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The Power of Touch

MASSAGE CAN HELP YOU FEEL—AND LOOK—GREAT. HERE ARE FOUR NEW WAYS TO TRY IT—AND HOW THEY WORK.

Massages can seem like the ultimate luxury, with the right session melting away the stress of a day or alleviating jet lag after a long flight. But they're also a smart investment in your health. "Massage increases circulation, eases tension and muscle pain, removes toxins out of the body, helps lower blood pressure, improves quality of life by offering better sleep, reduces stress and anxiety, helps focus and enhance brain performance, improves balance and exercise performance, and the list goes on!" says Lise Sergent, spa director at the Grace Mayflower Inn and Spa in Washington, CT.

Massage can also fight aches and ease injury discomfort. "Massage helps with the release of endorphins [and] the reduction of pain. It also helps to unwind the fascia, which is the source of restrictions, as well as reduce muscular tension," says Monique Blake, National Director of Body at The Red Door Salon & Spa, which has a location in The Westchester in White Plains, NY.



(left) The Garden Room at the Mayflower Grace Hotel & Spa (above) A facial at New Beauty Spa & Wellness

Blake says the magic of massage is in the touch. "Positive touch creates a sense of connection, which makes us healthier and happier," says Blake, adding that this connection is more important than ever in the digital age. The key? Make it a part of your regular routine. "It is no different than exercising daily. It is only with consistent self-care and attention that our bodies can truly work for us in the way they were designed to," says Jennifer Efstathiou, lead esthetician at New Beauty & Wellness in Westport, CT. Although the classic Swedish massage—with a focus on the kneading of soft muscle tissue—remains the most familiar version, these are four others that are worth considering.

FACE MASSAGE

There are 40 muscles in your face, says Efstathiou, and to stay toned and firm (not saggy) they need to be exercised just like the ones in your body. "Facial massage can stimulate, aid

in lymphatic drainage, improve circulation, promote collagen production and restore the skin's elasticity," says Efstathiou. On top of making you look younger and better rested, facial massage can alleviate stress held in the jaw and sinus cavity. All of the facials at New Beauty Spa & Wellness incorporate it. (For an at-home technique, see *Try It At Home*.)

newbeautywellness.com

SCALP MASSAGE

At Warren Tricomi and Hopscotch salons in Greenwich, CT, head massage is offered as an added service. At Warren Tricomi, custom scalp massages (from \$75 for 30 minutes) are created for clients based on their individual needs (from itchy/flaky scalp to moisturizing); their stylist Naoko Iwai says: "The health of your hair starts with the scalp." According to Naoko, the deep cleansing, Shiatsu-based treatments can prevent oil build up, reduce inflammation and increase circulation, stimulating hair growth.



(left) A treatment room at the Mayflower Grace Hotel & Spa; (bottom, left) scalp massage at Hopscotch Salon; (bottom, right) a studio space at the Mayflower



At Hopscotch, the scalp treatments (from \$35 for 15 minutes) are also based on Shiatsu, says Maria Farago, salon manager. “We focus on pressure points on the temple, upper neck and various areas of the scalp; this also will include a hot towel,” says Farago. “Not only does it relax you but it can also help you achieve beautiful healthy hair.”

warrentricoli.com; hopscotchsalon.com

LYMPH DRAINAGE

The Grace Mayflower Inn and Spa is known for its restorative massages, and lymph drainage (\$185 for 60 minutes) is one of its most therapeutic. Sergent says this rhythmic massage based on light strokes helps the flow of lymph fluid, purifying the body’s tissues and helping supply cells with nutrients. “Lymph drainage helps reduce swelling, as it’s anti-inflammatory



and improves circulation,” says Sergent. gracehotels.com

SOUND HEALING

Sounds and emotions are closely connected, says Sergent, and the sound healing treatment (from \$65 for 30 minutes) at Grace Mayflower Inn and Spa is a must-try. Using Tibetan and Nepalese sound bowls, this vibrational therapy elicits a deep state of well-being, calming the mind, promoting relaxation, enhancing the immune response, calming the sympathetic nervous system, awaking intuition and balancing the right and left brain. Whichever treatment you try, you’ll get maximum benefits from doing it regularly, says Sergent: “You are investing in your health and helping to prevent diseases because most diseases are stress-related.”

TRY IT AT HOME

Lymphatic Drainage 101

NYC-based celebrity facialist Joanna Vargas teaches her clients facial massage, with a focus on lymphatic drainage. “It can completely change the look of someone’s face,” says Vargas. Here’s Vargas’ simple method:

1. For dry skin, massage the skin in circular motions upward.
2. Start at the base of the neck on the sides where your arteries are.
3. Massage in gentle circles upwards, towards the jaw, up the sides of the face and around the eyes. This will help coax nutrients into the tissue.
4. For acne prone skin, do the opposite motion and start on the top of the face by the eyes—this will draw the waste away.

Jade Rolling

This stone roller can be placed in the fridge to help depuff, and, like a massage, also stimulates collagen, promotes lymphatic drainage and leaves skin looking brighter. “I think tools can make it easier to deal with if someone feels they are clueless on how to do it,” says Vargas.

Dry Brushing

Exfoliate and encourage lymphatic circulation through the body with this Ayurvedic practice, suggests Blake.



Herbivore Jade Roller
\$30, sephora.com



Aromatherapy Associates Dry Brush
\$32, The Red Door Salon & Spa in The Westchester, White Plains, NY