

exploring today's touch therapies


N C B T M B
BOA R D C E R T I F I E D
What's Your
Specialty?
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MASSAGE

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ANNUAL BUSINESS ISSUE

MORE MONEY LESS STRESS

SPECIAL:

New Clinical Massage Credential

The Top 5 Ways
to Rock Retail

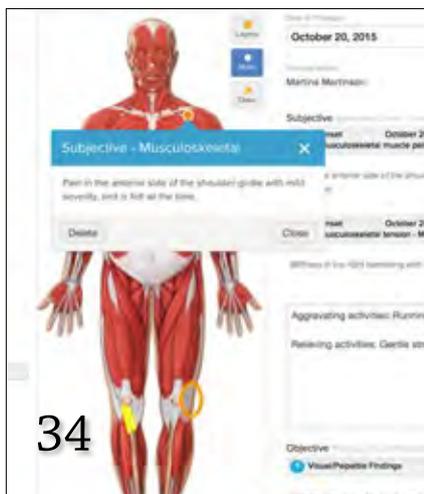
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by Gael Wood

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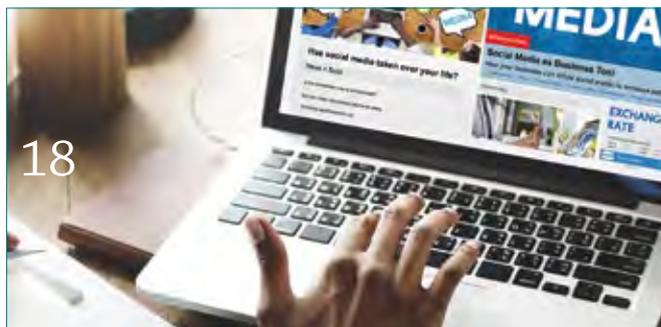
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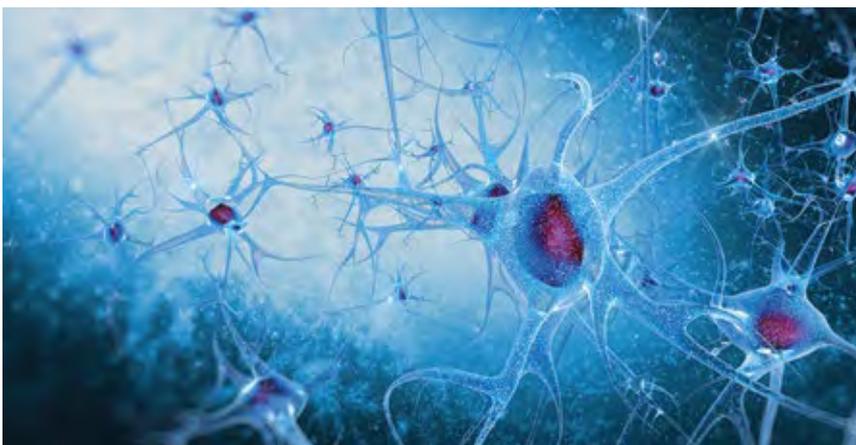


July cover image:
Unsplash/Ethan Robertson

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MASSAGE

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FAQs

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PHOTO BY KELLY MENEHAN

Welcome to *MASSAGE Magazine's* Annual Business Issue.

Here we present advice to help you achieve as much as you'd like to—as a massage therapist and as a business professional. This issue is filled with innovative ideas for developing

new revenue streams, billing insurance, creating a long-lasting career and much more.

For massage therapists, success often means getting clients out of pain and into a more flexible lifestyle, and this is definitely one aspect of achievement. Sometimes overlooked, though, is the income necessary for a lifestyle that affords high-quality CE, travel and relaxation. Plus, dedicated massage therapists deserve to earn a lucrative livelihood.

We all know, though, that there are only so many massages you can perform in a day before the pain, stiffness and tightness you see so often in your clients keeps you from your session room. Creating multiple revenue streams can be the key to offering a limited number of high-quality sessions while making more money—and not burning yourself out.

In “More Money, Less Stress” (page 38), massage business coach Gael Wood presents her ideas for business add-ons that will help you continue to progress in your career in ways other than hands-on health care. From writing and teaching to affiliate programs and earning an advanced credential, these suggestions could help you earn more with less effort.

Another important revenue stream, retail sales, provides clients with valuable home-care between sessions and provides additional income for the massage therapists who offer it. Two features in this issue, “Kinesiology Tape: Retail for Client Self-Care” (page 20) and “Top 5 Ways to Rock Retail” (page 24) give you the details needed to implement this value-add to your practice.

This issue is one important resource I hope you refer to throughout the year. I'd love to know which ideas from this issue of *MASSAGE Magazine* you implement in your massage practice and what other marketing techniques you're using to thrive. You can reach me at edit@massagemag.com.

Karen Menahan

Contributors

Meet some of the contributors who helped create this month's *MASSAGE Magazine*



Debra Koerner wrote “Career Longevity: Succeed at Every Phase of Your Career” for this issue. Debra is the co-founder of *imassage Inc.*, an education and consulting firm; she is also a wellness-business consultant and author of *Success from the Start*, a text for massage schools.



Cherie Sohnen-Moe wrote this month's Expert Advice column, answering the question, “How can I become more confident in using social media?” Cherie is the author of *Business Mastery* and *Present Yourself Powerfully*, and co-author of *The Ethics of Touch*. She is a founding member and current president of the Alliance for Massage Therapy Education.



Jason Erickson wrote an online exclusive article for massagemag.com, to post July 1: “Social Media: Your Incubator for Professional Development” (massagemag.com/socialincubator). Jason is a massage therapist and personal trainer who teaches continuing education classes, presents and hosts at conferences, and works with elite athletes.



Stacey Thomas wrote “Kinesiology Tape: Retail for Client Self-Care” for this issue. Stacey has been a certified sports massage therapist since 2005. She holds certification in Functional Movement Screen, Selective Functional Movement Assessment, Neurokinetic Therapy and CrossFit Level 2, as well as other training and soft tissue modalities.



Jimmy Gialelis wrote “The Therapeutic Relationship: 6 Principles of Professional Ethics” for this issue. He owns Advanced Massage Arts & Education, is a National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork-approved provider of continuing education, and is a frequent contributor to *MASSAGE Magazine*.

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Comments from Social Media

Article: *Message Benefits Autistic Children for a Lifetime*

I had the privilege of working with a disabled young gentleman while I was in school. He fell asleep about halfway through, and his caretaker told me afterward that he had never relaxed that much during a massage. It made my heart happy knowing he got some relief, if only for a few moments.

Kaleigh Alexis Bell
facebook.com/massagemagazine

Read this article here: massagemag.com/benefitsautistic.

Article: *A Whole-Family Model of Massage*

I love this! It is exactly what I want to do, and it just so happens I signed up for a class held in partnership

with the Children's Hospital mentioned in this article. After reading this, I am even more anxious to begin hopefully what turns out to be a similar career story. Thank you for this article.

Jillian Breneman
facebook.com/massagemagazine

Read this article here: massagemag.com/wholefamily.

Article: [Opinion] *A Radically Simple Solution for CE Regulation*

We asked: *Does massage continuing education really need to be regulated?*

It is near impossible to afford classes and take time from my work schedule to get the 12 hands-on

classes! I wish these weren't mandatory. I'm raising kids right now by myself and can't afford health insurance. I hope they can give us a break on these classes until things get better, if they can get better. I need health insurance before any \$400 dollar and up class.

Kim Kirkman, L.M.T.
facebook.com/massagemagazine

Yes, because there's way too much pseudoscience junk in massage therapy. I love my job as a massage therapist but some of the stuff that goes on in the massage world is painful.

Matthew Richards
facebook.com/massagemagazine

Read this article here: massagemag.com/radicallysimple.



Visit facebook.com/massagemagazine to join *MESSAGE Magazine's* Facebook group for massage therapists.

John Matthew Upledger (1961-2017)



COURTESY OF UPLEDGER INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL

John Matthew Upledger, CEO and chairman of the board of directors of Upledger Institute International (UII) passed away at his home in Palm Beach Gardens on May 21, losing a two-year battle with cancer.

UII is the organization dedicated to educating massage therapists on the CranioSacral Therapy technique developed by his father, John E. Upledger, D.O. Upledger Institute International is also a member organization of the International Alliance of Healthcare Educators (IAHE), which offers education, certifications and products in a variety of modalities.

John Matthew Upledger had been involved in UII for more than 25 years in areas including clinical services and education.

A statement published online by UII notes that John Matthew Upledger “was known for his incredible sense of humor, his passion for life and a good party! He loved the music of the 70s and 80s, and was passionate about his Miami Dolphins and [Michigan State University] Spartans. Most of all, he was known for his incredible compassion and generosity. From staff to friends, he always made time to listen and then, with great empathy and kindness, offer advice that was wise beyond his years. His big-heartedness and loyalty were just two of the emblems of his larger-than-life personality.”

John Matthew Upledger was a proponent of the Dr. John E. Upledger Foundation, which had the mission to fund philanthropic efforts, including providing care to people in need; pioneering health programs and research; studying conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and autism; supporting dolphin-assisted therapy; and making education available to massage therapists. The foundation also educates the public and health professionals about John E. Upledger’s work and the therapists who practice it. (Donations to the foundation are accepted here: upledger.org.)

He leaves behind his wife, Donna Stevens Upledger; a daughter, Miranda Skye Upledger; sister Leslie Upledger Ray (James); brother Michael Upledger (Lynne); and his mother, Beverly Roy Upledger. He was preceded in death by his brother, Mark, and his father John E. Upledger, D.O.



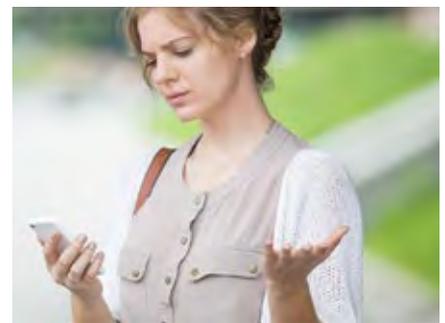
Read John Matthew Upledger’s 2013 *MESSAGE* Magazine essay on progress made in the massage and bodywork field, at massagemag.com/johnmatthewessay

Massage & Mood Studied

A pilot study on massage therapy for disabled adults in residential care found that participants’ mood improved “markedly” immediately following massage; in fact, participants’ pre-massage improved over the course of the stay as well.

However, according to the authors, “pre- and post-intervention measures indicated massage did not improve pain, sleepiness, depression or stress levels or sustain positive mood three days post-intervention ... [but] Participants’ satisfaction with their current health significantly ... as did their satisfaction with their current happiness ... suggesting that massage therapy offered some improvement in quality of life.”

—Source: “The impact of therapeutic massage on adult residents living with complex and high level disabilities: A brief report,” *Disability and Health Journal*.



ADOBE STOCK

86

Percentage of Americans who “constantly or often” check their email, texts and social media accounts, resulting in higher stress levels for these people.

—Source: *Stress in America: Coping with Change*, a report from the American Psychological Association.

A Victory for Equine MTs in Tennessee

When the Tennessee State Veterinary Board said only veterinarians—or those directly supervised by a vet—could massage horses, it wasn't the end of the story.

The Beacon Center of Tennessee, a nonprofit that advocates for the review of possibly onerous rules and regulations, filed a lawsuit on behalf of equine massage therapists Martha Stowe and Laurie Wheeler, and after hearing their testimony, the Senate Commerce Committee struck down the veterinary board's ruling.

"The case was settled after the Tennessee House and Senate unanimously passed an amendment

to a bill requiring the state's health commissioner to report factors that affect the state's health status rankings," stated a May 19 article published in *The HORSE*, an equine health care publication. "The amendment specifies that the practice of veterinary medicine does not include massage therapy to animals with the intention of positively affecting the animal's health and well-being."

The amendment will expire on July 1, 2018, before which time the plaintiffs intend to work with the veterinary board to craft a permanent solution.

Watch a video about Wheeler's and Stowe's story here: www.beacontn.org/martha-stowe-and-laurie-wheeler/.



Read "[Lawsuit Settled] Arizona Animal Massage Therapists Win Right to Practice" at massagemag.com/arizonalawsuit

MTF Partners with Canadian Association

The Massage Therapy Foundation (MTF) and the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of British Columbia (RMTBC) announced a new partnership in June.

Effective that month, the RMTBC adopted the MTF-produced *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork* as its members' journal. The journal provides peer-reviewed, open-access scientific massage therapy research.

This collaboration will help ensure the continued publication and the future development of the journal, according to a press release from MTF. The two groups signed a two-year contract.

"This is an exciting moment for both the Massage Therapy Foundation and the future of [the journal]," said MTF President Jerrilyn Cambron, L.M.T., D.C., M.P.H., Ph.D. "RMTBC is an excellent organization to help expand the reach of this prestigious journal. We could not be more pleased to partner with them."

The MTF (massagetherapyfoundation.org) is a 501(c)(3) public charity with a mission to advance the knowledge and practice of massage by supporting scientific research, education and community service. The RMTBC is a membership association for registered massage therapists in British Columbia.



SOURCE: GOFUNDME.COM

Support This MT's Recovery

Massage therapist Danielle "Dani" Haggmann, 30, of Fort Myers, Florida, had stopped to help a motorist in a car accident on April 21. While standing at the other motorist's car, a third vehicle plowed into the crashed car, pushing it and Haggmann into the guardrail. She subsequently had to have both of her legs amputated.

On April 26, Lee Memorial Hospital, where she had been taken to receive medical care, filed a financial claim in the amount of \$63,684.95 against her, according to news-press.com. "On May 3, they filed an updated lien," the newspaper reported. "For the five days she spent in the hospital, she faces a hospital claim of lien of \$151,478.80."

A statement from Haggmann's wife, Lyndsay Johns, reads in part, "Let me tell you just a little about this amazing mom to five kids, who still bakes everything herself and raises money for abused moms, fostered kids, and everybody else, and still makes time to be a Girl Scout Troop leader, chauffer, playmate for those kids and even other folks kids. In her spare time, she works 50-plus hours a week as a private contract massage therapist Now Dani's career and job are gone, she needs a power wheelchair, and then, two prosthetic legs, above the knees."

Donate to Haggmann's Gofundme campaign here: www.gofundme.com/dani-we-love-you.



PHOTO COURTESY ROCKTAPE

Kinesiology Tape

Retail for Client Self-Care

by Stacey Thomas, L.M.T., S.F.M.A., F.M.S., N.K.T., C.F.-L2

Kinesiology taping in massage practice is growing—and for very good reason. Pain reduction, proprioception, movement mechanics and postural re-education; managing the fluid dynamics of swelling after an injury, surgical procedure, or related to lymphedema—these are some of the effects that kinesiology taping can provide.

As a practitioner, using this versatile tool in your office complements your soft tissue work in tangible ways and adds a very real perception of value and benefit for your client. This not only opens a gateway for client education, it empowers clients' self-care.

Teaching your clients how to apply kinesiology tape to their own bodies is a powerful way to establish a trusting and empowering relationship.

Client Education

Any time I apply kinesiology tape to someone I am treating, I explain the general whys, hows and expectations so that it's easily understood and the clients become active and knowledgeable participants in their own health care.

This active role has huge benefits to the client's sense of control and capability of participating in treatment. The result is that your clients will be well-educated and will value the treatment they receive as well as its tangible effects long after they leave.

This added value can also become a boon to your business' bottom line.

When it comes to adding retail to your practice, kinesiology tape is both simple and effective. There are a couple models of approach. The first step is to create a wholesale account with the kinesiology taping company that you use. This is often as easy as a short application process found on the company's website. As a health care professional, you will be eligible for discounts, typically up to 40 percent off retail pricing, plus additional benefits depending on the company.

Once your wholesale account is set up, it's as simple as placing your order. The volume of inventory you stock has everything to do with your client load, how much and how often you use tape in your treatments, and anticipating how much tape you will send home with clients.

A wholesale account gives you the option to customize the tape with your business name and logo. This is a huge bonus when it comes to the power of marketing your services.

Word-of-mouth plus the visual aspect of your work on clients speaking highly of their experience in your care is just smart business.

Establish Trust

The retail model that I've used successfully in my practice is a simple one. The first session in my office is a combination of movement assessment and treatment. The cost of that session includes one standard 2-inch roll of kinesiology tape, typically with a retail value of \$20.

Any taping application I apply comes out of that roll of tape the client has purchased until it's time to purchase a new roll. Depending on the nature of the issue and the areas of treatment, that single 2-inch roll of tape could last for several treatment sessions or just a few sessions if I'm taping functional lines.

If the area of treatment is easily accessible to the client—such as a knee or ankle—or she has a family member who will be helping her with the taping applications for harder-to-reach areas such as the low back or shoulder, purchasing a roll of tape to take home for use between sessions is often recommended.

This is a great opportunity for additional client education. Teaching your clients how to apply kinesiology tape to their own bodies is a powerful way to establish a trusting and empowering relationship. A client who trusts you is a repeat client and one who refers family and friends; no amount of marketing can buy that.

This method has worked well in my clinic for the past five years and has produced countless referrals and repeat retail sales. It has also resulted in coaches of athletic teams contacting me because they've seen the tape on my clients and they want to find out if it could help their athletes.

Oftentimes this results in a request for me to speak at local high schools or colleges regarding movement mechanics and training—all because someone saw my business name on the kinesiology tape of a client praising the effects of my treatment.

Application-Based Sales

Other methods of selling kinesiology tape are application based. Some practices will charge a set amount based on the area of treatment and how much tape is used. Smaller applications of tape, on the knee for example, cost less than an application that covers the erectors of the spine.

There are no set rules on how you charge for kinesiology taping. The limits are only the ones you set yourself. Learning how to apply kinesiology tape is a worthwhile pursuit when it comes to your continued education, as it will return your investment many times over.

Regardless of how you do it, it's simply smart business to consider adding kinesiology tape sales to your services—not only for the benefit of your business, but for the benefit of the clients you treat on a daily basis. **M**

Stacey Thomas, L.M.T., S.F.M.A., F.M.S., N.K.T., C.F.-L2, has been dedicated to human movement and athletic performance since 1997 and certified as a sports massage therapist since 2005. She holds certification in Functional Movement Screen, Selective Functional Movement Assessment, Neurokinetic Therapy and CrossFit Level 2, as well as other training and soft tissue modalities. She is credentialed by educational organizations regarding human movement and soft tissue treatment. You can find her in one of her three Front Range clinics treating athletes or teaching courses for ROCKTAPE (rocktape.com).

Read Stacey Thomas, L.M.T., S.F.M.A., F.M.S., N.K.T., C.F.-L2, 's "The Art & Science of Kinesiology Taping," Parts I and II, at massagemag.com/taping1 and massagemag.com/taping2.

TOP 5 Ways to Rock Retail

For many massage therapists, retail sales are an unrealized source of potential income. Retail sales can also help build an ongoing relationship with your clients and increase client retention.



IMAGES/ADOBE STOCK

1

ASSESS YOUR OPTIONS

Conduct a survey of your current retail items. What sells and what does not? Now look at everything you use in your services starting with the reception area. If you use it in a service or to create ambiance it is a potential retail item. Think big—such as aromatherapy diffusers and sheets as well as oils, lotions, candles and tools. The easiest way to sell an item is to have the client experience it firsthand. Trending retail items include water enhancers, travel aromatherapy items, pillows and home-relaxation tools. You can expand your retail boutique assortment by including new items that are sure to capture sales.

2

SHOW IT TO SELL IT

Enticing retail displays are key to generating interest in your retail items and triggering sales. Create a display in your welcome or retail area that uses props, color and shelf talkers to explain products. Branch out beyond just putting retail items on a shelf. Repeat the theme of the display in your treatment room, hallway and guest bathroom. For maximum impact, you should have displays throughout the entire business. It may take a client a few times to pay attention to your display. Remember that people are like bumble bees—they need something to draw their attention to your retail offerings. Using testers creates engagement with a product and boosts sales.





KEEP IT FRESH

To keep your retail sales moving forward refresh your displays monthly. If clients see the same products in the same location at every visit they will become bored with your display. Mix it up by creating a new theme each month. You can create displays that highlight favorite or bestselling products. You might want to highlight a specialty service you offer, such as sports massage, with a display of retail products that you offer to complement the service. Enhance this display with props such as tennis rackets, golf clubs or other sports equipment. Holidays, special events or specific treatments are good themes for retail displays. Make a list of themes that you can use for the next three to six months.

FINISH WITH A FLOURISH

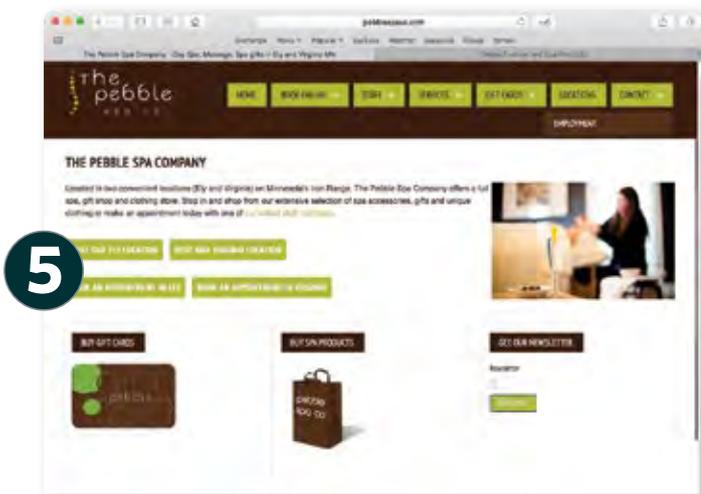
Do you offer your clients water at the end of a service? Kick it up a notch by offering flavored spa water or water supplements. This makes the service stand out, and these are excellent retail items to add to your inventory.

Other items may include an intention card, charm or other small reminder of the service. Many of these items are inexpensive to add to your service and can produce additional retail sales. This is also a great opportunity to give a list of recommended home-care products to clients. Think of this as helping them generate maximum return on their service investment. Prolonging the positive effects between appointments is key to retention.



CREATE AN ONLINE BOUTIQUE

Nearly every spa or salon software program comes with a component to allow you to sell retail items online; however, very few massage therapists take advantage of this type of program. Select your top-selling or most unique items and create an online shopping experience. Use excellent pictures and descriptions. Even if you do not generate huge sales online, this is one more way for clients to interact with your business. Having items for sale online can increase the time people spend on your website, and that can translate into appointments as well as retail sales. Use social media to promote your online store and your retail selections.



Patti Biro (pattibiro.com) is the owner of Patti Biro and Associates, a consulting firm specializing in special events, retail consulting, and education in the spa and wellness industry. She is a National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork-approved continuing education provider, lecturer and consultant.

You Can Bill Insurance!

by Julie Campbell, L.M.T.

Billing insurance companies for massage services can seem like a daunting adventure for many massage therapists. For most of us the fear is amplified by stories our peers tell of endless paperwork and delayed payments.

In reality, billing insurance companies is easier than you might think. You just need to make sure, in the beginning, you spend time setting yourself up for success and gaining the skills you need to be efficient and effective.



ADOBESTOCK/JORGEN MCLEMAN

Billing insurance companies allows you to set yourself apart from your competition, also known as *differentiation*.

Typically, clients who use insurance benefits for massage therapy understand the health benefits of massage and believe it is a valuable part of their health care plan. These clients tend to come in for regular sessions ranging from one to five times per week depending on what their plan allows.

Unfortunately, there are still many limitations on insurance billing for massage therapists because we are not widely accepted as health care providers across the U.S. Each therapist will need to check his or her state or local regulatory entities to determine if massage therapists are allowed to bill.

There are various details every massage therapist will need to understand about billing insurance companies successfully. In addition to reading this article, I highly recommend you take an insurance billing class and find a mentor in your area.

Benefits of Billing Insurance

- Billing insurance companies directly allows you to offer a unique and valuable service that will set you apart from your competition, also known as *differentiation*.
- Insurance companies will list you on their provider website so that clients can find you easily. This is essentially free marketing.
- Many clients who use their insurance benefits with you will become regular clients and will understand the benefit of receiving massage as part of their health care plan.
- Clients may work in an office where all of their co-workers have the same insurance, and so through word of mouth you will get more clientele.
- You will have a more steady and reliable income because of clients coming in more regularly.

Drawbacks to Billing Insurance

- Lack of organization can cause you to lose clients and money.

- Paperwork and computer work are increased.
- Lag time for payments can be between one and three months.
- Billing insurance companies will take time, which may mean less one-on-one time with clients.
- There is a learning curve; you must learn the language of insurance companies and how to get them to cooperate when they don't want to.
- You may get paid less per service than your regular rate depending on which insurance companies you decide to contract with.

Types of Insurance You Can Bill

You can bill some health insurance plans through a client's health savings account (HSA) plan that comes in the form of a debit card. You can also have the client bill the insurance company himself by giving him a detailed receipt, which is sometimes called a superbill. HSAs and superbills do not require therapists to become credentialed.

Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA). In some states, massage therapists can bill auto insurance companies through a client's personal injury protection plan if the client has been in an accident and has an open and active claim. Often the only requirements for billing are the client's date of accident, claim number and the insurance adjuster's name and phone number.

Workers' Compensation. Workers' compensation is very similar to MVA billing, although in some states you have to be registered with a local regulating group in order to bill. This type of billing also requires a client's date of accident, claim number and adjuster's information, and is related to an injury that happened on the job.

Health Insurance Companies. For most health insurance companies, massage therapists must be in-network. Getting in-network can take between three and six months and typically requires filling out a résumé-like application and sending supporting documents such as a copy of one's license and liability insurance to provider contacts at insurance companies.

Typically you will need the client's member ID, date of birth, name and contact information as well as the provider phone number to bill properly. Each insurance plan is different, and this means that verifying a client's benefits is important prior to allowing a client to attempt to use her plan with you.

Credentialing

In order to bill most health insurance companies, massage therapists must get credentialed, or in-network, with individual health insurance companies. To find out if an insurance company credentials massage therapists in your area and how to start the process, you can search or call individual insurance companies' provider networks.

Call the provider line of the individual health insurance companies you are interested in credentialing with and ask the representative these questions: Do any of your plans cover massage therapy by a licensed massage therapist? If so, do I need to be credentialed? If so, what is the process for credentialing?

Insurance Verification

Once you are set to begin billing insurance companies and have your first insurance client, you will want to make sure that you check the client's benefits to ensure that he or she is, in fact, covered for your services.

To do this you will call the provider line listed on the client's insurance card and ask the customer service representative the appropriate questions to ensure that you will get paid by the company for the services you provide to the client. Always ask the representative for his or her name and a reference number for the call, as this will protect you if the company tries to deny payment later.

HIPAA Requirements

As a health care provider, you will want to understand your responsibilities and requirements under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. HIPAA is a law designed to protect clients' personal information and documentation. You can find more information about this online at hhs.gov. By law you have to provide clients with a copy of the HIPAA agreement to have them read and sign it.

Your Billing System

Set yourself up for success by spending time in the beginning of your insurance billing journey to create an awesome and organized system that works for you. This should include a way to keep track of insurance verifications, billing dates and amounts, payment dates and amounts, and any follow up calls with insurance companies.

You will also want to have a financial agreement where the client agrees to pay if her insurance company denies the claim. As well as an assignment of benefits, this gives you permission to bill her insurance company on her behalf.

Billing & Payment Timelines

It is important to bill insurance companies in a timely manner; the best practice is weekly. Insurance billing is best done in a routine way so that you get in a habit and don't make unexpected mistakes or forget important items.

The timeline for payments depends on the company and the situation, but you can typically expect payment between one and three months. That means it is important to have enough cash to cover your bills while you are waiting for payments to come in.

I always tell my business and insurance billing classes that one of the most important parts of running a successful practice is knowing yourself and your strengths and weaknesses. If you know that you aren't naturally organized and hate spending time on paperwork, then insurance billing may not be for you—or you may want to find someone to bill on your behalf.

There are contractors and companies that are happy to take on this burden for you for a small fee; typically 10 percent or a flat fee of \$5 to \$10 per claim. Why stress yourself if you can delegate the task to someone else?

Be a Resource

In the end, insurance billing may not be for everyone and may not be an option in your area at this time. However, the possibility of billing insurance companies directly is increasing as massage becomes more popular and health care continues to evolve. This means it is important for you as a massage therapist to understand the ins and outs of billing insurance, even if you choose not to bill, so that you can be a resource for your clients.

Hopefully by doing so, you can continue to educate your community about the amazing health benefits of regular massage so that massage can become a larger force in their health care plans. **M**

Julie Campbell, L.M.T. (massagebusinesshelp.com), graduated from the Savannah School of Massage Therapy in 2008 and began her practice, Written on the Body Massage and Acupuncture Studio, in 2010 in Portland, Oregon. She has taught at the Oregon School of Massage since June 2013 and enjoys mentoring and coaching massage therapists in insurance billing and business. She is also earning her MBA from George Fox University.

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How can I become more confident in using social media?

CHERIE SOHNEN-MOE RESPONDS

Social media has become an integral part of our cultural landscape. While Facebook is one of the most popular sites, people actively engage on Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Meetup and other social sites.

According to Pew Research Center's *Social Media Fact Sheet*, released in January 2017, 69 percent of all Americans use some form of social media. Within social media use, Facebook is by far the most popular social media platform, with 68 percent of Americans using it, followed by Instagram (28 percent), Pinterest (26 percent) LinkedIn (25 percent) and Twitter (21 percent).



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Only post things you would be comfortable having anyone (and everyone) know about you.

These platforms provide a major way for people to connect—and this is particularly true in the massage profession, as it's a rather solitary calling. Yes, you work with clients, but those interactions are supposed to be client-centered—which means *not about you*.

Interaction with colleagues is limited, even for those practitioners who work in a group practice or are employees in a spa or massage center. Most practitioners barely have enough time to stretch and drink water between clients let alone have in-depth conversations with co-workers.

The image of colleagues standing around the water cooler and chatting doesn't really exist in this field—but practitioners do find time to check their phones for posts to see how their friends are doing, and that helps them feel connected.

Social Strategy

Social media platforms aren't limited to fostering your personal relationships. They can also be an effective business tool to promote your practice, generate new clientele, keep in contact with your current clients, drive people to your website, and enable you to quickly research almost anything.

Unfortunately, pitfalls also exist. It's easy to wander down the social media rabbit hole and find yourself emerging hours later. Plus, there are technological restrictions and ethical considerations.

One of the first social media platforms was MySpace. That sounded like a great name, but social media has never been *your* space. You don't own the space so you have limited control of how or when your content is seen. You have to follow the platform's guidelines—and those guidelines are all different.

The solution is to use your social media sites to drive people to your website where you can control what and how content is viewed. Share links to your articles and blogs, and once people are there, offer them regular opportunities to join your email list for announcements, special offers and newsletters.

Online Privacy

Privacy is tenuous in the realm of social media. You have to be careful

people don't discover too much of your personal information and that you maintain client confidentiality.

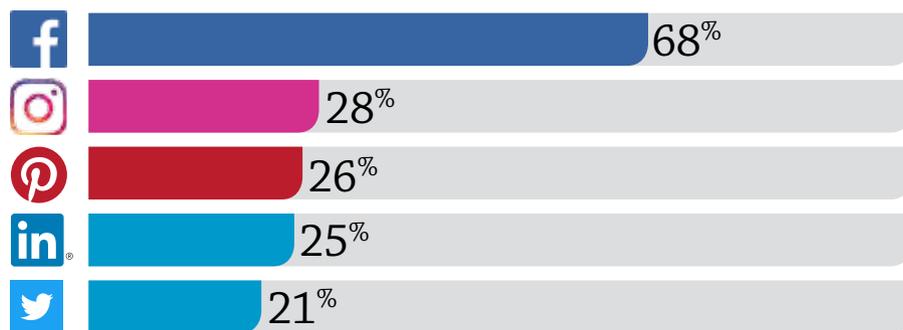
The main way to secure your online privacy is to be cautious when posting. Only post things you would be comfortable having anyone (and everyone) know about you. The next step is to manage your privacy settings.

For instance, in Facebook, you can allow only friends to see certain posts. You can also create subgroups that can only see certain posts.

Think before you write—particularly if you have an emotional response. Once something is posted, you can't take it back. Yes, you can remove it from your site, but there are other sites where it's already been shared.

Do create a dedicated Facebook business page, because it will help

Social Media Use Among Americans



Within social media use, Facebook is by far the most popular social media platform, with 68 percent of Americans using it, followed by Instagram (28 percent), Pinterest (26 percent), LinkedIn (25 percent) and Twitter (21 percent).

Source: Pew Research Center's *Social Media Fact Sheet*.

establish boundaries. Keep in mind that even with a business page, many people will still search for you by your personal profile.

When I first set up my Facebook account, business pages didn't exist. I set up a separate business page once that option was available and attempted to move my business friends to that page, but it wasn't as effective as I would have liked. Now I have a personal Facebook page and a business page. Sometimes there's crossover of people on the lists because the focus of what gets shared is different. And there are times where I post the same thing on each page.

Some people don't allow others to directly post on their Facebook pages. The only option is for those people to reply or comment on a post written by the page owner. While this certainly helps keep unwanted posts from your page, this isn't a very social thing to do.

Conserve Confidentiality

It's crucial to maintain client confidentiality. This is another aspect of online privacy. Many practitioners use social media as an informal peer support group. This can be perilous, particularly when discussing client issues. You must make certain that nobody could figure out who you are talking about in your posts.

The most common confidentiality violations occur in relation to photos. For instance, you hold an open house for your practice and take some great photos of the attendees. You write about the event and post the pictures.

You think you are maintaining confidentiality because you didn't identify anyone by name. Unfortunately, someone else could share your photo and tag the person(s). The best solution is to get written permission whenever you take photos of clients or people attending your events.

Photo Protocol

Use appropriate photos for your cover photos on your personal and business page. You can add other photos on your personal sites—but it's best to be conservative with the photos that you allow the public to see.

Only use photos or images that are yours or that you confirmed are royalty free. (Read the guidelines carefully, because royalty free doesn't necessarily mean that there aren't costs for using the photo or specific requirements for crediting the source.)

Get permission or give credit to the source of the original post whenever you share, re-tweet or re-pin a photo, video, post or meme.

Security Steps

Most cellphones and tablets have automatic geo-tagging (location information) loaded. While this is helpful for people trying to find your business location, it also provides a lot of information you might not want to share. There are

software applications that can read metadata to pinpoint the exact location where a picture is taken. In most instances, this isn't a problem, but there are times when you want to protect your privacy.

For instance, let's say you want to sell or even give away one of your possessions. You take a photo of that item and post it on several social sites such as Craigslist, Freecycle and Letgo. If you don't remove the geo-tagging information, you could be unwittingly providing your location to thieves.

The first step to removing this information is checking the privacy settings on your phone. I own an iPhone, and when I click on privacy and location services it gives me a list of options to activate or disable. I've set things like maps and compass to *while using* and have set everything else, such as camera and messages, to *never* status.

Another security option to consider if you don't want to alert people to the fact that you aren't home is to wait to post photos from events and meetings until you or someone else is at your house.

Be Safe

Also according to Pew, 77 percent of Facebook users visit the site daily (51 percent of Instagram users do so, as do 42 percent of Twitter followers). With so many Americans online and looking for information, education and connection, no massage therapist can afford to ignore social media as a valuable venue for capturing clients.

Just be sure to implement social media safeguards, to protect your clients, your privacy—and your practice. **M**

Cherie Sohnen-Moe is an author, business coach, international workshop leader and successful business owner since 1978. She has served as a faculty member at a massage school, acupuncture college, and holistic health college. She is the author of *Business Mastery* and *Present Yourself Powerfully*, and co-author of *The Ethics of Touch*. She is a founding member of and is the current president of the Alliance for Massage Therapy Education. Visit massagemag.com/targetmarket to read Sohnen-Moe's "Create a Target Market Profile."



In "Social Media: Your Incubator for Professional Development," educator Jason Erickson, B.C.T.M.B., C.P.T., describes the ways social media can contribute to a massage therapist's education and career. Read this article at massagemag.com/socialincubator.

Amelia Wilcox

Amelia Wilcox is founder and CEO of Incorporate Massage (incorporatemassage.com), a national corporate massage company headquartered in Utah. She studied nutrition and exercise physiology at the University of Utah and received her massage therapy training at the Utah College of Massage Therapy.

When and how did you decide massage was the right career for you?

A When I got my first massage at the age of 19. A friend of mine dragged me to the massage school to try it when she found out I'd never had one. I suffered from chronic headaches my whole life, and I finally found relief in massage.

What do you credit for your business success?

A A strong company culture centered on flexible employment. [That culture] attracts great people with fabulous skills who stick around because they can work in a meaningful job and still be at home to take care of their families.

Why did you decide to focus your business on corporate chair massage?

A I wanted to bring the benefits of massage to the masses by making it accessible and affordable through bringing it into the workplace. People can enjoy most of the benefits of massage from 15 minutes in a chair, without the high price tag, the drive time and treatment time, and the travel involved in going to a spa or clinic.

What did winning a blue ribbon from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce mean to you and your employees?

A It was an amazing experience. I was presented with my award by the CEO of Constant Contact [an email

“I wanted my business to make massage accessible and affordable by bringing it into the workplace.”



Amelia Wilcox

COURTESY OF AMELIA WILCOX

marketing company] and got to spend the whole evening with their crew. It meant we were really changing the industry, and that all our efforts were making a difference and we were being recognized for that. It was a great shot in the arm to keep pushing forward with what we were trying to accomplish.

In your experience, in what ways does workplace massage benefit clients?

A It makes massage more affordable and accessible to people who would otherwise not get massage. You can reach people who would not be comfortable undressing, who wouldn't ever make time to do this for themselves in a spa setting, or for whom massage would otherwise be cost-prohibitive.

It's a great way to raise awareness of massage therapy and educate people on those benefits.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

A Managing a high-growth company is really challenging because processes have to keep changing; we can never hire as fast as we need the people. At any time we are probably hiring four to five administrative positions and 30+ massage therapists. Managing all that is tough sometimes, but I love it!

What advice would you give massage therapists who would like to become involved with a chamber of commerce?

A Sometimes they have a less expensive membership option for smaller, one-person companies, or woman- or minority-owned companies.

In five years, where do you see yourself and your career?

A I see myself running our company across the U.S., the U.K., Australia and Canada—and changing the massage industry by improving benefits and opportunities for growth for massage therapists. **M**



Read *“From the Bottom to the Top: Building a Corporate Massage Business”* to learn how one massage business became a fast-growing provider of corporate massage in the U.S.

Multiple Income Streams



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More Money, Less Stress

by Gael Wood

It seems like there is always a little too much month left at the end of the money, right? The cost of living is increasing, with housing, food, gas and health insurance getting more expensive, making it hard to get by.

Who wants to just get by, anyway? There are vacations to take, classes to learn and gifts to buy for special celebrations. Add all that to retirement savings, life insurance, disability insurance, and it's clear: We could all use more money.

Diversify now

As massage therapists, we are limited in how much we can earn by massage alone. Even if we are booked solid and working as much as possible, which is great, we can only do so much before risking injury or burn out.

The great news is there are opportunities to earn more with less stress on our bodies by diversifying and creating some additional income streams. The income streams you pick can complement your business or give you something new and completely different to pursue. The choice is yours.

Several years into my massage career I began to wonder if I really wanted to *just* do massage forever. Forever is a very long time! At that time, I was working at a spa. Between higher-priced services, add-on services like waxing, and retail sales, the estheticians were doing well.

I also knew from receiving facials how deeply relaxing and therapeutic they could be. I decided a credential in esthetics was the right choice for me. It wasn't easy as a single mom to work three days a week and go to school three days a week, but it was worth it.

Let's look at some income streams that can complement your massage business and benefit your clients.

Advanced credential

Spa services can give your body a break

while adding value to your services so you can earn more per hour. If you like spa services and can sell them (this is important) consider services like body scrubs and wraps or spa enhancements that can be added to massage treatments. Anti-aging facial massage treatments are another good option, and these services are a great lead-in to retail sales. Just think about the wonderful holiday gift certificate packages you could create after turning your massage room into a day spa. If you want to offer facials as well as spa add-ons, an esthetics license might be the next step for you.

Another type of training might be a better fit for you. With personal training, yoga or Pilates sessions, you can help your clients stay healthier and in shape while giving your hands a break. You could even work with a couple of clients at a time for more income per hour. The average cost per hour is between \$40 and \$75 per session. You can also provide online coaching, support and resources. (Think workouts, webinars and white papers.)

Any kind of massage business can incorporate retail. Just consider, "What would help my clients stay out of pain, relax at home and maintain their results?" (Read "Rock Your Retail," this issue, page 20.)

I've had success with selling warm neck wraps, muscle relaxing bath salts,

warming and cooling muscle rubs, spa body products and skin care products. I would recommend researching and sampling various options until you find products that you absolutely love and would feel proud to carry and recommend.

Success with retail depends on your ability to solve a problem that your client is having with a home care product, and the confidence to recommend your products to clients. From therapeutic products to pampering treats, you'll need to be able to share the benefits of the products you carry and close the sale. We aren't born knowing this stuff! You may need to practice and get some help learning to sell.

Produce products

If you are creative and have time you could make products to sell. This could be something you do just for your clients or a side business you promote along with your massage services. Consider the options for gift sets with products and massage services included.

You will want to see if you need any additional insurance coverage before starting and take some classes to learn how to create and package your products safely.

"I find it best to check with your tax preparer or your financial advisor as to whether you need extra insurance to suit your specific needs and the needs of your company," said massage therapist Stacey Hoffman Markwardt, owner of The Butterfly Garden Soap Co. in Haw River, North Carolina. She also advises that your side business will need to make a profit at least three out of five years or it will be considered a hobby by the IRS.

Your past life

Many of us are in massage as a second or third career. If that is true for you, then consider the skills and talents you developed before getting into massage that could help your clients, your fellow therapists or members of your community.

Before starting my massage career, I cooked at a bed and breakfast and a vegetarian eatery. I combined those skills with my massage practice to create spa parties in my spa with a full lunch menu, and for many years I have taken side jobs cooking for large groups at a camp. This gives me a break from massage and I can earn extra money working a couple of days here and there.

Maybe you love organizing, gardening or creating websites for people. Use those skills to bring in more income and add variety to your days.

Expand or employ

Expanding your massage business is another way to increase your income. Many therapists don't want the overhead, responsibility and work that goes along with being a business owner.

Renting out rooms would probably be the simplest way to do this; however, if you want to have more control over scheduling, services offered and dress code, you'll need to hire employees. With this comes extra overhead, marketing expenses and payroll taxes, so be sure to have a solid business plan in place before you dive in.

Write and teach

If you are an experienced therapist, consider sharing your skills and knowledge through teaching and writing. Most massage therapists need continuing education classes and are excited to learn new techniques and skills to help their clients. There are many opportunities for teaching once you have your National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork approved provider status.

These include teaching in-person or online workshops, hosting webinars, writing text-based CE courses, producing books and videos, teaching at massage schools and presenting at industry conferences.

Teaching requires specific skills, such as class planning, presentation

skills and event management, but there are teacher-training programs designed to help you get started.

The internet offers even more possibilities for income stream. Blogging and promoting affiliate products is one way to make money online. This means affiliate products are sold on your site and you make a commission off each sale. You could even do this with your massage website if you can find products to benefit your clients.

This is not a get-rich-quick plan. Most successful bloggers work diligently for several years before they can quit their day jobs. You'll need to pick a topic you are passionate about and that people are searching for online.

Develop a downline

Network marketing, for which a distributor network is necessary, can be an affordable way to get started with an additional stream of income. (Think Mary Kay or Tupperware—or a product more closely aligned with massage.)

My friend, Gloria Coppola, who is a massage therapist, educator and life coach, has found success with network marketing.

"Network marketing may be an ideal additional resource for income for massage therapists," she said. "First, find a company that aligns with you. For example, an essential oil company could be the perfect companion if you use them in your practice."

"Be realistic about the opportunity the company may bring and how much time you may need to build this additional income," Coppola adds. "Choosing a company that has easy online ordering for your customers reduces the time you may have to spend assisting them to purchase."

She offers the following advice for network marketing opportunities:

- Startup costs to join a network marketing company should be reasonable for a new business.

- Be sure to understand how you get compensated as each company has its own requirements.
- You might expect to make a few hundred dollars a month—or thousands if you really give it the time and energy to build.
- Your massage clients are not necessarily the best choice for your downline or auto ship, as this can create a dual relationship. A client might want to stop her orders but might not feel comfortable talking to you about it, and that would be a sticky situation. It is better to have your clients just order retail or order through you.

Keep Moving Forward

There are many opportunities to earn more money, but most of them will require you to further your education, take a risk and try new ways of doing things. They will require dedication and a commitment to making things work. You may start off going in one direction and end up somewhere different, maybe somewhere even better. Just don't give up! **M**

Gael Wood has more than 20 years of experience in the massage and spa industry. She now concentrates on training massage and spa therapists in business, spa services and greater success. She is a regular contributor to *MASSAGE Magazine* and her articles include "Stepping Stones to Success: Build a Path to Career Longevity" (July 2016) and "Is Your Practice LGBTQ-Friendly? How to Create a Welcoming Space" (massagemag.com). Visit gaelwood.com for a complimentary Massage & Spa Success Toolkit.



Read "Step Out of Your Comfort Zone—and Into Your Success Zone!" by Gael Wood, at massagemag.com/successzone.

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Higher standards, training, and credentials help us to be respected as a field. It has helped me bring my work of massage for arthritis and chronic pain into hospital settings. My clients see improved outcomes in their pain levels and quality of life, and their doctors are thrilled.

Massage therapy is a complementary field and I am honored to be a part of this integration by being Board Certified and educating others. ”



Ann Swanson
M.S., BCTMB, ERYT500





The Therapeutic Relationship

6

Principles of Professional Ethics

by Jimmy Gialelis, L.M.T., B.C.T.M.B.

The therapeutic relationship is the proper space to communicate and work with clients in order to facilitate their healing journey; the topic of professional ethics in the massage field is an ever-present topic of significance, and must be taken into account when addressing this relationship.

Due to massage therapists violating ethics, especially choices regarding ethical dilemmas, laws have been created to protect the general public.

The therapeutic relationship concept is a cornerstone curricula in most massage therapy programs. As the practitioner learns how to show this relationship, the level of professionalism increases, and the client-therapist bond grows stronger. Client trust increases while therapists have greater clarity to discover new means to aid clients.

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Therapeutic Touch

All professional touch performed within the construct of the therapeutic relationship is therapeutic in nature and performed with a purpose that is in alignment with the client's treatment goals. This includes being acutely aware of initial touch to begin the session, secondary contact throughout the session and grounding practice at session's end.

Shaping the therapeutic relationship with our clients are our ideas of boundaries, transference, counter-transference, dual relationships, informed consent, right of refusal and scope of practice. Understanding and accepting these concepts allows therapists to perform his or her services with a heightened therapeutic relationship with his or her clients. Let us examine each concept in greater detail.

Boundaries are physical and nonphysical limits determined by individuals to ensure security, safety and well-being. Therapists must be conscious of boundaries when interacting with clients and employ awareness in understanding boundaries created by clients. Boundaries will not be equal among all clients. Some clients may not mind if you stand two feet from them; however, other clients will think you are smothering them physically by standing too close.

Where do boundaries come from? For some clients, boundaries arise

from sensitivity to what is perceived by the client energetically. For others, past experiences shape boundaries. Clients' perceptions of their environment also create boundaries.

Some questions to ask yourself about boundaries include: Am I aware of how my practice environment will be perceived? Does my work environment promote boundary-building? Does my body language, appearance or speech cause clients to create boundaries?

Transference is the displacement or transfer of feelings, thoughts or behaviors related to a significant person or event onto someone else, such as a therapist.

Below is a list of signs of transference by clients. Do you recognize any of these signs from experiences with past clients?

- Frequently asking the practitioner about his or her personal life.
- Communicating in manners the practitioner has disallowed.
- Bringing gifts to each session.
- Inviting the practitioner on dates or to social events.
- Soliciting help in solving personal problems.
- The client displays reluctance or difficulty maintaining personal boundaries, such as disrobing in front of the practitioner or attempting to hug the practitioner after each session.

6 Principles of Professional Ethics

1

Client-centered approach

The therapist practices a client-centered approach. Regarding the care of the client, this approach indicates that the client's wishes and needs are placed higher in priority to what the therapist considers most important.

2

Respect

The therapist holds the client in high esteem. The therapist respects the individuality of each client and honors his or her dignity as a human being.

3

Empathy

The therapist expresses empathy toward the client. In the therapeutic relationship, empathy embodies the ability to understand the perspective of a client expressing concerns, problems and challenges.

4

Active listening

The therapist practices active listening. This type of listening involves intending to truly understand what the client is expressing via verbal and nonverbal communication.

5

Silent attunement

This is the concept that a client and therapist become bonded energetically through treatment. Meaning, the therapist's total focus remains on the client with no distractions interfering with the session either physically within the room or mentally within the therapist's mind.

6

Awareness

The therapist remains acutely aware of the needs of the client during the session. Aspects pertaining to the client's sensory sensitivities during a session, including nonverbal cues and perceptions of touch, are mindfully monitored.

- The client requests more time during each session and is disappointed when the request is not granted.

Transference may occur if the massage therapist provides the space for certain clients to perform any of the acts noted above. Usually these acts are unconscious, as the client feels completely comfortable with his or her therapist. However, boundaries are in question at this point.

If a massage therapist does not honor healthy boundaries, such as encouraging a friendship to develop, clients are taken out of the normal therapeutic relationship and thrust into a different, interactive, role where transference thrives.

Counter-transference is displacement or transfer of feelings, thoughts or behaviors related to a significant person or event onto a client by a therapist. Below is a list of signs of counter-transference by therapists. Do you recognize any of these signs from experiences with past clients?

- Unusually strong feelings (positive or negative) directed toward a client.
- Becoming argumentative toward a client.
- Bending professional and personal boundaries to accommodate a client.
- Impatience with clients when displaying a lack of progress or effort.
- Making exceptions for a client's inappropriate behavior.
- Soliciting assistance from client regarding the practitioner's personal affairs.
- Treating the client in a certain manner because he or she reminds you of someone.

Counter-transference indicates unresolved emotions or feelings on the

part of the practitioner. Clients should never be viewed as a replacement for professional assistance in dealing with personal problems and unresolved emotions or feelings.

Dual relationships are defined as relationships in which multiple roles exist between a therapist and client. In the health care field, it is the responsibility of the therapist to be accountable regarding dual relationships and not allow these to proliferate.

Some examples of dual relationships include when client and therapist:

- Begin dating.
- Create a business partnership.
- Include their family in the relationship outside the scope of massage therapy sessions.
- Actively support the same charitable, political or religious cause or event.
- Attend a social event together.
- Exchange finances outside of the context of a massage therapy session.

Because the client no longer views the therapist in strictly the context of a facilitator of health, there can be many negative side effects that arise from a dual relationship. First, the quality of care can be greatly diminished. Second, communication in both directions can become less professional. Third, boundary violations become more common. Finally, the client may easily become a former client as professionalism becomes difficult to maintain.

Informed Consent

Informed consent reflects the client's right to know and fully participate in his or her care. Writing a statement of informed consent is crucial to the success of a massage practice, yet many massage therapists overlook this

vital component. An informed consent statement includes:

- A list of services that you offer.
- A specific definition of the services you offer.
- Guidelines for receiving massage.
- Your policy regarding cancellations.
- Description of your scope of practice.
- A statement of your intentions for massage.
- A statement of your philosophy on healing, massage and health.
- A description of the client's treatment plans and goals.
- Risks involved in treatment; contraindications.

After informing a client of your services and philosophy, it is necessary to confirm that the client understands what you mean. Often, clients will agree without hesitation to avoid interfering with the treatment. If you feel this is happening, you can ask a client to tell you what they understand will be happening during and immediately following a session.

Right of Refusal

Right of refusal is an often overlooked aspect of the therapeutic relationship. Clients have the right to refuse services for any reason and at any time. If they determine that the session should be stopped midway, their needs must be respected.

This same right also applies to the practitioner. You can end a session at any time with just and reasonable cause. Consider the nature of the therapist-client relationship with these queries: How healthy is your relationship with the client? Is the client taking advantage of you in any way? Is this situation correctable?

Scope of Practice

Your scope of practice encompasses

the actions, methods and perspectives of healing allowed to your profession in accordance with legal and ethical considerations.

According to Ben Benjamin, Ph.D. and Cherie Sohnen-Moe, co-authors of *The Ethics of Touch*, the scope of practice for massage therapists is influenced by four factors: education training, competency, personal accountability and laws. All four of these factors impact our practice of therapeutic massage application.

Education training and competency are intimately linked. A therapist needs to conduct an honest introspection on his or her level of training. Sugar-coating or self-inflation will do nothing to aid one's ability to help a client through his or her healing journey. The maxim "fake it, 'til you make it" does not apply to scope of practice issues!

Some questions to ask yourself about scope of practice include: Have I mastered the techniques to the point that I can apply them

properly and safely? Do I need more training or continuing education in a certain modality? If so, where can I obtain more training or continuing education? Do I have a thorough understanding of the client's pathology and dysfunction? If not, where can I obtain this information?

Ensure Safety

Regarding personal accountability and laws, massage therapists must assume personal responsibility for knowledge in these areas. The excuse "I didn't know" does not apply when dealing with personal accountability and laws.

Be sure to keep up with changes in local and state laws and rules concerning massage therapy. Keep in mind that massage laws (and the definitions and rules accompanying these laws) vary by state. It is the responsibility of the massage therapist to obtain the most current information.

The therapeutic relationship ultimately becomes the basis that

the therapist should always take into account when interacting within any ethical gray area with clients. Communicating and behaving from this proper stance will likely ensure safety, benefits and positive results from any action taken in handling ethical dilemmas. **M**

Jimmy Gialelis, L.M.T., B.C.T.M.B., is owner of Advanced Massage Arts & Education (advancedmassagece.com) in Tempe, Arizona. He is a National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork-approved provider of continuing education and teaches many CE classes, including "Professional Ethics for LMTs." His many articles for this publication include "Massage Improves Quality of Life for the Cerebral Palsy Patient" (massagemag.com/massagecerebralpalsy) and "Autoimmune Disease: Implications for Massage" (February 2017, in print).

Earn your specialty certificate in Sports Massage

The 30 credit-hour AMTA/NCBTMB Sports Massage Specialty Certificate Program is perfect for newer massage therapy practitioners as an overview of sports massage, while still being detailed enough to give veteran massage therapists a refresher on current science and settings for sports massage.

Online Courses: Expand your skill set conveniently online with six rigorously vetted sports massage courses on topics such as the science of athletics, what to expect at athletic events, athlete care and more.

Workshops: Highly specialized instructors demonstrate advanced techniques, customize approaches tailored to the athlete's needs, and share their vast experience.

Specialty Exam: The program culminates with NCBTMB's take-home, online Sports Massage Specialty Certificate Exam.



Advance your
career with
a specialty
certificate!

What's *your* specialty?

NCBTMB & Academy of Clinical Massage Launch Profession's First Clinical Rehabilitative Massage Specialty Certificate Program



ACADEMY OF CLINICAL MASSAGE

NCBTMB is proud to partner with the Academy of Clinical Massage to empower new and veteran massage therapists with the opportunity to achieve a Specialty Certificate in Clinical Rehabilitative Massage—an exclusive certificate available to therapists who complete the Academy's Clinical Rehabilitative Massage Program.

Program Breakdown

This continuing education program has been evolving and growing for over 12 years into its current format. Created and led by Whitney Lowe, this specialty program is the first of its kind to focus on key components of clinical rehabilitation science. It provides in-depth study of a variety of musculoskeletal conditions, their assessment and treatment, and reviews of core clinical practice skills. The new program is backed by Lowe's revolutionary online program and hands-on training and a Specialty Certificate Exam administered by NCBTMB.

Program Requirements

1. Complete all Clinical Orthopedic Massage online courses. (Seven courses totaling approximately 130 hours.)
2. Complete all classroom/hands-on massage trainings. (Two courses totaling approximately 32 hours.)
3. Passing score on the NCBTMB Specialty Exam. (Online; 140 questions.)

Course Details

Applicants may take online coursework or hands-on classes in any order. The online

component focuses on key facets of rehabilitation science: anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, pathology, kinesiology, clinical reasoning and treatment planning. Putting this key information in the online format gives the opportunity to make this program available to busy working professionals regardless of their geographic or time limitations.

The hands-on training courses are designed to give additional advanced massage skills, but not be focused on a specific technique or modality. Participating instructors in this program have been selected because of their many years of contributing to advanced massage training in assessment and treatment of pain and injury conditions. Current instructors include Whitney Lowe, Judith Delany, L.M.T., James Waslaski and Douglas Nelson, L.M.T., B.C.T.M.B., C.N.M.T.

Program Purpose

A Specialty Certificate in Clinical Rehabilitative Massage provides you with the credentials your clients, employer and insurance companies appreciate while giving you the training you need for addressing conditions clients seek effective solutions for today.

The program helps you to thoroughly understand why treatments function and how they are effective, and how to make wise, strategic choices. You learn the *why*, *what* and *how* so that your treatments can be based on sound problem-solving. It is this knowledge and these skills that will make you a more effective clinician and lead to a more satisfying practice and loyalty from your clients.

To learn more visit www.ncbtmb.org/specialty-certificates

What the profession is saying about the CRM Specialty Program....



"The Academy and its Director Whitney Lowe have a national reputation for integrity and high-quality work. With their top-notch list of partners, they are the perfect combination to spearhead this initiative. We are thrilled to partner with this extraordinary group to bring our profession a training program and credential that will lift our highly trained practitioners above the crowd and support them in this important area of work."

-Donna Sarvello LMT, BCTMB
VP of Educational Support, NCBTMB



"There are many orthopedic massage courses to choose from, but I chose Whitney Lowe for specific reasons, and I was not disappointed. The online course did not interfere with my work schedule, and I could work at my own pace. The information is given in a very clear and concise manner, and Whitney is a professional presenter that makes the material easy to learn. He made himself available to any questions I had, and even provided personalized feedback on case studies. The information and the techniques that I learned I could use right away. My clients have benefitted from this education as well. I highly recommend his courses!"

-Beth Victor LMT
Former Student & CRM Graduate



"For decades, stakeholders and professionals in our field have been looking for some type of recognized credential that can validate the training and experience of massage therapists who treat pain and injury conditions. This specialty certificate program has been uniquely designed to address this deficit."

-Whitney Lowe
Founder, Academy of Clinical Massage



"I have watched over the last 35 years as clinical massage therapy has taken its place in many forms within medical and sports communities, undeniably through the efforts of countless individuals and organizations. For many, the endeavor to prove worth in those markets was difficult, since licenses and other credentials were fairly standard within the field."

This new nationally recognized specialty certificate distinguishes those who have worked hard to achieve a particular set of clinical skills and knowledge, the kind of expertise that can attract new clients and expand employment opportunities."

-Judith DeLany LMT
Academy Workshop Instructor



"NCB is proud to serve the profession with additional opportunities to establish a career pathway true to each therapist, regardless if he or she works in a school, spa, medical center, or owns an independent practice. With specialty partnerships like this one, the profession is empowered to achieve advanced credentials that prove expertise with a recognizable, industry-supported accomplishment clients, employers and insurance companies appreciate."

-Teresa M. Matthews
LMT, CPT, BCTMB, Chair, NCBTMB



New Products & Services



Hanging Air Freshener

Purple Frog Patches

Bring nature to your nose with this all-natural hanging air freshener, which comes in three scents: peppermint, orange and lemongrass. Made entirely from essential oils, this air freshener is rechargeable and allows you to add your own essential oils when it is empty.

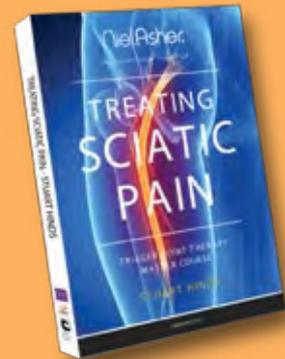
Hanging Air Freshener costs \$3.50. Purple Frog Patches, purplefrogpatches.com.

Treating Sciatic Pain, Trigger Point Therapy Master Course

Niel Asher Healthcare

This DVD on the Niel Asher Technique, *Treating Sciatic Pain, Trigger Point Master Course*, by Stuart Hinds, addresses various treatment techniques and considerations for common forms of sciatic pain, which include trigger points and their influence on peripheral nerve entrapments. This book includes the *Trigger Point Workbook (Sciatica)*, 13 online video classes, online exam (15 questions) and certification.

Treating Sciatic Pain, Trigger Point Therapy Master Course costs \$39.95. Niel Asher Healthcare, nielasher.com.



New on the scene

Phase One Thai Massage Workbook—Print Edition

Robert Gardner Wellness

This Thai massage workbook includes 220 pages of detailed advanced training and color photos on heavy stock pages to help a massage therapist learn Thai massage. It comes spiral-bound for ease of use when practicing the techniques.

Phase One Thai Massage Workbook costs \$44.99. Robert Gardner Wellness, robertgardnerwellness.com.

Phase One Thai Massage Workbook—Print Edition



Peace & Quiet Bath & Body Oil

Tranquility Spheres

This product helps with muscular aches, joint pain and backaches. Apply this product after a bath or use during a massage for a calming effect. This product is non-comedogenic and is made with 100 percent organic jojoba oil.

Peace & Quiet Bath & Body Oil costs \$18 for 2 ounces. Tranquility Spheres, tspheres.com.





Food Freshness Card

Nature's Frequencies

This new, award-winning invention is a small holographic card that is convenient and easy to use, and will help keep your fruits, vegetables and breads fresher longer. Just place the 6-inch laminated card in the refrigerator, under a fruit bowl or in a bread box.

Food Freshness Card costs \$50.

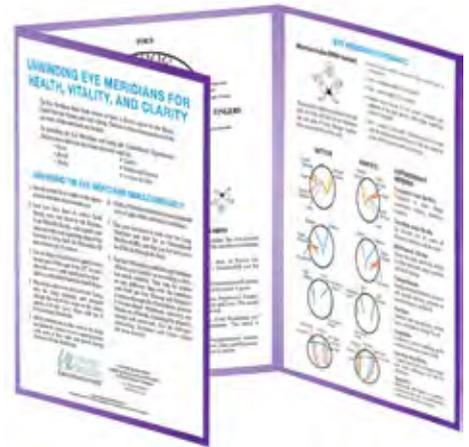
Nature's Frequencies, foodfreshnesscard.com

Unwinding the Meridians in the Eyes—Trifold Reference Chart

Upledger Institute International

Balance and enhance your physical and emotional wellness with this reference chart. It's specially designed to lay on your client's chest to allow you to follow the diagrams, which will allow you to access the body's inner physician to initiate healing abilities for optimal health, well-being and consciousness.

Unwinding the Meridians in the Eyes—Trifold Reference Chart costs \$16. Upledger Institute International, upledger.com



Sugar Glow Coffee Scrub

Body Blendz

Made with ground coffee beans, olive oil, macadamia oil, jojoba oil and other ingredients, this sugar-based coffee scrub will help you achieve glowing and radiant skin. This product is specially formulated to help target stretch marks, cellulite, acne and eczema. It is cruelty free.

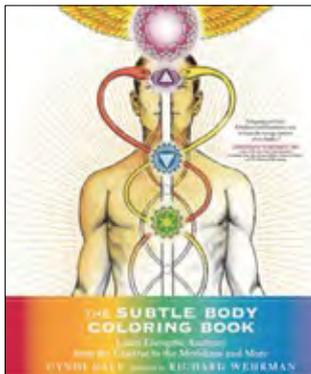
Sugar Glow Coffee Scrub costs \$19.95. Body Blendz, bodyblendz.com

Baby Reflexology Feet

Golden Egg Holistic

The clearly marked zones on these colorful baby feet provide the perfect teaching aid for your infant reflexology classes or as a gift for new parents. They are lightweight at only 1 lb. and are texturized to allow for practicing thumb-walking.

Baby Reflexology Feet costs \$6.72. Golden Egg Holistic, reflexologyhub.com.



The Subtle Body Coloring Book: Learn Energetic Anatomy from the Chakras to the Meridians and More

Sounds True

Coloring is more than just an enjoyable way to learn about the energy systems that govern our health—it's also a fun way to experience energetic anatomy. This coloring book by Cyndi Dale and Richard Wehrman gives readers a deeper level of understanding that can be reached by kinesthetically interacting with images.

The Subtle Body Coloring Book: Learn Energetic Anatomy from the Chakras to the Meridians and More costs \$18.95. Sounds True, soundstrue.com.



Baby Neck Detensor

Avazo Co.

This pillow provides cervical support and helps aid in rehabilitation for a newborn baby when the birthing process has an effect on the baby's neck. It is .25 pounds and is 9 inches wide and 1 inch tall.

Baby Neck Detensor costs \$29. Avazo Co., avazo.com.



Software Solutions for Your Practice

How much of your workday do you spend doing things other than providing massage—things such as filing, billing, scheduling and answering the phone? Those tasks are critical to running a business, but they're not necessarily what you want to be doing.

If you find you're taking too much time handling the day-to-day details of your practice, software might be the solution.

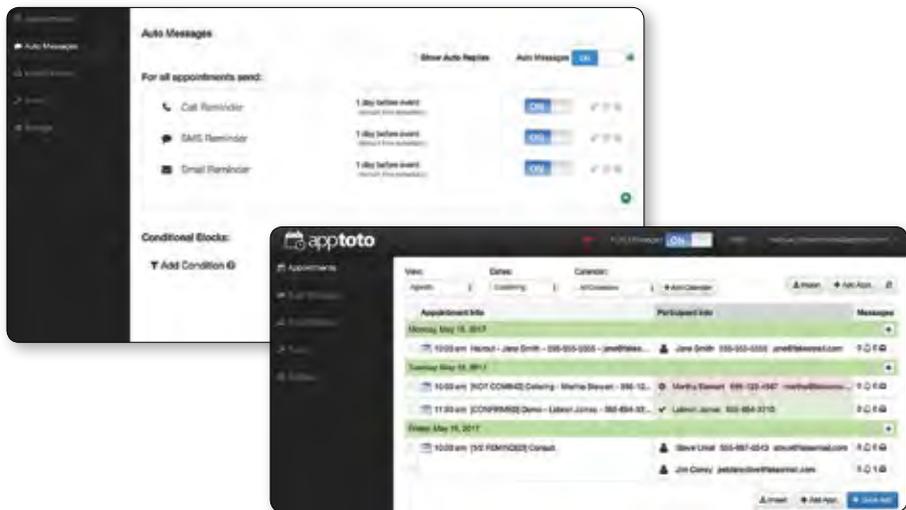
This roundup of business software represents only a handful of the many efficient products out there that can take the place of an administrative staff member, which is especially helpful if you're a solo practitioner without employees.

Use software to book and reschedule sessions, send appointment reminders, file SOAP notes, handle cancellations, follow up with clients you haven't seen in a while, track retail sales, deploy your e-newsletter—and even book a massage for yourself after a hard day's work.



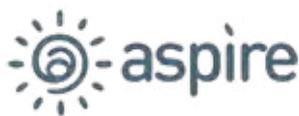
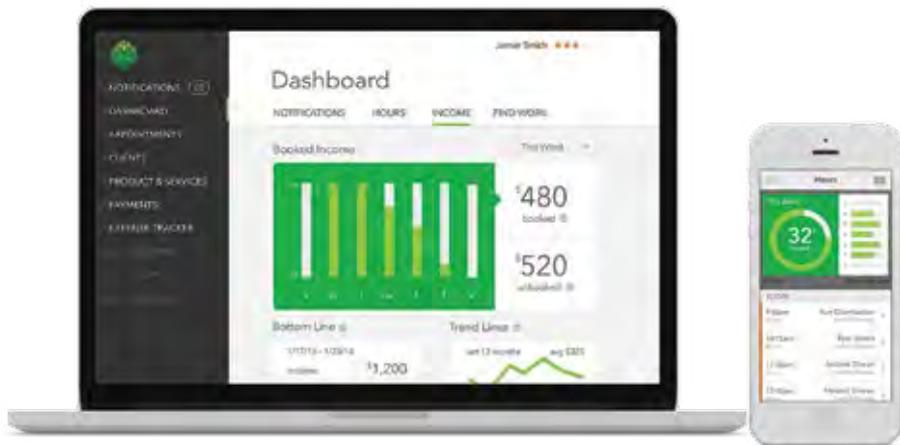
This cloud-based, fully automated service app for business appointment books provides automatic voice, text and email reminders. Using this service can significantly decrease your no-shows. It's compatible with Google Calendar, Outlook Calendar, Office 365, Microsoft Exchange, iCalendar and many other existing calendar products.

AppToto • apptoto.com



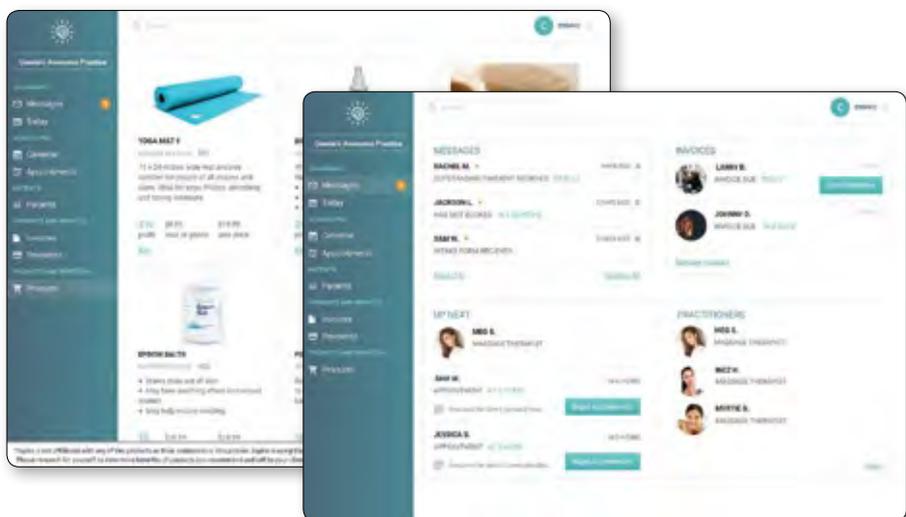
This web-based software, which also works well on mobile devices, features easy-to-use tools to power your massage business, in the office or on the go. It includes online scheduling, payment processing, client management, reports, balance tracking and appointment reminders.

Artichoke • getartichoke.com



With a few simple taps, you can create comprehensive SOAP notes, send clients personalized email reminders and analyze treatment effectiveness in real time. Aspire, now in beta testing, will be available soon for therapists to try out. Engage with clients while creating a clinical experience they will appreciate and see your practice thrive.

Aspire Inc. • myaspireapp.com





Bodywork Buddy is a simple to use online-based massage software specifically tailored to the solo massage therapist. This online scheduling and business management software is accessible from your computer, tablet, or smartphone. It will streamline your practice and make tax time a breeze.

Bodywork Buddy • bodyworkbuddy.com

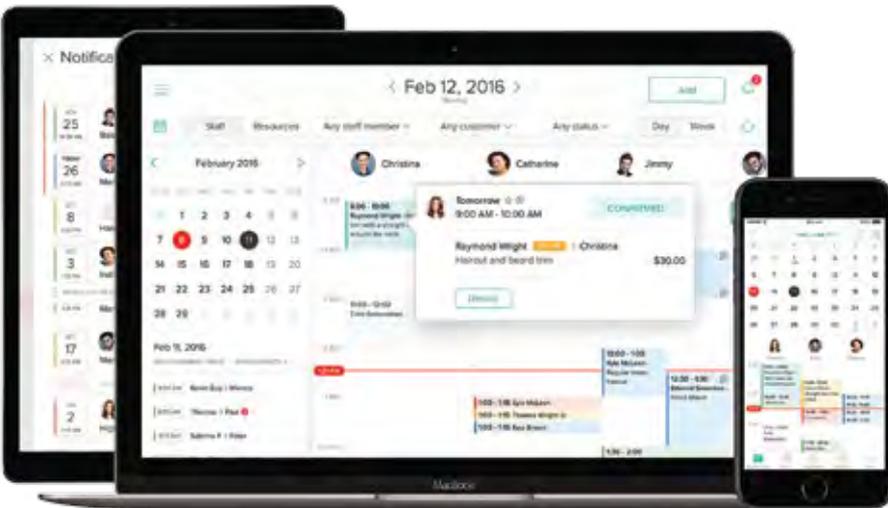


Booksy

Appointments made easy

Using this scheduling software, clients can view your real-time appointment availability and receive immediate confirmation and reminder emails 24/7, and you'll receive notifications of booked appointments. In addition to mobile app access, Booksy Biz features scheduling widgets you can embed into your website and Facebook page.

Booksy • biz.booksy.net



Click4Time

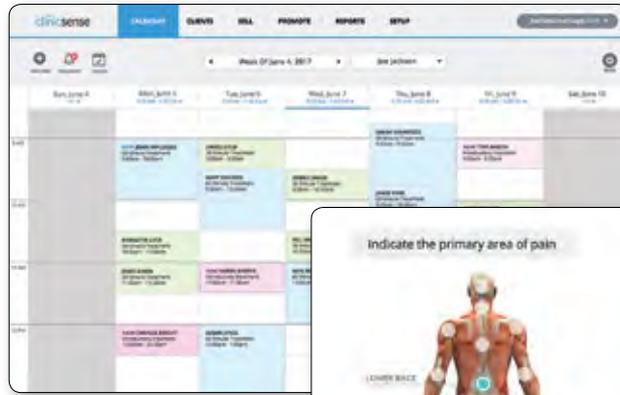
Affordably priced and designed for massage therapists in large or small practices, Click4Time's enterprise online practice management and appointment booking software automates client administration and communications and provides free smartphone apps. Take appointments and payment for service online 24/7; manage client history with electronic intake forms, SOAP notes and e-charting; accept new clients with e-referrals; and send automated reminders by e-mail, SMS or push.

Click4Time Software Inc. • click4time.com



clincsense

This web-based product was created to help reduce the stress of managing a massage therapy business. ClinicSense features easy-to-use SOAP notes, online appointment scheduling, online intake forms, email appointment reminders, and billing and payment tracking.



ClinicSense • clincsense.com



Update your clients' charts quickly and efficiently with this app. It allows clients to document complete pre- and post-session stress, pain and activity scales as well as other information that will help your client keep track of his or her wellness. This app is secure and allows you to simplify your recordkeeping.

Hands Heal EHR • handshealehr.com



This web-based software, which works on Macs, PCs and all mobile devices, can help you manage clients' care through online booking, scheduling, charting and receipts. You can also keep client and staff profiles; create, sell and reload gift cards; print reports; and send appointment notifications. Pricing is based on features selected and the number of practitioners in your business.

Jane Software Inc. • janeapp.com



massagebook

MassageBook offers therapists a free web profile with seamless online booking and scheduling; easy accounting and client-management tools; a simple payment solution for clients booking online; interactive SOAP notes; easy integration into your business' Facebook page; and tools to help your business get found in online searches.

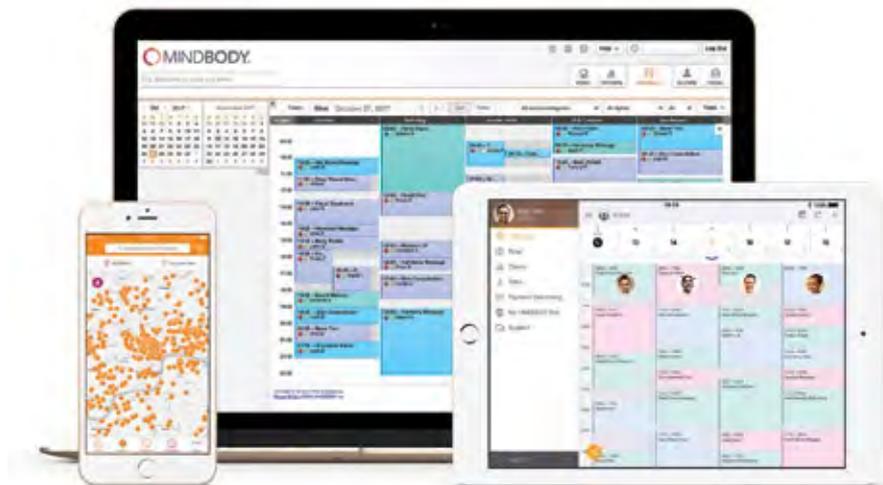
MassageBook • massagebook.com



MINDBODY

This online business management software helps massage therapists leverage technology to streamline business and make their services more accessible to clients. It enables massage therapists to take online appointments, organize staff schedules and payroll, manage client profiles, track sales and run promotions. This program is also available as an app so that customers can book from their mobile device.

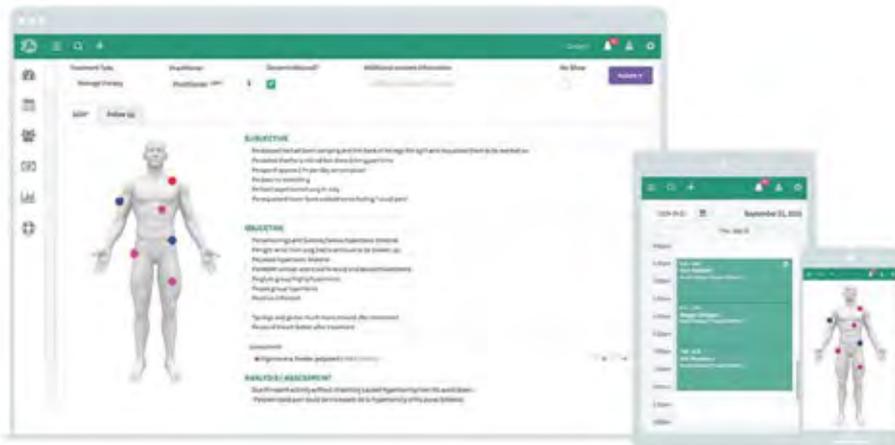
MINDBODY Inc. • mindbodyonline.com



SOAPVAULT

Eliminate paper charts and filing cabinets with SOAP Vault, a web-based charting program specifically designed for massage therapists to create and manage client SOAP notes. Employed with advanced security to keep your data safe, this program can be used anywhere you can connect to the internet. You can also save files to PDF to share with other providers.

SOAP Vault • soapvault.com





Timely is appointment software application for service-based businesses such as beauty and hair salons, massage therapists, health clinics and fitness trainers. With a color-coded calendar, you can easily organize your business, staff and clients. Other great features include 24/7 online booking, appointment reminders, point-of-sale capability, financial reporting, and add-ons for accounting and other functions.



Timely • gettimely.com



For more software to help manage your practice, visit massagemag.com/practicesoftware.

I Choose BOARD CERTIFIED.



“ I choose Board Certified because I value holding myself to a higher standard and strive to integrate massage therapy into the modern health-care system. Higher standards, training, and credentials help us to be respected as a field. It has helped me bring my work of massage for arthritis and chronic pain into hospital settings. My clients see improved outcomes in their pain levels and quality of life, and their doctors are thrilled. Massage therapy is a complementary field and I am honored to be a part of this integration by being Board Certified and educating others. ”

Ann Swanson
M.S., BCTMB,
ERYT500



www.ncbtmb.org | 1-800-296-0664 | info@ncbtmb.org



Are You Covered?

Massage Liability Insurance Protects Your Practice

by Brandi Vesco

From tripping over the entryway to a practice room and breaking a wrist to suffering an allergic reaction to the almond oil in massage lubricant, there are many reasons a client might sue a massage therapist. However, it also seems obvious that the risk of facing a legal claim is far lower for massage therapists than, say, chiropractors or surgeons.



Even though the chances of a client suing his or her massage therapist appear to be rather low, all it takes is one lawsuit to wipe out a massage therapist's finances and practice when massage liability insurance is not in place.

The potentially low risk of facing a lawsuit may tempt some massage therapists to forgo purchasing massage liability insurance, but this may prove to be a poor business decision. Many massage therapists are required—by their state governing board, employer or landlord—to possess liability insurance in order to practice. For all massage therapists getting such coverage can be considered a step not only toward greater financial protection, but also toward increased professionalism.

Here, we cover the main reasons a massage therapist should carry massage liability insurance, along with basic facts about what such coverage tends to entail, and some of the most common reasons clients bring lawsuits against massage therapists.

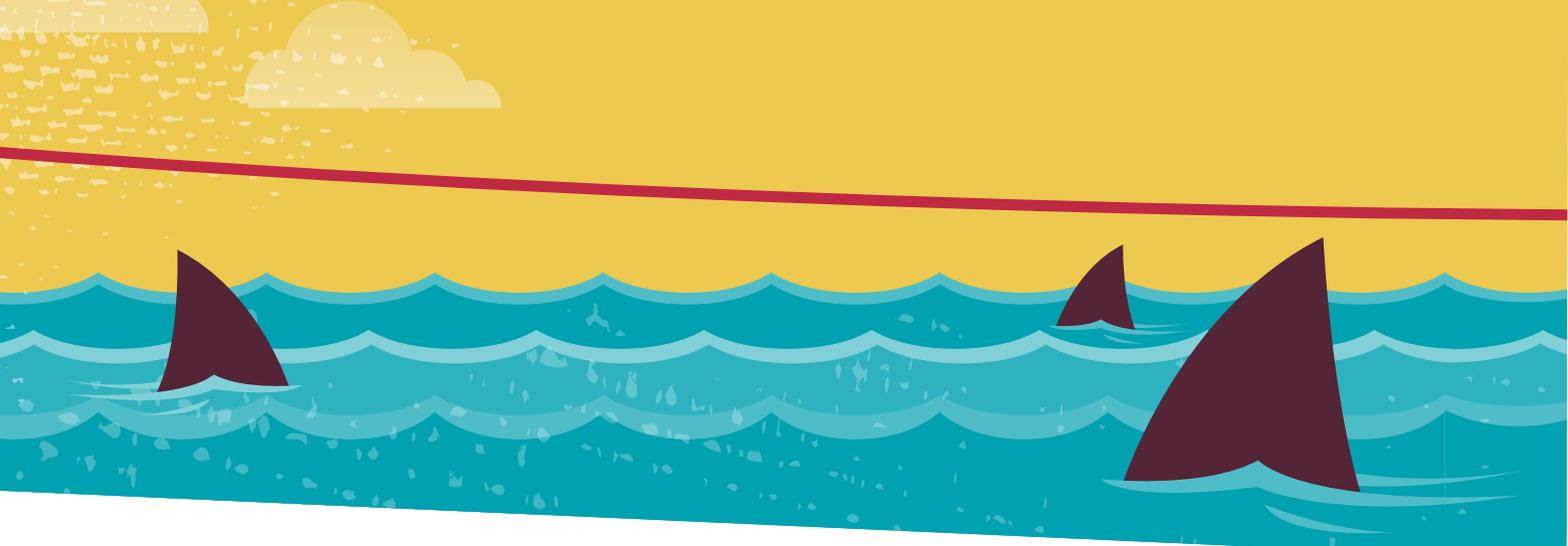
One lawsuit is all it takes

It's challenging to find exact numbers related to how many massage therapists are sued by clients each year; however, by speaking with agencies that offer liability insurance for massage therapists, we can begin to get a clearer picture of the frequency of lawsuits against massage therapists, as well as the nature of these legal claims.

"I've got records and information relative to our program, and the numbers suggest that licensed massage therapists are sued rather infrequently," said J. Kevin McCarthy, managing director of MASSAGE Magazine Insurance Plus. "Both the frequency and the severity of the claims against licensed massage therapists are fairly small, hence the rather modest cost to acquire liability insurance."

Even though the chances of a client suing his or her massage therapist appear to be rather low, all it takes is one lawsuit to wipe out a massage therapist's finances and practice when massage liability insurance is not in place. Also, it is important to keep in mind that all people who practice massage—from massage instructors and students to solo practitioners and employees—are liable when sued and need to protect themselves.

According to McCarthy, the nature of claims coming in through MASSAGE Magazine Insurance Plus, as far as clients suing massage therapists, tend to be evenly divided between professional, or malpractice, liability claims and general liability claims, with a smaller number of claims falling into the category of product liability.



Why clients sue

The kind of coverage massage therapists receive from liability insurance is a good indicator of types of lawsuits practitioners might face. Most massage liability insurance programs include coverage for three kinds of legal claims: general liability claims, professional liability claims and product liability claims.

General liability coverage applies to instances where a client may sue a massage therapist due to an accident that occurred on practice premises, such as tripping on a doormat and ending up with a chipped tooth.

"An example of general liability would be when someone gets hurt, but it's unrelated to the massage," McCarthy said, "such as a slip and fall or a fire that happens with the client on the premises."

Professional liability coverage, also known as malpractice insurance, applies to instances where a client may sue a massage therapist due to damages or injury incurred during the course of a session. Reasons cited in malpractice lawsuits basically boil down to misconduct or lack of ordinary skill.

"In other words, if during the course of a treatment, a massage therapist does something that injures the client, that would fall under malpractice liability," McCarthy said.

Product liability coverage applies to instances where a client may sue a massage therapist due to damage or

injury resulting from use of a product, such as a massage lubricant that causes an allergic reaction or a faulty table that crashes to the ground in the middle of a massage.

Risk rises with no massage liability insurance

Any legal claim from a client is tough to imagine, whether it be for an accident that took place on a massage practice's premises or because of some kind of harm done during the massage or due to a product used in the session room. However, even though these claims appear to be fairly few, they can and do occur. Taking a gamble that no client will ever sue, the practitioner who chooses to forgo liability insurance faces great risk.

"Massage therapists are leaving themselves open to significant financial risk if they don't insure," McCarthy said. "We all know that the income levels of the majority of therapists are fairly modest, and therefore, if they were to get sued, and there was a judgment against them, it could financially ruin their practice and also invade their personal finances as well."

Besides huge financial losses that can occur when an uninsured massage therapist gets sued, another risk of skipping liability insurance is what McCarthy calls the "aggravation factor." Without liability insurance, the individual massage therapist

is responsible for managing the complicated legal process associated with a lawsuit.

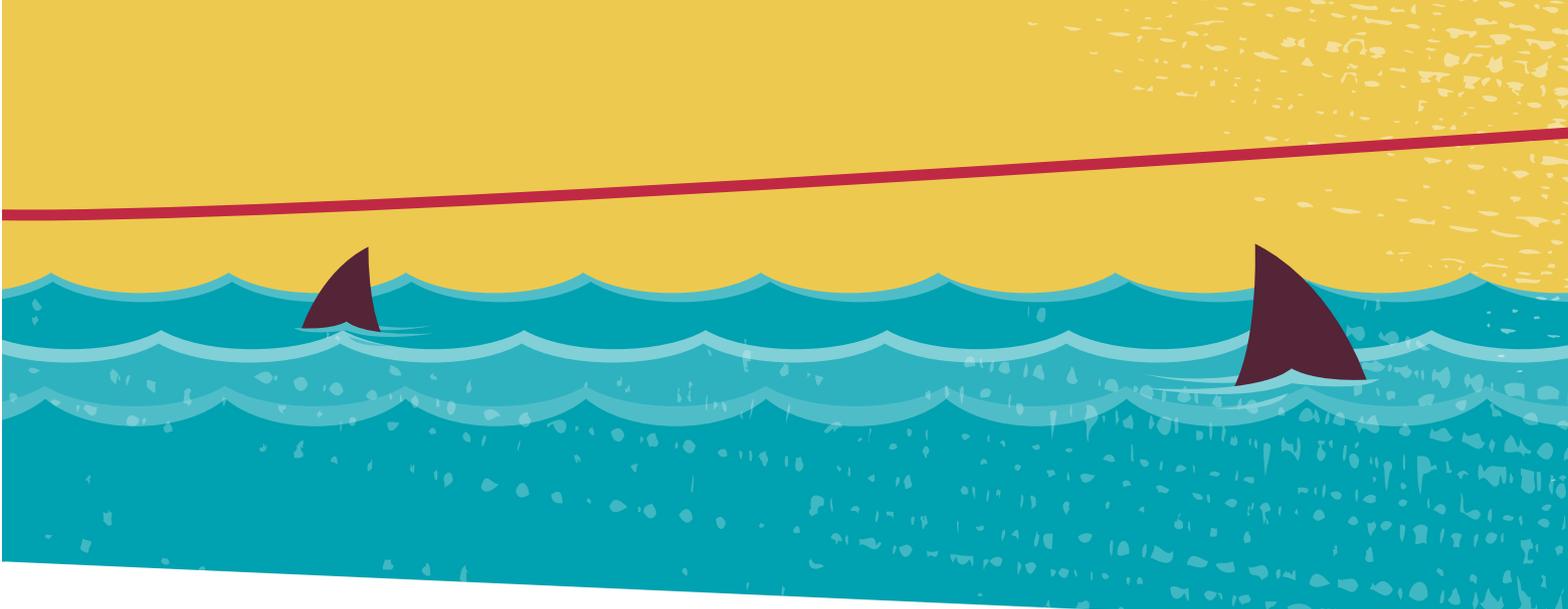
"If I'm sued, and I have insurance, I'm going to report it to the insurance company, and they're going to take over investigating that claim, so it relieves me of the burden of having to take responsibility for handling that," McCarthy said. "Without insurance, you don't have the insurance company as a partner to help you through the legal process and to take the financial responsibility of paying the claim if it's a legitimate claim."

A third risk massage therapists may face if they choose not to purchase liability insurance is potential for a perceived lack of professionalism in the eyes of prospective clients and employers. This is much subtler than the financial risk and aggravation factor associated with forgoing insurance, but it remains an important point.

"I think having liability insurance shows a greater sense of credibility, in that the licensed massage therapist has taken the appropriate business steps to protect their practice," McCarthy said, "and to ensure the consumer will be taken care of in the unlikely event of a mishap."

Understanding what's covered

When you purchase liability insurance, it's necessary to know what's covered under the policy and what kind of



protection you're purchasing. This can help massage therapists better understand the value of investing in liability insurance.

"Generally, it's going to cover the legal expenses associated with the investigation of the claim and the claims management process," McCarthy said. "If there's a judgment, the policy will pay up to the cost of the judgment."

For example, many massage liability programs will cover up to \$2 million per legal claim, and then there will be a larger dollar amount assigned to cover multiple claims made within a one-year period, referred to as annual aggregate coverage.

Besides knowing how much financial coverage a policy offers, it's also important to find out exactly *what* is covered. For example, if you do massage *and* teach yoga, or if you use hot stones in your practice, you will want to find insurance that covers all these services within one policy.

According to McCarthy, more than 350 modalities are covered under MASSAGE Magazine Insurance Plus, and the purchase of a single policy will cover any of these modalities a massage therapist may practice.

Getting greater coverage

Several massage liability insurance programs not only offer protection against client legal claims, but also

offer added coverage for other issues massage therapists may face, such as lost or stolen property, rental damage and identity theft.

"One type of claim we see a lot of is property coverage," McCarthy said. "If some property used in massage practice—a massage table or chair, or a laptop or cell phone used in the context of the business—if that gets stolen, there's coverage for that."

Coverage for damage to rental premises is another form of protection that may be included with liability insurance. For example, if a massage therapist is burning a candle in a rented session room, and that candle gets knocked over and starts a fire, damage to the rental premises would be covered.

The identity theft protection offered by certain insurance programs is not related to the practice of massage, but is provided to reimburse massage therapists for expenses associated with cleaning up their credit if an identity theft occurs.

Insuring students and teachers

Massage schools tend to carry their own liability insurance policies, but this does not mean students and instructors at these schools are safe from potential lawsuits. The rule to remember is anyone who practices massage may be liable when sued, so massage students and teachers need protection, too.

"The school will have a policy, but the students and instructors are not necessarily covered by that program," McCarthy said, "so they could be left out in the cold in the case of a lawsuit."

Most massage students practice within school clinics and out in their community, whereas massage instructors may perform demonstrations, participate in community massage events and also practice on their own outside the school setting. Therefore, the need for liability insurance is present.

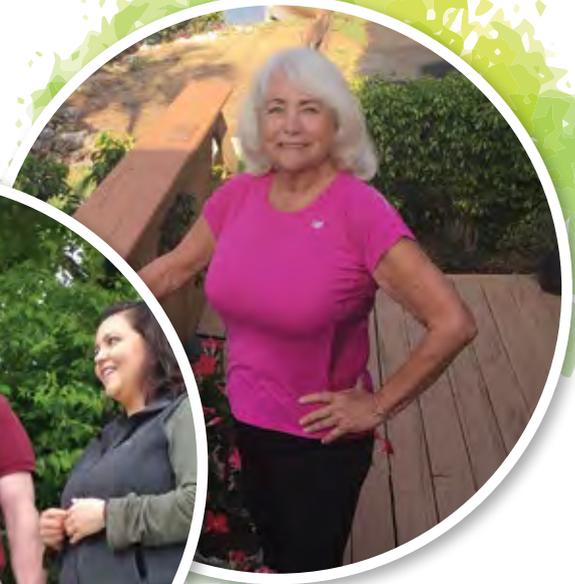
Better safe than sorry

Despite the fact that legal issues among massage therapists may seem rare, it is clear that numerous situations could occur in which a massage therapist would benefit from coverage provided by liability insurance.

Comparing the fairly low annual fees associated with most massage liability programs to the massive amount of coverage these policies provide, it appears the old saying, better safe than sorry, certainly applies. **M**

Brandi Vesco is an avid bodywork client and full-time journalist based in Reno, Nevada. She is a regular contributor to *MASSAGE Magazine*.

Career Longevity



PHOTOS COURTESY/DEBRA KOERNER

Succeed at Every Phase of Your Career

by Debra Koerner

If you have been practicing massage for a while, you know your service can come with a price: burnout. Physical pain, sore thumbs, the inability to perform enough sessions to earn a living and having enough time to recuperate are a few realities massage therapists face.

In order to build a thriving practice, you have to dedicate yourself to personal and business self-care strategies that ensure you will perform at your best and thrive in your career. Some of your massage colleagues are here to help you on this self-care journey.

Massage Student and Massage Mentor

Tori Koerner and Chuck Haehlen, L.M.T., B.C.T.M.B.
Lexington, Kentucky



Chuck Haehlen, L.M.T., B.C.T.M.B. and Tori Koerner

My daughter, Tori Koerner, is a 23-year-old massage student at Lexington Healing Arts Academy in Lexington, Kentucky. Even as a student, it is important that Tori begins to practice self-care techniques that will ensure she stays healthy. She has found a massage mentor, Chuck Haehlen, 64, who has been instrumental in helping her as she begins her career in massage.

Having suffered from migraines since she was a teenager and finding that massage helped alleviate her symptoms, Tori made the decision to become a massage therapist so she could help others. For her, it is not just a career path, it's a passion, and she knows it's what she wants to do with her life.

Chuck received his massage license in 2008 after retiring from the U.S. Postal Service. In fact, he was our mailman and was influenced by the massage mail we received. He was fortunate the teachers and education he received early in his career placed a strong focus on career longevity, and he has not experienced any symptoms of burnout.

Tori admitted she has not heard much about burnout. She did say her teachers want her to use her arms and elbows so she can save her hands—but because of what she's learned from Chuck, she knows she will burn out quickly if she doesn't take care of herself and follow proper body mechanics.

Establishing a mentor early in a massage career can be vital in sustaining a practitioner through challenging times. Chuck works with University of Kentucky athletes, has his own practice and is a full-time caregiver for his young granddaughter. He still finds time to work with Tori to help her develop.

"I keep myself available for Tori and try to be responsive to her questions while not interfering with the educational process," he explained. "I reinforce for her the importance of body mechanics and help her fine-tune her techniques."

Chuck said that education is key to success in the massage field.

"I take over 100 hours each year of continuing education, and while I know everyone cannot do this, I encourage therapists to keep learning and focus as much as you can on body mechanics," he said.

Tori shared a personal story about their connection: "Chuck has been my surrogate dad for a long time and he has personally helped me in developing my skills in becoming a massage therapist. He is someone I call with questions about the profession. He has shown me some great tricks to help benefit a client if they are looking for specific help with things I personally am unsure about. He has been great in both roles, and I am so thankful to have him in my life. He is my Yoda, and I am his Luke Skywalker."

Chuck said he hopes when Tori starts her career, she finds a good work environment that offers a support system for self-care and client concerns.

Tori is not sure yet where she wants to work in the future, but she has made the following commitments:

I will be aware of my body mechanics and make sure to do the work correctly.

I will use as many non-harmful techniques as possible, utilizing my other tools instead of my thumbs, like my elbows and forearms.

I will take yoga classes to maintain flexibility and movement; the stronger my core is the better my flow is going to be as a therapist.

The Mid-Career Massage Therapist

Benjamin "Ben" Stone, L.M.T.
Lincoln, Nebraska



Left to Right: Heather Hall, LMT Employee; Ben Stone LMT, BCTMB (Owner at Simple Wellness Massage); Tonia Hunter LMT, Business Partner/Owner at Simple Wellness Massage

Five years into his massage career, Ben Stone was ready to quit. Not only did his thumbs hurt, he was having a hard time making ends meet. After attending a body mechanics and no-thumbs deep tissue workshop, he left inspired. Ben decided to try those practices to make his massage career work.

His commitment expanded beyond this specific focus on massage and into his overall health. A few years ago, he and his girlfriend realized they both needed to lose weight and become healthier. They started by drinking a gallon of water each day and tracking their food intake. Seeing progress, they began to minimize processed foods and committed to a regular fitness routine. He said they focused on the quality of their actions and tried to make choices they could adhere to for the rest of their journey.

Today, having lost and kept off 65 pounds and thriving in his massage practice, Ben still sticks to regular exercise and receives massage regularly. Throughout the day, he practices mindfulness and meditation. These efforts, and his renewed attention to career longevity, allow him to continue to do up to 25 deep tissue massages each week.

He hopes his story of well-being and weight loss can inspire others. "My thumbs do not hurt anymore and I only use them for palpation," he said. "It is possible to do deeper work and not blow out your thumbs."

Earn your specialty certificate in Sports Massage

The 30 credit-hour AMTA/NCBTMB Sports Massage Specialty Certificate Program is perfect for newer massage therapy practitioners as an overview of sports massage, while still being detailed enough to give veteran massage therapists a refresher on current science and settings for sports massage.

Online Courses: Expand your skill set conveniently online with six rigorously vetted sports massage courses on topics such as the science of athletics, what to expect at athletic events, athlete care and more.

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Another aspect of Ben's growth has been his willingness to learn more about the business of massage. He recently made the move to open his own center and now contracts other therapists.

"Part of the process of learning is being grateful for both failures and triumphs, as they both teach valuable lessons," Ben said. He recognizes he will have to continue to learn more about business and looks forward to this added responsibility.

Ben has some advice for massage therapists: "I would encourage practitioners to work smarter, not harder, and to focus on the type of massage they enjoy the most. Most importantly, get regular massage to stay healthy."

The Seasoned Massage Therapist

Gayle "Mya" Breman, L.C.S.W., L.M.T., C.S.T.-D.
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida



Gayle "Mya" Breman, L.C.S.W., L.M.T., C.S.T.-D.

When Mya Breman began practicing massage, she had already been immersed in CranioSacral Therapy as the marketing director for The Upledger Institute since 1988. She decided to attend massage school to further her knowledge of noninvasive therapies and in 2003 she began practicing massage—first treating clients very traditionally

and then, as she evolved, she began to hone her niche and started practicing primarily CranioSacral Therapy.

At 72, Mya is committed to staying healthy with a regular routine of exercise. Whether it's working out in the pool or walking three miles several times a week, she keeps moving. For her, this creates more energy and clarity of mind.

"Movement is life, and if I have fallen off and I'm not practicing what I preach, I try to get back on track by eating healthy foods and drinking lots of water each day," she said.

Mya's practice is very unique in that she also holds a license as a clinical social worker and has created her own branded practice called BodyPsychology.

"I blend noninvasive therapies such as CranioSacral, lymphatic, visceral [manipulation] and Zero Balancing therapies along with everything I've learned as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I love working with clients in this way and helping them find some form of resolution in their body, mind, emotion or spirit," she said. "This gentle, hands-on blending of work keeps me from burning out as it's always new and exciting to me."

Focusing on her long-term health by performing less active work, she is able to continue treating about 20 clients each week. Mya looks forward to her future in the massage field, wherever that might take her.

"I believe I can do this gentle, intelligent work for as long as I can sit in a chair and have my wits about me," she said. "While I love and respect traditional manual massage therapy, it can take a toll on the body."

Mya exemplifies the potential to thrive in a massage career for many years. "Explore less vigorous forms of massage and always be inspired and energized by your work," she suggested. "Listen to your inner physician and trust your gut when it comes to how you practice massage."

Stay Healthy

As a massage therapist, you chose a path that is dedicated to helping others. On this journey, ensure you place as much effort into taking care of yourself. The world needs your healthy touch now more than ever. **M**

Debra Koerner is the co-founder of imassage Inc. (imassageinc.com), a massage education and consulting firm dedicated to helping therapists extend their careers. A wellness business consultant and writer, Koerner is also the author of *Success from the Start*, a text for massage schools. imassage's new video, *Intelligent Deep Tissue Massage* includes signature no-thumbs deep tissue techniques, body mechanics and client experience training.

Massage Decreases Anxiety Among Hospitalized Children

Hospitalized children who received slow-stroke back massage three times a day for three days experienced a significant decrease in anxiety, according to recent research.

The study, “The Effectiveness of Slow-Stroke Back Massage on Hospitalization Anxiety and Physiological Parameters in School-Age Children: A Randomized Clinical Trial Study,” involved 80 hospitalized children ages 9 to 12.

The children were randomly divided into either the massage group or the control group. Those in the massage

group received 15 to 20 minutes of slow-stroke back massage three times a day on the second, third and fourth days of hospitalization. The massage was administered using sesame oil as the lubricant and with the subject in the prone position.

“Stroking massage involves a soft motion of the hand on the skin in such a way that the hand slides on the skin and does not result in deep muscle movement,” state the study’s authors. “Slow-stroke back massage uses this slow stroke.”

The main outcome measure in this study was anxiety, which was assessed via the state-trait anxiety inventory for children, blood pressure, pulse rate and respiratory rate. Baseline assessments of these outcome measures occurred on the second day of hospitalization, one hour before the first massage session.

These outcome measures were evaluated again at 8 p.m. on the second, third and fourth days of hospitalization. On the fifth day of hospitalization, after the massage intervention had ended, the outcome measures were assessed for the last time at 9 a.m.

Results of the research revealed a significant improvement in systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and pulse rate among children in the massage group on the fifth day of the study as compared to baseline. State anxiety scores on the state-trait anxiety inventory for children were lower among children in the massage group on the fifth day as well. No such changes were observed among subjects in the control group.

“The results suggest that massage reduced hospitalization anxiety, [pulse rate] and [blood pressure],” state the study’s authors. “Therefore, we propose that nurses can use massage to reduce anxiety in school-age children in the hospital. This method has no side effects and is easily applicable.”

Authors: Alia Jalalodini, Manijeh Nourian, Kiarash Saatchi, Amir Kavousi and Mahnaz Ghaljeh.

Sources: Community Nursing Research Center, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran; and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran. Originally published online in August 2016 in *Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal*, 18(11).

CST Reduces Chronic Neck Pain

Eight weekly 45-minute sessions of craniosacral therapy (CST) resulted in a significant decrease in pain intensity among people with chronic nonspecific neck pain immediately after the eight-week intervention period and also three months later, according to recent research.

The study, “Craniosacral Therapy for the Treatment of Chronic Neck Pain: A Randomized Sham-controlled Trial,” involved 54 people with chronic nonspecific neck pain. These subjects were randomly assigned to either eight weekly 45-minute sessions of a sham treatment that consisted of light touch and body awareness instructions or eight weekly 45-minute sessions of CST.

“The CST protocol was designed to release restrictions of the cranium and the spine up to the pelvis and the sacrum using standardized application of gentle fascial traction, release, and unwinding techniques in accordance with the respective palpated restrictions,” state the study’s authors. “If indicated, dialog techniques for increasing body awareness and assisting the process of somato-emotional release were used.”

The main outcome measure in this study was the intensity of pain as rated on a visual analog scale. Secondary outcome measures included pain upon movement, pressure-pain sensitivity, functional disability, health-related quality of life, anxiety, body awareness and subjects’ global impression of improvement, among others.

Primary and secondary outcome measures were assessed before and after the eight-week intervention period, as well as three months later at week 20. Results of the research revealed a significant improvement in pain intensity among subjects who received CST as compared to those who received sham treatment, both at week eight and at week 20.

Subjects who received CST also showed significant improvements in pain upon movement, functional disability, physical quality of life and anxiety, as well as their own global impression of improvement, both at week eight and at week 20, compared to subjects who received sham treatment. Measures of pressure-pain sensitivity and

body awareness were significantly improved in the CST group as compared to the sham group at week eight but not at week 20.

“CST was shown to be specifically effective and safe in reducing neck pain intensity and may improve the functional disability and the quality of life up to three months after the intervention,” conclude the study’s authors. “Particularly in chronic and recurrent neck pain, CST may be a worthwhile treatment option in addition to standard medical care.” 

Authors: Heidemarie Haller, Romy Lauche, Holger Cramer, Thomas Rampp, Felix Saha, Thomas Ostermann and Gustav Dobos.

Sources: Department of Internal and Integrative Medicine, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany; Department of Psychology, Witten/Herdecke University, Germany; and Australian Research Centre in Complementary and Integrative Medicine, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. Originally published in May 2016 in the *Clinical Journal of Pain*, 32(5), 441-449.



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Ann Swanson
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2017

Touch for Health Kinesiology Association

Conference
July 11–14
Kansas City, Missouri
touchforhealth.us

Alliance for Massage Therapy Education

Educational Congress
July 27–29
Tucson, Arizona
afmte.org

Alliance of International Aromatherapists

Conference
Aug. 3–6
Rutgers, New Jersey
alliance-aromatherapists.org

Healing Beyond Borders

Energy Healing Conference
Aug. 17–20
Westminster, Colorado
healingbeyondborders.org

The Feldenkrais Method

Conference
Aug. 23–27
Seattle, Washington
feldenkrais.com

Integrative Medicine for the Underserved

Conference
Aug. 24–26
Chicago, Illinois
im4us.org

International Polarity Education Alliance

Gathering
Sept. 8–12
Berlin, Germany
polarityeducation.org

American Massage Therapy Association

National Convention
Sept. 14–16
Pasadena, California
amtamassage.org

RockStock

Movement Summit
Sept. 22–23
Huntington Beach, California
rocktape.com/rockstock

Canadian Massage

Conference
Sept. 28–Oct. 1
Burlington, Ontario, Canada
oneconcept.com

Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards

Annual Meeting
Sept. 29–30
Tampa, Florida
fsmtb.org

Hawaiian Lomilomi Association

Conference
Sept. 29–Oct. 3
Hilo, Hawaii
lomilomi.org

Academy of Integrative Health & Medicine

Annual Conference
Oct. 22–25
San Diego, California
aih.org

International SPA Association

Conference & Expo
Oct. 16–18
Las Vegas, Nevada
experienceispa.com

International Council of Reflexologists

Conference
Oct. 19–22
Taitung, Taiwan
icr-reflexology.org

National Association of Myofascial Trigger-Point Therapists

Annual Conference
Oct. 25–29
Rosemont, Illinois
myofascialtherapy.org

Alexander Technique International

Annual Meeting
Oct. 29–Nov. 2
Seattle, Washington
ati-net.com

Society for Integrative Oncology

International Conference
Nov. 12–14
Chicago, Illinois
integrativeonc.org

2018

San Diego Pain Summit

Feb. 6–11, 2018
San Diego, California
sandiegopainsummit.com

Diversified Business Communications Integrative Healthcare Symposium

Annual Conference
Feb. 22–24, 2018
New York, New York
ihSYMPOSIUM.COM

Society for Oncology Massage

Oncology Massage
Healing Summit
April 27–28, 2018
Bloomington, Minnesota
s4om.org

Reflexology Association of America

Conference
April 27–29, 2018
Chicago, Illinois
reflexology-usa.org

Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine and Health

Congress
May 6–11, 2018
Baltimore, Maryland
imconsortium.org

World Massage Festival

Aug 6–9, 2018
Las Vegas, Nevada
worldmassagefestival.com

Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy Association of North America

Breath of Life Conference
Sept. 5–9, 2018
Reisterstown, Maryland
craniosacraltherapy.org

International SPA Association

Conference & Expo
Sept. 24–26, 2018
Phoenix, Arizona
experienceispa.com

National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy

The World of Aromatherapy VIII
Conference
Oct. 24–27, 2018
Salt Lake City, Utah
nahaconference.com

Fascia Research Congress

Fifth Annual
Nov. 14–15, 2018
Berlin, Germany
fasciacongress.org

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