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Indian Head Massage by Robert Sachs

SPA

In ancient India as in other cultures around the world, massage was used for healing, relaxation, comfort, and enhancing intimacy. Some techniques are evidently therapeutic in their application, while others show a more sensuous approach. However, there are few techniques, which embrace all aspects, of what massage can offer.

Champissage, the modern Indian name for the Ayurvedic method of head massage, is one such technique. Historically, Champissage was practiced by women as a means to keep their hair thick, beautiful, and healthy. At the same time, anyone who has experienced Champissage, can feel that this ancient technique has many applications all of which make it a spa treatment “par excellence”.

Three years ago, my wife, Melanie, and I had the good fortune to meet a master of Champissage, Narendra Mehta. Mehta is an osteopath and massage therapist, who with his wife, Kundan, runs the London Centre of Indian Champissage. The Mehtas have a reputation that brings the elite from around the world do their clinic. Along with the individual treatments they offer, they run an extensive training program for anyone interested in learning from them. These programs are done throughout the world.



What follows is an interview I conducted with Mr. Mehta regarding his own background in Champissage and the benefits he sees his clients experience from Champissage.

R.S.: Mehta, your background n natural healing is quite extensive. How did you become interested in champissage?

Mehta: As a child growing up in India, my mother and a local barber used to give me a head massage. It was so relaxing and I used to enjoy it immensely. When I came to Great Britain in 1973, within a few weeks of my arrival, I was very stressed out and looked for someone to give me a good head massage. I searched high and low, but found that no one [had] even heard of this therapy. So, a few years later, I decided to

go back to India, specifically to learn this technique. On my return to the U.K., I adapted it to meet the needs of a highly stressed Western culture.

R.S: What are the benefits of champissage and how can you see it used in the spa environment?

Mehta: Champissage stimulates the circulation to the scalp and nourishes the hair roots. Along with increased blood circulation, it also stimulates the movements of lymph and thus has a cleansing effect. Muscular knots and nodules of physical and emotional stress break down, dispersing toxins and improving mobility. By relieving tension, champissage is an invaluable treatment of the other stress-related problems such as eye strain, headaches, insomnia, lack of concentration, and lethargy. The energy balancing that we include leaves a client with a deep sense of peace, calm, and tranquillity.

The beauty of this massage is that a client need not undress to enjoy it and although there are some wonderful Ayurvedic oils that can be massaged into the scalp, you really don't need to use any oils or creams to see many of these benefits. Thus in the spa environment, it can be a great technique to interest clients in massage who are shy or would normally never consider massage. At the same time, champissage can be done for a spa's regular massage clientele as a treatment unto itself or as a luxurious add-on.

R.S.: What does training in Champissage involve?

Mehta: Because of the interest in this therapy along with a diploma program at our London Centre, we are teaching levels of champissage around the world. Along with these trainings, my book, Indian Head Massage, gives step-by-step instructions of the massage technique, with clear illustrations.

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