



amta
american massage therapy association™

WORKING IN A FRANCHISE ENVIRONMENT

AMTA CAREER SUCCESS SERIES

contents

WHAT TO EXPECT 4

WHAT'S EXPECTED OF YOU 8

BENEFITS & WAGES 10

EMPLOYMENT & INDUSTRY OUTLOOK 13

MORE RESOURCES 14

WORKING IN A
**FRANCHISE
ENVIRONMENT**

WHAT TO EXPECT

It's no secret that massage therapy chains and franchises are on the rise. In fact, seven percent of consumers reported receiving their last massage at a national massage chain in 2018. And, as franchises continue to offer both cost and time-effective solutions for busy consumers, this figure is expected to grow.

Throughout this guide, you will find information that will help you determine if practicing in a franchise setting might be a career option for you. As you'll learn, getting your foot in the door at a franchise could lead to career opportunities you never even considered a possibility when you registered for your first massage class.

GETTING THE JOB

The Right Resume:

When it comes to your resume, one size doesn't always fit all. Consider your resume the chance to tell a prospective employer your story. For a position in a franchise, you will want to emphasize any experience you have that involved working directly with clients and within a structured, professional environment. As always, include any special certificates you hold and the continuing education courses that you have completed. Beyond simply education and work experience, you should also consider discussing what you feel are your greatest strengths, as well as what you hope to achieve.

Also, if you're just getting started and are less familiar with writing a resume, think of any unique qualities you can highlight and the life experiences that help shape you as a person and massage therapist. Share your experiences more broadly so potential employers can get a more complete picture of who you are as both a person and a massage therapist. AMTA's Job Bank can even help you build your first resume.

Don't forget to proofread your resume for errors and typos before applying to any position. Have a friend, colleague or mentor look over your resume to help ensure there are no errors or glaring omissions. Better yet, ask a peer who has worked within a franchise for tips on what will make your application stand out.

“The best resumes tell me more than where they've worked—they tell me what applicants want to accomplish, where they feel their biggest strengths are, where they want to go and what they hope to accomplish on their career journey. When I see these things in a resume, it makes for a much richer and deeper conversation in the interview.”

“ Highlight your uniqueness. Your life experiences help shape who you are as a person and as a massage therapist. Sharing your experiences more broadly, not just the things that are obviously and directly related to massage, provides a much more complete picture of who you are and what makes you unique. ”



Remember that the interview is a two-way street. You'll certainly be answering a lot of questions, but take the opportunity to ask some, too, to find out if it's the right fit for you. And, as you're doing your practical, remember the interactions you would normally have with a client before the massage. Ask questions to help you better customize the experience and showcase your communication skills as well as your practical skills.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS:

What should you wear?

Knowing what to anticipate at an interview will help alleviate some of your nerves. Ask beforehand if you'll be expected to provide a hands-on demonstration as part of the process. Business casual is a minimum for a massage therapist. Dress professionally, but allow for freedom of movement.

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ANSWER:

- > *What are your strengths?*
- > *What areas would you describe as things you could improve on and what are you currently doing to work on those areas?*
- > *What type of management style do you prefer?*
- > *What has worked best for you in the past?*
- > *Describe a time you had to deal with a difficult client and explain how you handled it.*
- > *How many massages are you comfortable providing in a day?*
- > *Why, specifically, do you want to work at this company?*

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER:

- > *How would you describe the culture at this company?*
- > *What are some skills you're looking for that aren't listed in the job description?*
- > *What kind of training would be available to me?*
- > *What do you like best about working for this company?*

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

In addition to your massage therapy expertise and certificates, strong communication skills are required to be successful in any environment. You should be able to communicate effectively with your supervisor, fellow employees and, most importantly, your clients. Your supervisor is going to expect you to be confident conversing with your client and developing a massage treatment plan based on your client's intake questions. Hopefully, you have taken advantage of the business and communication classes offered through AMTA or your massage therapy school.

One of the biggest benefits of the franchise environment—consistent clients—also means that time management is going to be imperative. You might be tempted to focus more time on a client you think might be better helped by a little extra time on your table, but in order to maintain the schedule and be respectful of the next client's time, you need to be able to plan your sessions effectively.

Additionally, if your employer offers spa services, there may be an opportunity to diversify your skill set to include scrubs and more. Coverage for these services may be available in your AMTA professional and general liability policy. Practicing and mastering different techniques is one step toward a balanced self-care regimen.

FRANCHISE ENVIRONMENT

You won't need to worry about marketing, finding referrals, scheduling or getting clients in the door as a franchise massage therapist. Therefore, you can focus solely on massage and your clients—not the paperwork, scheduling and other tasks that fall on the shoulders of a sole practitioner. The franchise will generally provide all of the supplies you need. And, working with a team of other massage therapists can provide a sense of community and a shared vision.

The franchise environment can also offer you the unique opportunity to diversify your expertise and learn from massage therapists who come from a vast array of backgrounds. You'll often work with the same clients, too, so will be able to see their progress through massage sessions. And, franchises with membership options aid in reinforcing an idea you're already confident sharing: that regular massage is essential to overall health and wellness.

This environment focuses on helping clients feel their best and maintain their health and well-being, so massage therapists have the freedom to customize massage sessions according to the client's needs. Yes, policies and protocols are in place in the franchise environment to create a safe space that protects both massage therapists and clients, but you'll also be able to use your own knowledge and expertise—of massage therapy and the clients you work with—to develop massage sessions that best address the issues your clients are experiencing.

THE FRANCHISE MODEL

Because many franchises only offer massage and other limited services, they decrease overhead costs and can often provide massage at a lower price point than their competitors. Today's consumers are more apt to compare costs of all services, so it is anticipated that this model will attract more customers in the near future. Depending on the franchise and your own personal ambition, the franchise model might also open the possibility for you to become the owner of your own franchise location.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPTIONS

A passion for continuing education is expected in most work environments and vital to your continued relevance as a massage therapist. Many franchises will provide the opportunity to have your continuing education expenses paid for or reimbursed. Check out courses offered at the AMTA National Convention, AMTA's Online CE Courses or seminars offered through your local chapter.

Questions to Consider:

Is being part of a team of other employees the right professional setting for me? **How many clients am I comfortable seeing each day? In a week?** Do I tend to excel when working within a more structured environment? **Am I comfortable with the busy pace that the franchise environment presents?**

WHAT'S EXPECTED OF YOU

“The personalized scheduling of breaks is really important. We want therapists to have long, healthy, productive careers, so it’s important to us that they’re getting enough break time at the right times for them throughout their day so they can feel their best physically and mentally.”

EDUCATION NEEDED

In 2018, the average amount of initial training held by massage therapists was 667 hours. In general, franchise massage therapists are expected to have a basic massage therapy skill-set along with a professional attitude. It’s important to consider the licensing rules for the state in which you desire to practice, too. Check out AMTA’s website for resources on licensing requirements for individual states.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

The desire to work as part of a team, confidence and communication skills are all key qualities that a franchise owner will look for in potential employees. Communicating effectively and efficiently with fellow employees, management and clients is imperative to the day-to-day operational success of a franchise.

You also need to be very aware of the importance of taking care of yourself. In the franchise environment, you’ll often be able to work as much as you want, so be cautious about overbooking and give yourself time to build stamina.

In addition to understanding the franchise model, you’ll want to do some research on the franchise’s specific brand. Read what the franchise’s website has to say about the

client experience they are trying to create. You might even consider visiting a location to get an idea of how the franchise operates from a client’s perspective.

SCHEDULE EXPECTATIONS

You will likely be asked how many massages you are comfortable performing per week at your interview. The franchise model ensures that you will spend most of your time at work practicing what you were trained to do—massage. The massage therapists we spoke to reported doing approximately 6 to 6.5 hours of hands-on massage per work day, broken up by a lunch break and two shorter breaks.

In many franchise environments, these shorter breaks can be individualized, giving massage therapists the ability to schedule these breaks for times during the day that work best for their own needs. For example, one massage therapist we spoke with likes to perform at least two massages before she takes her first break.

Again, this is when the self-care practices you learned while in school or through your continuing education courses come into play. Think about arriving 30 minutes before your shift so you have adequate time to prepare



your massage room, discuss the plans for the day with your manager and front desk staff, review client notes and do a proper warm up. When your day is finished, you might find icing your forearms or doing a cool down helps close out your day.

From time to time, you may also be expected to fill in for a sick massage therapist or volunteer to adjust your schedule—being a flexible employee will help you stand out in any team-environment.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many massage therapists have wondered, is it ethical to promote my personal business while working and being compensated by another business? Some owners may not see it as a conflict while others have a “no compete clause” or other agreements. Check your employment agreement or your contract before promoting an outside practice, business or product to the clients you see.

Questions to Consider:

Do I fit the general requirements that franchise owners and supervisors are looking for in their employees? **Am I comfortable with someone else scheduling my appointments as well as my weekly schedule?** Would exposure to many different types of clients help me in reaching my overall career goals?

BENEFITS & WAGES

AVERAGE INDUSTRY WAGES

On average, massage therapists report earning \$64.59 per hour. That includes a \$52.29 average hourly rate and an average tip of \$12.30. Massage therapists working in franchise environments reported earning \$36.66 per hour.

GRATUITIES

On average, tip amount is \$10.73. Tips for massage therapists working in franchise settings remain more generous than the average at \$15.26. However, clients are tipping more frequently. In 2018, 41 percent of massage therapists reported receiving tips 80-100 percent of the time compared to just 30 percent in 2011. Gratuities should be graciously appreciated, but never expected.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A diversified skill-set, strong communications background and a well-documented work history can help open many doors for you. Being exposed to new skills and techniques and working alongside other massage therapists in a team environment will help prepare you to take your career wherever you want to go, whether that might be owning your own franchise one day or starting your own practice.

BENEFITS

Some franchises offer their full-time employees a benefits package or other perks, such as free chiropractic visits and free monthly massage. Benefits packages can include health insurance benefits and paid vacation and sick time. In 2016, 38 percent of massage therapists reported receiving health benefits from their employers.

You might find taking a big-picture approach to benefits beneficial when thinking about whether or not the franchise environment is right for you. Don't just compare net pay per service, as that doesn't really account for the full scope of benefits the franchise environment offers, some of which are business-related. Take a holistic approach and spend time considering what other settings might cost you in terms of time, expense, flexibility and support. These things might not show up in a paycheck, but the cost of doing your own marketing and accounting, for example, as well as the loss of income from injury, are very real and should be a part of your decision-making process.

“ The formal and informal learning that massage therapists have access to is something that's very unique to the franchise massage setting. Being able to work alongside lots of other therapists with different backgrounds and different experiences proves to be an invaluable learning experience for a lot of people, and massage therapists find that being a part of a small community of practice helps them learn and grow and makes everyone better. ”



“ A lot of therapists view themselves as very independent, and working as part of a team is a new experience. To thrive in this environment, you have to be a team player. When you’re passionate about massage, it’s easy to put your focus completely on helping your clients. The most successful therapists in the franchise environment are able to apply that same desire to help to their peers. And when the entire team in a location trusts, respects and genuinely wants to help one another, the culture flourishes and everyone, including clients, benefits. ”

Others learn that concentrating on a specific condition or modality is the most rewarding career move for them. Through seeing a diverse, steady set of clients, these therapists are able to find their niche and progress within the profession.

Strong teamwork skills, business savvy and a good work ethic will help you get ahead in any environment. No matter which direction you decide to pursue, your time spent practicing within a franchise setting can have a positive impact on future job prospects.

Newly graduated or still in massage therapy school?

The good news is that massage schools are doing more than ever to help new massage

therapists find jobs. In 2018, roughly 25 percent of schools reported having a formal placement program for graduates. Schools with formal placement programs successfully placed more than 80 percent of their graduates in massage therapy positions. The AMTA Job Bank is another great resource for job seekers: AMTA members can search positions and post resumes for free.

A diversified skill-set, strong communications background and a well-documented work history can help open many doors for you.

Massage Therapy Consumer Trends

SEEING THE RESULTS: 87 percent of consumers see massage as effective in reducing pain and 86 percent agree that massage can be beneficial to health and wellness.

MESSAGE IN NUMBERS: Approximately 43.8 million people had a total of 166 million massages in 2016.

SPREADING THE WORD: In 2018, 71 percent of all consumers said they would recommend massage to a relative or friend.

ALLEVIATING STRESS: 26 percent of Americans who received a massage in the past 12 months said their last massage was primarily to reduce stress or relax.



EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

OUTLOOK FOR THE MASSAGE THERAPY PROFESSION

Employment opportunities are expected to grow for massage therapists. According to the most recent U.S. Department of Labor information, employment opportunities for massage therapists are expected to grow at a faster than average rate as more people learn about the benefits of massage therapy. Between 2018 and 2028, employment opportunities for massage therapists are expected to grow by 22 percent, much faster than the average for all occupations.²

THE FRANCHISE INDUSTRY & MASSAGE THERAPY

While misconceptions still surround some massage therapy franchises, many massage

therapists see franchise environments as a work setting where they can find steady employment and potential benefits. Because franchises offer clients an easy way to access massage therapy, brands in the industry have been increasing their market share over the past five years—a trend that is expected to continue through 2023.

You're probably already very familiar with some of the main players in the massage franchise/chain market including Massage Envy, Massage Heights, XPressSpa, Massage Bar, Elements, LaVida Massage, MassageLuxe, and Massage Green Spa.

AMTA would like to thank the owners and employees of Elements and Massage Envy who took time to be interviewed for this Career Success Series. Interviews conducted March-April 2017. These personal interviews, in addition to member feedback from a variety of franchises, helps personalize the national data.

Sources

1. 2019 AMTA Massage Profession Research Report
2. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook



AMTA IS HERE TO SUPPORT YOU IN EVERY STAGE OF YOUR CAREER

AMTA RESOURCES

Whether you are a seasoned massage therapist or just starting your career, AMTA Resources offers a wealth of guidance to expand or jump start your career—including a special section for massage therapists choosing to work in a franchise setting, a career path assessment quiz and other installments of the AMTA Career Guides. amtamassage.org/CareerGuidance

AMTA ONLINE COURSES

AMTA's online courses are a convenient way to earn your CEs and enhance your knowledge in the areas of business, ethics, various massage modalities, client populations, teaching and self-care. More than 80 courses are now available. amtamassage.org/learn

► CAREER PLANNING ...

It's always important to be thinking ahead about your ultimate career goals in the massage therapy profession. If you're still unsure about which path is best for you, gaining some exposure to different work settings is never a bad idea. If you're an AMTA member, you can leverage connections you've made through your chapter. AMTA's community of massage therapists is a great place to begin making the connections that can help you progress and flourish in your career.

Originally published in 2011. Reprinted with updated research in 2020. © 2020

AMTA NATIONAL CONVENTION

Network with colleagues and advance your skill-set at this annual event. You can access more than 35 continuing education courses focusing on hands-on learning as well as the business-side of the profession. amtamassage.org/convention

AMTA JOB BANK:

Visit AMTA's Job Bank to search for massage therapy jobs in franchises or other settings, or post your resume online to gain exposure to potential employers. amtamassage.org/jobbank

AMTA'S MENTORING PROGRAM:

Improve your communication skills, make connections and set future goals through AMTA's mentoring program. amtamassage.org/mentoring



ABOUT THE AMERICAN MASSAGE THERAPY ASSOCIATION

The American Massage Therapy Association, the most respected name in massage therapy, is the largest non-profit, professional association serving massage therapists, massage students and massage schools. The association is directed by volunteer leadership and fosters ongoing, direct member-involvement through its 51 chapters. AMTA works to advance the profession through ethics and standards, the promotion of fair and consistent licensing of massage therapists in all states, and public education on the benefits of massage.

More information/ join:
amtamassage.org



amta
american **massage therapy** association™