

# Massage Program Objectives & Curriculum

## Objectives

### 1. Develop Proficiency in Massage Techniques:

Students will master a variety of therapeutic massage techniques, including Swedish, deep tissue, sports massage, prenatal, lymphatic, reflexology, and other ancillary therapies to address diverse client needs and promote overall wellness.

### 2. Understand Human Anatomy and Physiology:

Students will gain a solid foundation in anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and pathology to understand the body's systems and structures, allowing them to tailor treatments effectively for clients.

### 3. Enhance Client Care and Communication Skills:

Students will learn how to assess client needs, establish effective communication, and provide personalized care to ensure the comfort, safety, and satisfaction of clients.

### 4. Apply Ethical and Professional Standards:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of massage therapy ethics, professionalism, and the importance of maintaining boundaries, confidentiality, and respect in all client interactions.

### 5. Learn Business Practices for Success:

Students will acquire the essential business knowledge and skills needed to operate as a successful independent therapist or work in a spa, clinic, or healthcare setting, including marketing, financial management, and customer service.

### 6. Implement Safety Protocols:

Students will be trained in industry-standard safety protocols and best practices to prevent injury, ensure the safety of both the therapist and client, and maintain a clean and hygienic environment.

### 7. Prepare for Licensing and Professional Practice:

Students will be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully complete licensing requirements and begin their careers as licensed massage therapists, providing therapeutic services to clients for pain relief, stress reduction, and overall wellness.

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## Courses:

The successful completion of the curriculum outlined below, along with other administrative and financial requirements, will entitle the student to receive a Certificate of Completion in the Massage Therapy program at the Academy of Therapeutic Esthetics And Massage

### Anatomy and Physiology

200 hours = 40 five hour classes, 4 of which are Manikin described below.

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, interactive learning and group discussions, project based learning, digital learning and multimedia resources.

**Course Description:** This course provides a comprehensive, evidence based study of the anatomy and physiology of the human body. Topics include body organization; homeostasis; cytology; and the 11 major organ systems with a specific focus on the muscular and skeletal systems. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of principles of anatomy and physiology and their interrelationships.

Included in this course is a section called Manikin (20 hours = 4 classes) where students sculpt 13 major muscle groups from clay. This section develops practical understanding of the complexity of muscular origins and insertions and their correlation to how the body moves.

The content covered in this course directly informs the learning objectives of all practical hands-on courses. Manikin will also be referenced and studied in the Biomechanics and portions of the Ancillary Therapies course.

The textbooks for this course are *Applied Anatomy & Physiology for Manual Therapists* by Pat Archer and Lisa A. Nelson, *Trail Guide to the Body* and *Trail Guide to the Body Workbook* by Andrew Biel.

### Competencies / Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop a working vocabulary associated with the anatomy and physiology of the human body.
2. Apply concepts, knowledge, and correct terminology to describe anatomy and physiology related to specific body systems.

3. Understand homeostasis and how it is maintained through homeostatic mechanisms.
4. Describe the major anatomical components of each human body system studied, describe briefly their anatomical locations and general structures, and explain their physiological functions at both the organ and cellular levels.
5. Identify and assess pathologies, with a focus on musculoskeletal conditions, that affect treatment plans.
6. Describe the levels of structural organization and their relationships.
7. Describe the structures and functions of major tissue types.
8. Define anatomy and physiology, and explain how they are related.

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom participation during lectures and small group activities, homework assignments, weekly quizzes (either written or hands-on), a mid-course exam and a final exam. Students must achieve a grade of 75% or above on quizzes and exams.

## Biomechanics (Kinesiology)

45 hours = 9 five hour classes

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, demonstrations and modeling, interactive learning and group discussions, project based learning, and digital learning and multimedia resources.

**Course Description:** Biomechanics is the study of the structure, function and motion of the mechanical aspects of biological systems. This course focuses on the study of how muscles produce force and move along with the nervous system which controls this process. Key concepts include muscle function, muscle contraction, physiological and environmental factors that affect biomechanics.

The content of this course is foundational for the practical hands-on courses Swedish Massage, Myofascial Deep Tissue Massage, Bodywork Modalities and Student Clinic Experience.

The textbooks for this course are *Trail Guide to the Body* and *Trail Guide to Movement* by Andrew Biel.

### **Competencies / Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Increase their awareness of how bodies naturally move, so their own biomechanics improve to prevent injury and lengthen their careers as body workers.
2. Recognize joints and muscles of the body that contribute to dysfunction and pain.
3. Assess clients based on their movement patterns and be able to develop an appropriate treatment plan based on their observations during consultations.
4. Connect specific human anatomy and physiology topics to public health and social issues.

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom room participation during lectures and small group activities, thorough completion of homework reading assignments, weekly quizzes, a mid-course exam and a final exam. Students must achieve a grade of 75% or above on quizzes and exams.

### Ancillary Therapies

52 hours = 10 five-hour classes and 1 two-hour class

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, hands-on practical training, demonstrations and modeling, interactive learning and group discussions, cultural competency & inclusivity.

**Course Description:** This course explores a variety of standard modalities that are additional tools in a massage therapy practice. Classes include theory and hands-on practice of the following: aromatherapy, reflexology, Indian head massage, lymphatic drainage, cupping, hot stone, chair massage, body treatments and prenatal.

The content covered in this course will be utilized in the Student Clinic Experience and referenced in the final project for Business Practices & State Law / Spa Management & Salesmanship

The textbook for this course is *Massage Therapy: Principles and Practice* by Susan Salvo.

### Competencies / Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Attain a basic understanding of various modalities along with their benefits & uses and the conditions that are contraindicated for each.

2. Acquire technical skills to integrate some or all of these modalities into a regular practice.
3. Determine whether they choose to specialize in any of the modalities presented and how to continue with additional training in that field.
4. Maintain, set up and clean equipment for safety, sanitation and longevity of the equipment.

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom participation during lectures and classroom practice sessions, thorough completion of homework reading assignments, and quizzes. Content from this course is included on the Swedish Massage and Myofascial Deep Tissue Massage mid-course and final exams. Students must achieve a grade of 75% or above on quizzes and exams.

## Myofascial Deep Tissue Massage

45 hours = 9 five-hour classes

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, hands-on practical training, demonstrations and modeling, interactive learning and group discussions, digital learning and multimedia resources.

**Course Description:** This course highlights the anatomy of fascia and the location of the fascial lines running throughout the body and the therapeutic benefits of myofascial release and additional deep tissue modalities such as trigger point therapy. Students will learn the implementation of these modalities to help free fascial restrictions, increase functional mobility, evaluate and improve postural distortions and breathing capacity in their clients.

This course builds upon skills learned in Swedish Massage and employs practical application of material covered in the Anatomy and Physiology and Biomechanics/Kinesiology courses.

The textbooks for this course are *Trail Guide to the Body* and *Trail Guide to Movement* by Andrew Biel and *Massage Therapy: Principles and Practice* by Susan Salvo.

## Competencies / Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between deep tissue modalities and deep pressure treatment.
2. Hone palpation skills to identify the composition of connective tissues by touch.

3. Recognize how the fascial web is affected by chronic tension or injury.
4. Ascertain how the extracellular matrix responds and distributes forces as it pertains to the whole body.
5. Identify contraindications for myofascial release and deep tissue modalities.
6. Implement deep tissue massage techniques in 60 and 90 minute massage sessions.

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom participation during lectures and in-class practical exchanges, documented hands-on practice sessions outside of the classroom, a written mid-course and final exam and a final practical hands-on exam. Students must achieve a grade of 75% or above on the written exams and must display competency during the hands-on practical exam.

## **Business Practices & State Law / Spa Management & Salesmanship**

36 hours = 36 one hour classes

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, interactive learning and group discussions, project based learning, digital learning and multimedia resources, cultural competency & inclusivity.

**Course Description:** This course contains topics such as business fundamentals, marketing strategies, client management, practice setup, legal and ethical considerations, insurance, pricing structures, financial planning, scheduling systems, professional development, State law governing massage therapists and massage therapy businesses, and compliance with industry regulations. This course is tailored to the specific needs of a massage therapy practice, whether it be in an employment setting or an independent practice. Students will write an informal business plan as a guide for their first year in practice.

The content covered in this course will be utilized in practice hands-on sessions for the Swedish Massage and Myofascial Deep Tissue Massage courses and in the Student Clinic Experience.

The textbook for this course is *Business Mastery* by Ben E. Benjamin and Cherie M. Sohnen-Moe. The textbook will be supplemented by printed state statutes and regulations.

### **Competencies / Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify common business practices for an esthetics and /or a massage therapy practice
2. Create a strategy using common marketing methods for start-up clientele and repeat business.
3. Develop a strategy for a successful practice, business, or employment situation.
4. Differentiate between business structures (sole proprietorship, LLC, etc.)
5. Identify the process required for a massage therapy license and what steps remain in that process after graduation.
6. Outline an employment strategy, including short and long-term professional goals.
7. Develop an informal business plan for their first year in practice.
8. Identify state and federal legal requirements for creating, maintaining and retaining client, financial and tax records.
9. Review State statutes governing massage therapists and salon & spa businesses in the State of Missouri.

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom room participation during lectures and small group activities, homework assignments, quizzes, and a final project encompassing class content throughout the course. Students must achieve a grade of 75% or above on quizzes and the final project. Content from this course is included on the Swedish Massage and Myofascial Deep Tissue Massage mid-course and final exams.

### **Professionalism & Ethics:**

27 hours = 27 one hour classes

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, interactive learning and group discussions, project based learning, digital learning and multimedia resources, cultural competency & inclusivity.

**Course Description:**Topics covered in this course are professional boundaries, informed consent, confidentiality, therapeutic communication, power differentials, sexual misconduct prevention, dual relationships, scope of practice, ethical decision-making, reporting unethical behavior, understanding relevant state regulations, and adherence to professional codes of ethics from organizations like the

American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) and Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals (ABMP).

The textbook for this course is *The Ethics of Touch* by Ben E. Benjamin and Cherie M. Sohnen-Moe.

### **Competencies / Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify unethical or inappropriate client, coworker and employer behaviors and how to report them.
2. Model effective communication, especially difficult conversations relating to professional boundaries.
3. Maintain proper documentation practices to protect client privacy and personal information.
4. Manage client expectations regarding the benefits and limitations of massage therapy.
5. Recognize and navigate situations that are beyond the scope of practice for a massage therapist.

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom room participation during lectures and small group activities, homework assignments, and quizzes. Content from this course is included on the Swedish Massage and Myofascial Deep Tissue Massage mid-course and final exams.

### **Hygiene, Sanitation, Sterilization & Safety**

5 hours = 5 one hour classes

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, hands-on practical training, demonstrations and modeling, interactive learning and group discussions.

**Course Description:** This course provides essential knowledge and practical skills in maintaining hygiene and safety in massage practices. Students will learn about universal precautions, proper sanitation techniques, and effective infection control measures to prevent the transmission of infections. Topics include personal and environmental cleanliness, safe handling of equipment, and protocols to ensure a safe, healthy environment for both practitioners and clients. By the end of the course, students will be equipped with the tools to uphold the highest standards of hygiene and safety in their professional practice.



The content covered in this course will be utilized in all practical hands-on courses and the Student Clinic Experience.

The textbook for this course is *Pivot Point Fundamentals* by Pivot Point.

### **Competencies / Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define types of pathogens that could be found within in a spa/massage therapy practice environment
2. Describe the ways infection is transmitted within a spa/massage therapy practice environment
3. Define the term "cleaning" as related to infection control
4. Explain the disinfection method for tools and multi-use supplies
5. Offer examples of various sterilization methods
6. Identify infection control procedures used in a spa/massage therapy practice
7. Demonstrate appropriate levels of personal hygiene in the spa/school environment

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom room participation during lectures and small group activities and quizzes. Students must achieve a grade of 75% or above on all quizzes. Content from this course is included on the Swedish Massage and Myofascial Deep Tissue Massage mid-course and final exams.

### **Student Clinic Experience**

135 hours = 45 Instructional / Documentation Hours and 90 Hands-on Hours

**Instructional methods utilized:** Hands-on practical training, demonstrations and modeling, cultural competency & inclusivity.

**Course Description:** The Student Clinic Experience is the practical component which allows students to apply massage techniques under the close supervision of instructors. This allows them to gain hands-on experience in a real world situation in a controlled environment.

This course includes an introduction to clinic experience, scheduling their clinic hours, the documentation process, exploration of the clinic space, as well as hands-on practice prior to them meeting with clinic clients.

There is no textbook for this course.

### **Competencies / Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Refine technical skills and appropriate documentation within a clinic / spa environment.
2. Conduct thorough intake consultations to identify areas of concern and tailor treatment accordingly.
3. Integrate feedback from instructors and clients on technique, pressure, body mechanics and client communication to ready themselves for future career opportunities.
4. Demonstrate clinical reasoning when developing treatment plans.
5. Establish an effective closing consultation based on clients' individual needs that encourages follow-up care.
6. Complete hands-on sessions in a professional manner and environment, including each of the following services:
  - a. (6) 30-minute massages - 3 hours
  - b. (2) 45-minute massages - .75 hours
  - c. (12) 60-minute massages - 12 hours
  - d. (10) 90-minute massages - 15 hours
  - e. (2) Indian Head Massage - 1.5 hours
  - f. (2) 60-min Reflexology - 2 hours
  - g. (4) 30-minute Reflexology - 2 hours
  - h. (5) 60-minute Prenatal/side lying - 5 hours
  - i. (6) 60-minute Hot Stone - 6 hours
  - j. (2) 90-minute Hot Stone - 3 hours
  - k. (2) 75-minute Body Scrubs - 2.5 hours
  - l. (2) 90-minute Mud Wraps - 3 hours
  - m. (4) 30-min Lymphatic Drainage (Facial &/or Abs) - 2 hours    2
  - n. (2) 60-min Lymphatic Drainage (Facial &/or Abs) - 2 hours
  - o. (1) 120-minute massages - 2 hours
  - p. 73.25 additional hours of services as determined by clinic guest schedule and/or clinic supervisor

**Students' progress will be assessed** through instructor observations of the sessions, client survey forms, students' self surveys and completion of SOAP notes that clearly demonstrate clinical reasoning. The Student Clinic Experience occurs in a workplace environment, therefore the students' performance with timeliness and adhering to clinic policies is also considered a factor.

## Student Dynamics

20 hours = 1 six hour classes and 14 one-hour classes

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, interactive learning and group discussions, project based learning, digital learning and multimedia resources.

**Course Description:** Student Dynamics refers to topics beyond academic content, including student and teacher behaviors, emotions, and interactions. This course outlines the expectations for the students' behavior and academic success as well as what students can expect from the faculty and administration. Through exploring the seven major learning styles, students will discover how they learn best individually in order to develop active learning and studying strategies.

The content covered in this course will be utilized in all other courses.

The textbooks for this course are the Student Handbook and Program Guidelines and *Massage Therapy: Principles and Practice* by Susan Salvo.

### Competencies / Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the policies, rules and regulations required of attendees of the Academy of Therapeutic Esthetics and Massage (ATEAM).
2. Identify the roles of the ATEAM administration and who holds these positions.
3. Build effective classroom behaviors and study habits based on seven major learning styles.
4. Utilize available resources in the event of academic or personal struggle.

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom participation during lectures and small group activities. The determining factor of the effectiveness of this course is how the students implement the material covered throughout the program. Written assignments may be required should students not display competency in recollecting policies, procedures or regulations of the program.

## Swedish Massage

55 hours = 11 five-hour classes

**Instructional methods utilized:** Lecture based instruction, hands-on practical training, demonstrations and modeling, interactive learning and group discussions, digital learning and multimedia resources, cultural competency & inclusivity.

**Course description:** This course educates students on the modality of Swedish massage through exploration of the various classical strokes to address issues in the superficial tissues of the body. Topics included in this course are professional draping, assessment skills to guide development of a basic treatment plan to meet the needs of a range of clients, and practical application of supportive body mechanics.

The textbooks for this course are *Trail Guide to the Body* by Andrew Biel and *Massage Therapy: Principles and Practice* by Susan Salvo.

### **Competencies / Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Conduct a thorough client intake to determine whether Swedish massage is indicated.
2. Develop an appropriate treatment plan based on the intake and their own observations.
3. Determine their clients' future needs through a series of observation skills before, during and after the bodywork session.
4. Display competency of Swedish massage by performing hands-on sessions in the classroom and in the student clinic.
5. Recognize signs and symptoms of pathological conditions that may be present and altering their session plans accordingly.

**Students' progress will be assessed** through classroom participation during lectures and in--class practical exchanges, documented hands-on practice sessions outside of the classroom, quizzes, a written mid-course exam and a final practical hands-on exam. Students must achieve a grade of 75% or above on the quizzes and written exams and must display competency during the hands-on practical exam.

### **CPR & First Aid**

5 hours = 1 five-hour class

**Instructional methods used:** Lecture based instruction, hands-on practical training, demonstrations and modeling.

**Course Description:** Taught by the American Red Cross, this course includes peer-to-peer interactive scenarios to build the skills and confidence to provide this life saving procedure.

### **Competencies / Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will receive CPR and First Aid certification so students can provide assistance to someone who is having a cardiac or breathing emergency.

**Students' progress will be monitored and assessed** by a representative of the American Red Cross through small group activities and individual practice.

The representative will observe practice for a demonstration of competency. A written test will be administered. Upon completion with a passing score of 80% or above, the student will receive a certificate stating they are CPR and First Aid Certified.