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american massage therapy association

## Living Right: Talking to Your Physician about Massage

According to the results of a recent survey conducted by the American Hospital Association's Health Forum and Samueli Institute, a nonprofit research organization, **40 percent of hospitals indicated they offer one or more alternative therapies —up a full 37 percent from 2007.**

Responding to patient demand and the increasing cost of health care, more and more hospitals are taking a good look at complementary and alternative therapies—including massage therapy—to help patients with a variety of issues. From back and neck pain to stress relief, doctors and hospitals are beginning to think a little differently about how they might help patients better deal with some of these conditions.

"Today's patients have better access to health information and are demanding more personalized care," says Sita Ananth, study author and director of knowledge services for the Samueli Institute. "The survey results reinforce the fact that patients want the best that both conventional and alternative medicine can offer, and hospitals are responding."

Of the hospitals that responded to the survey, **64 percent reported using massage therapy as part of outpatient care**, and 44 percent use massage therapy as part of inpatient care.

These results dovetail nicely with the findings of a reader survey published in the September 2011 issue of *Consumer Reports*, where three out of four adults reported using some form of alternative therapy for general health. Chiropractic, deep tissue massage and yoga all dominated the lists of helpful treatments for conditions such as back pain, neck pain and osteoarthritis.

According to the report, survey respondents indicated that yoga, deep tissue massage and Pilates rated the same as prescription medications for help with back pain. And some of the respondents initially looked to complementary and alternative therapies upon the suggestion of their physicians. "**Twenty-eight percent of readers who used deep tissue massage, usually for back or neck pain, said their doctors had recommended it,**" the report explains.

### What This Means For You

As researchers begin to learn more about the benefits of massage therapy, don't be afraid to talk with your doctor about how massage might fit into your overall health care regimen.

And, talk to your massage therapist openly and honestly about the benefits you want to receive from massage therapy. Take some time to gather information on your own. There are quite a few resources out there that can help you better understand the research being done on the benefits of massage therapy, as well as the different techniques your massage therapist might use.

### How to Find a Professional Massage Therapist

Finding a professional massage therapist is vital to a positive massage experience. AMTA massage therapists have demonstrated a level of ability through education and/or testing, adhere to a code of ethics and must meet continuing education requirements. AMTA offers a free professional massage therapist locator service at [findamassagetherapist.org](http://findamassagetherapist.org).

### More Resources

AMTA has a wide variety of information for consumers—including clinical [research](#) on the efficacy of massage therapy, how to [find a qualified massage therapist](#), as well as tips for getting the [most from your massage](#). Visit [findamassagetherapist.org](http://findamassagetherapist.org) to get started.