

Massage Tables - What to Consider Before Buying a Portable Massage Table

Their first experience before the actual massage is when they lay down on your table. Make sure it's not squeaking and rocking or they will not come back a knocking!

Aug. 13, 2010 - [PRLog](#) -- There are hundreds of portable massage tables on the market today. With the influx of cheap Chinese imports and other tables, it has become an overwhelming task to decide on the right table. Here are the key things to consider before making your buying decision.

1. Table Width:

Many people think they should purchase the widest table available, but there are several factors to consider when deciding on the width of your table. Ease of access, comfort for your client, comfort for you as the therapist, and portability are all things that need to be considered when making your purchasing decision.

Generally speaking, the narrower massage tables will offer you the most access to your clients, as well as greater portability. Wider tables do offer a larger work surface and increased comfort for your client. However, if your table is too wide, you may have difficulty reaching your client effectively. This can become tiresome and difficult on your body over a period of time.

For most general wellness massage choose a 29" - 30" width depending on your size and the size of your clients. Most tables come in a standard width; however Oakworks, Earthlite and Stronglite do offer tables in various available widths. These tables are custom made to order, have numerous options and are typically a little more expensive.

Finally, as the width of the massage table increases so does the weight. If you intend to travel and still want a wide table, consider purchasing a massage table cart to assist in portability.

2. Table Height:

The standard height range on most tables is around 24" - 34" and will serve the bulk of most practitioners who perform various massage modalities, facials, physical therapy, acupuncture and other therapeutic services. Generally speaking, the height range should be based on the height of the practitioner.

As a rule of thumb, your table should come no higher than your hip joint. You'll probably want a height a little lower than this to provide room for the height of the body on the table. If you are exceptionally tall or short, you may want to consider a table that has various available height ranges. Again, Oakworks, Earthlite and Stronglite do offer tables in various available height ranges. These tables are custom made to order, have numerous options and are typically a little more expensive.

3. Padding Thickness:

While considering the thickness of your foam you should always keep in mind foam density. These two factors work hand-in-hand in determining comfort and durability. Since most every massage table comes in a multi-layer foam, the only option left to consider is the thickness.

Massage table padding thickness generally ranges from 2 1/4 inches to 3 inches. This is usually sufficient to provide a comfortable experience for most clients. Though you might be tempted to add thickness, this will add weight to the table and may not be conducive to portability. Finally, some modalities like Sports

Therapy are more appropriate for tables with firmer padding.

You will find that higher end, custom tables offer a selection of optional tops, including firm, semi-firm, plush, pregnancy and Breast Comfort.

4. Easy Access Panels (Reiki Endplates):

Easy access panels are simply different support braces that connect the two legs on the narrow ends of a massage table. Generally, the support panels go straight across the ends connecting the two legs.

Rather than go straight across, easy access panels are shaped like an upside-down U, creating an arched support. This allows the practitioner to place their legs between the table legs and get closer to the client on the table. This is more important for Reiki practitioners who need access both above and below the client. It can also be convenient for any therapist to slide under the client on a rolling stool, in order to work on the head and/or feet.

Some massage tables come standard with and without Reiki endplates, while some are optional. This option is often available on better tables for free or a nominal charge.

5. Brand:

You can buy a no-name massage table from Costco for \$199, but think hard before trying to save that \$50 bucks. Companies like Earthlite, Oakworks and Stronglite always stand behind their products. Most of these tables offer lifetime warranties on the frame and 2-3 year warranties on upholstery and padding.

It is important to be wary of cheap imports with no recognizable brand. The saying "you get what you pay for" definitely applies to massage tables. Do not risk you or your clients safety on a no-name brand, cheap table. It's just not worth it!

6. Metal or Wood Frame:

Both wood and metal frames can provide a strong table base. Most wood tables can support at least 450 lbs. The most popular tables have wood frames as these generally have better esthetic appeal and tend to be less expensive than metal framed tables. However, metal frames do often weigh less than their wooden counterparts. If you foresee doing a lot of traveling with your table, it might be worth looking at a metal frame table.

7. Stationary or Portable:

If you will be traveling frequently with your massage table, you will clearly need a portable table. Make sure you get a package that includes a carry case and other accessories. You might also consider purchasing a table cart so you don't have to support the weight on your shoulders.

If you have a day spa, medi-spa, massage studio, or salon, you should consider both portable and stationary massage tables. Some of the most comfortable and highest quality tables are stationary models. These can vary widely in price, but are generally driven by the number of features and options like electronic height adjustment, manual or electric tilting tops, salon tops, manicure armrests and much more.

8. Weight:

Although weight is important when considering a portable massage table, it is no more important than the other factors discussed above. Weight is mostly dependant on table size, material and padding. Wooden tables are typically heavier, but often look better and can be more stable than metal tables. Remember the wider the table and the thicker the cushioning, the more weight will be added to the table. Again, consider a table cart to help make traveling easier without sacrificing size and comfort.

Most manufacturers offer an aluminum framed table, but the vast majority do have wooden frames. Wood has proven to be the most often used material for the aforementioned reasons and the fact that it is more abundant and cost effective. You usually want to stick to the hardwoods like Maple or Oak as these tend to be more stable and durable.

If weight is very important to you, check out an aluminum table, but be prepared to pay more as aluminum is typically more costly than wood.

Before buying your massage table, think about how important these qualities are to you. You most likely want to make a good first impression with your clients so they'll feel comfortable in coming back.

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