



# 3, 2, 1 ... Liftoff!

## This is the Perfect Time to Launch Your Massage Career

By Felicia Brown, LMBT

TIME TO READ: 6 MIN

**YOU ARE A NEW** (or soon-to-be) massage therapist. Congratulations! The last year and a half have been quite a roller coaster, and even more so if you have been in school through part or all of it. But now it is time to begin a new chapter—one that begins your rewarding career as a massage therapist.

It is possible you may be wondering,

“What was I thinking?” in terms of taking the big leap into a new profession right now. However, in many ways this is the perfect time to start out as a massage therapist.

This is a time of reinvention for many Americans, and also a time (post-quarantine) when many people have discovered how important it is to have

touch, nurturance and connection (i.e., massage therapy) in their lives on a regular basis.

Massage therapists are also in a place of potential reinvention, in terms of where you practice, whether you work as an employee part- or full-time, or if you augment massage with specialized services. Let's dive in.

## Time for Reinvention

On the practitioner side, the COVID-19 pandemic gave each of us a chance to re-evaluate our priorities and reinvent ourselves. Common themes in these areas include people wanting more flexibility with their schedules, more control over their work environment, and involvement in work that matters to them or makes a difference in others' lives. (This sounds like a perfect recipe for a massage career to me.)

Similarly, the public (aka your potential massage clients) are seeking solutions for relaxation, pain relief and life enjoyment. Many folks are shifting away from buying things and replacing those purchases with experiences and services that soothe their mind, body and spirit. Even "way back" in March 2020, researchers at McCombs School of Business found that spending money on experiences instead of possessions creates more immediate happiness, and that the happiness was felt before, during and after the experience. (This seems like another perfect fit for massage therapy.)

As a result of more solace-seekers wanting massage—the choice of some veteran therapists to reinvent their own lives and leave the profession, and the mass reopening of franchises, clinics and spas—the demand for professional massage therapists is high. Although every employer and market are different, a larger need for therapists creates unique opportunities for higher pay, benefits, perks and scheduling options. If you feel pulled to work for someone else, now is a great time to be interviewing.

There are also plenty of opportunities on the solo-practitioner and self-employed side. For example, although it is tough to see established companies or practitioners close their doors, those closures provide extra options for new practitioners starting their own practices. This transition time is likely to increase availability and lower costs in office space, potentially making landlords more open to negotiation than they were a year or two ago.

## Go Mobile

Are you not ready for an office? That's OK; mobile massage services have become even more popular over the last year and a half. Many clients feel more comfortable having services in their own home, evidenced by their having gotten used to paying additional fees for conveniences like groceries or meals delivered by Instacart and Grubhub. Thus, many are likely to be more understanding about a higher price or travel fee for in-home massages than in the past.

Mobile services are ideal for massage therapists who want to work solo but not tie themselves to a specific location or the expense that goes with it.

work or gigs besides massage. For some, it may make perfect sense to hold on to your day job and use massage as a personal escape from the rat race as well as earn some extra cash. But if you are ready to spread your entrepreneurial wings, massage therapy can work hand in hand with a variety of professional pursuits and business models.

## Supplement to Start

Even if you are just wrapping up school and still paying off your student loan, you may want to consider additional training to supplement what you offer. This could be training in complementary disciplines or adding specialty modalities to what you learned in school.

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"I chose mobile massage so that I could be my own boss and make my own schedule," said Michelle Roos, owner of Mobile Massage Mastery. "Starting out, I was afraid to rent a place and have overhead costs. I am also a big fan of choosing who my clientele will be so that I can ensure my safety."

If you are like Roos, who splits her time between Florida and Manitoba, Canada (and several other businesses she owns), you too may want to be involved in other

For instance, you could combine massage therapy with other products or services that assist with self-care, wellness, fitness, recreation or art. This kind of package deal may also provide a bonus to clients who want to streamline the businesses and professionals they work with. Some related services include life coaching, yoga instruction, fitness, esthetics and energy work.

However, before you rush out to sign up for advanced certification, you might

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also consider utilizing hands-off skills gained in past schooling or jobs. In my case, as a new graduate, I jumped into massage with both feet and worked at several different businesses for the first couple of years until I got a sense of what I liked, did not like and what I excelled in as a therapist. As one with past teaching, training, writing and sales experience, once I got solid footing, I started my teaching, writing and speaking about how to promote and sell yourself and massage therapy to other massage therapists.

You may be a natural writer, researcher, videographer or comedian. Perhaps you have a special knack for growing herbs and use them to create a new self-care product. Whatever it is, find ways to blend your individual talents, style and skills

with your massage practice so you can create unique client experiences and stand out from the crowd.

## Be Open to Possibilities

Whether you choose to be an employee, business owner, mobile therapist or all of the above, massage therapy is about to open an exciting new world to you. Though it's always important to treat the work of massage as a business and to be a professional, it is equally important to create a career you enjoy and are rewarded by.

I encourage you to imagine all the possibilities and take steps that bring a smile to your face. Becoming a massage therapist at the right time can enhance your life in the best possible ways. I know

now is the perfect time for your new career to change yours. **M**

Felicia Brown, LMBT, is a business, marketing and life coach for massage, spa-and-wellness professionals and heart-centered entrepreneurs. She is a regular contributor to *MASSAGE Magazine*. Read the article, "This is What the Highest-Earning Massage Therapists Have in Common," featuring Brown, on [massagemag.com](http://massagemag.com). Download her free e-book, "Do ONE Thing," at [spalutions.com/doonething](http://spalutions.com/doonething).

Read "Easy Massage Session Add-ons to Increase Revenue," by Tara Grodjesk, on [massagemag.com](http://massagemag.com).

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