

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY:

Massage Therapist

You can study with a private training provider or at a college of further education.

Some learners prefer to start with diplomas at Level 2 in Complementary Therapies or Beauty Therapy which provide an introduction into the world of massage therapy; these qualifications may take up to a year to complete. Progression onto a Level 3 Massage Therapy course could then follow, or alternatively a learner can go straight into a programme of study for a Level 3 massage qualification. A learner would need to research a suitable centre or training provider and fit into their scheduled courses – some private centres have several intakes each year outside of the normal academic term times. At further education colleges, the intake is normally in September each year and courses usually run for one year.

Find a college in your area that offers VTCT qualifications:

www.vtct.org.uk/find-a-centre

What does your first course cover?

You would start with an induction session that would detail the requirements such as uniform, associated kit, centre regulations, examination details and course content like anatomy and physiology, client handling skills and massage techniques. This course gives you the information to know exactly what you will be doing over the next year so you will feel comfortable starting this journey.

How many courses are required in order to become a massage therapist?

A Diploma will give you all the skills you need to gain employment.

A certificate or diploma course would need to be taken to fully qualify as a massage therapist – this could take in excess of 400 hours to complete; the course schedule would be designed by the provider and would include hours for in-class theory on massage techniques, anatomy and physiology of the body, practical massage work, case study work, plus self-study and assessment preparation.

What is the class schedule?

Massage therapy can be studied full-time or part-time and there are courses available to suit all requirements. This structure is determined by where you study. Some classes run for two-days each weekend over a number of months, while some classes run 3 hours one evening a week for a whole year. Class timetables differ from each training provider so it will be beneficial for you to ensure you check how a course is delivered to ensure that the class timings suit your lifestyle and personal schedule.



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How many people will be studying with you?

Classes tend to vary in size but often consist of groups of 10 - 20 learners. Learners normally start in massage therapy practising skills and techniques on their classmates and then move on to 'clients'. These 'clients' are often brought in for case study and additional practise sessions.

Should you work while you are studying?

Many learners combine work and study. However, in addition to the in-class attendance, time needs to be allocated for case study work which is an important part of developing practical massage therapy skills. This can be quite time-consuming as it takes time to learn massage routines, develop massage techniques and perform the full treatments. These treatments also need to be documented as performance evidence is normally a qualification requirement.

Is there government funding available to help pay for school?

Depending on the age and previous qualifications of a learner, funding and loans may be available for massage therapy courses. If you are between the ages of 16 – 19 then you could apply for a bursary from the government to help with education related costs such as clothing, books and transportation. If you are over 19, you can apply for an advanced learner loan but you will need to check with your college or training provider to see if the course is eligible. If you take out a loan, you have to pay it back but only when you earn over £25,000. You will repay 9% of any income you earn over £25,000.

Required equipment:

At minimum, learners will need to buy a professional uniform, a massage couch, towels and oil. There are a number of professional supply companies who can provide these essentials at competitive prices. Don't think of this as just an expense but as an investment into your future career as these will be supplies that help you as you start practicing your trade.

