

Redefining Private Massage: The Massage Retainer™ Model for Modern Mobile Bodywork

Introduction

Massage is my craft, and it has always been rooted in intention, skill, and a deep respect for the people I serve. Over the years, I've learned that meaningful work requires a structure that protects both the integrity of the craft and the well-being of the client. I knew I needed a model that honored the depth of this work while elevating the experience for the clients who value it most. The Massage Retainer™ grew out of that commitment — a model designed to support consistent, high-level in-home care in a way that feels thoughtful, grounded, and sustainable. It reflects my passion for this work and my belief that private massage can be reimaged with clarity rather than just convenience. This paper outlines the framework that now defines my practice.

Executive Summary

The Massage Retainer™ is a modern framework for private, in-home bodywork designed for clients who prefer continuity, discretion, and high-level therapeutic care. Unlike traditional mobile massage or spa-based scheduling, this model establishes a structured, long-range relationship between therapist and client through dedicated time blocks, clear availability, and predictable access.

Built for individuals navigating demanding lifestyles, frequent travel, physical stress, or periods of transition, the Massage Retainer™ supports consistent in-home care across homes, seasons, and destinations. It allows clients to work with one therapist who understands their history, patterns, injuries, preferences, and goals — without the interruptions or limitations that come from third-party systems.

The framework also provides executive assistants and household staff with a reliable structure: defined scheduling windows, established communication protocols, clear boundaries, and a transparent scope of services. This reduces last-minute scrambling, miscommunications, and the friction that can arise when coordinating private wellness care at a high level.

For the therapist, the Massage Retainer™ protects the depth of the craft by ensuring adequate time, preparation, and energy management — all of which contribute to better outcomes for the client. It is

a model designed to sustain clinical excellence while honoring the realities of modern mobile bodywork.

This white paper provides an overview of the principles, structure, and application of the Massage Retainer™ and outlines how it functions as a viable, forward-thinking standard for private in-home care.

Defining The Massage Retainer™

The Massage Retainer™ is a structured, long-range agreement that provides clients with dedicated access to private, in-home therapeutic bodywork. It is built on the principles of continuity, presence, and clinical depth, with a focus on maintaining the kind of consistency that supports meaningful therapeutic progress.

At its core, a Massage Retainer™ establishes a predictable relationship between therapist and client through reserved time blocks, priority scheduling, and clearly defined availability. This structure allows the therapist to work with intention rather than urgency, and enables the client to receive consistent, individualized care without navigating the variability of spa schedules, online booking platforms, or rotating practitioners.

A retainer is not a membership, a package, or a prepaid series of sessions. Instead, it functions as an access model — a system in which clients secure committed time and therapeutic presence from a practitioner who understands their history, preferences, injuries, and goals.

The Massage Retainer™ is designed for individuals who benefit from steady, high-level support: clients managing ongoing physical demands; those who travel frequently or maintain multiple residences; individuals recovering from injury or navigating periods of stress or transition; and clients who value discretion, in-home service, and continuity of care.

While the structure varies depending on duration — monthly, weekly, seasonal, or travel-based — all Massage Retainer™ formats are guided by the same foundational principles: clarity of scope, sustainable pacing, protected time, and an emphasis on quality over volume.

In this model, the therapist is not simply booked; they are engaged. The work is not transactional; it is ongoing. And the care is not incidental; it is intentionally designed.

The Case for The Massage Retainer™ Model

Private, in-home bodywork meets a distinct set of needs that are not always supported by traditional scheduling structures — particularly for ultra-high-net-worth clients whose lifestyles involve irregular calendars, frequent travel, and multi-residence living. The Massage Retainer™ model addresses these gaps by providing clarity, continuity, and stability in situations where consistent therapeutic support is essential.

1. Continuity for UHNW Clients

Many clients benefit from a therapist who knows their patterns, injuries, physical history, and long-term goals. For ultra-high-net-worth individuals — whose schedules often shift rapidly across cities, households, and time zones — maintaining continuity through traditional appointment-based systems can be challenging. A retainer structure ensures that dedicated time and presence are reserved in advance, allowing clients to receive consistent, individualized care without navigating unpredictable openings, rotating practitioners, or availability gaps created by high-demand seasons.

The model also supports households who value unified, in-home care. Rather than coordinating multiple providers for spouses, family members, or visiting guests, a retainer allows one therapist to support the household within defined parameters. This creates ease, consistency, and efficiency for the client — and a clear framework for the therapist.

2. Refined Coordination for Ultra-High-Net-Worth Households

Ultra-high-net-worth households often rely on executive assistants or estate staff to manage wellness scheduling. Without a defined model, this can involve last-minute requests, visibility gaps in availability, or multiple outreach attempts during peak travel periods. The Massage Retainer™ provides assistants with a predictable framework: established scheduling windows, defined response protocols, and clear boundaries around availability.

This reduces last-minute scrambling, minimizes miscommunications, and helps prevent the friction that can arise when coordinating private wellness care across shifting calendars, travel plans, or seasonal demands.

3. Sustainable Work for Therapists and Higher Clinical Quality

High-quality therapeutic work requires presence, preparation, and physical sustainability. Traditional high-volume scheduling — especially in spa or on-demand settings — can limit the therapist's ability to deliver nuanced, attentive care. A retainer structure protects the practitioner's capacity by reserving time blocks, reducing overbooking, and allowing adequate recovery and preparation between sessions.

This results in better outcomes for the client and a healthier, more grounded practice for the therapist. It also helps preserve the long-term integrity of the craft by ensuring the work is performed in conditions that support skill, endurance, and clinical judgment.

What the Massage Retainer™ Includes

The Massage Retainer™ is built on a framework of dedicated access, protected time, and clearly defined boundaries. Across all formats, clients receive up to five days per week of dedicated care, with four hours reserved each day. How these hours flow may shift between local and travel environments, but the structure itself remains constant to ensure clarity, continuity, and sustainability.

1. Reserved Access to the Therapist

At the heart of the Massage Retainer™ model is guaranteed access. Clients are not booking single appointments — they are securing protected daily time with a dedicated practitioner who understands their patterns, their body, and the rhythm of their household.

For local retainers, the reserved four-hour blocks offer predictable structure. These hours can be used flexibly within the day, allowing the household to schedule sessions around school routines, meetings, ski plans, or visiting guests without competing for availability or navigating multiple providers.

For travel retainers, the same four-hour daily allotment applies, but the pacing of the day is allowed to breathe. Instead of adhering to a single fixed block, the therapist is present within the household's natural rhythm, allowing the four hours of care to be delivered where they best support the flow of the day. The total time remains the same; only the cadence shifts to accommodate the dynamics of travel, shared spaces, and variable activities.

This structure reduces logistical friction, provides clarity for both clients and staff, and ensures the therapist can deliver high-level work without rushing, overbooking, or compromising the depth of care.

How Payment Works: A Hybrid Model Built for Clarity and Sustainability

The Massage Retainer™ is a hybrid financial model designed to support high-level private care with both clarity and flexibility. Rather than functioning as a traditional “package of sessions” or a pure “access only” system, the retainer separates two components: the fee that secures exclusive access, and the fees associated with the therapeutic work itself.

For local retainers, clients pay a retainer fee that reserves up to five days per week and four hours per day exclusively for their household. This ensures protected access, priority scheduling, continuity of care, and the ability to plan bodywork around real life rather than competing for appointment slots. Individual sessions delivered within these blocks are billed separately at the established per-session rate. This structure allows clients to receive the sessions they need while maintaining the predictability and convenience of dedicated access.

For travel retainers, the financial model shifts to a flat daily rate. Because travel creates a more fluid household rhythm — shared spaces, variable schedules, unpredictable physical demands, and often multiple people receiving care — a day rate provides simplicity and clarity. The client secures the therapist’s presence for the full day, and all bodywork during that day is included. No per-session billing is required while traveling.

Across all formats, the Massage Retainer™ emphasizes transparency, boundaries, and sustainability. Clients understand exactly what they are paying for: access, availability, therapeutic continuity, and the time of a skilled practitioner whose work is tailored to their physical demands and household structure. This hybrid model avoids the limitations of appointment-based systems while ensuring that both access and the therapeutic work itself are honored.

The central principle is simple: the retainer secures the time; the fees within that time are structured according to the environment — session-based locally, day-rate while traveling. This clarity allows the Massage Retainer™ to meet the needs of UHNW households without sacrificing fairness, professionalism, or the integrity of the craft.

1. Why This Hybrid Model Works for Ultra High Net Worth Households

Ultra high net worth households operate on rhythms that do not fit traditional appointment systems. Their schedules are fluid, their environments shift quickly, and their physical demands vary depending on travel, guests, weather, work, or sport. A hybrid retainer model respects those realities by offering predictability without rigidity and structure without limitation.

The Massage Retainer™ provides guaranteed access — something UHNW households value because they cannot rely on last-minute availability, waitlists, or rotating practitioners. They need a practitioner who is already integrated into their routine, understands the household's dynamics, and can support multiple members within the same reserved window. Billing sessions separately for local retainers keeps the model transparent and allows the therapeutic work to match the household's day-to-day needs.

During travel, however, the household requires a different kind of simplicity. Instead of tracking individual sessions across a shifting schedule, a flat day rate ensures the therapist's presence, attention, and readiness without requiring the staff to coordinate or negotiate timing. The therapist is available for the full day's rhythm, and everyone involved — principals, guests, staff, and the therapist — benefits from the clarity of a single daily rate.

The Massage Retainer™ creates a dependable structure for households that value consistency and thoughtful care. It protects the therapist's time, supports the client's changing needs, and provides a clear, sustainable framework that works seamlessly whether the household is home, hosting, or traveling.

2. How the Massage Retainer™ Aligns with Private Household Staffing Models

Ultra high net worth households are already structured around access-based staffing. Chefs, stylists, pilots, private security, drivers, and wellness professionals are retained not for individual units of work, but for their presence, readiness, and continuity. Their value lies in being available, prepared, and fully integrated into the household's rhythm.

The Massage Retainer™ adapts this logic to therapeutic bodywork. Clients still receive individual sessions, but those sessions take place within time that has already been reserved specifically for their household. In local retainers, the fee secures recurring access—up to the agreed days and hours each week—and sessions are billed separately within that framework. In travel retainers, the structure shifts to a flat daily rate that includes all bodywork provided during the agreed window. In both formats, the emphasis is on continuity and readiness rather than piecemeal, one-off scheduling.

For therapists — or anyone evaluating this framework from a professional lens — this alignment with existing private staffing structures is intentional. It situates bodywork within the same category of retained, high-trust, relationship-based services already familiar to UHNW households. It also allows the work to be delivered at a pace that supports clinical depth, household flexibility, and sustainable practice for the provider.

How the Massage Retainer™ Model Benefits Clients, Staff, and Providers

The Massage Retainer™ creates advantages that extend beyond scheduling convenience. Because the structure is built on consistency and protected time, it improves the experience for every person involved in the care ecosystem: the client, the household staff, and the practitioner. Each group benefits in distinct and meaningful ways.

1. Benefits for Clients and Principals

Clients receive a higher standard of care rooted in familiarity and sustained therapeutic attention. Physical patterns are understood more quickly; recovery work becomes more precise; sessions build on each other instead of starting from scratch. Because time is already reserved, clients avoid the common pitfalls of availability issues, rushed appointments, or long gaps between sessions that disrupt progress. The retainer also gives clients a sense of continuity during periods of heavy travel, increased stress, athletic training, or hosting. Their care becomes one less variable to manage, and the therapeutic relationship becomes a reliable anchor in otherwise demanding schedules.

2. Benefits for Executive Assistants and Household Staff

The Massage Retainer™ removes a major logistical burden from the household team. Scheduling becomes predictable rather than reactive; last-minute scrambles for appointments are eliminated; staff do not have to coordinate multiple providers or manage inconsistent arrival windows. Because the therapist is already integrated into the weekly structure, the household team can plan around known blocks of care instead of constantly adjusting for cancellations, availability issues, or variable session lengths. The clarity of the model also reduces communication errors and frees up the staff to focus on higher-level responsibilities. For households with frequent guests, athletic pursuits, or complex itineraries, the retainer creates a streamlined wellness rhythm that supports the entire environment.

3. Benefits for the Therapist

For the provider, the Massage Retainer™ creates a sustainable professional cadence. Instead of working in fragmented appointment slots or unpredictable daily volume, the therapist can deliver care with appropriate pacing, preparation, and presence. This leads to stronger clinical outcomes, deeper understanding of client patterns, and reduced burnout. The model also allows the therapist to maintain clearer boundaries around their time, energy, and workload. By shifting from transactional

sessions to a relationship-based structure, the therapist gains stability, consistency, and the ability to provide higher-level work without compromising their wellbeing or professional standards.

Operational Clarity: How the Massage Retainer™ Functions in Practice

The Massage Retainer™ is grounded in a refined professional structure that protects both the household and the therapist. Each engagement begins with a formal written contract that outlines expectations, access, scheduling parameters, fees, and cancellation terms. This agreement ensures clarity for all parties and establishes the retainer as a high-level professional service—not an informal or ad-hoc arrangement.

1. Clear Boundaries, Professional Standards, and Legal Frameworks

The model also integrates essential legal and privacy protections. Nicole James Bodywork LLC maintains full professional liability insurance, operates strictly within state licensure requirements, and provides a dedicated NDA for all retainer clients. Households may also request use of their own NDA; both options are standard. These measures safeguard confidentiality, protect sensitive information, and align the retainer with the protocols UHNW households are accustomed to.

Communication flows through a designated point of contact—typically the executive assistant or estate manager—to prevent misalignment and eliminate last-minute disruptions. Retainer hours are reserved exclusively for the household, and all bodywork must occur within those protected windows. These boundaries preserve the integrity of the work, support efficient planning for staff, and ensure that the therapeutic experience remains consistent, grounded, and sustainable.

2. What Makes the Model Easy for Households to Use

One of the core strengths of the Massage Retainer™ is its simplicity. Households, estate managers, and executive assistants do not need to constantly negotiate schedules or request last-minute accommodations. The protected hours built into the local retainer—and the predictable day-based structure of travel retainers—mean that support is already in place.

Onboarding is streamlined through the Executive Assistant Guide, intake materials, and a clear point-of-contact framework that reduces unnecessary back-and-forth. Whether the household includes one principal, a couple, or multiple family members and guests, everyone understands how access

works, how sessions are requested, and what the boundaries are. This clarity is essential in UHNW homes where privacy, discretion, and efficiency are non-negotiable.

The Massage Retainer™ is designed to remove friction, eliminate ambiguity, and create a seamless working relationship between the therapist, the household, and the support staff who coordinate daily logistics. By combining contractual clarity with flexible but protected access, the model preserves the depth of the therapeutic work while aligning with the pace, privacy, and expectations of ultra-high-net-worth homes. This structure ensures that care is never rushed, coordination is never chaotic, and the service consistently meets the standards of households accustomed to exceptional support.

When the Massage Retainer™ Is the Right Fit

1. Households Managing High Physical Demand (Ski, Golf, Polo, Training Seasons)

These are the clients whose bodies are their engines:

- Ski families in Big Sky, Yellowstone Club, Vail, Jackson Hole
- Golfers, polo players, and equestrians
- Clients training for marathons or endurance sports
- Older adults maintaining mobility throughout active seasons

Why the retainer works:

Because the strain is cumulative. And a single massage after the fact can't compare to continuous therapeutic monitoring through a demanding season. Protected retainer access makes recovery predictable, not reactive.

2. Clients Who Are Immunocompromised or Managing Complex Health Conditions

These households prioritize safety, control, and consistency.

This includes:

- Clients undergoing cancer treatment

- Clients with autoimmune disorders
- Clients unable to risk public spaces or inconsistent providers
- Households with medically sensitive family members

Why the retainer works:

Because trust and continuity reduce stress and exposure. Having one licensed, insured, NDA-protected therapist allows clients to maintain wellness without navigating public environments or constantly onboarding new practitioners.

3. Individuals in Emotional Transition, High Stress, or Therapeutic Work

These are clients navigating:

- High-intensity therapy work (somatic, trauma-informed, or integrative)
- Burnout, grief, or identity shifts
- Major life transitions
- Recovery from addiction or post-rehab stabilization

Why the retainer works:

Because, as *The Body Keeps the Score* teaches, emotional load lives in the body.

Consistent, regulated touch supports nervous-system recalibration, stabilizes routines, and anchors clients who feel unmoored. It provides a grounded physical complement to psychological healing.

4. Families Who Need Household-Level Support

This includes homes where multiple members benefit from bodywork, such as:

- Neurodivergent children
- Kids in sports or dance
- Partners who golf, ski, or train

- Elderly parents visiting seasonally
- Homes preparing for or recovering from busy hosting periods

Why the retainer works:

Because a single therapist with a structured retainer prevents logistical chaos. Everyone receives care within the same protected window. One provider, one schedule, one therapeutic standard — aligned with household flow.

5. Clients with Multiple Residences or Frequent Travel Itineraries

These are households who move seasonally or travel often:

- Big Sky → Hamptons → Palm Beach rotations
- Montana winters, European summers
- Martha's Vineyard, Napa, Aspen, Jackson Hole
- International travel where continuity matters

Why the retainer works:

Because care shouldn't stop when the zip code changes.

The Massage Retainer™ can follow the household during key seasons or critical travel periods, maintaining therapeutic consistency in a lifestyle defined by movement.

6. Clients Preparing for or Recovering from Surgery (Pre- and Post-Op Support)

This includes:

- Orthopedic surgeries
- Cosmetic procedures
- Injury rehabilitation
- Post-op swelling, stiffness, or guarded movement

Why the retainer works:

Because post-surgical recovery is a marathon, not an event.

Having a therapist who understands your baseline, your goals, and your surgical constraints allows for safer, faster recovery — without leaving home.

7. Anyone Who Values Continuity, Craft, and Therapeutic Depth

This category is the most universal.

It includes clients who:

- Want a long-term relationship with a therapist who knows their body
- Prefer consistency over novelty
- Are tired of “hit-or-miss” experiences
- Understand that meaningful bodywork is cumulative
- Respect boundaries, quality, and professionalism

The Massage Retainer™ is about alignment.

It's for people who want bodywork handled with the same intentionality as their health, their time, and their home.

8. Clients Who Require a High Level of Privacy, Discretion, or Security

This category includes individuals and households whose public profile or safety needs make continuity essential.

It includes clients who:

- Prefer a single trusted provider rather than rotating practitioners
- Require NDA protection or strict confidentiality
- Have security protocols that limit outside personnel

- Manage sensitive schedules, locations, or public visibility
- Need predictable, vetted support without exposure to public environments

For these clients, the Message Retainer™ provides controlled access, minimized risk, and a stable therapeutic relationship built on trust.

It ensures that all care is delivered by one licensed, vetted professional who understands the household's privacy expectations, security rhythms, and internal protocols.

The Structural Gaps in Traditional Massage Models

Traditional massage options — luxury spas, mobile apps, and independent mobile therapists — all serve meaningful purposes in the wellness landscape. But none of them were designed for clients or households who require consistent in-home care, protected access, privacy, continuity, or the ability to integrate bodywork into the rhythm of daily life. As needs become more complex — multiple family members, demanding schedules, recurring injuries, travel between residences, or heightened security and discretion — the structural limitations of these models become more apparent. The Message Retainer™ was created to address these gaps with clarity, continuity, and a level of professionalism that traditional systems simply cannot sustain.

1. Luxury Spas

Luxury spas offer beautiful environments, curated experiences, and exceptional single-day services — but they operate on fixed schedules that cannot bend to the unpredictability of high-demand lifestyles.

- Appointment availability is limited, especially during peak seasons.
- Last-minute or same-day visits are rarely possible.
- Guests are assigned whichever therapist is available that day—not the provider who understands their history, patterns, or recent injuries.
- Continuity of care is nonexistent; each session is a standalone experience with no cumulative therapeutic strategy.

- Privacy is limited: therapists cannot sign household NDAs, and treatment rooms are shared spaces.
- Spas cannot serve entire households, support fluctuating daily schedules, or provide travel continuity.

Their model is built for hospitality — not household integration.

2. Mobile Apps

- Mobile massage apps democratize access, but they are structurally incompatible with clients who require consistency, discretion, or specialized clinical oversight.
- Algorithms prioritize speed and proximity over client–therapist alignment, meaning even when a client “favorites” a therapist, the app may assign whoever can arrive fastest.
- Quality, training, and presentation vary widely among providers, and clients cannot reliably secure the same practitioner across multiple sessions.
- Apps do not provide a framework for NDAs, high-privacy environments, or coordinated household scheduling.
- Therapists cannot follow a household across locations, and the model cannot support clients who require structured, ongoing therapeutic work.

These platforms serve convenience well — but they cannot deliver continuity or personalization at a high standard.

3. Independent Mobile Therapists

Independent mobile therapists can offer excellent hands-on work, but most operate without the systems, structure, or household-level protocols required for complex clients.

- Communication often happens through informal channels (texts, DMs), scheduling varies widely, and availability may shift week to week.
- Few independent practitioners maintain the legal, logistical, or operational frameworks UHNW clients and security-sensitive households require — such as NDAs, written contracts, liability insurance alignment, travel readiness, or multi-member support.
- Most independent therapists cannot reliably support multiple household members in a coordinated, time-sensitive way (e.g., staggered ski times, childcare shifts, dinner schedules).
- They cannot quickly adjust when the household rhythm changes — such as a delayed ski return, an unexpected business call, or a guest needing an urgent session — especially if they are seeing multiple clients that day.
- Price-point limitations often force independent therapists to stack many sessions per day, reducing the flexibility and depth required for UHNW households.
- Continuity across locations is nearly impossible: most independents cannot travel with the family or maintain care across residences (e.g., Bozeman → Big Sky → Hamptons → France).
- Most independent therapists do not communicate with a client's broader wellness team — such as physical therapists, personal trainers, chiropractors, or orthopedic providers.
- Many do not use secure, professional documentation systems that allow for coordinated care. As a result, treatment plans remain isolated instead of integrated, which is a major limitation for clients navigating rehabilitation, performance goals, or medically guided recovery.

This creates an unpredictable experience for both clients and household staff, especially when multiple family members need care or when continuity is essential.

Why These Gaps Matter

For clients who require consistent therapeutic work, structured support, higher privacy, or care that can follow them across locations, the limitations of traditional models aren't just inconvenient — they make it harder to maintain steady, coordinated progress. While excellent results are possible in many settings, certain needs benefit from a model built around continuity and clear access. Without that structure, bodywork can become fragmented, reactive, and harder to integrate into the rhythms of a demanding lifestyle.

The Massage Retainer™ Difference

Developed by a New York-trained licensed massage therapist with formal degrees in Exercise Science and Massage Therapy, twenty years of professional experience, and deep exposure to the workflow of luxury spas and UHNW households. The Massage Retainer™ directly addresses the operational gaps that traditional models cannot.

It replaces randomness with structure, replaces superficial continuity with true therapeutic depth, and elevates bodywork from a transaction into a thoughtful, steady, intentional rhythm of care that actually supports the way you live.

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