



# John Gifford, LMT, CBPM, BCTMB

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## How Many Sessions Will I Need?

This question is completely reasonable. Even so, I still have no answer to it. I know people feel like I am being evasive, and yet it is the truth from my perspective. As I have written before, pain is multi-factorial and each person's exact "pain contribution profile" is as unique as their fingerprint.

Here are just two of the many contributions to pain symptoms. HISTORY OF SYMPTOMS. Generally speaking the person who has been struggling with their pain for years will have more sessions ahead of them than the person who just started having pain a week ago. Why? The longer you have had muscular pain, the greater chance there is of having a larger number of muscles involved because other muscles have had to help your body compensate for the pain. Those compensating muscles will now have to be worked with as well.

MUSCLE MEMORY. Professionals in the bodywork field agree with the theory that the longer tight muscles are left untreated, the deeper the memory there is for that muscle to want to return to the shortened state after initially being relaxed. What does this mean? It

could mean that muscles with a long history of being tight may have to undergo a multitude of sessions to be reeducated to remain in the relaxed state.

So where does that leave us? I tell my clients that if they have undergone three sessions with no change, then fire me. In my experience, if after a couple of sessions you have seen no change, then five sessions won't be more helpful.

I also educate my clients to hold other professionals to a similar process of experimentation. I get so frustrated when I hear stories from clients involved in a treatment program they have been going to for weeks with no change and they are still being advised to continue the program. The key question in my opinion is not about the number of sessions it takes to feel better. The more important question revolves around whether you feel you are continually progressing towards your goal of experiencing less pain. Five sessions or twenty-five sessions is missing the point. The point is to get healthy. Use me as long as I am useful, and not a minute more. Till next time,

*"I always tell my clients that if they have undergone three sessions with no change, then fire me."*

-John C. Gifford, CBPM, NCTMB  
Owner, Motionwise®



John Gifford has performed over 40,000 sessions as an approved provider of sports massage and a unique style of bodywork called Bonnie Prudden Myotherapy® and Exercise Therapy®. His mission as a clinician, lecturer, consultant, and author is to empower people to lead more active, successful, and fulfilling lives through the reduction and prevention of their muscular pain and tension.