



## **Indian Head Massage**

Indian head massage is a relaxing holistic treatment that uses acupressure massage on the head, face, neck and shoulders.

It aims to rebalance your body's energies.

### **What is Indian head massage?**

Indian head massage is an ancient therapeutic treatment that has been practiced in India for thousands of years, and is incredibly relaxing. Part of the Hindu health care practice of Ayurveda, Indian head massage focuses on your head, neck and shoulders. It is a deep massage, which uses a variety of pressure and techniques that tap into your seven "chakras" or paths of energy and encourage healing and balance in your whole body.

Indian head massage has become a popular component of combined treatments or rituals, including massage and facials.

### **What is Indian head massage good for?**

This form of massage focuses on the three higher "chakras" - mind, body and spirit and as such hits your energy epicentre.

It doesn't seem sufficient to say that a good, long Indian head massage (involving proper neck and shoulder and back massage as well) will relax you. It's more than this. It should actually make you feel detached and serene, and leave you sighing and wordless.

Even if you don't experience this level of relaxation, this massage treatment offers all kinds of other benefits. It will relieve aches, pains and tension in your neck, back and shoulders, improve the texture of your hair and encourage it to grow. An Indian head massage stimulates the flow of blood, lymph and oxygen in your upper body which will clear your sinuses, relieve stress and help you sleep better. And because it can help cure headaches (even migraine!), eye strain and anxiety, an Indian head massage can even help you to concentrate better at work.

What's more, the use of fragrant oils can stimulate as well as relax you, clearing your head, and soothing you even further.

All in all, an Indian head massage will leave you feeling happier and more relaxed all round.

### **Before you go**

You should wear loose-fitting clothing, so that you don't feel restricted or uncomfortable. It's a good idea not to have too many layers. For an Indian head massage, the masseur is liable to want to massage your neck and shoulders, even your upper back, so a polo neck is a bad idea, as is complicated or tight-fitting underwear.

Indian head massage is kind to hair; it is not kind to hair-dos. Remove any hair bands, clips or slides before you go in, and book that hair appointment for the day *after*

Bear in mind as well that as you may have oils rubbed into your scalp - you might want to take a cap, "Alice" or other hair band with you to make yourself look respectable on your way home, or back at work.

### **Precautions**

As with any treatment it is important to tell your therapist in advance if you:

- are, or think you might be, pregnant
- have any medical conditions or are receiving any treatment or medication
- have recently had an injury or operation
- are allergic to anything, particularly skin allergies
- have any broken skin or sores on your scalp

as this may affect the kind of oil and treatment you receive.

Be aware that after your massage your hair will smell very strongly of the essential oils used during the massage. If you're going out for a meal afterwards, you might want to give your hair a good wash beforehand. Chances are it will still smell good, but less overpowering.

### **What to expect from an Indian head massage**

A complete Indian head massage will probably take between 25 and 45 minutes. Your therapist will probably chat with you beforehand to get an idea of your lifestyle, any particular aches, pains or ailments you have. She may ask you if you are having any medical treatments or taking medicines, as this might affect which oils she uses, and what type of pressure and technique.

In an Indian head massage, you are likely to have oils rubbed into your scalp. You may be asked whether you have dry, greasy, normal hair so that the therapist can use an oil which will most

improve your hair's shine and texture. It's worth mentioning, too, if you have dandruff, or thinning hair, as some oils are can help improve these conditions.

Be prepared for the fact that some of the massage will be quite firm - it can be quite an odd sensation to have your skull massaged, for example - but stick with it. You will feel really relaxed and serene afterwards. The results are worth it.

### **Hot tip!**

Get this treatment combined with a neck, shoulder and back massage and we defy you to have any stress left. This Good Spa Spy emerged from the treatment room after a combined treatment (Espa Advanced Specialist Back and Neck Facial) feeling as though I had fallen into a pool of valium, or was it love...?

One Good Spa Guide had bad luck with her treatment and said that the head massage was quite painful - it shouldn't be. Speak to your therapist in advance if you're worried and always tell them at any stage if you feel uncomfortable with what they're doing.

### **Afterwards**

After an Indian head massage you are likely to feel great: relaxed, serene, ache-free, clear-headed, ready to tackle that important report for work, run the children ragged round the park, or fall asleep immediately, depending on the kind of oils used probably!

But beware: you will feel great; you won't *look* great. With all that oil stiffening on your hair, you'll probably look like you put conditioner on it three days ago and forgot to rinse it out.

In the long-term, the deep-down effects of your Indian head massage may well leave your hair softer, shinier and in much better condition; in the short-term, wear a hat or a very cunning hair band.

### **Different types of Indian head massage**

A lot of generic head and neck massages are based on techniques that you'll find in Indian head massage. What you will find is that they may have removed the harder elements and will just stick to the gentler movements. This is fine, but may do you less good.

Indian head massage - in its pure or a derivative form - features as a component of many other treatments, including specific massages or facials, or combined treatments or rituals.