

SPORTS, ACTIVE HEALTH & FITNESS CAREERS:

Sports Massage Therapist

WHERE TO STUDY?

You can study with a private training provider or at a college of further education. Colleges often have a September start date while private training providers will have year-round start times.



Colleges start advertising and enrolling early, so we'd encourage you to speak with someone at the college to get all your questions answered. You can often find your answers by visiting their website for more details. Not sure what colleges in your area have the courses you want to study? You can find colleges that offer iTEC and VTCT qualifications through our websites or this link: www.vtct.org.uk/find-a-centre or www.itecworld.co.uk/find-a-centre

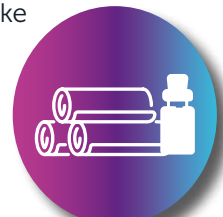
STUDY FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME?

There are courses that can be completed part-time or full-time. Some colleges and training providers may offer part-time/evening courses that will allow you to balance your studies with your other commitments. This is something we recommend investigating to see what is offered in your local area.



WHAT EQUIPMENT WILL I NEED?

For your course, you will need to make minimal investment in items like towels, oils and uniform. The typical equipment that a sports therapist possesses – like a plinth or massage table – will not need to be purchased unless you plan to work on your own. If you decide you'd like to set up a clinic, you will need to consider additional costs such as rent, insurance, furniture, etc. and determine what your rates would be for different services.



WHAT KIND OF COURSES SHOULD YOU TAKE?

To become a Sports Massage Therapist, You would initially have to do a Level 3 Sports Massage qualification to understand the principles of massage, anatomy & physiology, fitness principles and professional practice.

There are three different levels of sports massage therapy. A Level 3 Massage Therapist would be able to carry out a maintenance massage and a pre or post event massage routine.



A Level 4 Therapist would be able to treat common injuries such as hamstring strains, runner's knee, tennis elbow and would also be able to differentiate between a chronic and acute pathology and then be able to cross refer.



A Level 5 Therapist will have a thorough understanding and practical skills to carry out treatment in all Level 3 and 4 areas, in addition to more complex injuries, skills such as client care and health and safety.



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HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Many ask "How long will it take to complete my studies?" Level 3 sports massage courses typically take four or five weekends over a period of four to six months. A learner may wish to continue on to a Level 4 sports massage qualification which can last approximately three to four months. Some private training providers combine the Level 3 and 4 into one offering over a period of about six months.



A college of Further Education may run the course part-time in the evening over two terms or one day a week over one term. There are usually four classes per day with a mixture of theory and hands on practice. There is more scope for a Level 4 practitioner as they have developed the skills to work with sports injuries and can therefore be more versatile when working with sports people, teams or clubs. A learner may wish to further develop their skills and gain a Level 5 qualification which typically takes three to four months part-time.

CAN I WORK WHILST I STUDY?



Many students work alongside their studies, but be aware you will have a lot of homework and studying to do in addition to the hours you spend in college. We would suggest to never take on more than you can handle. Make the qualification your top priority if you can. It would be best to look for industry related part-time work. For example, look for jobs in a gym or working in a sports stadium so you can have exposure to the industry. You will be able to add it to your C.V. as well as it being an opportunity to learn even more about the industry you want to enter.

INSURANCE AND WAGES

As part of your training, the training provider will most likely provide insurance indemnifying you as a training therapist. However, it is imperative that you only work within the scope of your knowledge. As part of the training, it is encouraged that you work with as many clients as you can so you can complete case studies as part of the qualification. You may not be paid as part of providing this service.



When qualified and insured, you may only work within the scope of your insurance and qualification and are encouraged to join an association. You must take into account the various insurance needs when running your own clinic. If you are part of a larger organisation they will likely cover these costs for you.

When you are in industry, you can typically charge a fee of anywhere from £50 per hour with a client up to £200 per hour with a team. Most therapists will be sole traders and subject to taxation in their own jurisdiction.