

How to be a Licensed Massage Therapist in the Philippines

By

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So what is the technical difference between someone who just practices massage and someone who is Licensed? bakit mo pa kailangang magka-license? meron ba nun? pati ba naman massage may lisensiya? These are just some of the questions that might be bugging you right now. I can only answer the basics- and yes, my professional advice is, if you really want to advance your career and be able to earn more (I would warn you that hindi madali at hindi rin mura ang mag-aral), you need to have a license.

Technically speaking, according to Section 9.1.1 of PD 856 (Chapter XIII) of the Republic of the Philippines, no person is authorized to practice massage therapy in the Philippines without a valid certificate of registration issued by the Committee of Examiners for Masseurs. Yun ay kung gusto mong maging practitioner (or magpractice ng massage as a profession sa Philippines) which means this is just the first step. Hindi dito nagtatapos. Kasi siyempre pag gusto mong maging spa therapist- iba rin yun and with different requirements and regulations. Massage therapy lang ang pinaguusapan muna natin dito. And before I proceed, when we say LMT or Licensed Massage Therapist we generally mean you are Licensed to perform Swedish Massage- dahil different massage types or modalities will have different regulations and criteria too.

Being a Licensed Massage Therapist means you are legally acknowledged by law to practice massage therapy as a profession. Not without, of course, some liability on your part. First, you have to consider if you are eligible to apply for Licensure in the Philippines.

Here are the requirements:

1. You have to be a Filipino citizen (irregardless of gender and marital status)
2. No less than 21 years old and no more than 60 years old.
3. With good moral character and mentally fit (in short certificate of good moral character)
4. With a medical certificate issued by a government physician (government physician ha? hindi family physician natin or private practitioner)
5. With an NBI clearance or police clearance (sa city hall ito nakukuha or sa NBI kiosks)
6. With a certificate of training from an association or trainer certifying that you have received basic instructions in: Anatomy and Physiology; Microbiology, Parasitology, Virology and Bacteriology; Ethics and Jurisprudence; Hygiene and Sanitation (tandaan mo itong mga subject na ito kasi -these subjects will be the basis of your theoretical exam at nakukuha ito sa mga massage trainers or trainors kung wala ka pang alam, the book on "Spa, Massage Therapy and Wellness Resource Guide and Career Book" covers the most comprehensive list of training centers both here in the Philippines and abroad.

7. With a certificate that he/she has taken practical massage from any Licensed Masseur for at least 100 hours (dati 60 hours lang ito but now I think starting 2009, the 550 hours will be implemented na)

8. STD seminar with AIDS (this seminar is being scheduled sa mga local city hall, just inquire from there may bayad din ito pero mura lang)

9. ID Pictures (2 pcs of 2X2- not sure about this one kung anong size)

10. Minimal payment (no more than 500 pesos)

Pag nakumpleto mo na yung mga requirements mo: you have to submit and apply sa Department of Health Office, Quiricada st. beside Jose Reyes hospital Santa Cruz, Manila (kung andito ka sa Metro Manila) and submit your complete requirements no less than a month before the date of the examination. If you are located in the province you have to go to your nearest regional DOH office and inquire from there.

They will give you an examination pass with your seat number.

There will be a theoretical (written examination) and those who passed with an average rating of 75% in all subjects (pero kailangan wala kang grade in any subjects na less than 50%) and afterwards if you passed, you will be asked to take a practical exam to demonstrate the skills learned. Malalaman mo na pasado ka kasi i-po-post nila yung list of examinees na pumasa after a few days together with the schedule ng oral/practical exam.

During the oral examination (anyways, they will also list down the things that you need to bring during the practical exam) but just to give you an idea these are some:

bring your subject or model (ito yung taong i-ma-massage mo mas madali kung male kasi wala kang aalalahaning maraming private parts at kailangan naka shorts siya)

bring also a lubricant: cream, oil, powder, gel - (aromatheray oils are the best)

be professional in your attire normally a white scrub suit will do- humiram ka na lang kung bibili ka it will cost 250-500pesos sa tabi tabi dyan sa St. Cruz depende sa klase ng tela

towels

pillow

alcohol (ethyl alcohol ang mas earth friendly and more natural)

slippers for your client

For the December 2008 batch, the DOH already provided materials and the model so mas maganda dahil you do not have to bring tons of materials, eh dati yung iba may dala pang CD, cassette, banig, atbp.

Tips during the oral or practical examination:

1. Do not be nervous and relax (alam ko nakaka tense ihi nga ako ng ihi eh before I had my turn sa sobrang nerbiyos- but you will do just fine. Remember, ang brain cells natin mas less ang oxygen pag takot at stressed so inhale deeply at wag nerbiyosin para makasagot ng maigi)

2. Answer politely but straight to the point as much as possible

3. Know the subsequent steps (yung pagkaka sunod sunod na steps dapat you know it by heart)

4. Be able to explain while you are working with your client (multi-tasking baga...)

5. Be able to know yung purpose ng techniques na ginagawa mo example, ano ba ang purpose ng

tapping?

6. Huwag kang mag massage lang ng mag-massage, be able to articulate or explain what you are doing parang kunyari nag de-demo ka (this is a good exercise regarding your oral abilities kasi sa mga job interviews ganyan din ang gagawin mo mag-de-demo ka especially if you are going abroad or applying for other certifications)

7. Be prepared for side questions (like, under the law, how many people can an LMT supervise?)

8. Dapat marunong kang mag take ng client history like asking about their blood pressure (at marunong ka dapat kumuha ng blood pressure), ask also if they have allergies at may dala ka ring client intake form.

9. Introduce yourself first before you start your massage. Example, "Good morning sir/ma'am, I am _____ and I will be your massage therapist for this morning/afternoon. You will have a session of Swedish massage and we will start with you lying on your belly/stomach."

Those who passed these two exams will be taking an oath (at a scheduled date) and will be designated with an L.M.T. (Licensed Massage Therapist) after their name.

Every year (normally) June and December are the months that these exams are taking place.

For more information and other concerns: call me at +639184745685 or 4315074 or email me at yunesa@yahoo.com

To join our online community for massage therapists for FREE visit www.meetup.com/philippinemassagetherapy

This article is written by: Eunice Estipona a spa consultant, mentor, advisor, speaker and lecturer. One of her advocacies is to make healing and information regarding the field of spa, massage and wellness accessible and affordable to everyone. If you are serious about turning your business or practice around, making the right decisions, getting an unbiased opinion and knowing where to get help, for lectures and other concerns she can be contacted at yunesa@yahoo.com or +639184745685. To find out how she can help you take your business to the next level, visit her site at www.meetup.com/philippinemassagetherapy. These along with hundreds of resources found locally and abroad are contained in "The Spa, Massage and Wellness Resource and Career Book", the first book of resource information to know more about the Spa, Massage and Wellness Industry in the Philippines and other countries including the United States, Australia and other Asian countries. If you are a spa, massage therapy and wellness information seeker the resources contained in the book is for you. This book is a collection of data and valuable information regarding the spa and massage industry in a global perspective with a focus on the Philippines. Her advocacy in writing the book is to make "unbiased" information regarding the field of spa, massage and wellness resources and career, accessible and affordable for everyone. If you are considering a career in the massage, spa and wellness industry, this book will prepare you and give you a glimpse of what it is like, the preparation you need to take: emotionally, intellectually and financially. In this book, you will learn more details in the spa and massage field and the possible paths you can take. You will also learn about local and international training programs offered and numerous employment possibilities. Giving you much needed information at your fingertips. For more information, get in touch with Eunice at yunesa@yahoo.com

Employment of massage therapists is projected to increase 20% through 2016, meaning that the profession is being rapidly absorbed into mainstream American health care. You'll find jobs with existing practitioners, chiropractics offices, spas, hotels, athletic organizations and clinics. Each state

has its own set of licensing requirements. The median salary for massage therapists in 2007 was \$40,330.

(excerpt from Five Career Changes You can Actually Make by Gabby Hyman FindTheRightScool.com) taken at this link:

http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/career-articles-five_career_changes_you_can_actually_make-525

These along with hundreds of resources found locally and abroad are contained in “The Spa, Massage and Wellness Resource Guide and Career Book”, the first book of resource information to know more about the Spa, Massage and Wellness Industry in the Philippines and other countries including the United States, Australia and other Asian countries. If you are a spa, massage therapy and wellness information seeker the resources contained in the book is for you. This book is a collection of data and valuable information regarding the spa and massage industry in a global perspective with a focus on the Philippines. Her advocacy in writing the book is to make “unbiased” information regarding the field of spa, massage and wellness resources and career, accessible and affordable for everyone. If you are considering a career in the massage, spa and wellness industry, this book will prepare you and give you a glimpse of what it is like, the preparation you need to take: emotionally, intellectually and financially. In this book, you will learn more details in the spa and massage field and the possible paths you can take. You will also learn about local and international training programs offered and numerous employment possibilities. Giving you much needed information at your fingertips. For more information, get in touch with Eunice at yunesa@yahoo.com

The Spa, Massage and Wellness Resource Guide and Career Book

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I. Before You Plunge In

This Chapter will give you tips and insights on the industry, what you basically need to know before you enroll and investing your money into training programs, seminars or plunging into this career, it will also give you tips on how to get ahead, be happy and successful in this field, this chapter will open your eyes in the possibility of working and getting ahead without stepping on someone’s shoes. With test taking tips and strategies, even financial assessment. This will inspire you to look ahead and beyond the daily grind of working being able to assess yourself, your short and long-term goals and be proud you are adding value to the industry.

II. Career Options and Alternative Positions

Will cover the most common positions according to the responsibilities they perform: their general profile, the skills and personal traits required in order to fulfill the role, job qualifications with educational and academic requirements, job description, duties and responsibilities and what you should expect before you leap. A career in the wellness industry will include (BUT IS NOT

LIMITED TO) being a: reflexologist, spa concierge or spa receptionist, spa and massage trainer/instructor, spa/massage consultant, spa manager, spa supervisor, massage therapist, massage attendant, spa therapist, facialist/facial therapist or aesthetician (with or without a), electrologist, spa operator/owner and other similar positions with a peek on the plight of massage/spa therapists and the problems facing them to-date and help in your career ladder. This chapter will discuss it all without being too dogmatic or technical.

III. Standards Of Practice, Resources, Laws, Rules and Regulations with Emphasis on the Philippines
Training standards and requirements for massage therapists in other countries vary greatly by state, country or locality. We will enlist government agencies that regulate the practice in the Philippines with Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Licensure Requirements and Details like: When and where should I apply? What is the scope of the exam? How, When and Where can I renew my License? Etc. With a Listing of Local Training Institutions, Establishments, Trainers, Associations offering seminars, workshops, etc. Other helpful resources in travel and tourism, locally authored books that would help you in your quest for knowledge in the industry including books on Hilot. With a glimpse on how other countries regulate their spa/massage professionals including: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Thailand, The United States (I have enlisted all 50 state regulations and laws), etc.

IV. Valuable Resources and Training Programs Abroad

This Chapter will be composed of six sections: The first section will cover topics and tips before enrolling, how to choose a school or a trainer, etc. The second section will cover how to maximize your school experience, how to get the most out of your training, study habits and tips for a student professional. The third section will cover recommended readings, foreign produced and authored publications, books and magazines. The fourth section will cover resources available online and through the Internet, including taking exams online, demonstration and techniques, online groups, etc. The fifth section is about schools, seminars, workshops, etc. abroad including but is not limited

to UK and US. Last but not the least, in the sixth section, I will provide resources and other organizations that might be of help.

V. Preparing to land a job in the Spa, Massage and Wellness Industry

In order to make a fair consideration of career opportunities in this field, it is necessary to know the total spa, massage and wellness world where you are at. I will also be giving you resources where you can apply, post your resume experience and be visible to employers out there, where will you find job openings, questions to ask your employer, tips in preparing your resume/CV with sample cover letters and resumes. Challenges faced on the job and how to handle them, also a list of resources for job opportunities online and more!

VI. Work Abroad

In this Chapter, Modes of recruitment are discussed, with my personal list and collection of employment agencies where you can get in touch with these employment agencies for inquiries and manpower pooling. Their contact details like website, emails, address, contact person, etc. are enlisted. Positions range from massage therapists, spa therapists, fitness trainer, spa supervisors, spa managers, spa directors, beauty therapists and aestheticians, hair stylists and salon personnel.

VII. Insider's Advice from Leaders in the Industry

Part of learning is learning from others, here are some insights taken from people in the industry. Their views differ depending on their location, the degree of their exposure to the industry and a host of other factors. This chapter exposes the many variables and experiences you might encounter. They will give tips or advice you want to give to those aspiring to succeed in this profession? What are the three most common problems or concerns you have encountered in the field and how did you handle it? What do you think are the most effective solution/s? etc. They will give you the real picture of what it is like working within the industry.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

EUNICE ESTIPONA, started as a freelance massage therapist way back in 2001 became a Licensed Massage Therapist in 2002 and since then worked her way up the career ladder of the spa, she became hooked to the intricacies of the spa industry which eventually led to her organizing the International Council for Complementary Medicine, Inc.. She is a Registered Medical Technologist, a Licensed Massage Therapist and an Emergency Medical Technician. She finished numerous trainings, seminars and workshops including spa management programme in Bangkok, Thailand and the Institute of Spa Management. She is a spa and wellness center consultant, teacher, lecturer, coach (even a cyber/online coach), referral facilitator, mentor and speaker specializing in Massage/Touch Therapy. She is a spa and indigenous healing aficionado, connoisseur and information consultant. She will tell you what you need to know and direct you to people who can be of help. Nearly half of her experience in the industry was spent on managerial, consulting and supervisory level. Through this exposure she has been able to gain strong insight into the wellness industry. Being a frequent spa-goer herself who has experienced being a practitioner and a client, she also has first hand-experience on what it is like wearing different hats.

She is a member of the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET) and one of the founding Board members of the Massage and Bodywork Association (MBAI) which is under the umbrella of the Department of Health, Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care. She is the first Philippine-based member of the American Massage Therapy Association (Evanston Illinois, USA) and a member of the Christian Medical and Dental Association (Bristol, Tennessee USA) and many other organizations. In 2004, when information was very limited, Eunice was the first Filipino to look into organizing the first Philippine online community group and started both the Philippine/Manila Massage Therapy Meet-up and the Manila Entrepreneur Meetup groups which currently have more than 500 members. Her first book is entitled "Spa and Massage Therapy Resource Guide and Career Book" an informative book on the spa industry world wide with a focus on the Philippines. Contact her if you want to get included in her publications and articles.

An out-of-the box thinker, her passion is in educating and developing a mind set geared towards a responsible and caring attitude of the spa personnel through her articles, lectures and speaking engagements. Her love for natural, uniquely-Filipino indigenous concepts of the spa is evident in her speaking engagements. She believes that "Filipinos have the natural ability to excel in "touch therapy" as exemplified by our culture and our traditional values through our ancestors' practice of "HILOT" and other indigenous healing modalities". One of her advocacies is to make healing and information regarding the field of spa, massage and wellness accessible

and affordable to everyone. If you are serious about turning your business or practice around, making the right decisions, getting an unbiased opinion and knowing where to get help, for lectures and other concerns she can be contacted at yunesa@yahoo.com or +639184745685.

Eunice Estipona is a spa consultant, mentor, advisor, speaker, lecturer and author. One of her advocacies is to make healing and information regarding the field of spa, massage and wellness accessible and affordable to everyone. If you are serious about turning your business or practice around, making the right decisions, getting an unbiased opinion and knowing where to get help, for lectures and other concerns she can be contacted at yunesa@yahoo.com or +639184745685. To find out how she can help you take your business to the next level, visit her site at <http://www.massage.meetup.com/6>.

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