

How to Get Your Website to the TOP of the First Page of Google.



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How to get your website to the top of the first page of Google

If you need more massage clients you will need a website that gets listed on the top of the first page of Google (and other search engines) when people search for the keywords – massage, your city. There is just no way around it.

It will take some time and learning on your part, but websites are so much easier to create these days. You just have to set aside that critical voice in your head that says it will be too difficult, complicated or impossible for you to do. Just take it little by little – a half hour a day even if that is all you can take.

How the Internet Works

A little background on the www (World Wide Web): Getting your website on to the www is a process of creating files and combining them into a format (website) that can be hosted on a server on the internet. Here is my really simplistic version of how this works:

The Internet is basically a network of computers around the world that share information through emailing, instant messaging and file transfer protocol (FTP). The **www** is just one more way of exchanging information through the internet and Web Browsers are what allow it all to happen and connect. You will be designing a website that will need to be found among all of the billions of websites out there. **Hyperlinks** are what connect web pages together on the www. I'll say that again –

Hyperlinks are what connect web pages together on the www.

Once you really understand that, you start to see why links are so important in creating a website – the links *within* the site linking the pages together and the links *from other sites* that go to your site are what make the www possible. People click on links and follow them through the internet. There are programs that automatically scan the web for hyperlinks. The process of following and retrieving documents on the www is called crawling and the search engines have programs called “Spiders” or “Bots” that do the crawling to find websites. The Web is a collection of interconnected documents and other files that are *linked together by hyperlinks*. Search engines are in the business of finding websites and

organizing them by keywords. They search the web for websites and follow the links to more and more websites and also keep an index of these sites on their servers so that when someone does a search they already know where it is. That is why search results are able to appear very quickly when you do a search. Search engines start with websites that are the most popular and follow the links from there on down. The spiders/bots return every so often to check up on the websites and their links. The more popular your website, the more often they come back to visit. Communicating with spiders/bots is an important part of getting your website found online. The spiders look at specific parts of the document to find out what is on your website and file it according to hundreds of variables that are kept secret so that no one can really know how they work. Today search engines are getting much smarter and are moving toward looking for meaning and context.

In July 2008, [Google announced](#) that they had found 1 trillion (as in 1,000,000,000,000) unique URLs on the web!! They also explained their basic process for looking at and indexing websites:

How do we find all those pages? We start at a set of well-connected initial pages and follow each of their links to new pages. Then we follow the links on those new pages to even more pages and so on, until we have a huge list of links.

The reason I am sharing this information with you will definitely become clear by the end of this book. (Even though 2008 was quite awhile ago, the basics remain the same but the power of links has decreased significantly in the past few years!)

The basic technical process that is needed to get a website going consists of:

- Placing your website on a host (server) that allows you to add, update or change the pages as often as you need to.
- You will need to pay for space on a server and will receive or buy additional software that will help you create your site, update the pages, and continually add new information.

- You will have to tell the search engines that you have made a website and you will need to help them to find you. (Remember that search engines are in the business of providing the best searches to their users. The search engines that give the best relevant results will be used the most!)

As you create a website, keep in mind that the goal is to be found by the search engines. Today, the best place to be is at the top of the first page of the search result or at least somewhere on the first page. Now in 2015, getting to the top of the first page of Google is quite different than it was about 5 years ago. If you just build a solid website, you should not have to worry about what Google does. Your site should remain at the top (theoretically!)

Webhosting: Where to start your website and what software should you use.

There are so many different hosting options but and it isn't really hosting that will make the difference in getting to the first page of Google. Here are my recommendations:

Use WordPress. WordPress is known as blogging software but it is much more than that. It is really a content management system. It can be used for a website, a blog or a website with a blog. You can start playing with the free version at www.wordpress.com to see if you can figure out how to use it. (I don't recommend using the free version, but it may be a good place to start learning about websites. You can move to a self-hosted WordPress site as you learn more and gain more confidence.)

You will have to do learn how to use the software on your own. I do have a little tutorial on it at www.messagepracticebuilder.com and there is a ton of free help out there on it. You will have to install plugins and figure out the best settings for them all.

The best way to use WordPress is on a site that you host yourself on a server that you purchase on your own. There are many, many webhosts where you can do that. I actually use and recommend [Dreamhost](#) as they specialize in WordPress hosting.

The other webhost that I use and recommend is [SBI! aka Site Build it!](#) They are much more than a hosting company. They teach you EVERYTHING you need to know about creating websites that work – and getting to the top of Google and getting the clicks that you need to get the traffic you need. I have been using them since about 2002. They also teach you how to create a website business where you can make money with your website to support you while you do massage and work on building your business. It is about creating residual income that will last through retirement or for whatever you want.

If you are an ABMP member, they offer a free website which is pretty good for starters too. There are other Free webhosting options but if you really want to get the best results, you really need more control over your website. You need to be able to create unlimited pages and have unlimited bandwidth - meaning traffic.

If you are seriously overwhelmed with this all then you really should hire someone to do your website for you. Expect to pay a few thousand for a really good, effective website and on top of that you will still need to be adding content weekly if not more often.

Domain Names

Quite simply...your domain name should tell what you do and where you do it so it is clear to someone at first glance what it is that you do. It may also include what solution you provide

for people. So a domain that says www.massagetheyourcity.com is really the best but the problem is that most of those are already taken.

You have to get a little creative. Put some thought into this too. You can add little words to the domain to try to find one that is available like – massageinmycity.com.

Use something like www.domainsbot.com to research various possibilities. Don't register your domain there. It is best to register your domain with your webhost so you have it all in one place. Once in a while you might find a domain on that website that says it is available but when you go to register it, it may be already taken. Your webhost will tell you.

Your domain name can be different from your business name. If you do have a different business name you can get that in a domain name and redirect it to your site that uses the domain with your keywords – www.massagetheyourcity.com

Website Design and Layout

Keep it simple. Make it mobile friendly. Keep it simple. It needs to load quickly in every type of browser.

Website Design Do's

The best design is clean and simple. Here are some tips:

- Use text that is big enough and easy to read. Use plain black text. Visitors who can't read the text will leave your site. Period.
- Use a white or light colored background.
- Break up text into short paragraphs that are easy to read. (Think most people skim!)
- Use subheadings to break up paragraphs and emphasize information.
- Get some pictures done professionally of you doing massage! That is really the best thing for search engines nowadays. Use professionally done pictures of people getting a massage in the header (top area). If you can't do that, buy stock photos or buy pictures from <http://ryanhoyne.com/pictures/>. See how many people are using the image first, if you buy from a stock photo company, so it doesn't look like the same person getting the massage everywhere. Do a Google Image Search - <http://www.google.com/imghp>

In the search engine box, upload the photo in question and click search.

- Use soft colors that suggest relaxation if your business is relaxation focused.
- Increase line spacing where possible, leaving more space between lines.
- If you use links, state what the link is - especially if it is a PDF file.
- Put your contact information – phone number, address, and email address on the top or side of EVERY page. Make it easy for people to contact you.

Website Design Don'ts

- Don't use Flash Intros or Flash of any kind. Flash is dead. Search engines can't find it, and people don't have time to watch it. Avoid pop up or pop under pages!
- NO MUSIC! Sorry but it is true. The music is more about YOU not your prospective client. If I want music when I am online, I will play what I want and when I want it. If a site starts playing music, I will immediately close the window and others will too!
- Don't steal pictures from Google images or from any website. Pictures are the property of the photographer. You can ask for permission if you find one that you like but get it in writing so they can't come back and sue you. Also many pictures you find may be stock photos or may be owned by others and the person with the website may not know it. You are responsible for knowing who owns the pictures. You can do a Google Image search and actually upload the image in question and they will tell you other places that it is used. Just go here:
<http://www.google.com/imghp>
- Red on black doesn't look cool nor does any other color text on a black background.

Navigation is a part of search engine optimization and also of getting your readers to become clients! Your key goal is to provide the easiest most effective navigation route for your visitors and for the spiders. You want them to move to the right pages in the right order. The basic design should be so simple that people don't have to think. Yes, they can usually find their way through confusing navigation, but if you make it so they don't have to think to do that, it will keep them more focused on what they are looking for and focused on your content. (For More info see the book: [Don't make me Think](#). A common sense approach to web usability by Steve Krug)

The navigation tabs or buttons will have text links in them that connect all your pages together. Remember, search engines love links and will find you through a link! They will follow the links within your site to index the whole website. The way you link your site together is an important part of search engine optimization.

Google's Webmaster Guidelines recommends that you:

“Make a site with a clear hierarchy and text links. Every page should be reachable from at least one static text link.”

This is probably THE most important concept that I hope you will understand!

This means that every page should be able to be reached within 3 clicks from the homepage. Your site needs to be connected by links and in a clear *Tier formation*. Your home page is Tier,1 and the linked pages on your navigation bar then become Tier 2 pages.

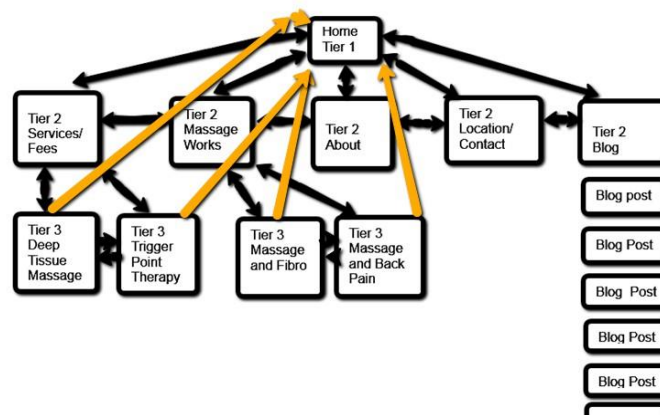
Your Tier 2 pages will link to Tier 3 pages. You don't want to have more than 3 tiers because Google usually doesn't index those pages.

Keep it simple and straight forward! Have a navigation bar down one side of the page and/or one at the top of the page.

The navigation structure and page layout will funnel visitors into making your most wanted response – an email/call to ask more questions or make an appointment or to use your online scheduling system to make an appointment. For instance, each page in Tier 2

will link to every other page in Tier 2 and also link back to the home page. Tier 2 pages may also be linked to pages from other tiers. Pages from other tiers need to link either back or to any other, tier if they are on the same topic. In that way, your website is linked together and will take people step by step through each page as you build the interest and trust of the reader. (See image below.)

As you create links from page to page, think about keywords again. The general method of linking has been to use the main keyword in the actual text of the link. There is now some talk of that actually hurting SEO and that Google is getting smarter all the time and can supposedly now read the words next to the link. The real idea is to create natural looking links. Make your linking as natural as possible and as clear as possible.



Tier 2 pages show up on the navigation bar of the homepage. That is what defines them a Tier

2. The Tier 2 pages will have links in the body of the page to the Tier 3 page and/or will contain a navigation bar with text links (or buttons or bars) and will influence the reader to click on the links.

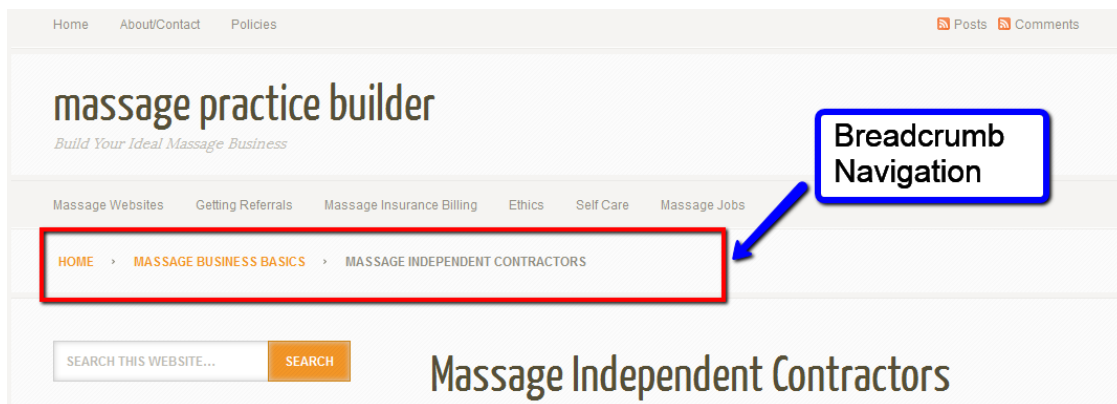
The Tier 3 pages should also *link back* to Tier 2 *and the* home page. For example... Your home page will link to a page on your massage services (the types of massage) you do. That page will list the types of massage like deep tissue, pregnancy massage, etc. When the reader gets to the bottom of the page ‘deep tissue’ you will want to redirect them back to the homepage or to the other pages. You can do that by just adding a link that says something like “return to Home”. The best way to link your pages together is to add something

called 'breadcrumbs' to your pages. Breadcrumbs is a navigation system that tells users where they are on the website so that they can easily navigate back to the home page or to the page that they just came from. Some website builder systems will do that automatically for you. WordPress has plugins to allow you to do that.

Here is Google's Help file on that:

<https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/185417?hl=en>

You have to go to the bottom and look at the code that they tell you to use in the link that says Microdata. Personally I don't really understand the coding part of it all, but just copy what they have there and add your own info to make the link work. You can also find templates or plugins with it already built in. This is what it looks like on a WordPress Website:



Clear and easy navigation is an important part of building traffic and giving your reader enough information so that they will make the call for the appointment. That is also why it is important to have your contact information on each page. Each page should also have text suggesting that they make a call or contact you by email.

Photos

Another part of good design and SEO is having photos on your website. Photos are becoming a big part of making a site interesting and compelling for readers. People relate to

photos that mean something. A well designed theme or template will also integrate photos into the pages to complement the content.

One of the issues with photos is finding photos that actually represent what we do as massage therapists. You can't just go searching for photos on Google Images and use whatever images you find. That could be a big copyright issue. Most everything online is the property of the owner. If you find a photo that you would like to use, you need to get the owner's permission. The thing is that many people have 'borrowed' photos from other sites and think that they are their own. You don't really know the true source of a photo unless you find the photo specifically on the website of a photographer.

Photos will need to enhance your design and your content. One thing you can do is to make sure you think carefully about the placement of the photo in relation to your content and design. Put the photos near the text you want to highlight and make sure if you have a person that they face toward the content when possible. You can also create a unique style with your photos because of all of the easy to use image editing software that allows you to create vignettes or postcard looking photos etc. When you choose a photo you should also check to see how much it is being used online. You can do that with Google Images.

www.google.com/imghp

Google still likes original photos best!

Although website design is important navigation and search engine optimization (SEO) is where the money is. The nicest looking site that is not optimized won't really matter because no one will see it. A website with a simple design that is pleasing to the eye and is organized and optimized is what will attract customers to you.

So... design is one important aspect of SEO. The next step is to tell Google and search engines what you have on your website and that your website exists!

Meta tags - Tell the Search engines what is on your pages!

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is all of the things that you need to do to get your website found by search engines. Using meta tags is the best way to tell search engines what is on your website. Meta-tags are a hidden part of the site that search engines read. They help search engines decide how to list your website and where to list it. The search engines will show some part of the meta tags in the listing that search engines show for your website that will help determine whether or not people will click on the listing. Meta tags explain what you do and what solutions you provide. Since you only have a few lines of text that show, you will have to make it compelling.

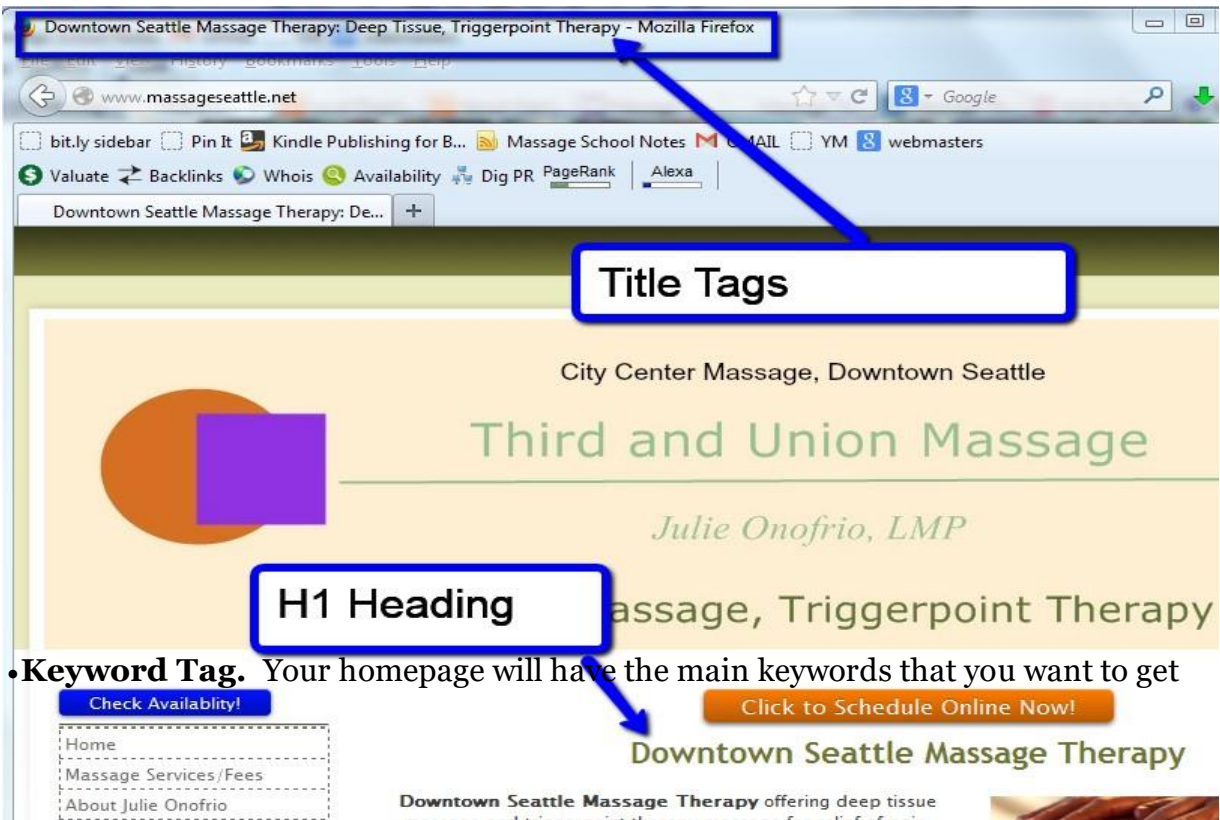
To help with the understanding of Meta tags, Keywords, Descriptions, and Headlines here is an actual page from my website to refer to as you read the descriptions below.

| | |
|--|---|
| File Name | http://www.massageseattle.net/ |
| Title Meta tag- Use the main keyword in the first few words of the Title (or as close as possible) plus a short descriptive phrase. The title shows up in the listing of the search engines so make it compelling so people will want to click on it. | 3rd and Union Massage in Downtown Seattle for the best relaxation massage in town! Specializing in Back and Neck Pain, Carpal Tunnel, Computer Strain, Sports, Deep Tissue and Relaxation Mas- sage |
| Keywords – use the main keyword in the first position and then 3 or 4 more descriptive keywords | downtown seattle massage, seattle massage therapist, massage 98101, sports massage |
| Description – Use the main keyword in the first few words and then a descriptive phrase. The description is what show up in the search results so make it compelling- make it so people will want to click. Put yourself in your potential clients shoes! | Massage Downtown Seattle for the relief of back and neck pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, plantar fasciitis, sports injury and prevention of injuries. |
| Headline of Page using H1 Title tag (usually an option under text) | Massage Downtown Seattle |

| | |
|---|--|
| First sentence of page should include the main keywords exactly as they are in the meta tags. | Offering Massage in Downtown Seattle at |
| Photo | Name your photo the same - massagedowntownseattle.gif Use the Alt tag! |

Many meta tags are used but the main ones that you need to be concerned with are:

- **Title Tag** – The title tag tells search engines what is on your page. The title tag shows up in the top of the browser. It can also be the words in the first sentence of the listing that is created by the search engines, making it the center of attention. It is wise to make it compelling and should suggest something of value to potential visitors. It should create interest and make people *want* to investigate further by clicking to your page. It is also the words that appear when you go to bookmark a website in your browser. Your main keyword should be in the title and in the first few words. The title tag is very critical because it captures the attention of search engines and readers, so take time to craft it for each page. Unfortunately, if it is too long, it will be cut off in the listing.



- **Keyword Tag.** Your homepage will have the main keywords that you want to get

found for. Each page on your website should focus on a main keyword. Enter a *maximum* of 5 keywords in the keywords section. It should consist of one, two or three words in a phrase at most. Your main keyword for the page should appear first in the line. Use a few other words to describe your page or variations of your main keyword. (Yes, Google admits that they don't use the keyword tag, but it is still important like the other tags! There are other search engines besides Google.)

- **Description Tag.** Some engines use some or all of your Description to create the description in the listing on a Search engine results page. The Description forms the second half of what searchers see in a Search Engine's listing. Your Page Title forms the first half. Compel the reader to click to your page with your description. **Don't repeat your Page Title in your Description. Don't create multiple pages with the same description.** From Google's Guide to SEO:

“Whereas a page's title may be a few words or a phrase, a page's description meta tag might be a sentence or two or a short paragraph. [Google Webmaster Tools](#) provides a handy **content analysis section** that'll tell you about any description meta tags that are either too short, too long, or duplicated too many times.”

Your homepage and each page of your website should include this meta data. It should also be formatted in a way that includes keywords in the page in specific ways.

The basic format for a page is as follows (You will have to adapt this to whatever website design program you use. Check the help guide that comes with the program to find where you put the meta tags, keywords and descriptions):

1. The **file name** of the page should include the main keyword that focuses on that page's topic. The file name is the name of the page “sports massage” and the words will show up after your domain name like this :

http://www.massageyourcity.com/sports_message.html (filename is **sports_message**)

2. The **page title** should be the same as the name of the file – with the same words exactly as they are laid out. The page title will show in the top of the browser bar when someone is

viewing the page. It will also show up as the title of the listing that the search engines provide. It is what people and search engines will read first so it needs to make them click on your site and not the next listing! Whatever program you use will require that you learn how it puts the title in – it is usually easy to do. Every program is different. A title is usually less than 70 characters. If you have more than that, the words will be cut off at the end.

3. Your keywords list should restate the name of the file first (your main keyword for that page) and then add additional keywords that apply to the page and website. It should only list about 4-6 words or phrases. The more specific the keyword the better. Use the words 'massage therapist Seattle' not 'massage' which is very general. Use your main keyword only once! Use variations of it if you can. Be short and to the point!

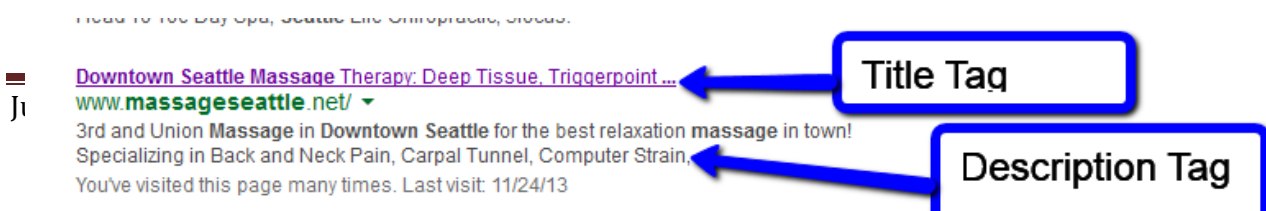
4. The description of the page will also start with the name of the file (that uses your main keywords) and can be in the form of a sentence. The description will be caught by search engines in the results. This is like writing an advertisement for your website so write it carefully. Don't use the same words as in your title except for the keyword or keyword phrase. Make it catchy! Make people want to click and read your website!

5. The headline of the page should also be the same as the file name of the page. Create a headline that is larger in text and uses the headline format (which is different depending on what program you use). It should also be descriptive to make people want to keep reading. Make it interesting!

6. The first line of the text should include the file name in the page and the same keyword should be used a few times throughout the body of the page.

7. Name your photos –with the main keyword of the page as in seattlemassage.jpeg to further attract search engines, consider using an 'alt tag' for photos or graphics that also have the same keyword name.

Here is what it looks like:



There also seems to be a lot of controversy over the use of the keyword meta tags on websites especially since Google has said that they do not go by the keyword tag. I still use them because there are other search engines out there besides Google. The title tag and the description tag are still the things that do show up in the listing so until that changes just stay with it!

There are a few more meta tags that you can use to help your site get found locally:

- `<meta name="zipcode" content="include all applicable zip codes">`
- `<meta name="city" content="include all applicable city names">`
- `<meta name="state" content="list all applicable states">`
- `<meta name="county" content="list specific counties or municipalities, if applicable">`
- `<meta name="country" content="include country details by name and abbreviation, ex., United States, USA">`

You just add those codes to your website in the meta tag area. You will have to find out exactly where you can add those tags depending on the system you are using. Some systems may not let you add these additional tags but they can help for a local site to get listed in the search engines.

A small summary:

All the above is just telling the search engines that you are here and what you are doing – that you are in Seattle doing massage.

With each page you build, you will need to use a different main keyword. You can use a variation of your main keyword, for instance ‘massage therapy services’ for the services page or ‘your city massage services’. Use this same method for creating tags and for using the keywords of each page. Don’t over use words.

You will need to keep building pages, finding new keywords and developing new content. I usually recommend 30 pages but having more pages does not necessarily mean more traffic/clients. It is what is needed to really convey what you do and to build trust with potential readers.

Don't be alarmed by that number. I will give you many ideas for topics. They will be built over time. You don't have to be a perfect writer! It is really about writing down what you are

already saying to people every day, either on the phone or to clients on your massage table. Just start writing the same way you talk to people. It is more appealing and more personal on websites. You are providing a service to the massage profession by educating clients as to what you do and what massage does. Content is what makes the internet and websites work.

Just put yourself in your client's shoes and assume they know nothing about their muscles and/or their body. The curse of knowledge is that we often forget what we already what we know.

All this may seem to take a lot of time and energy. It does, but once it is done you can add a page or two a month if you want even more clients. I suggest starting with setting up 10 pages in the first month and then adding to it over the next few months. You can track your results and make changes as you go.

So carefully crafted meta tags can help get your website found by the right people! I personally think that metatags are becoming less important UNTIL the site/page is actually being found by search engines. Once you get the page ranked, you can improve the click through rate by having better meta tags.

Let the Content Begin

Content is what makes everything come together. Think of content as the way you build relationships online. Your content is what makes people feel comfortable and makes them trust you. Search engines love content. Remember, they are in the business of finding the best content to meet the searchers needs. Content needs to over-deliver! Content will bring the search engines which means it will bring people to your site who are looking for something. People are already searching for something so they are great potential clients! You give them what they want with content.

People are more open to making an appointment when they find your site through searching, compared to someone who sees an ad for your business. You are seen as the expert! You become the one they trust...all because of content.

Start with putting yourself in a reader/potential clients shoes. Actually go out and look for

a massage therapist in your area just by searching.... What do you find? Think about what you see in the listings. What is it that makes you click on one listing over the other? Think about how you feel the first few seconds after clicking on a site. I also like to assume that they know nothing about how massage works or why it works. When you do that, it will help you write more at their level rather than using big anatomy, physiology and pathology words you learned in massage school. A good general rule is write as you would for seventh graders. That is because most people skim and jump around so they still need to get the information that they are looking for. Make it easy to read and follow.

Think about what kind of clients you want – your ideal client. Who are they? An ideal client is someone who already understands what massage does and values getting massage. They don't have to be sold on it. They may be looking for their first massage but they already have an inkling that massage could help them. What would your ideal client like to see in a site? What would they have to know before they click on the link to make an appointment?

One of the challenges in providing great content is getting over our fears of writing. Many will want to just set up a calling card type of website and call it good. People want to know more about you so they can make an informed decision. They want information that will help them solve a problem which is usually some sort of stress and/or pain. It is also getting over the fear of possibly doing it all wrong. Writing is a learning process like anything else. It will get better the more you do it. Hopefully it will get easier to make yourself sit down and just start writing. Don't worry if you have some of those days where you don't feel like doing anything!

The basic formula for writing a page is something like this:

- Start with a general overview of the topic. Why are you writing about this?
- Do a little research on the topic. Read a few good articles.
- Start putting your thoughts together about what you read.

- State the obvious. Keep it simple. Get back to what you didn't know before you went to massage school.
- Let your voice come through. Just be yourself! Just write the way you would if you were talking to someone right in front of you!
- Start with a good headline that pulls the visitor in. Sometimes I write the article first and go back and write the headline.
- Divide your article into small paragraphs to make it readable and easier to understand.
- Write a few paragraphs to make your point.
- Write a summary of your article and add a call to action. What do you want them to do or to know at the end of the article?
- Go over it again and edit as needed.
- Check for typos and grammar. Read it out loud. Print it and read it.
- Don't worry about the grammar police or the content police. There will always be someone who has issues with something. Don't let people get to you. If something needs to be changed - change it.
- Add photos and videos to further emphasize content!

So let's move into it! I have broken down the basic pages and provided you with some ideas for each page and section! Let's go! Just sit down in front of the computer! Put your hands on the keyboard!

In addition to written content, Google wants pictures and videos! I mention photos a few times throughout this book, but videos are really a whole book in itself. You can venture out and start learning about how to create videos. Some ideas would be short videos on what is Swedish massage, deep tissue massage or some other type of massage that you do. Be aware of copyright issues when using photos!

The Home Page, About Me Page and Services Page

The Home Page. The home page is where most people will land on through search engines or directly through your URL. It is one of the most important pages that you will have on your site. You have about 5 seconds to get someone's attention. If people found your page through the search engines they won't know anything about you and they won't really care much about you. They are still thinking about themselves and are looking for an answer to their problem (which is why they were searching in the first place). The issues that usually bring people to look for massage are some kind of pain or stress. They want to know if you will have the knowledge and experience to help them with it. They want to know if it will be worth spending their money on you. They want to know if you can handle their situation. They want to know – What is in it for me?

The way that you tell them is through writing content so your home page will have to address and ease their fears and peak their interest so they will read more about you or call to make an appointment.

Your home page will need to answer the question: What solution do you provide? Start thinking about that and create a one or two sentence 'slogan' for the headline and topic of your home page.

People don't want to know about the benefits of massage or the history of massage. They want to know what you can do for them! They don't want to know how many years of experience you have or what training you have until they understand what is in it for them.

Crafting a homepage that attracts your Ideal Client is the goal. It will take time and will also require testing the wording on the homepage to see what works best.

When a home page starts with something like “Welcome to my Website” - it is really about you. People would rather see something that indicates that you know what you are doing. If you say something like “If you are stressed out, you have found the right website” this is a sales pitch which you want to avoid on a website. The goal in writing content is to inform and educate people. People will know when they are being sold to and will be more skeptical.

Your homepage will link to 5-15 pages creating your main navigation structure. The Main pages will be: your 'about me' page, your services/fees page, your contact/location page and then you will add pages about different types of massage, or different diseases and conditions that you work with or specialize in such as pregnancy massage, car accidents, work related injuries and sports injuries.

Your 'About Me' Page is the second most important page on a website. After you create an attractive and engaging homepage, the next page you want people to go to is either your massage services page that lists the fees and services you offer or your 'about me' page. People want to know who you are!

Creating your 'about me' page for your massage business website is where you will tell people just that – everything about yourself that is related to your business. It is the second most visited page on websites. It is like looking at the dust jacket of a book to find out who the author is and what they look like. People want to know if you are capable of handling whatever problem they have. Your main goal with your 'about me' page is to create credibility and build trust with potential clients.

A good place to start with is why you chose massage as a profession. This really works because massage therapists go into massage because they want to help people or because massage helped them heal from an injury or condition. The people searching for a therapist want someone who wants to help them, someone who is knowledgeable about their condition. People will relate to your story! The 'about me' page is very important. Take time to make it truthful and compelling. Here are some suggestions for your 'about me' page:

- write from your heart
- have a picture of yourself doing massage
- write about your very first massage experience and how it helped you
- write about how often you get a massage yourself especially if you get one every week and be a model for your clients
- write about why you went to massage school
- write about what it means for you to be doing massage
- write about why you like doing massage

- write about your own healing experience with massage
- write about your expertise
- talk about what problems you can and have solved with massage
- include the steps they need to take to contact you
- don't be afraid to brag or show off – this is about you!
- use the 'about me' page to link to your other best or most popular pages
- write about what sets you apart from others
- write about your philosophy on health and healing
- write your mission or vision statement

The Services Page

Create a page about your massage services including your rates for each service. List every type of massage that you do and explain it in a brief paragraph. I also recommend that you have a link that takes the reader to a whole page on each type of massage that you do. Most people don't really know about the different types of massage. Deep tissue massage is often confusing for people because of the name and the idea that deep tissue is - well deep. There are many different ideas on what makes a deep tissue massage. You need to communicate what your idea is and be clear about the depth and pain levels. People don't even really know what basic Swedish massage is. Write about why you do that type of massage and what you use it for. It is also another opportunity to create pages with good keywords that people may be searching for – things like 'deep tissue massage', or 'spa massage your city'.

Build More Content

When people search for something online they are looking for information. The internet is all about information. People may have a problem or issue and they are looking for a solution. Content is what drives search engines. The more pages you have on your website, the more opportunities search engines have to find you. Search engines are in the business of finding information that people want. It is also what builds trust with the reader/potential client especially online. When people find that information on your website, they will trust you from the start. Because massage is such a personal experience, trust is essential in building a relationship with your clients. The visitor will have more respect for you. You will look like the expert when you give them what they are looking for! That is all done with writing content!

Creating quality content is key to creating a 'website that works' and finding your ideal client. You don't need to be a writer, but you do need to be able to write down what you say to people all the time anyway. It is just what you tell people on the phone or on the massage table. Since people are searching for a service that will help them with whatever problem they have, they want to know if you can help them. There are many reasons why people come for massage, and there are many different styles and techniques that you know. Most people don't know about the different styles of massage and the different styles mean nothing if it isn't connected to how it can help them.

Creating in-depth content that tells a story of who you are, what you do and how you and massage are going to help solve their problem is what will help build trust.

To build a 'website that works' you need to have at least 30 pages of content to start with and it is also necessary to always be adding more. You are probably feeling overwhelmed right now about what you are going to write. Be comforted that the writing doesn't have to be perfect, text book edited information. Just think about the things that you say every day to clients and start writing it all down. It does have to be grammatically correct and typo free. Start thinking about what it is that you really do with clients, something beyond what classes you have taken and techniques that you know. Just write the way you talk to people. Keep it simple. The first few pages might be difficult to put together but the more you do, the easier it

gets – honest!

Here are some ideas for your first few pages. With the first three suggestions, go back to the previous chapter where there [is a whole section](#) to help you with each page:

- Home Page
- ‘About Me’ Page
- List of services, prices, office hours, contact information
- Forms – intake forms, insurance verification forms etc.
- Policies and Procedures – late fees, cancellation fees, policy on tipping
- Frequently asked questions page – Do I have to get undressed for a massage? What do I wear? What do I need to bring?
- Suggestions for getting the most out of your massage
- Gift certificates
- The address, phone number and contact info should be on every page, preferably on the top or bottom

Writing articles (pages) on your website is about attracting search engines and also potential clients. Here is a list of some suggested topics for pages:

- Fibromyalgia and massage
- Massage and headaches
- Massage and muscle strains/sprains
- What to do if you are in a Motor Vehicle Collision (MVC)
- Beyond touch – what massage is really doing (not the typical benefits of massage)
- Back pain and massage
- Neck pain and massage
- Tendonitis and massage

- Plantar fasciitis and massage
- Pain – the message from our bodies
- Water for health
- Stretches for everyday health
- Healthy computing
- Write pages about the various types of massage that you do yourself and explain how you use them and why you use them.
- Taking time for yourself
- Stress – what it **really** is, and how to deal with it more effectively.
- What to do before and after a massage for continued benefits.

Take some of your most frequently asked questions or comments and start writing about them.

- How do muscles work?
- What is a knot?
- Stretches for different conditions
- Guides for setting up desks for best posture and the least amount of strain
- Exercise and massage
- Yoga and massage
- Breathing exercises
- Sports and massage
- Stress and what it **Really** means
- What really happens when you are injured and when scar tissue begins to form.
- What are the different types of massage that you don't do but people often ask about. Craniosacral, Rolfing always make people curious.

- Have a page on music and how music can help the process of relaxation and find affiliate programs through amazon.com and make money selling music to clients through your website.
- Create a page on various massage tools that you might recommend to clients and sell those also. Talk about how to use them or why you find them helpful.
- Write about doing couples massage and sell a DVD on it to people there who are interested. You don't even need to have your own classes on this but it can also be another service you offer. See [Couples massage](#) info on my website.
- Write about the meaning of touch and what touch can do for people.
- Have a section for other massage therapists. Get involved in your community. If you are reading this, you are already a leader in your community so share what you know and have learned. You can find products to sell to other massage therapists in your area.
- Share what you know about essential oils and aromatherapy even if you don't offer that service, but particularly if you do! Sell oils and lotions through amazon.com so you don't have to carry products. You will also get sales from people out of state who aren't clients.
- Become informed on the latest research but be sure you know how to interpret research. Just because there is a study done, does not make it so. Find the section on research and resources on my site www.massageschoolnotes.com
- Create a self massage page for clients.
- Have stretches for various ailments that you work with if it is within your scope of practice.

Writing about yourself and massage will also help educate the public as to what massage can and can't do. Educating people is not just about spewing out information – it is about making a connection with people to find out what they really need. It will help your readers make a

more informed decision about choosing you and will also help you find clients who are compatible with your beliefs and values. Doing so will help you create a practice that is congruent with who you are and increase your chance of success. It will help you attract new clients and keep clients coming more often.

The process of building content can feel overwhelming so just remember - it is done gradually over time. Each page should have at least 300- 500 words, more is better. There is more evidence that Google likes even longer content. Search engines look for more recent content. One of the tricks in writing content is to write just the way you talk to people in person. It is more personable and readable too. It is very important that your content be original and not copy pasted from other online sources. Never copy even a sentence or two from another site. Don't even try to get away with paraphrasing. Google in particular does not like duplicate content. They only want the best original information.

The other part of writing content is about search engines and getting them to come to your website and to list your site in their listings. Every time you create a page, you need to tell the search engines that you just added a new page or updated a page. When you create your first page, you need to tell Google and Bing that your site is out there and the best way to do that is by creating an xml sitemap and 'pinging' them with that information when you build a page. A 'ping' is like a little dinner bell saying come and get it! That is why it is better to create as much content as you can to keep the dinner bell ringing! You will learn about xml sitemaps in the next chapter so don't worry!

If you become really stuck, you can download the free [Netwriting Masters Class](#) (Warning: long Ebook but very insightful) that will help you to just write the way you talk. This isn't about knowing marketing or creating a catchy phrase. It is just talking to potential clients the way you would talk to them in person and telling them about yourself and what you do.

So now the technical part of writing content which I touched on already in the section on meta tags is worth bringing up again because it is SO important.

Your headline of your page needs to be the right combination of keywords and attraction

getting words. So your basic pages (about me, services/fees, etc.) are usually pretty straight forward but be sure to use the word massage (the main keyword or if it is a specific technique or whatever) and then use a descriptive word if you can. Sometimes you just can't. This is more important for other informational based pages, like on the different kinds of diseases or conditions that you work with, or particularly important if you are blogging.

So start with an idea for your page – say your services page. When people land on the page, the first thing they will see is the headline of the page. It will have a big impact on who goes on to actually read the page or find out more about your services. So it will say something like 'Massage Services' or 'Therapeutic Massage'. You can't really embellish that much.

Let's try other pages like one on fibromyalgia and massage. Start with the keywords 'Fibromyalgia Massage' and then think of something descriptive that will really make them want to read the page....

- You don't have to live in pain
- Your answer to pain and fatigue
- Breaking the pain cycles
- Becoming human again
- How to live a more pain free life (using how to is really about telling them the benefits of massage.)

The headline should always be done in the H1 tag. The H1 tag is <h1>Your Headline Here</h1>. You will have to figure out how to make that happen in whatever website system you are using. It is usually already done for you in some of them. This is one part of search engine optimization.

Some other things about the headline:

- Keep the headline less than 80 characters, 40 is best. (Spaces and punctuation count as characters.)
- If your headline is longer than one line, "break it" so that the two (or more) lines are

about equal length, especially if you choose the "centered" alignment. Use the
 tag.

- Include your Specific Keyword once, not more than twice
- Do not use all CAPS. Use a combination of Caps and lower case for more impact.
- Normally headlines do not contain periods, as they are not complete sentences. However, they may have commas, dashes, question marks or exclamation marks to make people want to keep reading!

The body of your page will be a combination of keywords and compelling copy. Try to use your keyword a few times throughout the page. You can also use it too much so be careful. If you are using WordPress there is a plugin called SEO by Yoast that will help you analyze your meta tags and the body of your article for keywords. SBI! has that feature too.

Using links in your page is also a part of SEO. You need to make sure that all of your pages are linked together. You can link out to a few other resources if you really want to, but remember that takes people away from your website. Getting other websites to link to you is the last part of getting the search engines attention and is talked about more in the next chapter!

If you are intimidated by writing content, just take one topic at a time and start writing. Get feedback on my Fan page on Facebook – <http://www.facebook.com/MassagePracticeBuilder> and look at what other people are writing about. Just step back when it gets to be too much and do something you like until you feel more connected and relaxed.

Building Traffic

Before we get into the building traffic concepts – make sure that your website has a statistics program set up or add Google Analytics to your pages. You won't be able to track what is working and what is not without this. You will also want to watch for changes in traffic and the fun part is watching your traffic go up and up and up!

Head over to Google Analytics. Set up a free account. <https://www.google.com/analytics/>

Analytics is really confusing even to me. Here is where to start to set up a website profile and get the tracking code. https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1008015?hl=en&ref_topic=1727146

You will need to figure out how to add the code to your website.

Your website will also most likely come with some sort of statistics program. The thing is that these stat programs also usually count the bots and spiders that come to the website which makes the numbers look inflated. Be sure to research how your stat program works and know what it counts so you can interpret the results correctly.

Ok then...on to content.

Every website that you see online is competing for traffic or visitors (Potential Clients!). The more traffic you get, the more clients you will get. The more traffic you get that is using your targeted keyword- massage your city – the more clients you will get and the more likely they are ideal clients. The next thing you do after you have built your website is to increase the traffic to it. This will allow you to have a steady flow of clients. Since not everyone who lands on your website will become a client, you want as many people landing on it as possible to increase the number of people who do become clients.

There are a few ways to do this:

1. Submit your website to the search engines
2. Build a Natural referral network by getting links to YOUR website FROM OTHER websites. (Remember – Search Engines like to follow links!)

3. Go Local – get listed on the local sections of search engines
4. Get more citations!
5. Go Mobile! The amount of traffic from mobile phone users is increasing everyday! Be sure you don't miss out on potential clients!

Submitting your website to search engines.

In order for the search engines to find you, you have to let them know that you exist! The best way to do that is to create an xml sitemap of your website and submit the url to the search engines. An xml sitemap is a special file that tells the search engines what is on your site and what pages were added or updated most recently. This is an example of what one looks like.

<http://massagepracticebuilder.com/sitemap.xml>

It doesn't really make any sense to a person looking at it, but people don't really see it. The search engines see it and can tell what is on your site. There are a few websites that will create these sitemaps free of charge. Just do a google search for "create google sitemap" and try one of them. I used this one [-xml sitemaps](#) for one of my old sites that didn't have an automatic xml sitemap creator. Many systems will have an automatic sitemap generator.

You will have to ask your webhost or website builder system if you have one and find out the address so you can tell search engines about it!

If you don't have an xml sitemap available, you can at start with submitting your site in general to Bing and Google.

Regular website submit pages.

<http://www.google.com/submityourcontent/website-owner/>

<http://www.bing.com/toolbox/submit-site-url>

You will also need to set up free webmasters accounts with Google and Bing and continue the process of submitting your website to them.

www.google.com/webmasters

<http://www.bing.com/toolbox/webmaster>

Submit Your XML Sitemap File to Google

It is like an announcement telling search engines to come and get it! Without this page, your site is likely to be lost in never-never land.

Once you create one this is what you have to do with it:

- Log into [Google Webmaster Tools](#). On the Home page, click on your domain name. You are then taken to the Dashboard page.
- Click on the tab that says **Sitemaps**.
- Find the address of your xml sitemap. It will look something like:
<http://www.yourmassagewebsite.com/sitemap.xml> or other sites the sitemap address is usually sitemap.xml
- Click on **Submit Sitemap** to submit it.
- On the next page, Google will confirm that you submitted your sitemap successfully. Back on the Home page, you will see your sitemap's file name in the bottom right corner.
- Follow the steps to **verify your website also**. The directions are in the Google Webmasters tools.

Submit your xml file to Bing

- Log in to [Bing Webmaster Tools](#). www.bing.com/toolbox/webmaster
- On the dashboard, in the Sitemaps section, click on **Submit a Sitemap**
- Find Your xml sitemap address. It is usually sitemap.xml but you will need to check with whatever software you are using.

(Directions for this for both Google and Bing seem to be constantly changing so you might have to figure this out on your own.)

Congratulations! You have now submitted your site to Google and Bing letting them know you have a website! How else will they know that you are out there?

Getting Into Business Listing Pages

Google My Business is one of the most important places to register your business. Google My Business powers Google Maps, and Google Search. I cannot stress how important this is. Google has most likely already built you a page, they have for millions of businesses across the world, but only about 10% of them have been claimed by the business. That's going to change quickly, so getting your listing set up and positioning yourself is key to rising to the top!

[Click here to start your Google My Business listing.](#)

Do the same for the following too:

[Bing Local](#)

[Yahoo! Local](#)

[Yelp](#)

Yelp results seem to be dominating the search results. They are also very controversial in the way they control reviews making it difficult for some of your clients to give you good reviews. Apparently, if people only log in and give one review, their review may not be posted. There are also many lawsuits around reviews so just be aware.

Once you sign up for a free account at Yelp, a representative will start calling you relentlessly trying to get you to sign up for their paid listing which currently goes for \$300- \$1000 a month. I have seen a wide range of responses from massage therapists as to just how well this works. Some say it was a waste of money, and some say it works great to pay for a spot in their listings.

Just follow the directions on each page and get your business listed in their local results section.

Be sure to encourage your clients to leave reviews on these sites and also watch out for negative reviews. I am not sure if there is anything you can really do about bad reviews except reply with an explanation.

The one thing to remember about all of these local listings is that you need to make sure that your name and contact info is the same across the board on all of these sites. If there is a discrepancy, Google will know it!

Citations

Whenever someone mentions your massage business on a website or anywhere online it is a citation. (It isn't a penalty!) Citations are defined as "mentions" of your business name and address on other webpages, even if there is no link to your website.

Here is another resource: <https://www.whitespark.ca/local-citation-finder>

Getting listed in the many other online directories may also help.

Start with the directories that are focused on healthcare or massage like:

[At Judy's Book](#)

Massage Today: <http://www.massagetoday.com/circulation/new.php>

Zeel - <https://www.zeel.com/find/massage-therapist-local-directory>

Then get a few citations from some of these major directories.

[City Search](#)

[MerchantCircle](#)

[At Judy's Book](#)

[Yellow Pages](#)

[Info USA](#)

[Super Media](#)

[ShopCity](#)

[Yellow Bot](#)

[Zidster](#)

[Localeze](#)

[Yellow Book](#)

[Kudzu](#)

[Local.com](#)

Social Media (Facebook)

There are so many different Social Media tools that there are too many to cover really. Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google Plus, Four Square and of course Facebook. I have chosen to focus on Facebook but you can explore many of the others. I recommend that you start with Facebook and focus on that until you get it to work. Having too many social media commitments is just taking up valuable time. Use it to support your website and marketing efforts.

Having a social media campaign is now probably more important than ever with the Google updates in the last few years. The next essential part of building an online presence is having a professional social media presence and know how to engage potential clients. The key here is 'professional presence' and 'engaging content'.

The one big problem that is arising with social media that no one is talking about is the added risk of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) violations. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act is the law that protects against unauthorized disclosure of identifying health information and any violations can result in fines up to \$250,000 and/or imprisonment, besides being an ethical breach.

The AMTA-WA Attorney, John Peick, recently recommended that massage therapists either remove their social media profiles all together or to at least limit the comments or posts from people. Yes patients are posting under their own free will but when you publically acknowledge that they are your patient/client, it may be a breach of privacy. You can not even talk about a hypothetical client with certain conditions that will identify the client as that is also a HIPAA violation. See this news story on one doctor cited for doing just that.

[Doctor busted for patient info spill on Facebook \(NBC News\)](#)

Though probably inadvertent, physician's post led to identification of patient

While this is an extreme case, it is important to be aware of these issues! You may not need to be HIPAA compliant in your area, but it is good to start understanding and respecting

privacy issues.

It is important that you have proper training and knowledge of HIPAA before posting and if you have someone at your office posting for you, they need to be trained in HIPAA.

The goal in using social media is to get people to book appointments and to keep them coming back. You do that by posting regularly to build trust and interest. You can also post a sentence or two from a page on your website and put a link to your website. When you post an update on any of these services be sure to ask them to do something – “like” a post, make an appointment. Social media is all about engagement. It sometimes seems like it is more hit or miss. People don’t always check their newsfeeds or even have it so that you show up regularly in their newsfeed.

Facebook. Facebook constantly changes and adds new features and options so I won't really go into it in depth. It could be a whole other book! You will need to weed through the Facebook Help Section if you have questions. The best thing is to find someone who uses Facebook successfully and “Like” their page and see how it is done.

When you set up a Facebook fan page use your main keywords as the user name – “massage your city” so that it will look like www.facebook.com/massageyourcity. That is another part of search engine optimization. This is another example of how important keywords are.

Having a Facebook Fan Page can help with getting your website found because fan pages are now showing up on search engine results. A Facebook fan page is all about building community and interaction. It is important to have a ‘professional’ Facebook personal profile. Do not have pictures of yourself at the nude beach or downing shots at spring break. I am serious about this because unfortunately there are massage therapists who do have very questionable photos on their profiles. If you think your profile is private – think again. What is on Facebook/Twitter, stays on there. Learn how to use the privacy setting to stop people from viewing your personal profile and keep your personal profile very separate from your business fan page. Even if you hide your personal profile, I guarantee that someone will be able to find it! Some massage therapists have successfully used a profile page to connect with their clients but they keep it professional. They can also connect on a personal level if the

person posts – “Hey I just had a great massage from so and so”. In such a case you can “like” the post or say thank you or you can interact more with that client. (This is where caution is advised because of HIPAA. Even though the client is offering the information, you still need to be cautious with your reply. Don't mention whatever issue they had that you worked on or anything they said or did in the session!) Just remember to keep things professional. You never really know how your personal life will affect your business.

There are stories of people losing or not getting jobs because of what they have posted on their Facebook profile. You can put the Facebook feed on your pages so they can ‘Like’ your page or also use the ‘comments’ feature on your website so that when people make a comment on your website it posts to Facebook. You can also add the ‘like’ button to every page of your website so visitors can ‘like’ your page and your articles. It will then post on Facebook. You can find directions for creating badges or ‘like’ buttons on Facebook.

<https://developers.facebook.com/docs/plugins/>

The biggest thing to watch out for is when putting Facebook “like” buttons or follow buttons on your website is to be sure to know the difference between the two. A follow button is different than a like button. Make sure you put a button that people can “like” your page right from your website. Make sure if a link goes directly to your Facebook page from your website that you have it open in a new window so you don't lose the reader to Facebook.

Facebook is about creating community and relationships and works well for a massage business, especially when it comes to rebooking. You can stay in front of clients by sending out daily health tips or relaxation tips or the latest research on some area of massage. It's a great way to connect with people and to get referrals.

Be aware that even though you may have many fans on Facebook, you never really know how many people are actually reading your posts. It is really hit or miss marketing. The best thing to do is to get people to subscribe to your ‘RSS feed’ on your Facebook fan page. Currently, fans can follow your ‘RSS feed’ by clicking on the ‘Get updates via RSS feed” on the bottom of the left hand side of the page.

To build more interaction on your Facebook page, you will have to make sure it is set up

correctly. Start with filling out the timeline with all of your events related to your massage career. You can also list past specials so people can see what types of things to look for. Create a cover image that shows someone getting a massage. Use the top tabs for a sign up page to your newsletter; online scheduling (some online scheduling software have Facebook Apps for that). Create an about me tab, and other tabs that have interesting subjects that will keep people coming back to your page. You can use your Facebook page to create special offers and run contests. You can also give away products, massages or gift certificates.

You will have to experiment with how much to post and what to post to get more clients.

Everything with Facebook is a matter of testing, seeing the results and changing one thing at a time to see what works.

Shareable content.

The goal of posting is to get people to “like” a post or to comment on a post or most ideally to share a post on their own page or profile. The way Facebook works these days is that the more people that engage with a post, the more they will show it to your fans.

Otherwise they want you to pay to get a post in front of your fans. Paying for a post is only worth it when you are going to make money from the post or you are trying to build your mailing list.

Creating posts that get high engagement is really what Facebook and Social Media is really about.

Here are some things to post:

- Create pictures to post with sayings on them about massage and have your website url in the picture. You can use free image editing software like www.picmonkey.com or www.canva.com
- Have a call to action in your post. Send people to your website to read an article or sign up for your newsletter.

- Have a call to action to make an appointment!
- Ask fill in the blank questions like 'the best thing about Wednesday is_____'. You have to keep it more general because of HIPAA. You can't ask things like how was your massage or does your back hurt today or things like that.
- Post some funny videos or pictures about massage. My favorites are “I Love Lucy“ doing a massage and the massage your possum videos. (Search Youtube for those!) It is just to get likes really!

Also be careful when posting on other fan pages related to massage business and other groups on Facebook whether it is for massage or some other hobby or interest as these pages are now being found in the search results. I recently have had a few massage therapists ask me to delete some posts on my page because their clients were finding them and it was making them look bad or causing some challenge. The content wasn't even bad or anything. It was just the massage therapist asking questions about building a business.

You can also connect many online appointment making systems to Facebook through an app and track whether or not they book through Facebook or your Website.

Facebook resource:

<https://www.facebookbrand.com/> - to understand how to use Facebook logos correctly.

Google Plus

Personally, I still haven't really figured out how to use Google plus but you need an profile there to connect to your local listing. It also helps to post links to the pages on your website to get higher rankings in the search engines.

<https://plus.google.com/>

Newsletters, blogging, online scheduling

Having a newsletter for your site is essential if you want to build trust and relationships with your readers. It also became more important in the last few years because of the hit or miss quality of social media and the extra challenges of privacy when using social media tools like Facebook. Newsletters are still a good way to go even though there is also a hit or miss factor as in will they read it, delete it or send it on to their friends or will they even want to come in for a massage.

You can use your website to send out a regular newsletter for potential and current clients. There are also various systems like www.constantcontact.com and www.mailchimp.com that will manage the list of subscribers and let you send out the newsletter with the click of a few buttons. You can use the newsletter to keep in regular contact with potential clients and build further trust to get them to make the call. You can talk regularly about the specifics of massage – like how to deal with back pain, health tips and send regular notices of specials or holiday gift certificates. You can even sell gift certificates online by starting an account with Paypal and building a simple ‘buy now’ link.

The challenge with newsletters is of course writing them. You have to once again write content. What is a Massage therapist to write about?

Generally the same information that you write about on your website and/or blog.

There are also some legal aspects to having a newsletter. It is required by law that your email show a true “to and from’ address. It also will need to have your actual physical address somewhere in the email and a way for people to easily opt out of receiving such email. Most bulk email messaging systems will tell you about this and also make it easy to implement.

Blogging

Blogging is another interactive tool for you to use to provide information and to build traffic. A blog is an online journal. It also refers to the software that a site uses such as WordPress. You can also have a regular site that adds a blog feature without having to use WordPress or

Blogger.com. I recommend that you use WordPress blogging software for creating a regular website or some systems like the ABMP website builder and www.weebly.com offer their own little blogging system. If you are just adding a blog to your website, it may be better to just add the content to your website and let it become a real page.

Blogging seems to be the new buzz word. Many think it will be the key to getting more clients but it is just one small possibility for making this all work. The thing about blogging is that you have to keep doing it. It also looks really bad if your last post was 2009. I recommend that you get your website working for you before you start blogging. If you get most of your traffic just from blogging then you have to keep blogging to keep it going. When you have a solid website, you won't HAVE to blog but you can if you want to or if none of this works for some reason. Yes blogging can work to help your website if you really are not getting anywhere after implementing the things in this book.

The problem I see with blogging is that content gets 'lost' (as in not easily found and too many clicks away from the homepage) and you have to blog often to keep it up to date. Most blogging systems record the date of the post so if you haven't posted in months, it may look like you are not available. The main purpose of blogging really is to get more of the search engines attention but you can also do that through creating a regular web page. The way blogging software works is that when you create a post using the system, it will **'ping' the search engines** and tell them that you have new content. The way blogs build traffic is because of the xml sitemap and rss feeds that are built into the way the software works. When you post a new post/page, the system will alert the search engines that you have more content and if people are following your rss feed, they will also come to read your latest posts.

RSS is a simple syndication but it isn't really that simple. Honestly, I really don't understand how it all really works. Just know that it can help! You can read more about it if you want to understand it better at [SBI!" rss pages](#). The bottom line is that blogging (or just updating your rss feed) builds traffic. People sign up to receive notification when you publish something. This gets around the regular email newsletter method which can lose a lot of emails to spam filters. Remember that with blogging the reader totally controls the experience

of what they read and when they read it!

What should you blog about? In general, blogging is more personal and more relaxed but you still need to keep it professional.

- Write about current and past research.
- Write about health issues that are related to massage.
- Write about books on health that you are reading and become an associate (affiliate) at amazon.com and get paid when people buy books through the affiliate links.
- Write about health conditions that you work with regularly. (Be sure not to talk about clients in any way shape or form.)
- Share stories about yourself that clients might be able to relate to about health or life stories.
- Write about what is going on in the massage profession such as massage franchises (without bashing them!) and explain the difference between them and your massage.
- Write about community events that you are a part of or interested in.

The thing with blogging is that you really have to do it regularly because most of the blogging systems post the date on the post. If you haven't blogged in awhile, that can make people think that you aren't doing well or that you are lacking information or may even think that you are not in business any longer. To me blogging seems to be the new craze and everyone thinks that they should be blogging. You don't have to blog if you have a solid site that gets you all of the clients that you need. If your website isn't working for you, then blogging can help increase traffic and get you more clients, but it is mainly because of the way blogs send out the pings or updates your rss feed as I have explained before. It sends messages to the search engines that you have new content, assuming you have set up the system correctly or that your blogging system even does that.

Online Scheduling

There are many online scheduling systems. You can usually see a demo of how they work. Usability for you and potential/current clients is the top priority. Is it easy for people to get right to your schedule without many clicks?

In general, think about some of the things you might need such as:

- Do your clients know where to go to easily make the appointment?
- Being able to login and change things from your Mobile phone
- Have appointment reminders sent out automatically to clients
- Be able to take credit cards to hold the appointment
- Be able to schedule multiple therapists, if you have others in your office
- Easy login and access for clients from their computer and their smartphones
- Easy access for clients to just check their appointment times
- Integrates with Facebook to provide a scheduling tab on your Fan Page

If you are an AMTA or ABMP member, check your member benefits for special offers from various online scheduling systems.

Some of the most popular are:

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

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

<http://www.fullslate.com>

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

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

<http://www.appointment-plus.com/>

The only one I know of that is HIPAA compliant is www.fullslate.com . There may be others but it is important to check to be sure. With massage moving into being more of a healthcare service, it will be essential to be HIPAA compliant. It isn't the software that has to be compliant, it is that the people who work there have to be trained in HIPAA privacy issues as far as I understand now.

Check with your professional association – ABMP or AMTA – as they usually have discounts as a part of your member benefits.

It takes a bit of work to set up and use properly and to find the one that works best for you. I finally took the plunge this year and started online scheduling. It has taken me about 4 months to get used to the system. I tried a few first until I found the one that works best for me. The reason it took so long to get used to was that I had too many years of having a printed calendar. I actually still carry it with me because I don't totally trust it.

You have to figure out what features are most important to you and that sometimes involves trial and error.

Take Credit cards for Gift Certificates and regular massage services.

PayPal is still the top dog here even with some of their past horror stories. There are also other services like the Gift Card Cafe and Spaboom that have systems for selling gift certificates.

You can use PayPal to create a 'buy now' button that allows people to buy gift certificates. You will, however, have to send the certificates out to them. You can find the directions on PayPal where you will also learn how to place the code on your website. It is usually just a matter of copying and pasting code into a specific spot on your webpage.

All of these extra website features and services can help you create your 'Ideal

Massage Business'. But remember, that it all really depends on having a high quality, content filled website that gets enough traffic to keep your schedule filled.

You will need to be aware of the laws regarding the sale of gift certificates in your state.

There are laws that regulate the expiration dates on gift certificates and gift cards. I have more info on selling gift certificates at

<http://massagepracticebuilder.com/the-gift-of-selling-massage-gift-certificates/>

So Now What?

So now that you have completed all of the steps and created content...what if this isn't working...what if you still are not at the top of the first page of Google results and you are not getting enough clients?

It takes time...How long? I can't really say. I know I have been teaching this stuff for many years on my website and through Facebook and I see such varying results. Your website can be the main source of clients for you.

Join my [Facebook group](#) and ask as many questions as you want.

Personally, I think the difference is about using [SBI! \(Site Build it!\)](#) and following through with every step and keep continuing with the process of writing and sharing content until it does work! I have taught so many people about creating websites and they seem to do everything and it just doesn't work in the way I expect it to. SBI! Has a unique backend system that takes care of updating search engines when you write content and change content that is different than anything else out there.

It does take a lot of time and learning and trying things and adjusting again and again. But to me it is worth it because it does work. Since I am a shy person and dislike networking and public speaking, this has been the best investment of my time since my website continues to be at the top of the first page of Google despite all the changes Google constantly makes.

Keep at it until it works! You know how to massage, now let your website get you most of your clients!

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