

## Indian Head Massage

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### History

Massage is the oldest form of medicine known to humans and has been practiced for thousands of years. The art of Indian Head Massage originated from Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine. This Sanskrit word can be translated as the "science of life" or "knowledge of life". The Ayurvedic approach to health is the balance of body, mind and spirit and the promotion of long life.

Massage has always played an essential role in family life in India. It is an integral part of the daily routine and is highly recommended for everyone throughout all stages of life. Indian Head Massage was originally developed by Indian women as part of their daily grooming routine. Massage skills were passed on from mother to daughter from generation to generation. The oils such as sesame, almond and coconut that they massaged (and still do) into their scalps assured a healthy scalp and beautiful, long, lustrous hair.

Indian barbers incorporate massage into their treatment. A visit to the barber will always involve champi - the Western word "shampoo" is derived from this word which means "having your head massaged". A barber will pass on his particular techniques to his son. Everyone has his or her own individual techniques. You can also receive an Indian Head Massage in India on any street corner and on any beach. It is widely available.

In the West, we tend to view the scalp as independent from the rest of the body and treat it in a different way. In India, however, the scalp is regarded as an extension of the body skin and lavished with care and attention. Head massage has been developed and refined, with each family and region in India adding their own special touches. The concept of Indian Head Massage as a complementary therapy was first introduced to the west in the United in the early 1980s.

Many office workers or people who use computers suffer from aching shoulders and tight muscles in the neck. Indian head massage is an ideal massage to alleviate these problems. Also many people find that this massage, as it is a fully clothed massage, find it less intrusive than a full body massage. The therapist favour giving this massage as it is just 30 minutes and is less tiring to offer than full body massages and it offers many benefits.

It is a sad fact that we tend to look after our cars better than we take care of ourselves. Some people look at having a massage as a treat or wait until their muscles are so tight before booking a session. Having just one session may not give them the benefits they require. However, if we looked after our bodies the same way we look after our cars and give it the right fuel in the way of healthy foods and have a massage on a regular basis as a preventative measure our bodies would thank us for it and work in a more efficient way and suffer less aches and pains.

### **The Advantages of an IHM Treatment**

No need to undress

Treatment done in a seated position

Cost effective - a half hour treatment can cost as little as \$30.00

Suitable for all ages and also for pregnant women

Can be done anywhere at anytime

Minimal equipment needed - just a fold out chair and a small pillow or folded up towel

### **Possible Benefits of IHM**

1. General relaxation
2. Improved blood circulation increases oxygen supply to the brain
3. Calms, revitalizes and uplifts the spirit
4. Can create a more balanced state of being, and balancing of the Chakras
5. Relaxes taut and uncomfortable muscles, eases stiffness, breaks down knots and nodules in muscle tissues
6. Stimulates blood circulation and drains away accumulated toxins
7. Increased joint mobility
8. Improved lymphatic drainage which helps in the removal of waste products and toxins helping the immune system
9. Can give your hair a healthy lustrous shine and improve skin condition
10. Encourages deeper breathing and deep relaxation; very enjoyable and triggers the release of "feel good" chemicals called endorphins creating an almost euphoric sensation of contentment and happiness.
11. Promotion of hair growth
12. Helps to dissipate mental, tiredness, stress, depression resulting in greater mental alertness and concentration, and clearer thinking

*Can also help relieve the following conditions:*

Eyestrain

Tension headaches

Migraines

Earaches

Tinnitus (ringing in the ear)

Jaw ache

Sinusitis congestion

Insomnia

Disturbed sleep

## Contra-Indications

*The following conditions cannot be treated unless otherwise stated:*

1. Any recent head or neck injury, including whiplash and concussion. This would be painful and could exacerbate the injury and seriously delay recovery.
2. Severe bruising in the areas to be treated. This could be painful and delay recovery time.
3. Epilepsy. Treatment might bring on an attack due to possible sensory disturbance.
4. Recent hemorrhage. Treatment could create a recurrence.
5. High or low blood pressure unless under control with medication. Can result in feeling faint or loss of consciousness.
6. Migraine provided there is no sign of the onset of an attack. Clients should be aware that treatment may result in an attack.
7. A history of thrombosis or embolism. These blood clots or blockages could be moved by the increase in blood flow due to massage and can have serious or fatal results.
8. Diabetes unless under control. This metabolic condition may be adversely affected.
9. Infectious skin disorders such as Impetigo, Herpes simplex and Herpes zoster. Many non-infectious disorders such as acne and dermatitis may benefit from treatment.
10. Head Lice
11. Scalp infections such as weeping eczema.
12. Cuts and abrasions in the treatment areas. If they are small then you can work around them but otherwise avoid the area altogether as massage may adversely affect the wounds.

13. Recent operation. Full healing needs to take place as well as permission from the client's physician prior to receiving treatment.
14. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. A debilitating condition which is worsened with treatment in some cases. Client should consult physician before receiving a treatment.
15. High temperature, illness and fever. An increase in the blood flow will increase the severity of these conditions.
16. Any infectious disease. Disease can be passed on to other clients and to the therapist.
17. Intoxication. Not conducive to a positive experience.
18. Aneurism, the localized dilation of the blood vessels, usually in the temple or forehead area in the elderly. Increased blood flow may result in a very dangerous outcome.
19. Food poisoning
  
20. Cancer or any other serious medical condition while undergoing treatment

**Special conditions where caution is required:**

*Only light and soothing techniques are used*

- Osteoporosis
- Frailty
- Spondelites or Spondelosis in the neck. This is a form of arthritis in the neck, avoid working on the neck.
- Painful cysts, work around these
- Psoriasis, work around affected areas
- Pregnancy - go lightly on shoulders and occipital areas as there are acupressure points that can bring on labor in these areas.

When in doubt DON'T. If you are working with someone who has a condition you are not familiar with, get them to consult their physician regarding the appropriateness of Indian Head Massage before proceeding with a treatment.

With serious conditions a note from the doctor is best.

## Some Possible Reactions to an IHM

Some of your clients may report some of the physical or emotional reactions listed below, or may notice that a condition they have is worse after a treatment or has triggered a condition, such as a headache. Please know that though these reactions may appear negative they are actually positive. They are indicative of a deeper level of relaxation and of healing.

1. Cold feeling: Because the body becomes totally relaxed, the blood moves away from the extremities and goes towards the center of your body.
2. Funny Taste in the mouth: An IHM promotes the body to cleanse itself from all toxins; the poor taste in your mouth could be a result of this cleansing.
3. Perspiration: This is another way in which the body rids itself of toxins. You could also be releasing excess fluids.
4. Mucus: Could be related to a clogged sinus, ileo-cecal valve, or small intestine that the body is trying to detoxify. The gall bladder could be increasing the amount of bile it is secreting into the small intestine causing loose bowel movements.
5. Diarrhea: Or frequent bowel movements. A cleansing activity causing the body to excrete toxins through the feces. This may normalize bowel activity.
6. Tiredness: The body's reaction to IHM causes it to switch into parasympathetic mode to rest and repair itself. Most repairs our bodies undergo occur during our sleep.
7. Nausea and Headache: This could be a side effect of the body trying to cleanse itself.
8. Greatly energized: Since the body is cleansing itself it will run "cleaner". There are fewer toxins to weigh us down.
9. Eyes watering: Due to the cleansing of the lachrymal glands in the eyes.
10. Release of pain: Since you are put in a relaxed state the muscles and nerves relax. This in turn eases pain.
11. Temporary Rash: Toxins are released through the skin which is the body's largest organ of elimination. Some people may be sensitive to these toxins.
12. Flatulence and burping: Releasing gas is another way in which the body rids itself of toxins.
13. Improved urination: Due to relaxation of muscles in the urinary tract as well as being yet another way in which toxins are released.
14. Improved digestion: The body digests its food during rest.
15. Laughing or Crying: Emotional release.

Advise your client to drink lots of water and to take Epsom salt baths as these will lessen the effects as they speed the removal of toxins from the body.

## ***Anatomy***

### **Bones of the Head and Face**

Temporal: Two Temporal bones are found at the sides of the skull under the parietals

Occipital: One Occipital bone forms the back of the skull

Parietal: Two Parietal bones form the sides and top of the skull

Frontal: One Frontal bone forms the forehead

Sphenoid: One Sphenoid bone helps to form the base of the skull

Ethmoid: One Ethmoid bone helps to form the eye socket and nasal cavities

Lacrimal: Two Lacrimal bones make up part of each eye socket

Nasal: two Nasal bones form the bridge of the nose

Zygomatic: Two Zygomatic bones form the cheekbones

Maxilla: Two Maxilla bones form the upper part of the jaw

Mandible: One Mandible forms the lower part of the jaw. It is the only movable bone in the skull

Vomer: One Vomer extends upwards from the hard palate to make the nasal septum

Turbinate: Two Turbinate bones (not shown) make up part of the nasal cavity

Palatine: Two L-shaped bones (not shown) form walls of the nasal cavities and part of the roof of the mouth (the palate)

### **Muscles of the Head and Face**

Platysma: extends from lower jaw to the chest and covers the front of the neck

Action: depresses lower jaw and lower lip, used in yawning and pouting

Sternomastoid (Sternocleidomastoid): extends from clavicle and sternum to the mastoid

process behind ears)

Action: rotates head and draws it toward shoulders

Occipitalis: extends from the Occipital bone to the back edge of the Intermediate Tendon

Action: draws scalp back, helps to raise eyebrows

Frontalis: extends from the front edge of the Intermediate Tendon to the eyebrows.

Action: raises eyebrows

Temporalis: extends from the temporal bone to the mandible

Action: raises the lower jaw in chewing

Masseter: found over the outer part of the cheeks and jaw from Zygomatic arch to mandible

Action: used in chewing, closing mouth, clenching teeth

Orbicularis Oculi: circular muscle that surrounds the eye

Action: closes the eyes

Zygomatic Major and Minor: extends from the cheekbone to the angle of the mouth

Action: draws angle of mouth upwards and laterally, used in laughing and smiling

Orbicularis Oris: circular muscle surrounding the mouth

Action: closes the mouth in speech and in kissing

Intermediate Tendon: A tough band of fibrous connective tissue that connects muscle to bone

and is built to withstand tension. Located on the top of the head and joins the Occipitalis muscle to the Frontalis muscle.

## **Bones of the Upper Body**

Clavicle: Two Clavicle bones are long and slender, also called the collar bones

Sternum: One Sternum which is also known as the breast bone

Scapula: Two Scapulae are large, triangular, flat bones also called shoulder blades

Humerus: Two Humerus bones are the long upper arm bones

Ribs: There are 12 pairs of ribs (attaching to the 12 thoracic vertebrae)

Vertebrae: Cervical spine: made up of 7 vertebrae (base of skull forming the neck)

Thoracic spine: made up of 12 vertebrae (torso)

Lumbar spine: made up of 5 vertebrae, the largest of the vertebrae (lower back)

Sacrum: made up of 5 fused vertebrae

Coccyx: made up of 4 fused bones (tail bone)

There are 33 vertebrae bones in total

## **Muscles of the Back and Shoulders**

Trapezius: large triangular shaped muscle of the upper back. Extends from along the Thoracic

vertebrae and Occiput to the Scapula and Clavicle.

Action: elevates and depresses the Clavicle and Scapula, rotates the Scapula, and draws the head backward.

Levator Scapula: extends from the cervical vertebrae in the neck to the scapula.

Action: elevates the Scapula and draws the scapula towards the spine

Rhomboids: extends from Thoracic vertebrae to middle edge of Scapula

Action: draws the scapula towards the spine

## Hair Anatomy

Hair is much more complicated than it appears. It helps transmit sensory information and creates gender identity. There is hair on almost every visible surface of the body. The main function of the hair is protection from extreme temperatures and from the sun's rays. It is composed mainly of the protein keratin and is a dead structure.

### Follicle

The follicle is a stocking-like structure that contains several layers with different jobs. At the base of the follicle is a projection formed like sticking a finger in the bottom of a stocking and pushing it in a small amount. This projection is called a papilla and it contains capillaries, or tiny blood vessels, that feed the cells. The living part of the hair is the bottom part of the stocking surrounding the papilla called the bulb. This bottom part is the only part fed by the capillaries. The cells in the bulb divide every 23 to 72 hours, faster than any other cells in the body.

The follicle is surrounded by two sheaths - an inner and outer sheath. These sheaths protect and mold the growing hair shaft. The inner sheath follows the hair shaft and ends below the opening of a sebaceous (oil) gland, and sometimes an apocrine (scent) gland. The outer sheath continues all the way up to the gland. A muscle called an erector pili muscle attaches below the gland to a fibrous layer around the outer sheath. When this muscle contracts, it causes the hair to stand up.

The sebaceous gland is important because it produces sebum which is a natural conditioner. More sebum is produced after puberty. The sebum production decreases in women throughout their lives. The production also decreases in men, but not as much as in women.

Shaft - The hair shaft is made up of dead, hard protein called keratin in three layers. The inner layer is called the medulla and may not be present. The next layer is the cortex and the outer layer is the cuticle. The cortex makes up the majority of the hair shaft. The cuticle is formed by tightly packed scales in an overlapping structure similar to roof shingles. Most hair conditioning products attempt to

affect the cuticle. There are pigment cells that are distributed throughout the cortex and medulla giving the hair its characteristic color.

## Hair Shape

The amount of natural curl a hair has is determined by its cross-sectional shape. Hair that is circular is straight and hair that is flattened and elliptical is curly or kinky. The more circular the shaft is, the straighter the hair is. The more elliptical the shaft is, the curlier or kinkier the hair. The cross-sectional shape also determines the amount of shine the hair has. Straighter hair is shinier because sebum from the sebaceous gland can travel down the hair more easily. The kinkier the hair, the more difficulty the sebum has traveling down the hair resulting in more dry or dull looking hair.

## Some Notes on Massage Techniques

Never work directly over bones as this can be painful and has no benefit to the client.

Avoid working over the spine unless using light and gentle techniques

Friction vs. Rub

Friction occurs when we move the soft tissues of the skin and muscles back and forth, or in a circular motion, over the underlying tissue. Our client's degree of tension will dictate how far a muscle can be moved. A rub occurs when we slide over the skin surface not moving the soft tissue below; you will hear a rubbing sound.

## Hygiene

Your personal appearance and that of your treatment room and/or office space will reflect your professionalism. A good first impression is vital and will tell your prospective client a lot about you. Make sure that you are clean and well groomed and dressed nicely, partake in daily oral hygiene and hands should be washed frequently throughout the day especially just prior to and just after giving an Indian Head Massage. It is preferable to have nails clean, trimmed and not painted. If you have longer hair make sure it is tied back securely to avoid having hair fall in your face or on your client during a treatment. Make sure hair is clean and tidy.

## **Posture and Body Mechanics**

When doing massage of any kind it is important to pay attention to your posture to ensure that you are comfortable and do not hurt yourself. Correct posture will allow you to work longer without becoming tired and will also prevent muscle fatigue and strain. Here are some things to look out for:

Always face your work

Keep your shoulders relaxed and down, if you are not relaxed your client will not be relaxed either

Stand firmly on both feet so that your body weight is evenly distributed between them

Try to keep your head up and balanced centrally, this will help avoid a kinked neck or neck strain keep your back straight

If you need to lower yourself then bend at the knees and not at the waist. You can do this by either doing a lunge or a squat

Avoid using the smaller muscles and joints when working as they will tire and wear out much more quickly than if using larger muscles and joints

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## **Setting the Stage**

Prepare a room or space that is clean, warm, comfortable and relaxing where interruptions will be minimal. Where possible lighting should be low and soft relaxing music should be audible but not intrusive. If you like, burn a candle to set the mood for relaxation. Aromatherapy can also be used, though be aware that some clients may have sensitivities or allergies to scents. Subtle but not overpowering scents can add greatly to the relaxation experience.

Make sure that you have removed any watches, bracelets and larger rings you may be wearing. Small rings such as wedding band are acceptable. Keep jewelry to a minimum.

Have everything prepared prior to your client's arrival. Have at hand any materials you may need for the massage such as a small pillow, oil if you choose to use some, hair clips for clients with longer hair., a baggy t-shirt or towel if client arrives in a halter top or any other clothing in which skin in the areas to be worked on is exposed, or if client arrives wearing a very thick sweater. Remember Indian Head Massage is to be done directly over clothing. It is best done over thinner materials so that the client can enjoy the full benefit of the massage.

When client arrives have them fill out the Health Record Form (see appendix C), Once that is completed go over the form with the client and discuss any possible contra-indications. If this is the first time the client is receiving an Indian Head Massage go over the procedure so that they know what to expect and are comfortable with the procedure.

Client should be seated in a small, narrow chair such a folding card table chair. Client should remove any necklaces, earrings, glasses and watch. If they have long hair, it should be put up for the first part of the massage. If possible do not have client cross their legs or arms as this short-circuits their natural energy flow.