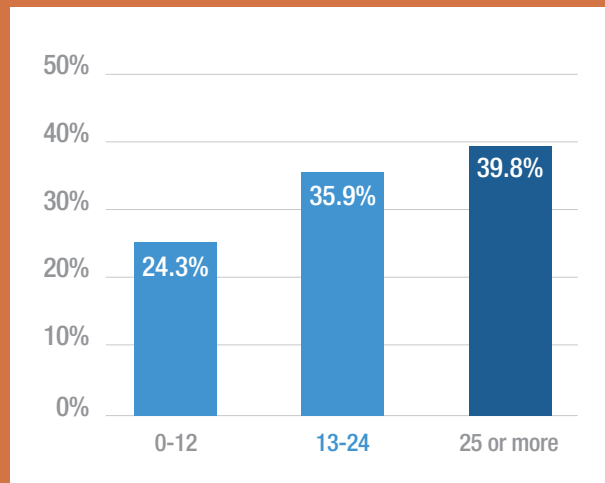


Continuing education (CE) is important for knowledge and skill growth, but also for state licensure and certification compliance.

**NEARLY 40%**   
**OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS**  
**SURVEYED COMPLETED 25 HOURS**  
**OR MORE OF CE PER YEAR**



### HOW MANY CE HOURS DID YOU COMPLETE IN THE LAST YEAR?



## CONSIDERATIONS

Massage therapists are skilled professionals who manage a variety of responsibilities to run their practices. Massage therapists who are new to the profession can enhance their careers by taking CE in the areas presented in this report, finding a professional mentor and connecting with peers through massage organizations.

Massage therapy schools can support their students by using this report as a guide in curriculum development and testing to help students adequately prepare for their careers.

Organizations that support the massage therapy profession are invited to cite the information in this report when looking at the competencies and knowledge for massage therapists.



# SURVEY RESULTS

## How important is this task in your current position or level?

Tasks: It's important that I'm able to...		RESPONSE
Massage Techniques and Modalities		
1.	Apply massage and bodywork techniques in a safe manner, monitoring responses and adapting techniques as needed	97.1%
2.	Utilize efficient body mechanics during the session	94.6%
3.	Identify the benefits of massage and bodywork techniques and modalities	89.8%
4.	Identify endangerment sites and adverse effects	95.6%
5.	Position clients for comfort and safety, utilizing positioning equipment as appropriate	94.6%
6.	Apply appropriate draping techniques	94.5%
Assessment, Care Planning, and Documentation		
1.	Use a variety of intake interview techniques to gather client information	86.2%
2.	Conduct a variety of assessments (e.g., range of motion, posture, gait, pain scale, palpation)	78.6%
3.	Develop a plan for the massage session (e.g., short-term, long-term where appropriate)	82.3%
4.	Identify and discuss indications, contraindications, pathologies, and special accommodations, and adapt the session as needed	91.8%
5.	Obtain informed consent	95.8%
6.	Adapt massage for pre- and post-surgical considerations	93.0%
7.	Adapt massage based on prescription and non-prescription medications	84.6%
8.	Customize massage based on client's goals	95.1%
9.	Monitor client responses, and solicit feedback during and after the session	93.3%
10.	Educate client about the care plan, including self-care activities as appropriate	88%
11.	Maintain client documentation	88.1%
12.	Utilize medically accepted terminology in client documentation	72.2%
13.	Collaborate with health care providers when appropriate	78.1%
14.	Apply research evidence to client-centered care planning	72.5%

## How important is this task in your current position or level?

Tasks: It's important that I'm able to...		RESPONSE
<b>Anatomy, Physiology, and Kinesiology</b>		
1.	Identify structures, functions, and interactions of body systems (i.e., integumentary, muscular, skeletal, nervous, cardiovascular, lymphatic, endocrine, reproductive, respiratory, digestive, urinary)	86.9%
2.	Identify origins, insertions, actions, functions, and innervations of muscles	86.6%
3.	Identify types of muscle contractions	76.8%
<b>Law and Ethics</b>		
1.	Follow local and state laws and regulations for massage therapy practice, operating within scope of practice	96.9%
2.	Maintain client information and records, safeguarding client confidentiality	95.4%
3.	Apply ethical principles in professional interactions	96.7%
4.	Establish and maintain professional, culturally sensitive relationships with clients	94.1%
5.	Identify and manage legal and ethical conflicts	94.2%
6.	Establish, communicate, and respect therapist/client roles and boundaries	96.7%
7.	Report inappropriate behavior and sexual misconduct to the proper authorities	95.9%
<b>Professional Practice</b>		
1.	Maintain a clean, safe, and accessible facility	96.9%
2.	Maintain and disinfect tools and equipment	97.4%
3.	Stay current with massage therapy research	82.7%
4.	Participate in professional development	85.5%
5.	Apply common massage therapy business and employment practices	79.9%
6.	Practice self-care regimen to promote injury prevention and career longevity	92.9%
7.	Manage medical emergencies when they arise	93.6%

## How important is this knowledge in your current position or level? How frequently is this knowledge used?

Knowledge. I know...		IMPORTANCE	OFTEN/VERY OFTEN
<b>Massage Techniques and Modalities</b>			
1.	General massage techniques (e.g., effleurage, petrissage, tapotement, vibration, friction)	91.3%	85.6%
2.	Massage modalities (e.g., Swedish, deep tissue, neuromuscular/trigger point therapy, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation [PNF], Eastern bodywork therapies)	92.8%	88.2%
3.	Pressure and manual forces (e.g., compression, tension/decompression, friction/shear, bending, torsion, vibration)	90.5%	83.9%
4.	Stretching (e.g., barriers, end-feel)	85.0%	74.1%
5.	Joint mobilization	81.0%	67.2%
6.	Endangerment sites and adverse events	92.1%	70.5%
7.	Client positioning (e.g., prone, supine, bolstered, side-lying, seated)	93.6%	87.9%
8.	Appropriate use of tools and equipment	85.7%	71.9%
9.	Appropriate use of topical agents (e.g., analgesics, essential oils, CBD)	78.4%	61.1%
10.	Benefits and effects of techniques and modalities	91.8%	84.0%
11.	Draping techniques	92.6%	87.8%
<b>Assessment, Care Planning, and Documentation</b>			
1.	Interview techniques (e.g., open-ended and fact-finding questions, verbal and nonverbal communication skills, reflective listening)	95.2%	91.4%
2.	Assessment methods (e.g., health history, observation, palpation, range of motion, posture, gait, pain scale, special tests)	92.7%	87.3%
3.	Common pathologies, injuries, and pre-/post-surgical considerations	94.9%	84.9%
4.	Common prescription and non-prescription medications, their effects, and side effects (e.g., pain medications, muscle relaxants, cardiovascular agents, anti-inflammatories)	87.1%	71.5%
5.	Stages of tissue healing	87.9%	70.9%
6.	Special populations (e.g., pregnancy, oncology, geriatric, athletes, disabilities, palliative)	92.2%	74.4%



**How important is this knowledge in your current position or level?  
How frequently is this knowledge used?**

<b>Knowledge. I know...</b>		<b>IMPORTANCE</b>	<b>OFTEN/VERY OFTEN</b>
<b>Assessment, Care Planning, and Documentation</b> CONTINUED			
7.	Indications and contraindications	96.1%	87.4%
8.	How to customize a massage (e.g., analysis, synthesis, application of client information, and research data)	93.0%	87.8%
9.	How to communicate with clients in understandable terms	95.7%	92.1%
10.	Informed consent (e.g., risks and benefits)	94.6%	89.3%
11.	Documentation formats (e.g., Subjective, Objective, Assessment/ Application, Plan [SOAP], Focus, Data, Action, Response [FDAR])	83.7%	79.4%
12.	Medically accepted terminology	77.5%	71.9%
<b>Anatomy, Physiology, and Kinesiology</b>			
1.	Anatomy and physiology of all body systems, including:	89.5%	82.7%
	a. Integumentary system	90.7%	84.1%
	b. Muscular system	97.0%	92.3%
	c. Skeletal system	95.1%	88.7%
	d. Nervous system	93.9%	85.8%
	e. Cardiovascular system	86.5%	75.0%
	f. Lymphatic system	91.5%	79.4%
	g. Endocrine system	76.7%	61.8%
	h. Reproductive system	63.7%	47.7%
	i. Respiratory system	82.7%	70.5%
	j. Digestive system	77.4%	63.2%
	k. Urinary system	66.1%	51.2%
2.	Immune response (e.g., inflammation, lethargy)	91.3%	79.7%
3.	Kinesiology (e.g., mechanics of body movement including levers, agonists, antagonists, synergists, compensatory patterns)	92.2%	83.2%



## How important is this knowledge in your current position or level? How frequently is this knowledge used?

Knowledge. I know...		IMPORTANCE	OFTEN/VERY OFTEN
Law and Ethics			
1.	Licensing laws (e.g., scope of practice, insurance requirements)	93.4%	80.8%
2.	Legal requirements for record keeping and HIPAA (e.g., retention, release, disposal)	90.1%	76.0%
3.	Establishment laws and zoning ordinances	77.8%	54.9%
4.	Ethical principles (e.g., confidentiality, autonomy, veracity, non-maleficence, beneficence, nondiscrimination, empathy)	93.1%	83.1%
5.	Professional roles and boundaries (e.g., dual relationships, power differential, transference and countertransference)	92.0%	79.4%
6.	Ethical strategies for managing and resolving conflict (e.g., conflicts of interest, how and when to terminate a session, right of refusal)	91.8%	59.3%
7.	NCBTMB's Code of Ethics	84.1%	67.5%
8.	Cultural sensitivity	84.1%	65.5%
9.	When, where, and how to report inappropriate behavior and sexual misconduct	91.3%	49.1%
10.	Mandatory reporting requirements (e.g., human trafficking, minors and dependent adults)	88.2%	48.2%
Professional Practice			
1.	NCBTMB's Standards of Practice	82.2%	66.7%
2.	Standard of care for safe practice procedures (e.g., infection control)	89.3%	78.4%
3.	Information literacy and research literacy (i.e., how to locate and evaluate research)	72.1%	50.7%
4.	Continuing education requirements (e.g., certificates of completion)	82.6%	73.5%
5.	Professional development (e.g., specialty credentials, board certification)	76.8%	65.8%
6.	Therapist self-care (e.g., efficient body mechanics, physical activity, hand-held tools, professional consultation, mentorships)	88.1%	76.8%
7.	Business entities (e.g., independent contractor, employee)	76.0%	57.9%
8.	Business planning and policies (e.g., marketing, cancellation, no-show)	77.8%	60.7%

**How important is this knowledge in your current position or level?  
How frequently is this knowledge used?**

Knowledge. I know...		IMPORTANCE	OFTEN/VERY OFTEN
Professional Practice <small>CONTINUED</small>			
9.	Accounting principles and financial record keeping (e.g., tax filings, profit and loss, income reporting, bartering)	80.0%	65.7%
10.	Insurance billing (e.g., medical, personal injury)	56.0%	34.4%
11.	Professional liability insurance	84.9%	68.3%
12.	Emergency preparedness (e.g., medical emergencies, disaster preparedness)	77.1%	48.5%



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to everyone who provided invaluable assistance throughout the Job Task Analysis. More than 900 individuals participated in different phases of the analysis, including Task Force members, survey pilot test participants, survey respondents and Test Specifications Committee members.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

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## ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Job Task Analysis consisted of several activities: background research, collaboration with subject matter experts to ensure representativeness of the tasks and knowledge statements, survey development, survey dissemination, compilation of survey results, and test specifications development. The successful outcome of the job analysis study depended on the high-quality information provided by massage therapy professionals.

