

# COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY CAREERS:

## Massage Therapist

### WHERE TO STUDY?

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. 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. Want to study massage and not sure what courses colleges in your area have on offer? You can find colleges that offer iTEC and VTCT qualifications through our websites or by following this link: [www.vtct.org.uk/find-a-centre](http://www.vtct.org.uk/find-a-centre) or [www.itecworld.co.uk/find-a-centre](http://www.itecworld.co.uk/find-a-centre)

### STUDY FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME?

You can study full-time or part-time. Some colleges and training providers may offer part-time or 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.

### WHERE CAN I WORK?

Career opportunities as a massage therapist exist in a variety of contexts, including:

- Commercial beauty salons
- Massage therapy clinics
- Destination spas and day spas
- Self-employed/mobile/home-based settings

You will also be eligible to join a professional association and gain insurance as a massage therapist.



## WHAT KIND OF COURSES SHOULD YOU TAKE?

iTEC and VTCT are the market leaders for the sector, providing high-quality qualifications; there is increasing demand within the industry for more qualified therapists. We have vocational qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

Some learners prefer to start with diplomas at Level 2 in Complementary Therapies or Beauty Therapy, which

Level

2

provide an introduction to the world of massage therapy; these qualifications may take up to a year to complete.

A learner could then choose to progress onto a Level 3 Massage qualification.

Learners may choose to take a Level 3 Diploma which focuses on classical body massage techniques such as the iTEC Level 3 Diploma in Massage or a qualification which covers a broader range of massage treatments such as the VTCT Level 3 Diploma in Massage Therapy.

You will develop a range of technical skills enabling you to provide a variety of relaxing massage treatments using different techniques. You will also develop interpersonal skills that will assist you to communicate effectively with clients.

Level

3

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### HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Many ask "How long will it take to complete my studies?" As mentioned before, some learners start with a diploma at Level 2 in Complementary Therapies. This will provide an introduction into the world of complementary therapies – massage, aromatherapy and reflexology. A learner could then choose to progress onto a Level 3 Diploma in Massage or Massage Therapy.



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.

### CAN I WORK WHILST I STUDY?

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.



### WHAT WILL CLASSES BE LIKE?

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 check how a course is delivered to ensure that the class timings suit your lifestyle and personal schedule.

### WHAT EQUIPMENT WILL I NEED?

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 your massage practice.

