

THE TOP 15 TECHNIQUES TO LEARN NOW

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TECHNIQUE ARTICLES



Specialization helps you stand out from other massage therapists—and in order to specialize, you must obtain advanced education.

Your new knowledge will help your practice be seen as one that helps clients feel their best, while your professional reputation will blossom.

Although there are [hundreds of techniques](#) to consider specializing in, we chose these 15 techniques as some that will be a natural step up from a relaxation practice.

Aromatherapy: The use of [aromatic essences and essential oils](#) extracted from plants to create, depending on the oil or blend, relaxation, invigoration and other physical effects. Delivery systems for essential oils now include diffusers, roll-on sticks and granules along with traditional liquid drops.

Assisted Stretching: Various types of stretching protocols used by the massage therapist on an engaged or passive client. More clients are aware of the benefits of stretching, and as one national massage franchise has added assisted stretching to its menu options, this technique will only continue to grow in popularity.

Chair Massage: A fully clothed, [seated massage session](#), which can incorporate various other bodywork techniques, usually done in a public space. As employers wise up to the benefits of healthy employees to their bottom line, more are implementing workplace wellness programs that include massage.

CranioSacral Therapy: This technique involves [a light-touch modality](#) that uses gentle, soft touch to release restrictions in the membranes around the brain and spinal cord. This technique is being used to address medical conditions including autism and anxiety.

Cupping: By creating suction and negative pressure, [cupping](#) is said to soften tight muscles, tone attachments, loosen adhesions, lift connective tissue, hydrate and increase blood flow to body tissues, and drain excess fluids and toxins by opening lymphatic pathways.

Energy Therapy: Techniques that restore balance and move energy. These include Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch and Reiki. More hospitals now offer energy therapies, as they are seen as a way to help patients relax and recharge.

Face-Lift, or Facial, Massage: As consumers turn away from plastic surgery, [facial massage](#)—acupressure, manual lymph drainage and massage strokes used on the face to stimulate blood flow, relax the muscles, reduce the appearance of lines and refresh skin—is increasingly popular.

Geriatric, or Senior, Massage: Massage modified to address age-related conditions, including lessened mobility and thinner skin. Every day, 10,000 Americans reach the age of 65, and [this generation](#) has more interest in integrative health care, and more money, than did previous generations.

Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization (IASTM): Leading educational companies are creating [multipart protocols using tools and additional techniques](#), such as scraping, taping and stretching, or scraping, taping and movement therapy.

Light and Laser Therapies: Pain-relief tools that emit red and infrared light and can be used in combination with massage therapy to address pain, injury, scar tissue and cellulite. The effectiveness of light, laser and massage combined is seen as a valuable add-on that helps clients leave a session more limber and relaxed.

Medical Massage: The application of massage techniques in [a medical environment](#). The number of hospitals offering massage to patients, staff and the public is growing, providing an opportunity for massage therapists to learn advanced skills and work with physicians.

Myofascial Release: A method of [affecting connective tissue](#) by applying pressure in the direction of fascial resistance. Insights and studies into the nature of fascia are showing that everything under the skin is connected.

Orthopedic Massage: Using knowledge of various approaches, the [orthopedic massage](#) practitioner applies clinical reasoning skills to determine how to address the client's concerns.

Stone & Shell Therapy: [Heated or cooled stones](#) used to perform massage or trigger-point work, or placed on the body for energy balancing or to elicit a physiological response. Tools take this therapy beyond basalt and marble stones, with manmade heatable or chillable “stones” and seashells used as handheld tools.

Taping: The practice of [applying elastic tape](#) to the skin to provide a gentle lifting effect, which can help ease muscular tension, improve blood and lymphatic circulation, and extend the benefits of massage beyond the end of the session. Taping is effective for both sports-minded and mobility-impaired clients.

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