

# Massage and Persistent Pain

**Pain** is the most common reason that people seek medical help.

Pain is said to be chronic or persistent if it lasts beyond the normal healing time of about three months.

**One in five** Australians lives with persistent pain including adolescents and children. This prevalence rises to one in three people over the age of 65.

**One in five** GP consultations involves a patient with persistent pain and almost 5% report severe, disabling persistent pain.

**Persistent pain** is Australia's third most costly health condition after cardiovascular diseases and musculoskeletal conditions (also associated with persistent pain).

→ **Reference:** **Pain Facts** [www.painaustralia.org.au/about-pain/painful-facts](http://www.painaustralia.org.au/about-pain/painful-facts)

15%  
Psychologist

5%  
Chiropractor

**10% OF AUSTRALIANS** using interdisciplinary allied health care to manage persistent pain seek remedial massage as part of their ongoing care.

Health Practitioners

40%  
Physiotherapy

30% Pain Specialist

10%  
I don't see health practitioners

15%  
Exercise physiologist

→ **Reference:** 2019 National Pain Week survey [http://www.nationalpainweek.org.au/images/documents/Surveys/National\\_Pain\\_Survey\\_2019.pdf](http://www.nationalpainweek.org.au/images/documents/Surveys/National_Pain_Survey_2019.pdf)

In 2008–09, around 1.8% of total health-care expenditure in Australia (\$1.2 billion) was attributed to back problems

In 2011, 'back pain & problems' were the third leading cause of total disease burden and injuries in Australia (3.6%)

In 2014–15, an estimated 3.7 million Australians (16%, or 1 in 6 people) had chronic back problems

People with chronic back problems are more likely to report poor quality of life than the general population

→ **Reference:** <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/chronic-musculoskeletal-conditions/impacts-of-chronic-back-problems/data>

## Australians who see a massage therapist use massage therapy to treat:

**45%**  
persistent pain

**70%**  
lower back pain

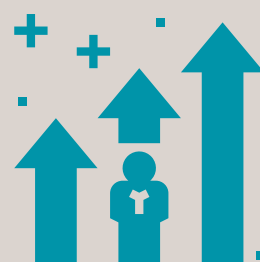
**60%**  
any pain condition

**65%**  
neck pain

→ **Reference:** 2016 AMT patient survey

### Chronic low back pain

The Kentucky Pain Research and Outcomes Study evaluated massage therapy impacts on pain, disability, and health-related quality of life for primary care patients with chronic low back pain. Participants improved on all outcomes at 12 and 24 weeks post intervention.



→ **Reference:** <https://academic.oup.com/painmedicine/article/18/7/1394/3069964?searchresult=1>

### Pain populations

A 2016 systematic review published in *Pain Medicine* found that massage therapy may be beneficial for improving various patient-reported functional outcomes for populations experiencing pain and posited that massage therapy should be offered to patients for pain management.



→ **Reference:** <https://academic.oup.com/painmedicine/article/17/7/1353/2223191>

To find your local AMT-accredited massage therapist please visit:  
**www.amt.org.au** or call **02 9211 2441**