



GROWTH STRATEGIES

## 3 Reasons to Add a Medical Massage Therapist to Your Practice

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Whether your acupuncture practice is thriving or you're investigating ways to get more patients through your doors, adding services like a medical massage therapist is a great way to diversify your practice, attract more patients and keep them coming back. There is a lot to consider when you add another service and provider to your practice; but here are three excellent reasons to feel confident in making this leap.

### 1. Improve Your Treatment Effectiveness

Adding a certified medical massage therapist to your practice adds value and can dramatically improve the effectiveness of your treatments. Highly trained therapists can address a variety of conditions and injuries. Beyond the relaxation techniques marketed in spas, medical massage therapists often specialize in a particular area.



For example, is your patient base primarily geriatric patients? Or maybe your specialty is chronic pain? What about athletes and those with sports injuries? How about fertility issues and women's health? If you are targeting a particular population — or want to begin targeting a specific patient base — a therapist with a specialty in this area can help you draw those patients to your practice.

And many therapists are used to practicing in a group setting, medical clinic or hospital setting, so they understand the flow of a practice, the billing process, and how what they do can complement what other practitioners are doing.

If you are considering adding a therapist, where do you even begin? How do you find the right therapist who will fit into your practice seamlessly? What type of therapist would work best in your office? How do you schedule them? How much should they be compensated?

Finding the right fit for your practice begins with the answers to certain questions. One of the first questions you need to answer is this: Are you adding a medical massage therapist to the team to create a new source of revenue or is your purpose to add a specialty that will benefit your patients? Maybe it is a combination of both.

If you are looking to solely create a new revenue stream, you might want to create a bit of separation between your services and those of the therapist, so patients are not confused. For example, you might set up a specific medical massage practice within your own acupuncture practice, as this would provide an additional source of revenue, but is not specifically tied to the protocols you perform in your practice.

## 2. A Great Addition to Your Treatment Team

However, if it does make more sense to incorporate medical massage into your treatment process, then adding a therapist can become a winning combination. Because they work on the soft tissue, your acupuncture treatments are certainly enhanced and often easier to perform since the patient

is more relaxed. Another benefit is that in comparing notes, you may uncover valuable information you can use to prepare your own treatment protocol for a patient.

As you collaborate with your medical massage therapist and incorporate soft-tissue work into the treatment plan, you are not only improving your effectiveness; you are also adding additional revenue. As the partnership develops, both treatments become more efficient and effective, thus allowing you to focus on new patients and growing your practice.

### 3. The Economic Advantages

Once you find the right fit for the team (and be patient, as it may take time to find the right therapist), make sure you are fully integrating them into the team. Include them in all treatment discussions, as this conveys confidence to both the therapist and the patient, and continues to build your reputation as an effective and efficient practitioner.

There are a variety of ways to structure scheduling and payment based on your type of practice and what makes the most sense for your current office structure. Depending on how you classify your medical massage therapist, there are hourly rates, salary, or base pay plus increases. You just want to make sure whatever compensation model you do choose takes into account the therapist's education and level of experience.

Finding the right fit can expand your offerings on several levels. Not only can this addition add a different treatment option to your practice, but the appropriately qualified medical massage therapist also can help you educate your patients on a variety of topics. This enhances your marketing ability and the areas of the community you can reach in terms of attracting new patients.

### Practice Pearls

Remember, you aren't just hiring an employee; you are integrating your acupuncture practice to enhance your effectiveness, improve the care you provide your patients and grow your practice. No longer are you just an acupuncture clinic - you are creating an integrative health care team. So take the time to find the right therapist and create a winning treatment combination that can take your practice and patient care to new heights.

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