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# INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE

INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE HELPS TO REDUCE TENSION AND RESTORE BALANCE BY TREATING THE HEAD, NECK, SHOULDERS AND UPPER ARMS. WE FIND OUT MORE

Words: Karen Young

Like many therapies, Indian head massage has evolved over the years, but its roots can be traced back more than 4,000 years to the traditional system of Ayurvedic medicine.

Meaning 'science of life', Ayurveda originates from India and takes a very natural, holistic approach to health. It uses a combination of diet, herbs, cleansing, yoga, massage, meditation and exercise to balance the mind, body and spirit.

Massage remains an integral part of daily life in India, and is a skill passed down from generation to generation. It first arrived on English shores in the 1970s, when Dr Narendra Mehta came to the country to learn physiotherapy. He missed having regular head massages from his family and barbers in India, and when he discovered that the head and scalp wasn't covered in standard massage training, he developed his own course.

"In India, a traditional head massage involves applying oil to the hair, which might be infused with different herbs and spices," explains Maria Mason, Vice President of the FHT, who practises Indian head massage. "While this helps to condition the scalp and hair, a 'dry' treatment is much more typical in the UK, which is carried out through clothing."

Before your first treatment you will receive a full consultation, which will involve your therapist asking a number of questions about your health, diet and lifestyle. In some instances you may be asked to speak to your doctor before going ahead with treatment, for example if you have suffered a recent head or neck



injury that may need to be taken into consideration during the massage.

"For the treatment, you will be seated in a low-backed chair or similar, so that the therapist can comfortably reach your shoulders, upper arms, neck, scalp and face," Maria explains. "Different massage techniques will then be used – including stroking, tapping, squeezing, pressing and gentle hair tugging – as the therapist works different pressure and *marma* (energy) points, to help restore balance and promote self-healing. Your therapist may also incorporate some chakra balancing work, holding their hands still, a little distance away from your head and throat, to harmonise your energy."

Sessions normally last 30 minutes and cost anywhere between £20 to £55, depending on the length of the session, location and practitioner. Most people feel very relaxed and peaceful after having a treatment. ☺

*The Federation of Holistic Therapists (www.fht.org.uk) is the UK and Ireland's leading professional association for complementary, holistic beauty and sports therapists.*

## Five benefits of Indian head massage

**1** The NHS reports that half of adults in the UK experience tension-type headaches once or twice a month. Many people find that Indian head massage can offer relief and even keep headaches at bay.

**2** Stress and poor posture can lead to tension in the muscles of the neck, upper back and shoulders. This has made Indian head massage a particularly popular therapy in business offices.

**3** If you're having trouble sleeping, Indian head massage is a very calming, 'head clearing' therapy, so ideal for promoting a peaceful slumber.

**4** Both with and without oil, Indian head massage is said to improve hair health and appearance, boosting circulation to the scalp and also strengthening the roots.

**5** Need some clarity of mind? While very relaxing, Indian head massage can also help to relieve mental fatigue and improve both concentration and creativity.

**BEFORE YOU GO**  
Indian head massage should be used alongside standard medical care and not as an alternative. Consult your GP or other health professional for medical attention and advice.