

Summer 2025

Massage Therapy

JOURNAL

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**From Student to
Professional,
AMTA is Here for
Your Entire Journey**



What the Research Shows

Massage Therapy for Mental
and Emotional Health

The Future of Massage

How to Curate the
Perfect Client Experience

CE

**Building an Inclusive
Massage Practice with
Cultural Competence**

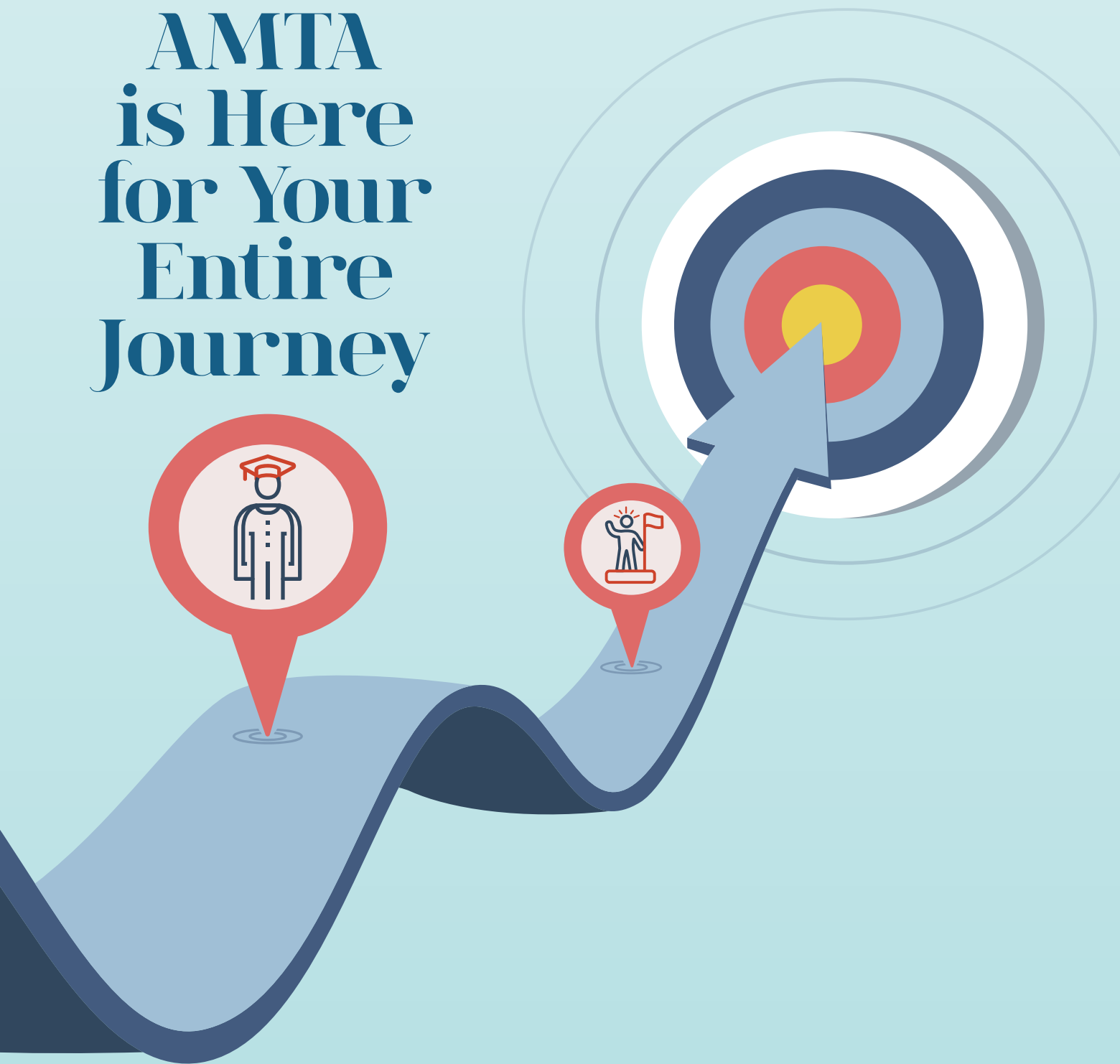
amta
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therapy association

AMTA SPECIAL STUDENT SECTION

From Student to Professional

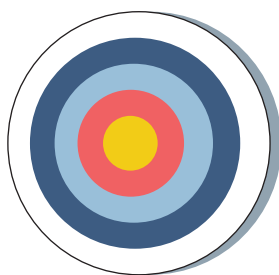


AMTA is Here for Your Entire Journey



1 From Student to Professional:

Your AMTA Membership Roadmap



By Emma Rhyner and Tia Johnson

Wherever you are on your massage therapy journey, AMTA is committed to providing exceptional value to support your success. From a **free Student membership** to discounted rates for Graduates and First-Year Professionals, to full Professional membership, we're here to help you grow and thrive. With benefits like mentorship, career resources, liability insurance and exclusive discounts, you'll have everything you need to advance your career. And the best part? Our Professional membership dues haven't increased in over 35 years!

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You Are Here: Student Membership FREE!

Being a student is just the beginning, and AMTA gives you the tools to set yourself up for success. With our free Student membership, you can take advantage of:

- Liability insurance for school-sponsored or sanctioned activities
- Access to the AMTA Mentoring Program
- Free AMTA MBLEx Study App
- Resume builder on the AMTA Job Bank
- Career guidance resources and more!



Next Stop: Graduate Membership

\$8/month or \$89/year (60% savings on professional membership dues!)

You've put in the work—now it's time to launch your career with AMTA's Graduate membership that gives you all the benefits of Professional membership benefits at a special discounted rate, including:

- 'A' Rated Liability Insurance
- The Best Online Massage CE
- Networking and Community
- Publications including the *Massage Therapy Journal*



Your Journey Continues: First Year Professional Membership

\$17/month or \$199/year

You've hit an exciting milestone—your first full year as a professional! AMTA is here to support this next phase of your career with a discounted Professional membership, giving you access to the following:

- Exclusive Discounts
- A free Find A Massage Therapist® National Locator Service profile
- Special Member Rate for AMTA National Convention, and more!



You've Reached Your Destination: Professional Membership

\$20/month or \$235/year

Step into the highest tier of AMTA membership! With AMTA's Professional membership, you'll have full access to the resources, benefits and support needed to thrive in your massage therapy career. Plus, AMTA's Professional membership rates haven't increased in over 35 years, ensuring you receive the best value.

No matter where you are in your journey, AMTA is here to support you. Make sure to take full advantage of your AMTA membership perks to help keep your massage therapy career moving forward!

2 From Passion to Practice:

AMTA Student Scholarship Success Stories

By Katherine Schwartz and Meagan Hessler

Every year, AMTA awards student scholarships to support the next generation of massage therapists. These scholarships provide financial flexibility for students to focus on their education and career development. For recipients like Leanna (Bordner) Patricio and Calley Sassin, this support has set them on a path toward rewarding and successful careers. Learn about their journeys and see how these scholarships have made a difference.



Leanna (Bordner) Patricio

Recipient of the 2023 \$5,000 80th Anniversary Student Scholarship

When Leanna found herself at a turning point in her career, the 2023 \$5,000 80th Anniversary Student Scholarship provided the support she needed to pursue a new career path. After 15 years in education, she knew it was time for a change and decided to transition into massage therapy—not only as a practitioner, but as





“My mission with every client is to apply my experience as an educator to meet them where they are while helping them navigate the complexities of how they think and feel within their bodies.”

—LEANNA (BORDNER) PATRICIO

a future business owner. With the financial support of this scholarship, Leanna was able to complete her massage therapy program while balancing her part-time job. After graduating, she gained hands-on experience at a locally owned practice, preparing her for the next step—opening her own business in the diverse community where she grew up.

Today, Leanna is living her dream as a business owner and licensed massage therapist. “My mission with every client is to apply my experience as an educator to meet them where they are while helping them navigate the complexities of how they think and feel within their bodies. I love what I do and all that massage has brought in this new chapter of my life,” shared Leanna.

“Both of these spaces are deeply meaningful to me, as I’m passionate about bringing body-based therapy into mainstream mental health care, especially for those healing from complex trauma.”

—CALLEY SASSIN

Calley Sassin

Recipient of the 2024 \$5,000 Bob King Scholarship

For Calley Sassin, receiving the 2024 \$5,000 Bob King Scholarship marked the start of an exciting new chapter in her career. With the support of the scholarship, she successfully integrated her new career as a licensed massage therapist with her work as a trauma-informed life coach and energy practitioner.

Building on this foundation, Calley established her practice in two locations—one in collaboration with an integrative practice focusing on plant medicine and sound therapy, and the other in partnership with an EMDR-certified mental health professional and fellow massage therapist. “Both of these spaces are deeply meaningful to me, as I’m passionate about bringing body-based therapy into mainstream mental health care, especially for those healing from complex trauma,” Calley shared. With a focus on restoring a felt sense of safety that can be disrupted by trauma, injury, and chronic stress, Calley has built a career that allows her to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those she serves.



3 You Graduated! Now What?

By Molly Nash

Hats off to you—you did it! You’ve probably been asked this a thousand times now, but ... what are your plans after graduation?

Transitioning into the professional world and utilizing your massage therapy education can be exciting and overwhelming at the same time. But don’t worry, this is a phase that connects you to every massage therapist, and AMTA has the tools to help you navigate this journey.

Not sure where to begin? Here are some tips from current AMTA members to help guide you during this exciting next step:



Dive into AMTA’s Career Resources

From [career guides](#) and an [industry fact sheet](#) to our [career path quiz](#) and [job bank](#), AMTA has a variety of resources to help you explore current opportunities in the profession and map out your next steps.

These resources are a great reminder of how flexible a massage therapy career can be in terms of hours, location, independence and practice type. Whether you already have a specialty or practice location in mind or you’re still figuring it out, AMTA has the tools to help you make these decisions and get you where you want to be.



Stay on Top of Industry Trends and News

School may be over, but the learning isn’t. Keep your mind and practice fresh by staying

up-to-date on the newest research in massage therapy. [AMTA’s newsfeed](#) features the latest updates on industry trends and professional news to help our massage community thrive. Also, check out our [extensive library of over 100 online CE courses](#), see which ones are [trending](#), and expand your skills.



Cultivate Your Massage Community

Just as your campus was a point of community and connection while you were at school, AMTA is a cornerstone that can bring you closer to mentors, friends and other massage professionals. Don’t enter into this unknown alone: AMTA members are everywhere and they know exactly what you’re going through!

Join your [state’s AMTA chapter](#) to stay involved in local issues and events! Many AMTA

CONNECT WITH US

Stay connected to your AMTA community—follow us on Instagram [@amtamassage!](#)



members have also found volunteering with their chapter to be refreshing, rewarding experiences. Beyond providing an opportunity to connect with peers in a profession that can often feel solitary, they cherish the ability to give back to the community that means so much to them.

No matter which modality you prefer, building strong relationships will provide support, increase career longevity, help prevent burnout, and open doors to wonderful new opportunities.



Take Time, Take Care

As you emerge into this new phase of life, remember to have patience with yourself and the wide, wide world. This is a huge transition—a shift in how your days are organized, a change in environment, and a new set of priorities—embrace the uneasiness and give grace to yourself. Change is never easy, but AMTA has resources for you to navigate this unknown with confidence and a community behind you.

4 Love Your License

What is a massage therapy license?

Earning your license is a significant accomplishment, allowing you to legally practice massage in your state. To obtain a license, you must meet educational requirements, pass an exam like the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx), and adhere to state standards. A massage license is similar to a driver's license, certifying that you meet the qualifications to practice legally and competently.

Why is it important?

- **Enhances Credibility:** It shows clients and employers you've met professional standards and are qualified to provide safe, competent care.
- **Expands Career Opportunities:** Licensure is required by many employers.
- **Advances Skillset:** Many states require periodic license renewal and continuing education, helping you stay current with new techniques and laws.
- **Reinforces Public Safety and Ethical Standards:** Licensure protects clients by mandating levels of competency and underscoring the importance of ethics in massage therapy.

Why should you be proud of your license?

Your license highlights your commitment to the profession and clients and symbolizes your expertise and dedication. Licensure marks your progression from student to professional, providing you with the legal right and credibility to practice.

Congrats, you're official!



5 Demystifying the MBLEx: What You Need to Know

New AMTA MBLEx Video Series!

Preparing for the MBLEx is a monumental task, and success depends on a combination of effective study techniques, organization and maintaining your mental and physical health.

To help you get ready, AMTA has developed an easy-to-use video series broken down into five modules to help you approach your MBLEx preparation fearlessly and effectively.

The video series includes:

- Module #1: What the Heck Is the MBLEx Anyway?
- Module #2: Making the Most of Study Guides
- Module #3: Self-care for Success
- Module #4: License Requirements 101
- Module #5: You Passed – Now What?

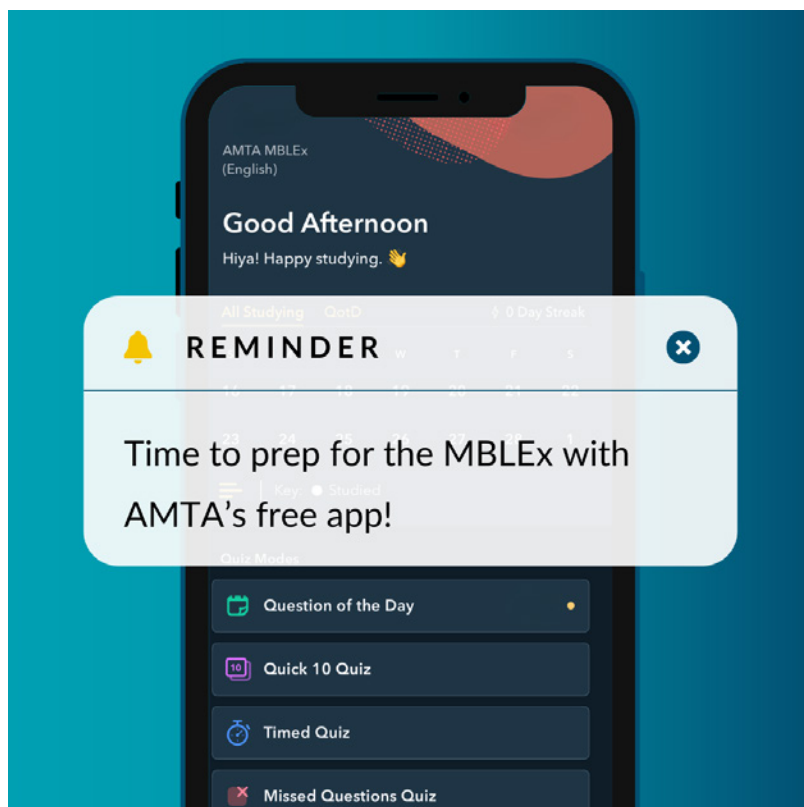
Learn more and get started [here!](#)

Your Roadmap to MBLEx Success

The MBLEx is the national entry-level licensure exam required in 46 of the 49 regulated jurisdictions. If you're on your way to becoming a licensed massage therapist, passing this exam is a crucial step!

Why Choose AMTA's MBLEx Study App?

Looking for an easy way to prep on the go? Join the thousands of aspiring massage therapists



who trust AMTA's MBLEx Study App to help them succeed.

- 5,000 downloads in 2024 alone!
- 60,000 downloads across iOS, Android and web since 2015

How We Compare to Other Study Tools

- ABMP Exam Coach: \$75 for a 6-month subscription
- AMTA's MBLEx Study App: Free!

Features That Help You Succeed

- Available in English and Spanish
- 100 challenging questions
- 10 quizzes to test your knowledge
- Five study modes to fit your learning style
- Performance tracking to monitor your progress

- Community scoreboards – see how you stack up against other students, question by question

Study Smarter, Not Harder with 5 Test Taking Tips

1. Start studying early—avoid the last minute all-nighter and give yourself at least 3-4 weeks to prepare.
2. Study in 45-minute increments—Short, focused sessions with regular breaks help prevent fatigue.
3. Get a good night's sleep—A well-rested brain improves memory retention and recall.
4. Match your study habits with your learning style—Whether it's flashcards, note-taking, or explaining concepts aloud, find what works best for you!
5. Download AMTA's free MBLEx Study App.
Happy test-taking!

Match your study habits with your learning style.

6 Decisions, Decisions: Which Massage Setting is Right for You?

By Emma Rhyner

Like many career paths, the massage therapy profession offers a variety of work environments. Finding the right fit depends on factors such as your work style, preferences and career goals. As you approach graduation and start mapping out next steps, you might be wondering which setting best aligns with your vision. Take a look at some of the common work environments to help you decide what feels right for you.

Franchise

Massage therapy chains and franchises continue to grow in popularity, offering a structured and consistent work environment. If you're looking for stability and predictable hours, a franchise setting could be a great fit for you.

Potential Pros:

- Steady client flow—marketing and scheduling are handled for you
- Predictable work schedule
- Administrative tasks (scheduling, billing, etc.) are handled by the administrative staff
- Work alongside other massage therapists and wellness professionals, which can create a sense of community and support
- Some franchises offer employee benefits like health insurance and paid time off

Potential Cons:

- May have limited flexibility in setting your rates or choosing your clients
- Can be a fast-paced environment with minimal turnaround time between clients

Want to know more? Learn more about the specifics of working at a franchise in [AMTA's Career Success Series](#).

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Spa

Spas are the most common setting for people to receive massages. Whether in a resort, day spa, or medical spa, these settings can provide an opportunity to diversify your skillset. If you enjoy a dynamic environment, a spa setting may be the right fit.

Potential Pros:

- Steady client flow—marketing and scheduling are handled for you
- Opportunity to expand your skills by learning additional services like body wraps and scrubs (varies by state regulations)
- Work alongside other massage therapists and wellness professionals, which can create a sense of community and support
- Some spas offer employee benefits like health insurance and paid time off
- Higher tip potential—gratuities in this setting tend to be generous

Potential Cons:

- Can be a fast-paced environment with minimal turnaround time between clients
- Some spas may require you to promote or sell spa-specific products

Want to know more? Read more about the specifics of working at a spa in [AMTA's Career Success Series](#).

Health Care Environment

Massage therapy is becoming increasingly integrated into hospitals, nursing homes and wellness clinics. If you're interested in working alongside healthcare professionals and making a meaningful impact on patients, this could be a rewarding career path.

Potential Pros:

- Work directly with patients to help improve well-being
- Many healthcare facilities provide referrals, so you may not need to focus on finding your own clients
- Working alongside healthcare providers can expand your professional knowledge
- From post-surgery recovery to chronic pain management and end-of-life care, you'll gain valuable experience working with a wide range of conditions
- Career opportunities continue to grow as massage therapy becomes more integrated within healthcare settings

Potential Cons:

- Can be emotionally demanding, as some patients may be facing serious health challenges
- Workspaces may be more clinical with bright lights and noise compared to the traditional relaxing setting

Want to know more? Read more about the specifics of working in a health care environment in [AMTA's Career Success Series](#).

Still Unsure? That's Okay!

If you're still exploring your career path, you're not alone! AMTA has plenty of **FREE** resources for students to help you weigh your options. Start with our [Career Path Quiz](#) or [dive into these tips](#) for starting your massage career. 