



F = M x A

By David Kent, LMT, NCTMB

Keeping It Simple Series

In previous articles, I have used Newton's Laws of Motion, specifically the first and third laws, as metaphors for how we can create positive change in our personal lives, our respective practices, and the massage industry as a whole. During this year's Florida State Massage Therapy Convention (FSMTA), people asked me when I was going to talk about Newton's second law. Well, as it happens, the timing couldn't be better because we need to create ripples change in our profession and that's what Newton's second law is all about.

To review, the first law states, "Every object [mass] in a state of uniform motion tends to remain in that state of motion unless an external force is applied to it."

For example, if there is an area of your life or practice that you wish to change, an internal "force" must motivate you to action. Newton's third law of motion says that "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction."

This concept I relate to cause and effect. If you make positive changes, you'll see the positive outcomes of those changes.

Newton's second law relates to the behavior of an object when existing forces are unbalanced; it states that the acceleration or movement of an object is dependent upon two variables: the mass of the object and the net force acting upon the object.

Essentially, F = Force; M = Mass; A = Acceleration, which means $F = M \times A$. Once again, this concept offers a perfect analogy for the massage industry as it relates to one very important concept: research.

M = Mass

In the massage profession, Mass stands for us—the massage therapists, the mass of the profession. And as a profession, our numbers (mass) are large. Just as we comprise a mass, there is an even larger mass of people desperate to learn more about the

benefits of massage through research. Preliminary studies indicate that masses of people would benefit from receiving regular massage therapy. In fact, there are plenty of people out there getting massage and not disclosing it to their medical providers because the medical profession still has not fully embraced massage as an adjunct to healthcare; this is, in part, because research remains in short supply.



"It doesn't take much for a mass to create a force that causes acceleration."

We see daily the life-changing results massage has on our patients. But we need more industry research to validate our knowledge and draw even more of the masses to massage. While we're certainly making progress in the field of massage research, we would definitely benefit from more. There are many other professions with far fewer people, yet whose research base is more widely

encompassing than that of the massage industry. If industries with a smaller number of professionals can produce a steady flow of research, then we in the massage industry—a profession large in number—should also be able to produce a more influential research base.

A = Acceleration

Acceleration equals movement, or action. In this case, we need to accelerate our efforts in the area of research. But acceleration only occurs when we take action. So how can we as therapists help accelerate massage research efforts? To begin, the acceleration of research is funded by the burning of fuel that we call money. Research requires money—and lots of it. This is where our actions come into play.

Philanthropy. The Encarta World English Dictionary defines the word philanthropic as 1.) showing kindness, charitable concern, and generosity toward other people; and 2.) devoted to helping other people, especially through giving charitable aid.

- You don't have to be a Rockefeller to be a philanthropist. In fact, it doesn't take much more than a creative mind and some ingenuity. Some ideas include
- Encouraging your patients to purchase a "gift certificate" for research. You will then mail the money to the Massage Therapy Foundation or any other institution that supports massage research.
- Hosting a massage benefit at your clinic or spa with proceeds going to support massage research. Recruit participants through your local massage association chapter, or partner with others in the community such as hospitals or community service centers.



- Please visit and support the “Sanctuary” sponsored by Massage Warehouse, a Scrip company booth. They offer a variety of 10 minute foot massages for \$10, with the proceeds going to research. The treatments I received at the FSMTA Convention were awesome.
- Donating personal time and/or resources for the benefit of research. At the upcoming AMTA National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, Kent Health Systems will be partnering with Hygienic / Performance Health the makers of Biofreeze and Massage Warehouse a Scrip company. Together, we are offering 50 packages we are calling “Massage Therapy Research Special” that includes one of my Home Study Programs with Photo Manual, a BIOFREEZE Masters Package with all proceeds being donated to the Massage Therapy Foundation for research. This is a \$230 package for only \$99 and only 50 packages are available all 100% of the sale goes to foundation. These packages will be available at the Massage Warehouse booth. Please stop by and ask for Sandy.
- Attend the Massage Therapy Foundation Post-Convention Workshop after the AMTA National convention. These workshops are taught by the leaders in the industry who donate their teaching time and the proceeds raised are donated to Massage Therapy research. This year Dr. Leon Chaitow DO, ND will be presenting. Learn more about massage therapy research at www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/

The more money we raise as philanthropists, the more fuel we have and the more action we take. These

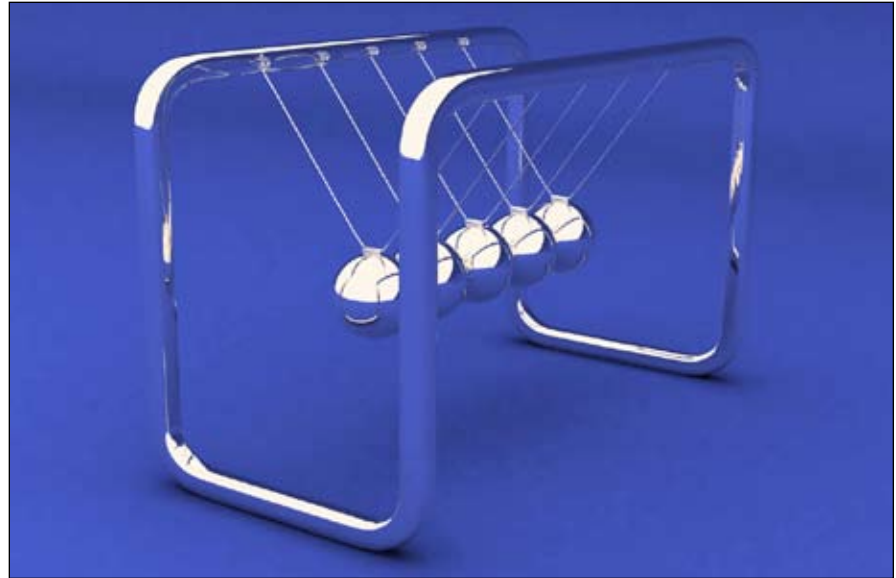
efforts produce a greater force for massage industry research, so that the benefits of massage are understood and delivered to those in need.

F = Force

The action of raising money produces the acceleration of massage research, and that is dependent upon our mass as an industry and the amount of force we use to create movement. We need

attentiveness, alleviates depressive symptoms, reduces pain, reduces stress hormones and improves immune function.

But we need even more research and we aren't fueling it with money fast enough; therefore, we need to create a bigger force that influences greater change. Remember, an object in motion can either bounce off of or penetrate



mass bring about acceleration—to take action. Massage is certainly a force to be reckoned with because it has the ability to increase one's health and quality of life; it also has the ability to decrease one's dependence on pain killers and prescription drugs, as well as traditional healthcare in general.

One such force in the industry is Dr. Tiffany Field with the Touch Research Institute (TRI) at the University of Miami, School of Medicine. Dr. Field has dedicated her career to studying the effects of touch therapy and has subsequently accelerated research in the industry with powerful results. Over the years, Dr. Field's research has discovered that massage “facilitates weight gain in preterm infants, enhances

another object depending on the forces placed upon it. As a profession, we need to penetrate the greater world of healthcare through more forceful massage research.

A Little Bit More about Force: The Butterfly Effect

The so-called Butterfly Effect “is the propensity of a system to be sensitive to initial conditions...this idea gave rise to the notion of a butterfly flapping its wings in one area of the world, causing a tornado or some such weather event to occur in another remote are of the world.”

It doesn't take much for a mass to create a force that causes acceleration. Imagine the possibilities of what could happen



if every one of us in the profession flapped our wings with our time, money and resources in an organized fashion. We would have a profound effect on generating additional massage therapy research, as well as educating the world-at-large about the wide-reaching benefits of massage.

When we invest in our profession, we invest not only in our own physical health, but the health of our children and generations to come. It's time for us to become a stronger force in healthcare. From there, the massage industry will gain speed and eventually accelerate beyond what we ever thought was possible.

I'd love to hear your ideas for taking action to bring about change. Drop me a line at editorial@massagetoday.com or visit kenthealth.com for more ideas. And drop by to see me at the AMTA convention. I'll be spending time in the Massage Today booth, and I'd love to meet you!

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