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**+** CHIC & HEALTHY  
FOOTWEAR



# Heavenly Head

## What is it about a good head massage?

From the five-minute pre-shampoo scalp massage at the salon to the savasana head rub my yoga teacher provides at the end of each class, there is something powerfully addictive about having your head rubbed. The epicenter of thought and verbal communication, the head is also home to four out of five senses and often a good deal of strain and tension. Computer work, traffic, poor posture, pollution, and other aspects of our modern lives leave us with clenched jaws, strained eyes, and regular headaches and sinus problems. So perhaps it's no surprise that a little TLC above the neck does the whole body good.

Although the head, hair, and scalp are usually the domain of salons, spas are catching on to the allure and the benefit of these treatments, offering everything from a basic "scalp refresher" as an add-on to devoting entire treatments to one's head. Turns out, head and scalp massage are a regular component of wellness and beauty rituals in many cultures around the world, from head massage and Shirodara in India, to scalp and face massage with camellia oil in Japan. North America is home to Native American scalp purification treatments as well as contemporary methods, like CranioSacral Therapy, for individuals seeking a fresh approach to stress relief.

Below you'll find an introduction to the wide world of head, hair, and scalp treatments as well as a survey of some of the services spas and practitioners offer to put your head in the clouds.

## Massage-based treatments

### Champissage

*(Indian Head Massage)*

Champissage (derived from the Indian word for head massage) is a specialized form of head massage based on traditional techniques that have been used in India for centuries. Developed by Narendra Mehta, an osteopathic physician, Champissage blends this age-old regimen with modern massage and energy balancing work, focusing on the three upper chakras. The session, performed seated and clothed, usually lasts thirty minutes to an hour. A true Champissage treatment follows a specific sequence of techniques—beginning with the upper back and shoulders, moving up the neck to the head and face, and finishing with more subtle

# Treatments

By Tanya M. Williams

chakra work. Denise Galon, currently the only certified practitioner on the East Coast, says that although most of her clients come to her for a specific physical malady (headaches, hairloss, eyestrain, etc.), the work has an emotional component as well. "Most clients don't experience an emotional release in the first session," Galon relates, "but by the third, bring on the Kleenex."

## CranioSacral Therapy (CST)

Developed by Dr. John E. Upledger, an osteopath at Michigan State University, CranioSacral Therapy is an extremely gentle method of manipulating the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) as well as the membranes that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. Just as

the cardiovascular system has a detectable heartbeat, CSF has a unique pulse. Using only five grams of pressure (the weight of a nickel), a therapist uses various holds to detect the flow and rhythm of the CSF. After the CSF flow is detected the therapist, with an equally soft touch, releases any restrictions in its movement—helping return the flow to its natural and optimal state. Though

the work is gentle, the effects can be quite profound. CST is effective both as a preventative health measure and as a pain relieving technique, addressing such maladies as migraines, chronic neck and back pain, TMJ, learning disabilities,

## Yasuragi Head & Neck Treatment

*Ten Thousand Waves,  
Santa Fe, New Mexico*

For centuries in Japan, camellia oil has been applied to the hair, scalp, and face to cleanse the pores, hydrate the skin, and bring body and luster to the hair. Ten Thousand Waves adapted this tradition, blending it with Anma bodywork (the forefather of Acupuncture, Thai massage, and Shiatsu) for their Yasuragi Head & Neck Treatment. Yasuragi means comfort in Japanese. To that end, the treatment uses a hot camellia oil blend to work the muscles of the neck and condition the scalp and hair. The treatment also targets Anma points on the face to soothe the nervous system and bring clients to the deepest possible quiet, making it an excellent precursor to any massage as well as a gratifying stand-alone treatment.