

Cathrine Thibault

Cathrine Thibault, 39, of Leominster, Massachusetts, specializes in orthopedic massage as well as fascial therapy and oncology massage. She graduated from Bancroft School of Massage Therapy in Worcester, and she has owned her practice, Compassion Massage Therapeutic Clinic, for almost 10 years. Today her focus is developing her massage therapy employees while mentoring graduates and student interns. Thibault is a mother of one with a baby on the way, and resides in Leominster with her husband, Justin.

How did you get into orthopedic massage?

A When I first entered the career field as a massage therapist, I worked as an employee for an orthopedic chiropractor and as a sole practitioner at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. Many of my clients sought massage for soft tissue injuries with a focus on pain management. A peer massage therapist introduced me to Whitney Lowe's orthopedic program, and I soon enrolled in his neck, back and pelvis hands-on workshops in Anchorage.

What is the best part about practicing orthopedic massage?

A The client's responsiveness to treatment. The results often show that clients immediately begin to experience a decreased level of intensity in their symptoms. The appreciation clients express for the level of assessment and care provided fuels our passion to continue to learn more about orthopedic massage. The practitioner benefits are vast, but the top two would be the advanced education and confidence to perform this type of bodywork.

What are the benefits of using orthopedic massage in your practice?

A The benefits of using orthopedic massage in my practice are comprehensive. As practitioners, we've gained knowledge to treat complex pain conditions. An orthopedic approach helps guide us as practitioners in providing client education, which increases awareness of why soft tissue injury has occurred and what can

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be done to accelerate healing. We see an increase in clients who make a commitment to receive consistent orthopedic massage once they experience and understand the benefits. The education, effectiveness of the treatment and practitioner development create a circle of satisfied clients and motivated practitioners.

How do you define massage session success?

A By how a client responds to an orthopedic massage treatment. The client's ability to feel a decreased level of symptoms such as pain, discomfort or restriction after each session is how we measure the effectiveness of our work. Success is also measured by the client's eagerness to schedule their next appointment to

continue with the treatment plan we've created specifically for them.

What is the most rewarding aspect of being a massage therapist who specializes in orthopedic massage?

A The gratitude, respect and appreciation our clients express for the level of care we provide.

What is the best way to market a new technique to clients?

A In my clinic, we leave a 30-minute break between scheduled appointments to allow our practitioners to spend more time [with clients] before and after each session. This allows them to connect and educate our clients without feeling rushed. Also, we promote new techniques by incorporating videos into our monthly email newsletters. Aside from the one-on-one connect time we provide in the clinic, we find that our clients have a higher response rate if we can communicate to them through video.

What advice would you give someone wanting to pursue a career in orthopedic massage that you wish someone had given you?

A Explore everything an orthopedic massage program offers. At Compassion Massage, enrollment in Whitney Lowe's Orthopedic Massage certification is an employee benefit to all practitioners once they've completed their 90-day evaluation. Learning how to treat soft tissue injuries and help clients manage pain holistically with massage therapy is essential to becoming a highly booked, skilled practitioner. **M**

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