



Massage Today

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Why Thai?

How Thai massage can build your practice while preserving your body.

By Martin Misenhimer, Zen Thai Massage School Founder

“I had two weekends of massage events in October. I saw the same number of clients both weekends, but made three times as much money the second weekend by offering Thai massage.”

“Many of my clients say they never want any other kind of massage again.” “I have a steady stream of clients for Thai massage. It has given me a powerful tool to supplement my wellness offerings to my clients.”

Contrast the above statements, all sent to me recently via e-mail from some of my Thai massage students, to the all-too-common pitfalls of massage practice: too much competition, too few clients, not enough income and physical burnout.

Thai massage offers a robust solution to these problems. In a future article, we will look at the health benefits of Thai massage to you as a practitioner. Here, we concentrate on the business advantages of offering Thai massage:

Ride the Great American Yoga Wave

The first thing I did when I moved to my new home in New York was to look in the Yellow Pages under “Yoga.” I telephoned the teacher closest to my address, who turned out to be a truly gifted instructor and a great supporter. He has become the megaphone for my work, broadcasting the benefits of Thai massage to his friends and students.

Thai massage has been called “yoga massage” and “assisted yoga,” because it uses yoga-like postures to give clients a passive way to receive many of the benefits of yoga: opening of tight joints, relief from pain,

lengthening of muscles and a deep sense of well-being. This appeals not only to active yoga practitioners, but also to the many people who would love the much-publicized benefits of yoga without ever having to unroll a mat.

Yoga has become big business in the U.S., with annual revenues of an estimated \$27 billion. Thai massage gives massage therapists a powerful way to tap this lucrative and growing market.

Reach a New Customer Base: Real Men Do Get Massage

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) discovered that only 17 percent of American men had received massages in the past year. While pro athletes enjoy massage all the time, the average Joe still is uncomfortable walking into a treatment room and taking off his clothes. Throw in scented oils and he might bolt like a cornered wolf!

Thai massage eliminates this discomfort because the clothes stay on. In addition, it provides the kind of deep work many men prefer. (And it does so without taxing your own body.) So, extend Thai massage to the stressed-out CEO, the aching office worker and the weekend athlete – female or male. They represent a vast untapped market of new clients, often with high discretionary income.

Differentiate Yourself From Other Massage Therapists

The day is long gone when a massage therapist could succeed with basic Swedish technique only. Today the competition is too tough and customers want an expanded menu of alternatives. The AMTA reports that 92 percent of its members use Swedish techniques; 76 percent offer deep tissue work; 58 percent neuromuscular; 58 percent trigger-point; 49 percent sports; and 36 percent shiatsu-acupressure.

Notice that Thai massage is not even on the list! And yet, the International Spa Association (ISPA) identifies Thai massage as one of the fastest growing modalities requested by customers. That means demand is exploding and the supply is limited. To any business person, that spells great opportunity.

Make Yourself More Marketable to Spas

To remain competitive, spas are working hard to diversify their offerings – and customer demand has made Thai massage a top priority. The ISPA identifies Thai massage as one of the “key trends” in the spa industry. In some parts of the country, practitioners can even charge more for Thai massage because of its

golden status as a hot “specialty.”

In the past year alone, I have been asked by six top-rated spas to teach Thai massage to their employees. Their customers want Thai massage, I hear again and again, because of its connection to yoga – its clothes-on comfort, its effectiveness at increasing flexibility and its ability to ease chronic pain.

Reduce Your Operating Expenses

Thai massage uses no lotions or oils. Because clients are clothed, you don’t have to buy or wash a lot of sheets. That translates into lower financial costs and less time spent on activities that produce no income.

I hope this article shows you some of the business reasons to consider incorporating Thai massage into your practice. Next time, we’ll look at another key benefit: your own health and well-being.



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