

Migraine Therapy - The Beauty Salon Method

Our mothers and fathers had it right. Do you remember the old fashioned beauty salons and barber shops? Daddy went for a haircut and a shave, and got the hot towel treatment; flat on his back in the big chair with his eyes closed. Mother set aside two hours twice a month for a wash, rinse and the latest gossip, then kicked back under the hair dryer with a magazine - free of guilt, housework and children.

Life is stressful. The worries and responsibilities of day to day living can sometimes overwhelm us, and we forget that stress can shift from our mind and emotions to our bodies. Many physical ailments and symptoms can be traced back to the levels of stress in our lives, and it is important to remember that time spent relaxing is not time wasted - it's time invested. Learning to decompress is an important step on the road to whole body healing.

Migraines are one of the leading stress related health problems in the world. Tension, sinus problems and a multitude of everyday things can cause them, but getting rid of migraines is not so simple. Finding the time to sleep, de-stress or otherwise relax is almost impossible. It often takes a conscious effort to make time for taking care of yourself, but you will find it pays off in many positive ways. Even if you need to continue taking daily or incident-targeted migraine drugs, alternative, holistic methods like the ones outlined below give medications a better chance of performing at their full potential.

Nowadays many beauty salons offer relaxation therapy along with the traditional cut and dry. Don't let the expense throw you; it's comparable to the cost of many prescription medications for migraine, and could be more valuable in the long run. Check and see if the salon offers discounts if you bundle services or sessions together, and try to have a standing appointment once every two weeks or so. Buying a series of sessions has the added advantage of encouraging you to make it to every appointment.

Indian Head Massage, or *Champissage* is one of the most popular natural salon treatments for migraine. Reaching back for thousands of years in India, it originated as a way to help stimulate hair growth, and was commonly practiced by all family members upon each other. Through the years, it has evolved as its beneficial effects for a wide range of conditions have been documented.

A thorough massage of this type does not even require disrobing, and can be performed with the recipient sitting or lying down. You will want to remove glasses and any jewelry, and possibly loosen your upper garments (consider wearing a loose, wide necked top to your appointment). A proper massage will include the face, ears, neck and shoulders in addition to the scalp. Many people claim that such a massage received at the earliest warning sign of a migraine can often prevent it completely. You may come to appreciate it to the point you will be asking if your masseuse offers emergency after hour sessions, or house calls for those unexpected migraine attacks!

If you have had a migraine in the past 24-48 hours you may wish to postpone this type of massage as the scalp and neck may be too tender. Other reasons to avoid intensive head massage include severe eczema of the scalp or spinal problems.

Another kind of massage is the Japanese based *shiatsu*, a form of acupressure which uses finger and pulse points to relieve stress. It works on migraines by releasing the

tension and faulty blood flow to base of the head and spinal cord. If used to treat an existing migraine, a dark room and the laying down position are recommended. Often the therapist will let you stay in the room for a little while after the conclusion of the massage, and you can use this time to relax and absorb the full benefits of the treatment.

Whether used in conjunction with massage or alone, essential oils are a popular tool for the prevention or treatment of migraines. Essential oils should always be diluted in a carrier oil (try almond, sold in most health food stores), and can be rubbed into the temples and shoulders or heated in a 'burner' to release vapors. Coconut oil is good for scalp massage as it rejuvenates the hair, while lavender, peppermint and chamomile are favored for topical application after dilution.

Aromatherapy has gained credence as a migraine treatment because so many sufferers report an unpleasant smell immediately preceding a migraine. Many believe that surrounding yourself with healthy herbal aromas can reverse the effects of a migraine, and there is no denying that a pleasant scent does promote relaxation. Favorites again are lavender, marjoram and rosemary.

A final treatment your beauty salon might offer is Hopi ear candles. These hollow flax tubes are dipped in honey and herbal oils such as chamomile, sage and St Johns wort. One is placed over the ear canal and lit, and the resulting flow of warm air softens ear wax, debris and irritants and draws them up out of the ear. This has proven to be successful in treating types of migraines triggered by sinus pressure.

Taking personal time for yourself can have far reaching mental, emotional and physical benefits that can help reduce the frequency and duration of migraine headaches. If expensive prescription medications are not proving effective for migraine control, consider spending your money and time in a salon rather than the doctor's office. The cost will be well worth it if it gives you that personal time away from all your chores and concerns.

"Research by Grace Alexander"

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