Indian Head Massage

Learner Guide
**History of Massage.**

Massage may well be the oldest and simplest form of medical care. Paintings of people giving and receiving massage have been found in Egyptian tombs. The ancient Greeks and Romans used massage as a primary form of medical treatment and the Chinese had documented the benefits of massage as far back as 3,000BC.

Massage or body therapy as it is also known, is a natural instinct. The benefits of touch have, it seems, always been known to man and appear across all cultures right around the world.

**History of massage in India**

Most records of massage in India speak of the sensuality of massage rather than the medical benefit. According to Hindu Tantra the *KUNDALINI* or life force originates at the base of the spine and is part of the interaction of cosmic forces of female and male energy. This area would be soothed and stimulated with a combination of massage, yogic positions and breathing exercises.

The use of massage in India can be accounted for back to the time of the first indo-aryan settlements; it is however, likely that massage was already in use during the preceding era of the Indus Valley culture. The important cultural function of the ancient practice of home massage can be seen in that massage was often linked to social, religious or ritual customs. Massage was considered to be beneficial to health.

The classic Ayurveda texts mention massage in this sense and recommended it as an almost indispensible healing factor. To this day, massage is regularly used in India for the promotion of general health and fitness as well as in treating minor health problems.
Ayurvedic doctors also employ massage as a complete therapy to be applied systematically in the treatment of serious illness.

The Ayurvedic system, moreover, has a wide range of special massage methods which are used to treat particular illnesses. While today the efficacy and effect of western massage is, in a large part, accounted for scientifically, in India, common, traditional massage is usually employed based on ancient experience.

The general social conditions in southern Asia will likely ensure that these types of massage will continue to be respected and frequently practised aspect of Indian culture.

**Indian head massage** is based on the ayurvedic system of healing which has been practiced in India for over a thousand years. It provides Indian families with relaxation and healing on a daily basis, as well as playing a part in rituals such as weddings and births, not to mention every day events like a visit to the barber. Massage is an important part of everyday life in India and massage skills have been handed down through the generations.

It is also known as *Champissage* – possibly a combination of *champi* – the Hindi term for the practice, and massage. In *champissage* the head, neck and face are massaged with the purpose of manipulating energy channels. The goal is to clear blocks of these energy channels that cause a build up of negative energy. The belief is when the energy does not flow properly; negative energy builds up, causing common ailments, including stress, pain, baldness and hair loss.
Indian head massage was brought to the west by Narendra Mehta in 1973. Narendra was an Osteopath and massage therapist, travelled to England from India to study physiotherapy. During the intervening years, he was dismayed to learn that most massages, even full-body massages, did not extend father than one’s neck and shoulders. Having grown to appreciate head massage as a way of life in India, he realized how much he missed the soothing sessions administered by the local barber and relatives back home.

Visually impaired since early childhood, Mehta was extraordinarily receptive to touch therapy. In 1978 he decided to return to India to research the physiological benefits of head massage, and spent the next couple of years documenting the skills and traditions of this technique, giving it his own personal flavour and expanding it to suit Western tastes. He developed a technique that combined massage of the face and ears, chakra balancing and scalp massage. He named his technique Indian Champissage, derived from champi, an Indian word meaning head massage. Today this technique is known as both Champissage and Indian Head Massage.

It was first introduced in the U.K. in 1981 at the Mind, Body and Spirit Festival.

**How does it work?**
The aim of Indian head massage is to release the stress that has accumulated in the tissues, muscles and joints of the head, face, neck and shoulders. Tension is relieved almost immediately.

**What does it involve?**
The client, fully clothes, sits in a massage chair for the treatment. The therapist uses a range of different movements including application of deep kneading and compression movements as well as broad and digital friction techniques and gliding strokes. These are applied over the neck, shoulder and scalp areas. In addition the therapist will also gently stimulate and stroke pressure points in the face. The session will usually last from twenty to forty five minutes, and most therapists like their clients to sit quietly for ten or twenty minutes once the massage has been completed.
**Guidelines for the practitioner**
The practitioner must always be in control of their **Attention and Intention**. They must be focused, grounded, work with correct body mechanics and be aware of what their receiver is feeling at all times. Communicate with receiver to check on pressure and any pain areas which are specific or referred. Proper breathing is important for the receiver and the practitioner, use visualization techniques to make the treatment more powerful.

**What is it good for?**
Indian head massage is especially good for relieving stress, tension, fatigue, insomnia, headaches, migraine & sinusitis. Clients report that the experience is deeply calming and relaxing, leaving them feeling energised and revitalised and better able to concentrate.

**What are the benefits?**
Indian head massage helps to increase joint mobility and flexibility in the neck and shoulders. It improves blood circulation and lymphatic flow, free knots of muscular tension, relaxes connective tissue and aids in the elimination of accumulated toxins and waste products. It is particularly good for reducing the effects of stress and tension.
It can also be used to:

- relieve eyestrain
- relieve insomnia
- ease headaches and migraine
- relax muscles
- relaxes and tones facial muscles
- stimulate the hair and scalp
- help localised blood and lymphatic circulation
- boost the immune system
- relieve sinusitis
- reduce stress release anxiety
- soothes and relaxes the nervous system
- relieves joint and muscle stiffness
- helps to remove toxins by stimulating the flow of oxygen around the area
What are the side effects and when should it be avoided?
Following a treatment some clients experience tiredness, dizziness, an increased desire to urinate (as the body eliminates toxins and waste material) or aching muscles. All of these side effects usually last for no more than a few hours after which clients generally experience increased energy and alertness.

Indian head massage should be avoided if you have had
- recent surgery
- a head or neck injury
- a history of thrombosis or embolism
- spondylitis or spondylosis.

Talk to your doctor before arranging a treatment if you have
- high or low blood pressure
- diabetes
- any kind of heart condition
- cancer
- osteoporosis

Endangerment Sites

An endangerment site is a region of the body in which nerves, arteries, or veins lay close to the body’s surface. These areas are not well protected by muscle or connective tissue, and have the potential to be damaged. Deep pressure or friction techniques sustained would be contraindicated for vessels and nerves in these areas. These areas may contain bony projections that are fragile and may be broken. Massage therapists should exercise extreme caution when working in or close to these endangerment areas.

Endangerment sites of the face and neck

Anterior Triangle of the Neck - consists of the medial border of the sternocleidomastoid (SCM) muscle, the inferior border of the mandible and the trachea. It contains the jugular vein, the carotid artery, and the vagus nerve, which are located deep to the SCM.

Posterior Triangle of the Neck - consists of the posterior border of the SCM, the superior border of the clavicle, and the anterior border of the upper trapezius. This area contains the brachiocephalic artery and vein superior the clavicle. The sub-cefhalic vein and the nerves of the brachial plexus.
Fig. 3.5. Contents of the Posterior triangle.
**Sternal Notch and Anterior Throat**- consists of the medial heads of the right and left clavicle, and their attachment at the superior edge of the sternum. This contains the vagus nerve, and nerves and vessels to the thyroid gland.

**Endangerment Sites of the Shoulder**

**Axillary Triangle of the underarm**- consists of the anterior edge of the pectoralis major, the posterior edge of the lattisimus dosi, the superior head and medial shaft of the humerous, the upper ribs and the medial aspect of the serratus anterior. This area contains the nerves of the distal brachial plexus, and the brachial artery, the axillary nerve, vein and artery, and the cephalic vein.

**Deltoid – Pectoral Triangle**- is a narrow area between the medial aspect of the pectoralis major, the lateral aspect of the anterior deltoid, and the superior border of the clavicle. This area contains the cephalic vein.
Advise for your client about the treatment

They should wear loose clothing, so that they don’t feel uncomfortable or restricted. It’s a good idea not to have too many layers. For this massage the therapist will want to massage the neck and shoulders, even the upper back, so wear something that will allow ease of access to these areas.

Indian head massage is kind to hair; it is not kind to hair-dos. Leave the hair loose and bear in mind there may have oils rubbed into the scalp.

Always make sure that they avoid alcohol for at least five hours before the treatment.

Ask them to tell you:
- if they are or think they may be pregnant
- have any medical conditions or are receiving any treatment or medication
- are allergic to anything particularly skin allergies
- have any broken skin or sores on their scalp as this may affect the kind of oil and treatment you give

After the massage the hair will smell very strongly of essential oils used during the massage.

Oils used in Indian Head Massage

What oils are commonly used in Indian Head Massage and what are the benefits?

Oils condition the scalp and the hair and can add to the relaxation effects of the treatment. Tension sometimes causes hair loss and an oil massage can help to stimulate hair growth. Oils are not always necessary or desired and their use will depend on the particular wishes / needs of the client. In some cases, essential oils can be blended with base oil for the scalp massage. The aromatic effects of the oils are enhanced by the fact that they are being used on the head, close to the olfactory tract and so the molecules do not have far to travel. In addition, the clients breathing will usually be deeper and more relaxed due to the effects of the massage resulting in more effective inhalation.

Base oils for a basic scalp massage are usually chosen because they moisturise the skin, condition the hair, stimulate hair growth and are neutral in scent. In India mustard oil, almond oil, coconut oil, sesame oil, and olive oil are traditionally used.

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<tr>
<th>Oil</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mustard oil</td>
<td>Extracted from yellow mustard seeds, this oil is mainly used in Northwest India. Mustard oil generates heat, making it popular for use in the cold winter months. It stimulates circulation, reduces pain and swelling and soothes sore tense muscles. Mustard oil has a strong scent and may be distracting rather than relaxing for some clients. It can also irritate the skin, so use with caution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Almond oil</td>
<td>Almond oil is popular and easily obtainable oil in the west. It is good for mature skin and dry hair, reduces muscular aches and pains and calms the nerves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coconut oil</td>
<td>This oil which has a sweet odour is traditionally used by women to lubricate dry skin and hair. It can be helpful in the treatment of psoriasis.</td>
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Sesame oil

This is the most widely used oil in India and is very popular in Ayurveda. It is beneficial in moisturising skin and hair, reducing muscular aches and pains, reducing swelling and stiffness. It is also said to reduce premature ageing and greying of the hair.

Olive oil

This oil is easily obtainable and it is said to provide relief from the pain of arthritis. It also relieves sore, tense muscles and reduces swelling. Olive oil has a strong scent and may be distracting rather than relaxing for some clients.

**Other oils that may be used include:**

- **Evening Primrose** - any skin type, very good for dry hair, scalp, and skin. Benefits for eczema and dermatitis, nourishing, soothing, promotes healing.
- **Avocado** - all skin, hair, and scalp types. Very beneficial for sensitive, dehydrated, and dry conditions, penetrative and soothing. Relieves any conditions that itch.
- **Grape seed** - very light and gentle emollient. All types of hair, skin, and scalp conditions.
- **Hazelnut** - absorbs well, very good for stimulating the circulation, used on oily hair, scalp, and skin types.
- **Wheat germ** - all skin types, very beneficial for inflamed and ageing skin conditions, nourishing, soothing, and promotes healing.

**Essential oils can be very beneficial for hair loss** as they also have an effect on the sebaceous glands and can be easily incorporated into an Indian Head Massage. The oils penetrate deeply into the hair shaft and follicle and helps encourage new hair growth. You can mix the essential oils with a carrier oil such as mustard or sesame oil. Massage the oil in to the scalp in a circular motion – do not use too much force if your hair is thinning. Leave the oil on over night if possible and wash hair after as normal. The oil is best applied when warm.

**Essential oils which are beneficial for hair loss include:**

Basil, clary sage, cypress, palmarosa, rosemary, geranium, lavender, Roman chamomile, thyme and cedar wood.

Arnica cream can also be rubbed into areas of thinning hair but should not be used if the skin is broken.

Lavender is used for its calming relaxing effect, while Rosemary, which also helps relieve aches and stress, gives an uplifting feeling and sense of being energised.
Indian Head Massage Blends

The following eight blends can be used as part of an Indian Head Massage treatment. They will meet the needs of a wide range of clients and will enhance the benefits of any treatment. They can also be added to a shampoo and conditioner or a hair rinse (3 to 5%).

Decongest & Clarify
Eucalyptus Dives, Eucalyptus radiate, Black Spruce, Pine & Rosewood A blend of essential oils with widely-acknowledged decongestant properties - for sinus congestion or catarrhal cough.

Energize
Cardamon, Ginger, Orange, Bergamot & Patchouli Just as it says - a blend to raise one’s vital energy and combat physical and mental fatigue

Harmonize
Frankincense, Lavender, Bergamot, Roman Chamomile & Vetiver. A blend to help release nervous tension, calm the nerves and restore one’s sensual mental-emotional equilibrium a formula designed to restore inner harmony.

Luxuriate & Relax
Jasmine, Mandarin, Geranium, Lavender & Vanilla. A blend to encourage a state of deep relaxation and to offer a chance to luxuriate in the Queen of Flowers’ fragrance.

Nourish the Roots
Sandalwood, Palmarosa, Vetiver & Ylang Ylang A blend of essential oils that nourish and restore the roots of the hair - indicated in particular for a dry scalp

Purify & Refresh
Grapefruit, Lemon, Palmarosa, Cypress & Sandalwood A blend to help promote cleansing and detoxification - or simply to refresh and revive

Regenerate the Scalp
Rosemary cineole 1.8. Rosemary verbenone, Thyme linalol, Cedarwood, Rosewood & Lavender. A blend designed to enhance the flow of capillary circulation in the scalp - and thereby to help regenerate the hair.

Tone & Soothe
Clary Sage, Spike Lavender, Sweet Marjoram, Black Pepper & Frankincense A blend of essential oils that help to both tone and soothe tired, achy muscles.
MASSAGE TECHNIQUES USED IN INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE

**Kneading**
Steady rhythm of squeezing, lifting, rolling of muscle tissue using whole hands or thumbs and fingers.
Stimulates relaxation and circulation, warms and softens muscle tissue.

**Digital Compression**
Technique used to apply a compression of muscle tissue followed a reduction of pressure, applied with the digit/tip of finger.
Stimulates circulation, produces temporary relaxation response, relieves stress points and stimulates acupressure and shiatsu points.

**Longitudinal stroke**
A slow steady movement along the direction of muscle fibre, applied with hands, thumbs, forearm.
Stimulates circulation and relaxation, stretches and realigns muscle fibres.

**Transverse stroke**
A slow steady movement across the muscle fibre, applied with thumbs.
Separates muscle fibres.

**Broad contact friction**
Fast, brisk oscillating movement, applied with back of hand or base of the hand.
Warms muscle tissue, stimulates circulation

**Digital friction**
Quick oscillating movement using the pads or tips of one or two fingers.
Warms muscle tissue, stimulates circulation, breaks down fibrous muscle tissue.

**Tapotement**
A percussive technique used to release and soften muscle tissue through a controlled, repeated, rhythmical light striking. Applied with the fingertips.
MUSCLES THAT ARE WORKED ON DURING AN INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE ROUTINE.

THE TRAPEZIUS MUSCLE

upper fibers
middle fibers
lower fibers

Deltoid

www.neckpainssupport.com

MUSCULAR SYSTEM

Semi spinalis capitis
Splenius capitis
Sternocleidomastoid

Trapezius

Sternocleidomastoid tendon (cut)

Levator scapulae (cut)
Splenius cervicis
7th cervical vertebra
Rhomboïd minor
Rhomboïd major

Superficial muscles of posterior neck and upper back
Sub occipital muscles
FACIAL MUSCLES

Figure 12-2 Superficial and intermediate anterior views of the muscles of the head.
Gallbladder (head) Meridian

Use this diagram to help you with stage 3-scalp massage routine, points 1, 2, 3
**CHAKRAS**

Chakras are energy centers that run from the base of your spine out to the top, or crown, of your head. The word chakra is a Sanskrit word, meaning wheel or disc. There are seven major chakras, each a circular wheel of light spinning in your energetic system, associated with certain body parts, a color, stone, element, and function. By learning to tune into the energy of your chakras, you can begin to embrace the fullness of who you truly are.
Deep Relaxation

With today’s lightening-paced lifestyles, stress and associated illnesses are our greatest maladies. Muscle pulls, migraines, tension headaches and toxic build in the body are all too common. Champissage, incorporating subtle chakra-balancing procedures that anyone can learn, is an effective way to rid our systems of the energetic debris of everyday life.

“The skilful placing of the therapist’s hands on the upper three chakras-vishuddha, governing the throat region and it’s associated organs; anja, the third eye-eye point, located on the forehead; and sahasrara the master chakra associated with the pineal plexus and found at the crown of one’s head, combined with visual and auditory stimuli, allow the client’s innate healing energy to rebalance and harmony to prevail,” explains Mehta. “If a client is feeling a little sluggish mentally, I find that working with the crown chakra and the third-eye chakra simultaneously will enable them to feel more alert and able to release pent-up emotions.”

Mehta’s champissage treatment begins with massage of the upper back, shoulders, upper arms and neck to melt fatigue. This is followed by a scalp massage, which is a series of integrated techniques.
SHOULDER, NECK, FACE MASSAGE.

When we think of parts of our body that carry tension, we often think of larger areas, like our backs, shoulders, and necks. While those core areas does a lot of work keeping us upright during the day, our faces hold equally as much tension, but often get neglected when it comes time to pamper.

Benefits of a holistic face, neck and shoulder massage are, that it helps to increase blood flow, thereby improving circulation. Better circulation means more blood pumping through the areas of your face, whisking away any impurities, and improving skin condition, can also improve muscle tone. The added benefits of holistic face, neck and shoulder massage are relieving migraine, premenstrual syndrome, stress, headaches and even sinus congestions.

Along with the face, the neck and shoulders can carry considerably tension.

Almost all daily activities such as working on a computer, writing, driving, etc cause the muscles of the shoulders to get overly stressed. This problem can be compounded by an incorrect posture, or wrong sleeping positions.

Neck and Shoulder holistic massage provides deep relaxation to the stressed shoulder muscles, stimulates the flow of blood, and improves the functioning of the lymph system. Holistic neck and shoulder massage is a natural analgesic because it stimulates the release of endorphins. In addition, it is an excellent stress buster and can make you feel relaxed and recharged.

Starting the massage with back and shoulders and finishing with neck and face, you will feel completely relaxed and the muscle tension greatly reduced.

Always be grateful for the opportunity to serve a fellow human being through the medium of structured touch and always respect and treat each client as you would want to be treated.