



Finding the Right Massage Therapist for You

Even if a massage therapist is fully licensed and qualified, that person may not be the best choice for you. The field of massage includes everything from light, relaxing massage to medically oriented massage to deep and structural work.

Because of this variety, it's always wise to ask massage therapists about the nature of their practice. Here are some questions you might want to ask:

- What types of massage do you do?
- How long have you been practicing massage?
- Where are you located and when are appointments available?
- What are your rates?
- What is your cancellation policy?
- How many sessions may be necessary to obtain the results you are looking for?
- Do you focus on one or two areas of my body or can I expect a more general massage?
- Do you bill insurance?

Washington Massage Licensing Requirements

The state of Washington requires that anyone providing massage therapy graduate from a state-approved school with at least 500 hours of training and pass a licensing exam. Licensed Massage Therapist's (LMT's) must renew their licenses every year and complete a minimum number of continuing education hours every two years.

Anyone who doesn't have a license to practice massage and charges a fee for their services is in violation of the law.



How to Report Problems

If you encounter an unlicensed massage practice or observe inappropriate actions by a Licensed Massage Therapist you can report it by calling the Washington State Department of Health at (360) 236-4700 or by using the online complaint form at: www.doh.wa.gov.

A CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO FINDING

Real Professional Massage

IN WASHINGTON STATE

PROVIDED BY THE:



www.mywsmta.org

Advocating for massage therapy as a recognized and respected healthcare profession.

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Finding a Qualified Massage Therapist

Real, Professional Massage

The benefits of therapeutic massage include relaxation, stress relief, recovery from exercise, healing from injury and more. Unfortunately, consumers are not always certain how to identify licensed massage professionals as some businesses offer something other than legitimate, professional, licensed massage.

This brochure is intended to assist you, as a consumer, in finding a professional, licensed massage therapist.

In Washington State, the Department of Health licenses massage therapists and considers them healthcare providers. A licensed therapist's designation is as either a Licensed Massage Practitioner (LMP) or Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT) and therapists are required to have their credentials on display in their place of business.



Licensed, professional massage usually involves an intake process that allows your therapist to better understand what you want from your sessions and identify any reasons massage may not be appropriate for you. Your therapist will want to know about any current or past injuries or conditions to avoid doing harm during your sessions. Massage therapists who don't ask these kinds of questions or do intake may be putting your health at risk.



Foot Spas in Washington State

In recent years, many foot spas have opened in Washington State. Foot spas generally offer only reflexology, which is limited to your feet, hands, and outer ears. Although foot spas can have fully licensed massage therapists on staff, some don't. Unfortunately, some foot spas include massage on the rest of the body without the proper license, which may be illegal.

Although providing reflexology doesn't require a massage license a certification process went into effect in July of 2013 requiring a 200-hour certification for reflexology practitioners. However, this change doesn't affect massage and anyone offering massage still needs a massage license. To find a qualified reflexologist, ask about the person's training and certifications or visit the Washington Reflexology Association at: www.washingtonreflexology.org.

Professional Organizations

Many massage therapists belong to professional organizations and you should feel free to ask your therapist about their professional affiliations. For instance, this brochure is provided by the Washington State Massage Therapy Association (WSMTA). Two of the largest national associations include the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) and the Associated Massage and Bodywork Professionals (ABMP).

More information is available on these organizations on their websites:

www.mywsmta.org
www.amtamassage.org
www.abmp.com

