

Massage Therapists

SOC: 31-9011 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$57,950

Median Salary

168,000

Employment

+15.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Postsecondary

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Medium Risk - 48.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job has some routine elements but still requires human judgment and interaction.

■■ Work-Life Balance

9.6/10 - Excellent work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	5.8/10	Investigative	6.0/10
Artistic	4.4/10	Social	8.4/10
Enterprising	4.6/10	Conventional	7.4/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Decision-making skills, Empathy, Integrity, Interpersonal skills, Physical stamina, Physical strength and dexterity, Time-management skills

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Massage Therapists are healthcare and wellness professionals who use **therapeutic touch and manual techniques** to relieve pain, reduce stress, improve circulation, and support overall physical and mental well-being. They work with clients to address muscle tension, injuries, and chronic conditions while promoting relaxation and recovery. Their role blends clinical knowledge with personalized care in a wide range of wellness and healthcare settings.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy helping others feel better, working hands-on, and supporting holistic health.

What Do Massage Therapists Do?

Massage therapists assess clients' needs and apply appropriate techniques to support health and comfort. Their responsibilities focus on safety, effectiveness, and client well-being.

Common responsibilities include:

- Evaluating clients' health histories and treatment goals
- Applying massage techniques to muscles and soft tissues
- Adjusting pressure and methods based on client feedback
- Maintaining a clean, safe, and calming treatment environment
- Documenting sessions and client progress
- Educating clients on stretching, posture, or self-care
- Following professional ethics and hygiene standards

Types of Massage Therapy

Massage therapists may specialize in one or more techniques or client populations:

- Swedish Massage: Focuses on relaxation and stress relief.
- Deep Tissue Massage: Targets chronic muscle tension and pain.
- Sports Massage: Supports athletic performance and injury recovery.
- Medical or Clinical Massage: Works alongside healthcare providers.
- Prenatal Massage: Supports comfort during pregnancy.
- Reflexology and Specialized Techniques: Focus on specific pressure points.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Massage therapists combine physical skill with interpersonal awareness.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Licensure Pathway

Becoming a massage therapist requires formal training and licensure:

- Postsecondary Massage Therapy Program: Typically 500–1,000+ hours of instruction
- Licensing Examination: Required in most states
- State Licensure or Certification: Legal requirement to practice
- Continuing Education: Required to maintain licensure and learn new techniques
- Professional Memberships (optional): Support credibility and networking

Licensing requirements vary by state and country.

Where Do Massage Therapists Work?

Massage therapists are employed across healthcare and wellness environments:

- Spas and Wellness Centers
- Chiropractic and Physical Therapy Clinics
- Hospitals and Medical Offices
- Sports and Fitness Facilities
- Hotels, Resorts, and Cruise Ships
- Self-Employed or Private Practices

Work schedules may include evenings, weekends, or flexible hours.

How Much Do Massage Therapists Earn?

Earnings vary based on location, setting, and client base:

- Entry-Level Therapists: Typically earn hourly wages or per-session fees
- Experienced or Specialized Therapists: Often earn higher pay with repeat clientele
- Self-Employed Therapists: Income depends on scheduling and demand

Compensation may include tips or package pricing.

Is This Career Difficult?

Massage therapy is physically demanding and requires strong body mechanics. Therapists must manage physical strain, emotional boundaries, and client expectations. The challenge lies in delivering consistent, high-quality care while protecting one's own health and well-being.

Who Should Consider Becoming a Massage Therapist?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy hands-on healing work
- Want to help people manage pain and stress
- Are comfortable working one-on-one with clients
- Prefer flexible or self-directed schedules
- Value wellness, balance, and holistic health

How to Prepare Early

- Study anatomy, biology, or health sciences
- Practice good posture and body mechanics
- Develop communication and interpersonal skills
- Explore wellness or fitness-related experiences
- Research accredited massage therapy programs

Massage therapists promote healing and relaxation through skilled, compassionate touch, helping clients improve physical comfort, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being.