

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist



Julie Onofrio, LMP

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Copyright & Disclaimer | 2 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| The Truth About Jobs in Massage | 6 |
| Your Ideal Job in Massage | 9 |
| Employees vs Subcontractors | 18 |
| Job Market Research | 23 |
| Who is hiring Massage Therapists? | 26 |
| Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews | 39 |
| Finding or Creating Your Ideal Massage Job | 48 |
| What Massage Employers Want | 52 |
| Feedback | 59 |

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Copyright & Disclaimer

© Copyright 2009 Julie Onofrio. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Author. Requests to the Author for permission should be addressed julie@massage-career-guides.com, or on the web at www.massage-career-guides.com/.

While the author has made every effort to produce a high quality, informative and helpful document, they make no representation or warranties of any kind with regard to the completeness or accuracy of the contents of the document. They accept no liability of any kind for any losses or damages caused or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly, from using the information contained in this document.

The information presented herein represents the view of the author as of the date of publication. Because of the rate with which conditions change, the author reserves the right to alter and update his opinion based on the new conditions. The book is for informational purposes only.

While every attempt has been made to verify the information provided in this book, neither the author nor his affiliates/partners assume any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies or omissions. Any slights of people or organizations are unintentional. If advice concerning legal or related matters is needed, the services of a fully qualified professional should be sought.

This book is not intended for use as a source of legal or accounting advice. You should be aware of any laws which govern business transactions or other business practices in your country and state. Any reference to any person or business whether living or dead is purely coincidental.

Book design and layout by Colin P Dunbar (www.colindunbar.com).

Introduction

Massage Therapy was once a field where most massage school graduates went out and started their own business. The most current statistics from the [Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals \(ABMP\)](#) still shows that most massage therapists do start their own businesses, but with more and more spas, resorts and massage franchises opening up each day, the massage therapy job market is expanding making jobs in massage more popular. When I first started out 20 years ago there were very few massage jobs. Because this is such a recent trend many massage employers are not massage therapists and they lack insight into the massage profession and what massage is really truly all about. Their interest is in creating a business which is quite different from that of a massage therapist who starts a business which is usually centered more on helping others and creating more meaningful work. Since the massage job is a fairly recent phenomenon, massage employers are not always aware of what massage therapist employees need to be successful which will in turn create a successful business.

There are many massage employers who try to take advantage of massage therapists by paying low wages, having long hours with no breaks between clients and other things that leave massage therapists very frustrated. Many massage therapists will take these jobs thinking that there aren't any other options and lack the confidence to find or create their ideal job in massage. Finding or creating your ideal job often involves teaching potential massage employers how to treat you and showing them just what you can do for their business. Getting a great job where you can make a great living takes work. You have to know how to promote and sell yourself to potential employers.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Finding your ideal massage therapy job is more about learning about what it is that you want and need and finding compatible employers that will provide you with that opportunity. It is also about figuring out what you want to and can do for potential employers using your unique skills which include massage skills but also your communication skills that will be used to create repeat business and even new business. Instead of taking the first job that comes to you, you can research your options and choose what is best for you or even take the time to create your Ideal Massage Therapy Job. Granted you may have to take the first job for financial reasons and getting experience, but think of it as a learning experience. When you are first starting out in massage you may not know exactly what you want because you haven't worked in the field much.

Creating your ideal massage job is often a process of taking jobs to try them out and learn more about what it is that will bring you happiness as well as enough money to take care of yourself and family. You can learn more about what you want from seeing what you don't want. Learning about the various aspects of massage therapy jobs and knowing what you want out of a job in massage will help lay the foundation for a long successful and rewarding career.

Many massage therapists often look for a job in massage thinking that they won't have to do much in the way of marketing or getting and keeping clients. They don't like the business aspects of being a massage therapist so they think that by getting a job they can avoid this part. Some massage therapists think that the massage employer owes them something and they have the perception that massage employers will 'take care of them' and do all of the work of getting and keeping clients. In reality, just because you work for someone else it does not mean that your job will always be secure or that you will be paid the highest wages just for showing up.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

To be successful in a job in massage requires that you take on the attitude that your success will depend on what you do rather than totally on the employer. When you think of yourself as a partner in building a massage business and being more active in the business process, it will help you to be more successful as a massage employee. To Find or create a high paying job requires that you think carefully about what you value and want, what you do and how you do it and holding out until you do find work with a company with similar values who respects you or teaching your massage employer what is needed for you to be successful (which means they will be successful).

Even though most people start their own businesses, it isn't for everyone. You can make a career out of a job in massage if you are able to find or create your Ideal Massage Job. Getting a job in massage can also help you build your self confidence while you learn about what it takes to run your own business. It can give you a chance to save up money to start your own massage business. You can also work on a lot of people in some jobs which will help build your people skills as well as your massage skills.

An ideal job to me is one that pays more than \$35+ an hour, pays you that for every hour you work whether or not you have a client or not, pays vacation and sick days, has a profit sharing or retirement plan and works with you to achieve your goals as well as theirs. Those are actually rare right now but hopefully as more massage therapist begin to become more involved in their job process that will become the norm.

The Truth About Jobs in Massage

If you are just looking into a career in massage or just graduated from massage school and looking for your first job in massage, you are probably wondering where you can find a job as a massage therapist to make a decent living and be happy doing so. Massage Schools and other massage associations may have told you things like

- Massage therapists make \$60 + an hour
- Massage jobs are in demand
- You will get to work in a relaxing environment helping others
- You can work at high end spas and cruise ships living a low key lifestyle
- You can set your own hours and have more freedom to do as you please.

While these statements are true for the most part - there is also another side to each aspect that the massage schools don't want to talk about.

While the average fee for a massage in the US is \$60 per hour - that is not what you will be making as a massage employee. Most massage employers will pay a percentage of that, usually around 30-40% or even less which will mean that you will be making much less than \$60 an hour. What massage schools fail to tell you is that there is overhead in running a business. Massage Franchises such as Massage Envy will pay a starting salary of \$12-\$15 an hour and that is only for the hours that you are doing the massage.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

A higher level spa job or job with a chiropractor or other health care professional will pay \$25-\$45 an hour and again you will only make that when you are actually working on a client as scheduled. If you don't have a massage client, you will most likely be paid minimum wage for that time frame and be asked to do other menial work such as cleaning or filing. So it is up to you mostly to keep your schedule filled with clients so that you will always be making the higher rate of pay. While massage employers will do things to get you the clients that you need, it is you really who have control over how many massages a week you do. It is the result of your hard work doing massage and educating massage clients about the benefits of getting regular massage.

You are just as much responsible for getting and retaining clients as your employer and maybe even more so in the client retention part. What you do in a massage session will determine if the client returns each week which is the goal for any massage business. This is one of the biggest things that massage therapists overlook. They go into jobs thinking it is all the employers' responsibility for getting clients and keeping you busy. A massage therapist who learns to participate in the business developing their own practice and following of regular weekly will be much more successful as a massage employee.

While the massage profession is growing and is an \$11 to \$14 billion dollar a year industry, most massage therapists continue to struggle to make a living working at \$12-\$25 an hour. It doesn't have to be that way.

Your work will also be limited by the number of massages that you can physically do in a day/week. Since massage is such a physically demanding job, you will be limited to your strength and energy. Most massage therapists consider about 20- 25 hours of massage a week to be full time but at less than \$20 an hour or even less than \$30 an hour that is hard to make a living on to support yourself let alone a family. That is why it is important to find or create higher paying massage therapy jobs. Your body just won't last. It is just one of the causes of burnout in the massage profession -doing too many massages a week and not getting paid enough to do that. Many employers

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

pay such low rates because massage therapists continue to just take low paying jobs. You can get an employer to pay you more when you learn how to prove your worth to the employer.

The idea of starting a union always seems to come up when talking about jobs in massage. I don't actually know much about unions but I don't think that is the answer. The answer is being educated and informed about how to find or create a job. Unions will take jobs and give everyone the same rate of pay for doing the same work. People who excel and people who are slackers will make the same. The answer is I believe in teaching massage employers how to treat you by standing up for your rights and what you need and learning to create jobs rather than just take low paying jobs.

Your Ideal Job in Massage

W

hat kind of job do you want?

Where do you want to work?

What do you have to offer?

How much do you need to make?

These are the questions that you need to ask yourself before you begin your job search. Taking the time to define “*Your Ideal Job in Massage Therapy*” can help direct your career path. When you know what you want and what you don't want, you can keep making better decisions which include making more money and having more freedom. Your ideal massage job guidelines can help you focus your job hunt or help you in creating your job.

I often hear stories of massage therapists going into places just looking for a job. I have my own office and have had many a massage therapist just randomly calling asking for a job when I don't even hire massage therapists. I have many just emailing me through my website asking if I would hire them or if I know of anyone who is hiring. Without knowing what they are really wanting or what they are getting into, massage therapists are just haphazardly searching for jobs in massage and are forced to accept jobs that end up being their worst nightmare. They end up being in a job that they just do for work and end up feeling unappreciated and resentful of massage employers which often leads to unhappy employees and employers.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

To begin with think about what you value most in respect to your work environment. What is it that you want most? What are the exact details of what your ideal job in massage would look like?

- What kind of people do you want to be working with? Do you want to be doing relaxing spa massage treatments, injury treatments or working with athletes or people who participate in physically strenuous activities?
- Do you want to be in a multi-massage practitioner office like a day spa or do you want to be the only massage therapist working for like a chiropractor or other health care provider?
- Do you want to work close to home or within a certain area?
- How big of a room do you want to do massage in and what kind of office space do you want to be a part of?
- Do you want to be part of a multi-discipline practice with other massage therapists, acupuncturists, Naturopaths or other health care professionals?
- Do you want to be an actual employee with employee benefits like vacations, retirement pay etc? Or do you want to be a sub-contractor which is someone who works for someone else like a chiropractor who refers clients to you constantly and pays the overhead? A subcontractor is someone who is self-employed and provides massage for the contractor. (There is a whole section on [employee vs subcontractors](#).)

Next think about your massage work and healing.

- Why did you become a massage therapist? For what purpose? (Not just to make money but what deeper reason did you want to become a massage therapist?) What are you getting out of it?
- What feeling do you want to get by doing massage and working for someone?
- What do you think is needed for people to heal?
- How do you view the healing process?
- What is your role in the healing process?

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- How much freedom do you need to work as you please with clients addressing their various conditions? How would you feel if a chiropractor that you worked for would not let you talk about other types of massage or healing?
- What relationship do you want with the employer? Do you want training, mentoring and a learning environment?
- If you want to work for a chiropractor or other type of doctor - do you know that doctor well enough to refer your mother to them or your significant other to them or would you go to them yourself for care?

The first step in finding a job in massage is knowing yourself and what you want. If you are just out of massage school some of these questions may be difficult to answer. The best way to find an answer is to look into various job opportunities and workplaces and try various jobs to find out what your preferences and needs are. Talk to people who work at various places to get some ideas. Go and get massages at various places to see what you like better. The clearer you get about knowing yourself, the better your chance of finding a job that meets those needs and allows you to grow as a person in the way that you want. It may mean taking jobs that you end up hating or changing jobs until you find your ideal job situation. You have to be willing to take those steps towards getting what you want. The closer the match to what you want in your Ideal Massage Job, the greater your chances for a long, successful and rewarding career.

Then get down to the details of the job you would like:

- Will you be wearing a uniform or your own casual clothes?
- What do you want your responsibilities and duties to be?
- Who will do the marketing and get new clients in the door?
- Who will be responsible for getting clients to come back?
- What part will you have in educating clients about massage and healthcare?
- What color do you want your massage room to be?
- How many clients will you be seeing each day?

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Most people approach massage employers with one thing in mind- how much will you pay me? One of the most important things people fail to take into consideration is how much do you want to make? How much do you need to make to pay your bills, take nice vacations, save for retirement? How much do you need to make so that you do not feel resentful of your job, employer or even of the client? I see so many massage therapists say things like, "It isn't about the money". When I hear someone say that I usually say "So you don't have any money, right?" Frankly it is about the money. If it isn't about the money then you would work for free – right?

You need money to pay the bills and take care of yourself and your family. You need money so that you can help others and share your good fortune with others. You can help more people when you have money then when you don't have any money. You can still work as a massage therapist and make money for the service you provide. When you really stop and think what massage is really doing - providing people a way to access their inner selves and address issues of pain and stress - what is that really worth? You need to make enough money so that you can continue working as a massage therapist.

Money issues are one of the massage professions darkest issues. The more we talk and learn about our relationship with money, the more successful you can become as a massage therapist (or in any field for that matter). Somehow the idea that not having money and helping others gets associated with being a better person. It is one way massage therapists keep themselves from making what they need to make. I have more information on [the website about this](#).

The next thing to start thinking about is what do you value in your personal life. Knowing more about what you value will help you know what is most important to you. In knowing that, you will be able to find a job that matches what you value making it easier to make decisions about various positions. So often people just take jobs because they need one right now. While there is nothing wrong with that and you may need to do that to pay the bills, know right up front that there are going to be

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

major challenges. Here is a list of values for you to think about and consider when you are looking for a job.

1. Clarifying your values - what is important to you.

This is a list to help you think about what values you have. There may be others not on the list that are important to you. Add these at the bottom. Go through the list and check off 10 qualities that are most important to you.

Then go through and pick out 3 to 5 qualities that are the most important - your core values. Core values are those that feel true right to the bone or the core of your being. These are not things that you think you should have. What do you feel most passionate about?

Can you narrow the list down to one value that you could not live without?

What values are at the bottom of the list? ([List of Values](#) (.pdf for easier printing)).

| | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|----------------|--|---------------------|
| | Friendship | | service | | advancement |
| | achievement | | freedom | | authority |
| | community | | security | | competency |
| | adventure | | inner strength | | influence |
| | creativity | | intuition | | integrity |
| | family | | service | | advancement |
| | family | | truth | | intellectual status |
| | health | | vitality | | leadership |
| | strength | | competition | | leisure |
| | love | | excitement | | peace |
| | grace | | sacredness | | trust |
| | partnership | | power | | fairness |
| | respect | | openness | | accomplishment |

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|--|-----------------|--|---------------|
| | wisdom | | wholeness | | nature |
| | joy | | support | | happiness |
| | honesty | | compassion | | growth |
| | contribution | | honor | | building |
| | challenge | | self-expression | | action |
| | Ecological awareness | | meaningful work | | inner harmony |
| | loyalty | | status | | privacy |
| | serenity | | self-respect | | recognition |
| | understanding | | winning | | mastering |
| | compassion | | accomplishment | | persuading |

2. Create a vision of what your ideal massage practice is keeping in mind your core values. If you could have anything, practice anywhere, have any clients, have the number of clients you need to make a living what would it look like. I have included some ideas to start you dreaming.

What do you feel in your body as you begin to imagine what this picture would look like? Do you feel warm and happy? Do you feel inspired?

What would the office look like and feel like?

Use your imagination. Nothing is impossible or unrealistic. You may not have all the skills needed to do what you are dreaming. Don't let that bother you.

3. Write a mission statement to keep you focused on what is important to you. This is a one to two sentence statement that sums up what you value most.

Here are some sample vision statements:

I will have a practice working in conjunction with mental health counselors and Naturopathic physicians to support healing. My focus will be on supporting people through their process.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

I will share what I have learned through my experiences as a massage therapist, making the path easier for those who follow next.

Examples of values at businesses that were the cornerstone of their success are --

Sears and its commitment to customer trust (any product could be returned with a money back guarantee from rural areas in the 19th century).

Apple Computers and its belief in the values of ease of use and service to society (Apple created the Macintosh computer to end people's fear of the computer).

Marriott's values of systemization and standardization (which enabled it to seamlessly duplicate its standard model hotel hundreds of times across the country). "

From [More on Values from gurusoftware.com](#).

[Stephen Covey's Mission Builder](#).

Once you have a clear mission statement you will be able to make decisions more easily based on what your values are. Doing this can help you find and choose jobs rather than having jobs choose you!

You can use this vision to promote yourself. Finding a job is about relationships. The best way to bring jobs and clients to you is by attracting them to who you are (not sexually or physically).

So find out what you love to do. What do you value most in life? Find a way to bring that into your massage profession, if you haven't already done that. When your values match what you do, things usually fall into place more easily.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Online resources on values:

<http://www.gurusoftware.com/GuruNet/Business/Topics/Values.htm>

<http://www.gurusoftware.com/GuruNet/zMiscDocs/ValuesSpiritualPrinciples.doc>

<http://www.yoursoulatwork.com/values.htm>

One of the last but big details is how do you want to have the employee relationship set up? One of the big questions is do you want to be an employee for someone else or do you want to be a sub-contractor for someone else? There is a big difference.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Ideal Massage Job Worksheet

My Ideal Massage Job Looks like this:

I work with _____

I am a full employee.

I am a sub-contractor and set my own hours.

I make _____ per hour – every hour.

I am paid _____ in vacation/sick pay.

I have a retirement account or profit sharing plan.

Employees vs Subcontractors

The whole Employee vs subcontractor issue in the massage profession is one of the most complicated and misunderstood issues you will be faced with. It is also the cause of most massage therapists frustrations with being hired or finding a job and being successful as we are not clear as a profession what we are - are we employees or subcontractors when we work for chiropractors who pay us a percentage of the massage fees collected?

One of the problems in the massage profession is that we do not have any professional support for knowing what our rights are as a massage employee or as a massage subcontractor. It is a legal issue that often requires hiring a lawyer to figure out. Each situation varies greatly and the laws vary in each state too. Attorneys are expensive and most massage therapists don't have the money to hire one. Without much support, you will have to try to decide what is right for you.

From the research I have done through the years, what I see is that massage therapists hired as subcontractors really should be hired as employees. (I often get told that this is incorrect but I think it is because people want to believe it. I am not an attorney and this is really my professional opinion and we really need to have more information on this topic. It is important to check with an attorney if you have any questions around this issue.)

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

There are many factors in determining if a person is an employee or a subcontractor. You can read the information on the [IRS Website](#) which says this:

"The general rule is that an individual is an independent contractor if (the person for whom the services are performed) has the right to control or direct only the result of the work, *and not what will be done and how it will be done or method of accomplishing the result.*"

The difference between being an employee or a subcontractor has to do with the amount of control the employer has over what you do and when you do it. Another issue seems to be over whether the employer tells you what hours you need to be at work or if you set your own hours.

The massage employer is actually responsible for setting this up correctly. If they hire people as independent contractors when they really should be paid as employees, they may be responsible for back taxes and benefits. What it means for you is that you may be taken advantage of when you are hired as a subcontractor when you should really be hired as an employee. While subcontractors probably will make more per hour, you will be missing out on sick pay, vacation time, retirement funds and other benefits.

The main difference in employees vs subcontractors is in how they are paid. A subcontractor is basically a self-employed person and is responsible for paying self-employment taxes. Self-employment taxes are considerably more than just paying regular tax. You need to file a Schedule SE form and the tax currently is 15.3% of your Gross Income. You pay this your self- not the employer. An employer will pay an employees' taxes and also pay into the unemployment fund for the state.

If you are paid a percentage of the fee for the massage (working on a split fee which varies but is usually around 60% for the employer and 40% for the sub-contractor), you are most likely considered to be an employee on commission and should be paid as an employee with other benefits.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Example: You are hired as a subcontractor for a chiropractor. They collect the fee for the massage of \$150 an hour and pay you 40% of that. The chiropractor sets up your schedule and tells you when you need to be at work. They tell you what massage to do to what area on the client. When you don't have a massage appointment, you don't get paid anything.

There is a simple comparison form on the [IRS website](#) that may help you in determining your status.

As a massage employee, you will most likely be told how to do your massage and how to interact or not interact with clients. You may be required to wear uniforms. All of your supplies and equipment should be supplied by the employer. They also will take care of all the scheduling, collecting of payments, insurance billing and paying for everything related to the function of doing massage. The employer will also pay taxes, provide vacation, sick days, retirement plans and other benefits.

As a sub-contractor, the massage employer will refer clients to you occasionally or maybe even quite often. You are basically self-employed when you are a subcontractor and are responsible for all of the costs in doing business unless otherwise arranged with the employer. One of the biggest challenges is figuring out if it is legal or not for a massage subcontractor to pay the employer a percentage of their income. From what I understand of this it is illegal to pay a percentage to a massage employer and could be seen as a kick back to the employer. While I am not an attorney, it is one of the biggest unknown factors in the massage therapy profession with many different opinions on this topic.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

In 2007, I attended a class put on by AMTA WA on this topic. It was given by two attorneys here in WA State. Their website has a few articles on this topic of subcontractor vs employee. While I am not sure if this applies to all states, it does provide a good place to start in researching this for yourself. See "[Am I an independent contractor or an employee](#)" (pdf file) by John Pieck and John Conniff.

A much cleaner way to do this is if you are a subcontractor is to pay a flat rent to the employer which will clear up any questions of your employee status. You then become a renter of office space and self employed.

This whole section is based on what information I have gathered through the years and is not legal advice nor should it be taken for granted that all of this information will apply to you and your situation. Please consult an attorney if you have any questions.

Deciding if you want to be a formal employee and receive job benefits such as vacation pay, sick pay, and retirement funding or if you want to just be a subcontractor is a difficult decision. As a massage employee you will probably be paid less per hour, but the employer should be providing you clients and taking over all responsibilities of running the business. If you are a subcontractor, you may still be required to find some of your own clients and pay rent. You are basically self employed when you are a subcontractor which means you have to set yourself up as a business. Deciding what type of arrangement you would prefer before you start looking for a job can help you in researching places to work.

Online Articles:

[Spa Savvy Concerns and Employment Considerations](#) by Cherie Sohnen-Moe

[The Employment Quandary](#) by Cherie Sohnen-Moe

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

[Independent Contractor, Employee, Booth Renter](#): Which Piece Am I?

Business Side By Ken Cassidy Massage and Bodywork Magazine

[Employees and Independent Contractors](#), Part 1 Business Side By Felicia Brown Originally published in Massage & Bodywork magazine, April/May 2000.

[Employees and Independent Contractors](#), Part 2 Business Side By Felicia Brown Originally published in Massage & Bodywork magazine, June/July 2000.

Ralph Stevens Therapeutic Chair Massage Employment Considerations Section ([Google Books](#)).

Job Market Research

So where do you want to work? Who do you want to work for or with? Is there a company you respect and admire that you would love to work for?

So many massage therapists fail to answer these questions mainly because they don't ever really think about them. Doing your research into the many different places to work can help you make a more informed decision and will help you choose the job that is best for you and your needs. In doing so your chances of having a successful *and* rewarding career greatly increases.

Instead of just sending out your resume blindly or calling every place just to see if they are hiring, take the time to look into the companies you are considering working for and decide which one you want to work for! Which company will provide you with what you need? Which company has the best reputation? What company respects massage therapists the most? Where will you be able to use your best skills and talents to the fullest in creating health?

One of the best ways to do that is to just go get a few massages from different therapists. What is their customer service like? What are their receptionists like? Are they able to describe the various services and match you up with the best therapist to provide that service? Are they on time? What are the massage therapists like? See if you can ask them a few questions about working there to see if they like it. Is the place clean and friendly or are the people just waiting to get out of there? Also getting to know a massage therapist who works at a spa or other place can be the foot in the door for you if and when the company is ready to hire.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Once you get some ideas of what companies you want to work for, you can create a plan for getting a job there even though that plan might include working somewhere else first to hold you over or to wait for an opening.

Informational interviewing is a great way to get a better look inside the business that you are thinking of working for. Call and ask to speak with managers or supervisors and just tell them you are looking for information about their company and potential jobs. You may be able to connect with the exact person to speak with by visiting the place as a customer as already mentioned. You are basically going to interview them first! What a concept! Knowing more about what you are getting into can be of advantage to both parties. Many business owners may be too busy to really talk to people. You may get better results by going in and getting regular massages at a place and getting to know one or two of the massage therapists and ask to meet their manager.

Ask some of these questions?

- What massage services do you offer and what do you charge clients for these services?
- What discounts do you provide?
- What training do you provide?
- What are your companies' goals and mission statement?
- How involved are your employees in generating and creating new ideas for the business?
- What incentives are there to retain clients?
- What do you do to give back to the community?
- What are your policies for cancellations and no shows? (If people don't show up you won't get paid.)
- What marketing do you do?
- Do you pay for or provide any continuing education?

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Finding out more about a massage employer can help you make a more informed decision. You can find out if your values match the employers and learn more about how you will fit into the business.

Who is hiring Massage Therapists?

Chiropractors - Chiropractic and massage work really well together. You can learn a lot about injuries and health working with a chiropractor. They usually see clients who were injured in motor vehicle accidents or hurt in sports or who are just stressed out or have repetitive strain injuries. Chiropractors are also notorious for taking advantage of massage therapists. They charge exorbitant prices to insurance companies - like over \$120 an hour and I have heard stories of \$300 or more and then turn around and pay the massage therapist \$23-\$30 an hour. They of course have an overhead to pay but make sure you aren't paying the whole thing. Sometimes a chiropractor will hire a massage therapist to do just 20 minute massages on their clients before they get their adjustments. It requires a different mind set really to work that way. It can also add up to a lot of massages at the end of the day so make sure that you have appropriate breaks and self care.

Be sure to clarify your position as to whether you are an employee or a subcontractor. (See the section on [employees vs. subcontractors](#).) This is often a very gray area and chiropractors seem to think that they can take advantage of massage therapists. Get as much help and advice in [creating a contract](#), so you know what your agreement is, up front to avoid any confusion in the future.

Some things to consider in working with a chiropractor are:

- The rate of pay and knowing what the fees for services are. Will there be vacation pay, sick pay, retirement benefits, educational benefits etc?
- If billing insurance how much is being billed? Is there a difference in what is billed for a cash client? A really big difference could be an indicator of less

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

then respectable practices. It also creates challenges when the client finds out that there is a very big difference in what they charge for insurance and what they charge for clients paying strictly cash.

- Will you have to get your own clients or will the chiropractor be referring his clients to you enough to fill your schedule?
- Will the chiropractor consult with you on each client as needed?
- Will the chiropractor direct what you do in a massage session or even what you say in a massage session? For example, a massage therapist told me that they got reprimanded for talking to a client about a different type of massage that might be helpful to their condition that was not performed in that office and they would have to be referred to someone else. The chiropractor overheard and was not happy.
- Who will supply all the equipment - table, lotions, pillows etc.
- Who will do the billing?
- How much will you be paid when you don't have a massage client - or what happens when you don't have a client? Will you have to be cleaning or helping out in other areas answering phones or whatever?

Knowing these things upfront will help you determine if you want to work there and will help you be successful.

See also this discussion on indeed.com - [Working for a chiropractor vs a spa](#).

Spas - Day spas, destination spas, resorts, Medical Spas-

Spas are probably one of the most popular places that hire massage therapists. The thing about spas is that their main goal is to create an atmosphere of relaxation and comfort. When you work at a spa you will be asked to dress a certain way and act a certain way so that you fit in with the image they are trying to portray. Spas offer specialized treatments and specialized training. They may provide the training that you need or expect you to know how to do various treatments. There are schools that

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

teach more spa treatment classes that may be beneficial when approaching a spa for a job.

Spa jobs can be more difficult because you only see the client if they are coming on vacation or special occasions meaning there are less regular weekly clients to work with. You will have only one chance to make an impression usually. There are some local spa's that probably build a regular client base, but I think most are missing out on the idea that getting regular weekly massage can be healing. Spa treatments can be particularly healing as they can be very nurturing. Some high end spas will pay very respectably. Some things to ask about are your hours and how much time you will have in between sessions and how much you will be paid when you don't have a massage. Good spas will have incentives for you to fill your time and retain clients rewarding you with bonuses when you can get clients to come more often.

There are various types of spas. Day spas where people just come in for a few hours, a half a day or a full day to receive treatments. Destination spas are big resorts that are usually very pricey like Canyon Ranch and other large spas. People stay overnight for a few days or a few weeks or longer. Massage is usually a part of their daily routine.

While spas are known for their pampering there also is a much deeper side to getting regular spa therapist that has really not been studied much. The combination of various types of water therapies, aromatherapy, body wraps, skin care and massage can be very nurturing and healing. These various therapies may cause a deeper healing than we really may ever know as they are similar to the birth process and early childhood development.

Spa menus are also branching out and adding things like Thai massage, Reiki, Deep Tissue Massage and other therapies that address more than just the pampering aspect of massage. You may also be asked to do things like body wraps, paraffin baths, hot stone massage, aromatherapy and other things.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Medical Spa's are run by doctors and Naturopaths and usually address serious diseases like Cancer, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and other conditions that will require that you are skilled in pathology and working with those conditions. There can be day medical spas as well as destination medical spas where people stay for a few weeks, a few months or a few days.

Finding a job in a high end or well paying spa will be very competitive. You will need to be able to work well with new clients and serve their needs. You will have to be a high quality massage therapist. It will also require a fair amount of physical stamina as spas are usually busy places. Customer service skills will also need to be exceptional to work in high end spas.

Successful spas should be able to pay you full benefits and provide incentives for retaining clients as well as bringing in new clients. In some spas tips may not be allowed but in others the tips may be mandatory and a specific percentage added to the client's bill automatically.

Spa salaries depend on the spa management really and how much they respect massage therapists. If a spa charges a higher than usual amount and pays the massage therapist a fairly low wage, you might do better elsewhere. Spa's also frequently use the seniority policy meaning that the longer you work there the better your hours, days and benefits. You may have options for getting more clients even when others don't have any clients to work with. Even though it is part of their policies it can also create tension between therapists.

The other thing I hear about often is that the front desk can favor one person and give them most of the appointments and keep you from getting appointments. You should ask the employer how they will handle appointments and watch who gets clients or not. Spa work can also be competitive with massage therapists stealing tips and clients so just beware when you start working at a spa.

See also these articles:

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

[Choosing the Spa That's Best For You](#) by Melinda Minton Massage Magazine

[Inside the Medical Spa Association](#): An Interview With Executive Director Hannelore R. Leavy Massage Today :The Day Spa Association (DSA) recently announced the creation of a sister organization, the Medical Spa Association (MSA). Spa Today interviewed Hannelore R. Leavy, executive director of both associations, to learn more about the future of the MSA and its role in the burgeoning spa industry.

[Log On for Spa Employment](#) by Preethi Burkholder Massage and Bodywork Magazine - list of online spa job directories.

[International Spa Association](#).

[Spa articles](#) - everything you ever wanted to know about spas. Complete listing of online articles from major spa magazines. massagenerd.com.

Salons are similar to spas in some ways as they are providing other services such as hair styling and nails. Some salon owners just want to make money off of the massage therapist. Salons can often be noisy and have bad smells from perms and other hair coloring services. Having a separate room with proper ventilation is necessary. Privacy can also be a big issue as some salons just turn their extra storage room into a massage room. Salons usually offer work as a subcontractor so that they don't have to pay the expenses of having an employee. If you are considering working at a spa be sure to work out the details to your liking.

[Log On for Spa Employment](#) by Preethi Burkholder Massage and Bodywork Magazine. Great list for looking for spa jobs online.

Naturopaths, Doctors , Dentists, Physical Therapists - More physicians are hiring massage therapists to work in their offices as they begin to realize just how beneficial massage is for their patients. You could create your own job opportunity by preparing a proposal as to what massage can do for their clients. Physical Therapists mainly would hire a massage therapist to perform the massage part of their sessions which may only be like 10-15 minutes on each client.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Health Clubs and Gyms are also hiring massage therapists. Massage is very complimentary to working out and sports. Massage can enhance the training levels of professional, masters and amateur athletes who work out at these health clubs. Massage is offered as a service to help their members succeed in their workouts and to reward people for their achievements.

A good working knowledge of sports and even formal sports massage training can be beneficial but not necessary.

Professional Sports Teams are also hiring massage therapists to travel with the teams. Football, basketball, golfers, hockey players and baseball players need a massage every day when in season. You will need more training in sports massage because their performance can be affected by massage if you don't know what you are doing.

Local high school and community sports leagues also may be in need of a regular massage therapist.

See also:

[How to Work With Professional Athletes](#) by John G. Louis, CMT Massage Today.

Hospitals, Hospices are fairly new in hiring massage therapists but they are also finding that massage can be very beneficial to those who are sick and bedridden, the nurses who care for them, the families and friends who are involved. Massage is helpful in premature infants, during labor and delivery, for patients with cancer and other debilitating diseases as well as in hospices and end of life programs. There are only a few hospital based massage programs out there currently so this is one area that really needs more development. You can set up and run your own hospital based massage program by studying and learning from other hospitals.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

See also:

[Hospital Based Massage Network](#) Resources for setting up your own hospital based massage program.

[Patricia Cadolino, LMT](#) by Claudette Laroche, RN, LMT, NCTMB Patricia "Patti" Cadolino is "the first" in many of her professional endeavors. Most recently, she is the first massage therapist to be employed by New York State in a full-time, salaried position (with benefits), working at The University Hospital at Stony Brook, on central Long Island. *Massage Today*.

[Massage Therapy](#) and hospitalized patients - Research study.

[Compassionate Touch®](#) Hands-on Care for Those in Later Life Stages.

[Hospitals Starting to Recognize](#) the Value of Massage Therapy by Kathryn Feather, Managing Editor *Massage Today*.

[Studying the Benefits of Massage](#) for Advanced Cancer Patients By Julie Engebretson. Even in a professional hospice environment, those suffering from advanced cancer are consistently, if not constantly, plagued by fatigue, pain, and loss of appetite. Cancer patients and health professionals at hospice programs are anxiously awaiting the results of a study to be conducted by the Health Sciences Center at the University of Colorado at Denver.

Cruise Ships

The idea of working on a cruise ship may be appealing to those who enjoy travel and love the challenge of meeting new people and doing new things. The few positive stories I have heard about working on cruise ships talk about what a great experience it was for them. The thing is it isn't for everyone but you may not know until you try it!

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Some of the things to consider are the living and work conditions. Being confined to the ship, you will not really be able to get away from work. The hours are usually long and demanding. The pay not much better, but if you want a way to travel and see bits of the world, massage cruise ship jobs may work for you. The crowd is usually older people who do have the time and extra money to be taking a cruise. You should be paid for getting to the cruise and getting back home and your living expenses will be free on board the ship. You will be able to save money in that way.

You most likely will have to share a room with a same sex employee and will have limited time to yourself. You will most likely also have many cleaning duties aboard the ship.

On the other hand you will go to places you may never go to and you will meet many diverse and interesting people as passengers on the ship as well as other employees on the ship.

You may also be able to find work on smaller sailing ships as the massage therapist once you get to some of the destinations of the larger cruises.

Resources and more information on cruise ship jobs:

[Expert Advice](#) by Charlotte Michael Versagi, L.M.T. Q: "How can I get a job on a cruise ship?"

[Cruise Industry Employment](#) The Pros & Cons By Ruthanne Johnson Massage and Bodywork Magazine.

[6 Considerations for Performing Massage on a Cruise Ship](#) by Nicole Cutler, L.Ac. Integrativehealthcare.org.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Steiner Leisure, Ltd., Harding Bros Ltd. and Judith Jackson Sea Spas and Salon are three of the top cruise ship spa management companies. Steiner manages 116 ships, Harding Brothers manages 22 ships, and Judith Jackson Sea Spas and Salon manages three. Applications and information can be found on their respective websites.

<http://www.steinerleisure.com/steinerSite.html>

Cruise ship lines websites:

<http://www.hardingbros.co.uk/>

www.cruiseplacement.com

<http://www.azamaracruises.com/>

Regent 7 cruises - <http://www.rssc.com/>

<http://www.silversea.com/>

<http://www.crystalcruises.com/home.aspx>

<http://www.cunard.com/>

<http://www.hollandamerica.com/main/CountrySelector.action>

<http://www.celebritycruises.com/vanity/home>

<http://www.royalcaribbean.com/gohome.do>

Norwegian cruise line - <http://www.ncl.com/nclweb/home.html>

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Hotels hire massage therapists or may contract with massage therapist to come in and work on people in their rooms. They may also have a spa connected with the hotel. Hotels usually charge more for massage so you should be able to ask for a higher rate of pay. Upscale Hotel's can bring in high paying clients who want a massage at the last minute. It can be very lucrative if you are able to be available at a minutes notice. There is also an unwritten code when working with upscale hotels that the concierge may often want a 'tip' for getting you a client.

The most important thing to figure out when doing hotel work is how to keep yourself safe. You can set up an agreement with the desk people to check on you if you are not back by a certain time. You can also work with security if there is one. Many people will of course think they might be getting some sexual massage so it is important to keep very clear boundaries and dress professionally at all times. Do not put up with any innuendos or abusive comments for your own sake. Hotels may also have self contained spas associated with them.

On Site Chair Massage Businesses - [The Massage Bar](#) made chair massage famous by opening up a few places in airports and convention centers. They became a multi-million dollar business. Onsite massage companies also provide massage in a corporate setting. You may have to travel to various sites and carry around your supplies and massage chair. Chair massage businesses are showing up in many different areas -from local farmer's markets and fairs, salons and day spas, cruise ships, wellness clinics in corporate offices, health clubs, health food stores, and waiting rooms of doctors and dentists. Kiosks are being set up in convention centers and the lobbies of large high rise office buildings and even grocery stores such as Whole Foods.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Most people work there part time to supplement their income. Most are hired as sub-contractors but you may be hired as a regular employee too depending on the situation. One of the things to find out is if you will be able to market your own practice or your table massage job while doing chair massage. Some people when they begin to trust you with chair massage will want to get a regular table massage from you. Be sure you are aware of what the rules are around that. Some massage employers don't want you to take clients away from their business but for the most part there isn't any way to stop that. There may be a non-compete clause in your employee contract (which you should always have a contract for any job or subcontractor position as it will help you know what you are responsible for and what you are not.)

Articles and resources:

Multi-million dollar chair massage business- [Massage Bar](#) - AMTA Journal

Chair massage resources at www.thebodyworker.com

Whole Foods Chair Massage in Florida - mymassagecorner.com

[The Road Taken](#) Airport Massage By Darren Buford

Chair massage resources at www.thebodyworker.com

Massage Franchises - The most recent phenomenon catching on in the massage profession is the creation of many different massage franchises. One of the first was Massage Envy and there are many more being opened every day. The basic concept is that people can get really low cost massages when they purchase a membership like the idea of a gym membership. Members can get one massage a month usually for less than \$50 and family members get a discount too.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

The thing about getting a job at a massage franchise is that the starting pay is usually around \$12 to \$15 an hour. They do usually offer benefits such as health care and vacation pay. The highest pay I have heard at places like these are about \$25 an hour after working there a year or more.

Massage franchises usually hire massage school students right out of massage school who are eager for their first jobs.

While in some areas of the country, \$12 to \$15 an hour sounds like good pay, other areas it seems more like slave labor. When you are not doing massage you also usually get paid just minimum wage.

When the idea of massage franchises first started, it seems to bring up a lot of fear in massage therapists who are trying to start their business. You can't really make a good living charging less than \$50 a massage. The thing is that there will always be someone who will want to charge less thinking that it is the way to get people in the door. When businesses start competing based on fees only instead of value, the business reduces its chances of success and longevity.

Some of the latest articles on Massage Envy state things like the fact that they are spending a good deal of money to advertise massage for the massage profession. Less than 25% of the people who go into Massage Envy actually become members or so the previous owner has said in an article [from Massage Magazine](#). They also have made big donations to research foundations such as the AMTA's Massage Therapy Foundation which helps put them in a different light.

There are also many other massage franchises besides Massage Envy, but ME is the one that is most popular and talked about the most I think because they were one of the first places to open.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Working at places like this can be a great way to start and get experience. A busy franchise can keep you working on clients all day long and can help you learn the ropes. It can even be a long term job if that is all you want is a job where you can just come in and do massage and leave. For most it leaves people wanting more.

For more information:

[Zen Massage](#)

[Elements](#)

[Hand and Stone Massage Spa](#)

[Massage Heights](#)

Keep in Touch Massage - <http://www.keepintouchmassage.net/>

[Massage Envy on indeed.com forums](#) – Mostly negative comments about ME but take it in stride because people who like working there and going there probably won't post! [More on indeed.com](#)

Massage Envy information on www.massagetoday.com

[From Massage Magazine News](#): On Massage Envy “The membership-model franchise, founded in 2002, now has more than 500,000 members, performed its ten-millionth massage in late 2008, and recently opened its 527th clinic. There are 300 more franchise locations currently under development, and the company employs more than 8,000 massage therapists nationwide.”

[Finding a Massage in Lean Times](#) – Wall Street Journal article compares various franchises.

Do massage franchises help the profession? Readers' expression on [Massage Magazine](#) .

Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews

To find a job you need to have a resume to submit to potential employers in a digital format or be able to send it to them in person. I am not a resume expert so I am referring you out to other resume sources to help you create one for yourself. [How to write a professional resume](#) is an ebook that will help you put it all together. There are also many online resources and examples so that you can create your own at the end of this section.

Your resume is just your calling card. If you are approaching places that are actually not hiring massage therapists or you don't know if they are hiring, you will need to have a cover letter to explain why you are contacting them.

If you are applying to a job listing from one of the online directories, be sure to submit the resume or any other information that they request in the manner that they request. Calling them when they only want you to email a resume is unprofessional and makes you look bad right from the start. Be sure to do your research first before just blindly sending resumes. Have you done all of the exercises and created a vision of your ideal massage job? Do you know for sure you would like to work there? If not try informational interviewing or just go in and get a few massages from the places you would like to work to see if you would really want to work there.

Here are some tips for using resumes, cover letters and the interview process.

- **Focus on what it is that you can do for the company rather than what you want them to do for you.**

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Tell employers what you can do to retain clients and get clients to refer others to you
- Tell employers why your massage is different than every one else's massage
- Show employers how you will make more money for them because of your massage skills, people skills, customer service skills and educational skills
- Research some statistics on stress in the workplace if you are applying to a chair massage job or research massage and back pain if you are going to work in a back pain clinic. Take some initiative and research the areas that you are interested in working in so that you can talk about it proficiently.
- Find statistics on what massage can do for various conditions.
- Research the business you are applying to by reading their website and brochures so you can see what services they offer and what their mission is so you know more about what you would be getting into.
- Even if you are applying at a spa job you will still need to know things like how to work with pregnant women, people with back pain or sprains and headaches to name a few things. Become the expert in the area you want to get a job in!
- Include the details of your work experience if any telling what types of massage you can do and are most effective at.
- Be sure you know how to do deep tissue work if they ask you if you know deep tissue. You can't try to figure it out later.
- Don't send it using one of your personal email addresses such as ratboy@yahoo.com, sleazygirl@hotmail.com or anything but yourname@isp/hostname.com.
- It is all about being professional and creating a professional image for yourself. Dress the part even if you are applying for a job at a gym.

Note: Please follow the directions of the massage employer for submitting resumes or you may also be asked to fill out a job application.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Resume and Cover Letter Resources:

[Utah College of Massage Therapy Career ServicesUCMT](#)

<http://career-advice.monster.com/resume-tips/home.aspx>

Creating an email, scannable and text resume - [Counselingseattle.com](#)

Best Book Resources for resume and cover letters:

Marketing Massage by Monica Roseberry

Business Mastery by Cherie Shonen-Moe

The Massage Interview

Be prepared to be asked to do a real massage on the manager or supervisor. It is a legitimate part of a massage job interview. Massage employers want to know how good your massage is and if you are professional.

You will most likely be asked to do a massage on one of the managers to show your massage skills. Don't get upset or overwhelmed. It is just part of getting a job and everyone has to do one. Just do everything you would do as if it were a normal massage.

- Do a short intake interview. Ask what areas need to be worked on. Ask what type of therapy they have had before and how much pressure they would like.
- As with anything else -be sure to show up on time and dressed for a job interview even though you are doing a massage.
- Do all of the things you usually do - paying attention to draping, client comfort. Clarify how long of a massage you are to give and be sure to go the full time and stay within the time limits.
- Don't ask how you did until the person is dressed and back out acting as the manager.
- They get easier the more you do just like with anything else.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

While job interviews are about finding a job, be sure that you are finding a job that you really want. You have to ask the employer questions to. It will also make you look like you are interested and know what you are doing.

Here is a list of the most popular job interview questions:

Interviewing the employer

- What image do they portray to the community in their marketing/advertising?
- What is their reputation in the massage community?
- Will they supply all the clients?
- How will they get you the clients? What marketing/advertising will they be doing?
- Where will they get referrals from? What people are they networking with?
- Is there an incentive for you to bring your own clients in like a higher hourly wage or bonus?
- What incentives will there be for you to build a practice? One company I read about tracked the number of repeat clients per month and gave incentives for therapists who improved their numbers each month.
- Will they make you sign a non-compete clause that states that you can not take clients with you if you leave the office or start your own practice within X-amount of miles from the office? Some places may ask you to do this. It is difficult to enforce, as clients will go where they want anyway. You may also be able to leave and tell clients where you are going but not be able to solicit their following you to your new location. Check with an attorney on this before signing a non-compete clause.
- What benefits will you have? Vacations, retirement accounts, sick days, etc.
- What support will they provide to assist you in working with clients and understanding the therapeutic process? Weekly meetings to keep you informed of what is going on in the company would be beneficial. Supervision? Peer Groups?
- Will they do the insurance billing and bookkeeping or teach you to do it?

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Will they supply the table, linens, lotions, music, stereo and other accessories or will you?
- One thing you need to make sure of is what your official status is – employee or sub-contractor. I have seen many places say that you are an employee but in reality they should be sub-contractors.

Be prepared for what questions might they ask you

- The typical what type of massage do you do? Where and when did you go to school? What classes have you taken?
- What does doing massage mean to you?
- How has being a massage therapist changed your life?
- Put what you do into one or two sentences.
- What do you want to get out of this job?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What are you going to do for this company? Why should they hire you?
- What will you do to build clientele? An employer will be more motivated to hire you knowing you know what you are doing and are motivated to be a part of the company.
- Create your own vision for the office. Where do you see it going?
- What marketing, advertising or networking ideas do you have?
- What are you going to do that is different from everyone else?
- You may also be asked to do a massage on the owner or someone who works there.

Presenting your self to an employer or business owner

Part of the job interview is how you present yourself to the employer. Most massage employers are looking for someone who can professionally represent their company.

So here are some tips for presenting yourself to a potential employer or business owner:

- Know what your ideal massage client, office space and practice looks like!

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Focus on what you are going to do for them and how you will help them build their business or increase their profits.
- Create your vision before you start looking for a job or space. Knowing what you want can save time. Settling for less usually has consequences.
- Answer in the manner that the ad requests.
- If you are cold calling (not knowing if they have a position or space available) ask when a convenient time to call is and set up a phone meeting. Keep calling to show you mean it and are serious, but don't over do it and be obnoxious.
- Write a resume that tells who you are, not just what you have done. Resumes of the old chronological, here's what I have done type are outdated. Write to tell who you are, what massage means to you, how has it changed your life, what your goals are, what is your philosophy when working with clients. Show how you love what you do and who you are!!
- If you are cold calling, try calling just asking for information (informational interviewing). Start a conversation to find out more about the office you are looking at. Don't mention that you are looking for work or an office space. Ask questions about the person's practice and what they do there. Go get a massage there! See if you want to participate in or be associated with that office! People respond when they can tell you are interested in them. One of the basic needs of people is to be of value. If you can show you are sincerely interested and not out to get something from them other than information, both parties will benefit from the connection.
- Get to know them.
- Then there are the standard rules: be on time for the interview, dress appropriately. (Even though massage tends to be an informal business, looking good is important and shows your respect).
- After the interview, send some kind of acknowledgment - a thank you card, an email, a phone call something!! Even if they said something like "We'll contact you".

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Even if you don't get the space or job, send a follow up after that. You never know what will happen. Something may not work out with the new person, things may change or there may be more opportunities in the future. Don't give up!
- Suggest creating an employee contract so that you will know exactly what is expected of you and what is expected of the employer. Don't leave anything to guessing. It is always better to get things in writing. If you are sub-contracting, a contract will be a necessary part of the agreement and will also thoroughly outline the details. Know what your contract says and what every line means!
- Don't ever give up until you get exactly what you want!! Don't settle for less!

Contracts

Whether you get a job or a subcontractor position the one thing that you will need either way is a contract. I hear so many horror stories of people working without a contract that I can't feel sorry for them. While it can be a binding legal document is also can be just a good way to outline each party's duties and responsibilities so that both parties know what they are getting into.

Some things to consider:

- Who will provide the clients or how will the clients get to the massage therapist?
- Who will provide the massage table, sheets, pillows, lotions/oils, music and other room amenities?
- What happens when you do not have a massage appointment? Are you responsible for other duties? Will you get paid the same rate as when you are doing a massage?
- What happens when you bring a client in through some marketing effort or referral?
- Are there any incentives for you when you develop a regular client who comes every week or even once a month like extra pay or benefits?

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- What are the clients charged for their massage?
- If there is insurance billing involved, who does all the paperwork , billing and collections?
- Who is the owner of the clients file contents?
- Is there a non-compete clause that says you can't work in the area or if you leave you can't take any clients with you? (Non-compete clauses are hard to enforce and clients will go where they want to go and may just follow you whether you intend to take them or not. While I don't know of the legal aspects of violating a non-compete clause, I am also skeptical of signing an agreement with one in them.
- What benefits are there? Vacation pay, sick pay, retirement funds, continuing education requirements, liability insurance, bonuses, health insurance for you and/or your family, dental and vision benefits, holiday pay.
- Is there any sales of products involved and if so what is the commission rate? What incentives are there to increase sales?
- If there is a uniform or required dress code who pays for the uniform and cleaning of clothes?
- Are there any other benefits such as discounted or free massages for you and your family or discounted/free memberships (health clubs, golf courses, classes)
- What is the policy for tipping and collecting the tips?
- What is the policy when selling gift certificates? Is there a commission or bonus?

If you are a subcontractor there are some additional things you need to be aware of:

- How much will I be paid and when?
- What will I have to pay for? Insurance, linens, oil, table, accessories, laundry, phone, advertising, phone book listings.
- Who collects the money?
- Who gets the tips or how are tips distributed/handled?

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Who sells the gift certificates - the business or the individual therapist? Who gets the money for the sale of the gift certificate? Who keeps track of outstanding gift certificates? Who is responsible for doing the massage when the gift certificate comes in?

There are a few sample contracts at www.sohnen-moe.com

[Independent Contractor Agreement](#) (pdf)

These forms are also available in other formats at www.sohnen-moe.com

[Massage Therapy Employment Agreement](#) by Cherie Sohlen-Moe

[The Anatomy of a Contract](#) by Cherie Sohlen-Moe

Finding or Creating Your Ideal Massage Job

Think and Grow Rich Job finding process of Napoleon Hill

First. Decide EXACTLY what kind of job you want. If the job doesn't already exist, perhaps you can create it.

Second. Choose the company, or individual that you wish to work with.

Third. Study your prospective employer, as to policies, personnel, and chances of advancement.

Fourth. By analysis of yourself, your talents and capabilities, figure out WHAT YOU CAN OFFER, and plan ways and means of giving advantages, services, developments, ideas that you can successfully deliver.

Fifth. Forget about "a Job". Forget whether or not there is an opening. Forget the usual routine of "have you got a job for me?" *Concentrate on what you can give.*

Sixth. Once you have your plan in mind, arrange with an experienced writer to put it on paper in neat form and in full detail.

Seventh. Present it to the proper person with the authority and he will do the rest. Every company is looking for men who can give something of value, whether it be ideas, services, or connections. Every company has room for the man who has a definite plan of action which is to the advantage of that company.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

W

orking in a job in massage therapy can be richly rewarding both financially and mentally/emotionally and spiritually. It takes time and research to find or create such a job but it is well worth it since we spend so much of our time at work.

Jobs are often places where people look for job security. Job Security won't be found in a job. It is found in your self. Jobs are one place where we project some of our unmet needs. Since the employer is seen to be an authority figure, jobs have a way of brining out some of the pain of childhood and growing up. You may feel entitled and think that a job will provide security. You may also think that you don't want to do any marketing or any of the things a business will need to do to build a business. People expect the companies that they work for to love us provide security and meet our emotional needs. James Hollis in his book "The Eden Project" says this about work:

"Having experienced the powerlessness and dependency in childhood, it is natural to project onto the corporate Other the power, wisdom and nurturant intent we once expected from the parent. That such a feeling state continues to exist in the face of experiential reality is a measure of its power. Internalized childhood experience not only influence our one-on-one relationships, it is also transferred to our experience of organizations. From having felt engulfed, we learn to placate the powerful Other. In corporate life this produces the compliant employee, not the one who will risk telling the truth to a superior or risk initiative in service of corporate development."

The truth is that no one can meet those needs for you. You can grieve the loss of never having those needs met and learn to give yourself what you need.

I am sure you might be thinking "Well I just wanted to get a job in massage". Well you can do just that but the more aware you become of the unconscious parts of yourself, the more successfully you can navigate your career through employment in the massage profession. You may as well find some place to work that you love going to and can't wait to get to instead of hating the idea of having to go to work. Work can

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

be a place of enjoyment where you can follow your passion and calling to help others.

This is why it is so important to choose or create your ideal job - one where you can participate and engage in your work and be rewarded and thought of as a part of the team. Massage corporations that lack 'soul' or an awareness of just what it is that massage does are the types of organizations that will just drain the life out of you. Companies that respect the massage therapist will pay a wage that you can make a decent living off of and provide other benefits such as healthcare, vacation pay, retirement funds as well teach you more about working with clients and building the business. They will provide a sense of community in the work place and provide a place for you to get the support you need in your work. One such tool for doing that is supervision and peer supervision groups. It is important to find meaningful work rather than just providing a service or product.

Part of the process of creating your own job will be researching various companies that you might be interested in working at. Hospitals and Dentists are a few of the places I can think of that are just starting to think about hiring massage therapists. You will need to create a plan and outline how massage can be beneficial to their patients. In hospitals there are patients, workers, stressed family members and even doctors who are standing all day in intense surgeries that could use massage.

You can research various topics about massage and how massage can be used for various diseases and conditions and create a job proposal with this information included in it. You can begin with looking at the various diseases that I have listed in the Pathology Section of www.thebodyworker.com. I am trying to list as many articles and related research to the various diseases and conditions. You can use this information as a basis of your plan.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

You can also approach employers from the stand point of how much you will increase their business by getting and keeping clients coming back. You can create an educational packet that you could show potential employers what you know about various conditions and how you would talk to people about them using getting regular weekly/every other week or monthly massage as a way to deal with various conditions. Being able to educate clients will be a big part of getting repeat clients. While your employer may at first be resistant to your providing this information you could approach them from the aspect of together creating informational packet for clients with stretches and more information. Employers usually want to control what employees are handing out and telling clients. Working with your manager you can create success for yourself and the business.

If you aren't ready for creating your own job at least take the time to figure out what it is that you need as a massage therapist- what you need to make, what kind of environment you want to work in and who you want to work for (spa, chiropractor, MD) and be sure to find and take only jobs that fit your needs. If you take a low paying job or a job that doesn't meet your needs you will be a disgruntled employee which will be evident to your clients as well as the employer. Don't settle for anything less. If you do have to take a job just because you are desperate for a job, know that it is just a means to an end of finding or creating your ideal job. You will have a much better attitude and it will help you to keep positive and enjoy where you are at while you look for work that sustains you. Taking jobs that pay low and don't meet your needs is not doing anyone any good including the whole massage profession. If you can live on less and are happy in a low paying job then that is a different story. Massage therapists are basically teaching massage employers how to treat us and creating a negative image. Continuing to take low paying jobs is teaching employers that massage therapists will work for low wages.

What Massage Employers Want

Massage employers are looking for people who know how to do massage, have good customer service skills, good marketing skills and just show up on time and stay until the time they are supposed to. Many massage employers don't know much about what a massage therapist needs to be effective. Your first job is to figure out what you need and teach them what you need. You also need to be aware that they are a business and in order to stay in business, they need clients and they need clients to keep coming back. Part of your job whether the employer realizes it or not is to get people to come back by educating them about their bodies and what massage can do. It is your massage that does part of that. I can't tell you the number of bad massages that I had at various spas and clinics. Some of the challenges are:

- Keeping your massage fresh and unique and geared towards the clients needs.
- Listening to what the client needs.
- Keeping quiet and letting the client direct the session
- Getting the client to tune into their bodies and the results of the massage.
- Asking for the rate of pay and benefits that you require so that you don't feel resentful towards clients or the employer.
- If you say you do deep tissue massage be sure that you do. Most people have never really been trained in deep tissue massage.
- Do a thorough intake and evaluation to engage your client in the sessions.
- Tell clients how massage works, how tight muscles affect them and show them some of the tight areas in their bodies.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Know how to work on people who have pain areas even if you are just working in a spa. I have yet to have a purely 'relaxation massage' that someone doesn't have tension or pain somewhere in your body.
- Provide a treatment plan for clients and tell them what other things you would work on to improve their health, condition or other areas.
- Keep them coming back!
- Be on time for your shifts and for your appointments. No last minute crises or late arrivals. Work on schedule with each client.
- Be available for hard to fill shifts like Sundays, evenings and be available to fill in on short notice.
- Be a team player. Most massage therapists are very independent which makes working a challenge sometimes.
- Dress professionally and act professionally. Jeans and tee shirts don't cut it. You may have to wear a uniform of some sorts. Keep it clean and professional.
- Know how to educate clients and create repeat business. Use interview skills to determine clients' needs and educate clients as to how getting regular massage can be of benefit to them.
- Know how to do sales of other spa items or health related items
- Have exceptional customer service skills
- Have exceptional communication skills.
- Have exceptional massage skills and knowledge of pathology
- Be able to fill in for the receptionist
- Be able to do billing and accounting work
- Understand business practices
- Be able to discover clients needs and learn to meet them
- Be able to do all types of massage proficiently.
- Be willing to learn new types of massage or spa treatments.
- Be able to give suggestions for marketing and participate in building the business.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Be a good listener and don't talk about yourself or don't talk unless asked something.
- Take continuing education classes continually to improve your skills
- Show an interest in learning the business and moving up to various positions such as a trainer or manager.
- Be ready to go with your massage license, liability insurance and references
- Know how to do a Great Deep Tissue Massage. Take classes in it if you are not proficient in this technique. Get some sessions yourself from a deep tissue massage therapist to see what it really feels like. Most spas and chiropractors need massage therapists who know how to do deep tissue massage. I can not tell you the number of really bad deep tissue massages I have gotten. I have gotten to the point where I will ask for my money back! Deep tissue massage is an art that needs to be practiced over and over. Take classes in it until you are well versed in it. Any good deep tissue massage therapist will be busy all of the time. It will help you to keep clients coming back in. If you are not getting a lot of repeat clients this would be a good place to start looking at.

Where to look for employers

Many of the online job centers like monster.com and careerbuilder.com may or may not have local job listings for your area. Your first job resource should be your massage school graduate services department. They should also have resources for helping you write resumes, practice job interviews and current job listings.

The best way though is to do your research on the various local companies and find out if YOU want to work for any of those places. So often massage therapist will just take what comes their way. Doing your research first can help you find a place that is more compatible for your needs and values.

The best way to research the company is go and get a handful of massages or other spa services from the place you are interested in and pay attention to every detail.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- How do they answer the phone? Do they put you on hold a lot? Are they professional in the way they answer? They will be making appointments for you. Do they know what they are talking about? Ask what kinds of massage do you do? Ask who is your best deep tissue therapist or best hot stone massage therapist. I have called many places and one of my biggest concerns is when I ask "Who does deep tissue?" they always say that all of the therapists do and of course when I go in and get a so called deep tissue massage - it isn't even close. How they define and explain their services can make or break your appointment schedule. Also if you are a male be sure to listen to other calls when you are there if you can and see if they say things like "Do you want a woman therapist?" rather than just booking it with the next available therapist who happens to be male.
- Are their appointments run on time?
- What are the massages actually like? Do the therapists take their time to get to know you? Are they skilled in what they do?
- Are the rooms spacious and clean?
- What is the overall experience like?
- What do they say when you leave? Do they ask you how your massage was and if you want to book another appointment? That simple question is what can bring clients back. If they are on the phone or doing other things when you leave and not paying attention to you, how will this look to your potential clients?
- Talk to the therapists there and see how they like working there. If they are professional they may not be honest but if they are unhappy, they may be ready to spill their guts and tell you how it really is. Ask how the management is. Ask how the tips are. Ask what the hours are like and if their schedules are full. You may or may not want to tell them that you are a massage therapist. Either way has its advantages. If you don't tell them, you will get an idea of what it is like to be a customer there. If you do tell them, the massage therapist may open up a bit more and tell you more about working there.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

Informational Interviewing

After you get some ideas of places that you want to work, try to set up an informational interview with the manager or at least call and see if you can ask them questions. Do this even if they are not hiring. This is actually a good time to connect with them.

- Find out who to talk to by calling and asking who is in charge of hiring the massage therapists.
- Write letters to these people or call them and tell them you are interested in learning more about their company. Make it clear that you are not looking for a job, but are looking into various places for information only. If they do not have time to talk to you in person, ask if you can ask them a few questions over the phone.
- Show interest in them as people asking why do they work there or how long have they worked there.
- Read the companies website or go in for a massage or to and familiarize yourself with their services. Ask about one or two of them.
- People may not have a lot of time to talk to you. Don't take it personally, but take it seriously and prepare your questions.

Resources for informational interviewing:

[Quint Careers](#) -informational interviewing tutorial

Tips on being successful at work.

- Show up early for your shift
- Be well groomed and dressed nicely even if you have a uniform.
- Ask questions about where clients are coming from so you know how the company is advertising.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Find out everything you can about how the business is run. Learn different aspects of the business.
- Talk to the other massage therapists and consider forming your own peer supervision group so that you can talk with others about dealing with clients and session issues. Doing this can help you and the company as well as the other employers. To find out more about peer supervision see www.peersupervision.com
- Interact with clients as much as you can. Do a thorough intake to find out just what it is that they are looking for. What are they expecting to get out of the session? Figure out how to provide that. Ask for feedback during the massage.
- Work with your manager to help you learn about interacting with clients and how to build a clientele. Often managers are not massage therapists and need to be educated about your needs and about what massage can do.
- Talk to the receptionists and work with them on how they talk about massage and what you do. Show them what you do by giving them a massage a month. If your employer discourages this tell them that it will help them to talk about massage. The receptionist really can help build the business by knowing about massage. They are taught to say things like “Everyone here does deep tissue massage” but in reality most don’t. Educating the receptionist on what it is and what it is that you do can help you to build your success.
- Don't work at any place that you feel resentful about. It will show up in your massage work as well as your success.
- Everywhere you go there will be some drama going on- people stealing tips or trying to steal all of the clients. Stay out of it and focus on what you want ignoring the trouble makers.
- Work with the management to create marketing ideas and promotions that will serve both parties.
- Be sure to negotiate your ideal schedule and allow for x amount of time in between sessions. Be sure to negotiate a schedule that you can work so that you aren't drained at the end of it from doing too many sessions.

How To Find or Create Your Ideal Job as a Massage Therapist

- Don't stay in jobs you hate. Find something else.

The process of finding a job is a full time and serious venture. A job in massage can be a great source of income and a great learning environment. It can be a stepping stone on the way to starting your own business, a way to supplement your income part time or it can make you a Great living when you take the time to research the job market and focus on what you can do for the employer rather than on what they can do for you. Doing everything you can to find or create your ideal job will be well worth it. If you have tried everything in this Ebook consider hiring a job coach, a professional resume writer and whatever else you need to create what you want.

If you are still having a difficult time everything really comes down to your own core beliefs about work, success and making money. Becoming aware of your unconscious patterns can be a difficult process. Most often we are not even aware that there is a pattern because after all it is unconscious. If you don't know what your unconscious beliefs are about money and success just start looking at what you have in your life and ask yourself 'what must someone believe to have that in their life?'. I explore the process of becoming more aware and resources to begin your journey on my other website www.workless-playmore.com

Just think you could be like this lucky gal –Bonnie Brown who was a massage therapist employed by Google before Google was really known. She is now a multi-millionaire writing books about how she did it and traveling the world.

[NY Times Article](#) www.gigglebook.com [Bonnie's blog](#)

This could be you!!!!!!

Feedback

This ebook has been an ongoing project since 2002 and is created for readers who are considering a career in massage therapy. It has been rewritten many times based on the feedback and inquiries from readers at www.message-career-guides.com and in my online discussion group at Yahoo Groups! Please take a moment to provide your feedback when you have finished reading.

I appreciate any and all comments, questions and feedback.

Thanks

Julie Onofrio

julie@message-career-guides.com