

SPORTS, ACTIVE HEALTH & FITNESS

Sports Massage Therapist

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

The length of time you'll study to become qualified in Sports Massage depends on where you choose to study. This could be in a college or a private training provider. It's up to you to do some research and pick the best route for you. You would initially have to do a Level 3 sports massage qualification to understand the principles of massage, Anatomy & Physiology, Fitness principles and professional practise. There are courses that can be completed part-time or full-time.

Find a college in your area that offers VTCT qualifications:

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

www.itecworld.co.uk/find-a-centre

Your schedule and your courses:

There are 3 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 great understanding and practical skills to carry out treatment in all Level 3 and 4 areas in addition to more complex injuries.

There are 3 different levels of sports massage therapy.

The length of each course will be in the region of 200 hands-on-hours that can be broken down into bite-sized units. A typical time frame for someone starting at a Level 3 and continuing on to a Level 5 is roughly 600 hours and may take about 2 years.

Level 3 sports massage courses typically take 5 or 6 weekends over a period of 4-6 months. A learner may wish to continue on to a Level 4 sports massage which can last approximately 3-4 months. Some private training providers combine the Level 3 and 4 into one offering over a period of about 6 months. A college of Further Education may run the course part-time in the evening over two terms or one day a week over 1 term. There are usually 4 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 3-4 months part-time.

Should you study full-time or part-time?

You can study full-time or part-time. We recommend investigating what is offered in your local area, and at your local college. See the section above for more details as well as the last page for qualification options.



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Paying for your schooling:

Government funding: 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. In most public courses, you may qualify for a grant, but there is certain criteria that you must meet. There are some private courses that you will require you to work a payment scheme or plan as they may not be subject to grant aid.

Working: Many students work whilst taking courses, but be aware you will have homework 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 CV 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.

You can typically charge a fee from £50/hour for a single client to £200/hour for a team.

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.

Required equipment and approximate costs:

During your time studying, you will need to make minimal investments in things like towels, oils and a uniform. The typical equipment that a sports therapist needs to invest in – like a plinth or massage table – will not need to be purchased unless you go plan to work on your own. If you decide you would 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.

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Qualifications:

Level 3 Sports Massage

This qualification allows learners to practice sports massage on people with non-pathological tissue. i.e. those people without injuries but wishing to use sports massage for maintenance, pre-event, inter-event, and post event massage.

Qualifications options to work as a Level 3 sports massage practitioner:

- VTCT Level 3 Diploma In sports Massage Therapy
- iTEC Level 3 Diploma in Sports massage therapy
- Level 3 Diploma in preventing injuries in sport and active leisure
- Level 3 Diploma in sports and massage therapies

Level 4 Sports Massage

This qualification builds on the above by introducing advanced injury assessment techniques and treatments so that learners can work with clients that require sports massage for the above plus for reasons relating to the treatment and management of sports injuries.

Qualifications options to work as a Level 4 sports massage practitioner:

- VTCT Level 4 Certificate in Sports Massage Therapy
- iTEC Level 4 Certificate in Sports Massage Therapy

Level 5 Sports Massage

This qualification builds on the above with additional injury assessment techniques and additional soft tissue treatment techniques. Still to provide treatment and management of sports injuries.

Qualifications options to work as a Level 5 sports massage practitioner:

- VTCT Level 5 Certificate in Sports Massage Therapy
- iTEC Level 5 Certificate in Sports Massage Therapy

