

Indian Head Massage (Champi)



Introduction

“HE WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH OF THE BODY,
KNOWS THE TRUTH OF THE UNIVERSE”

Alternative names for Indian head massage (IHM) are Shiro Abhyanga massage, or Champi massage. *Shiro* means head and *Abhyanga* means massage. *Champi* stands for “rubbing,” pressure,” “friction,” and most commonly known as IHM. Historically, IHM was common amongst women in India as part of their daily beauty routines. Thence, IHM became a common service for barbers and hairdressers, and popularity grew beyond the Indian borders.

The Champi massage, that derives from Ayurveda, is a non-invasive technique that can be applied on anyone and anywhere, as it doesn’t require any special equipment and is simple to perform. The term *Ayurveda* derives from the Indian historical language Sanskrit, and means “*ayu*” (duration of life) and “*veda*” (knowledge or truth). This term can be translated as “the science of life.” Being a holistic science, Ayurveda recommends us to follow a balanced diet, to practice meditation, yoga, massage and detoxification methods, with the aim of creating harmony between the body, mind, and spirit; which in turn will open the seven centers of vital energy known as *chakras*.

Ayurveda does not focus on treating illness, but rather on avoiding its appearance, and/or freeing us from an already existing illness through a healthy lifestyle.

The Champi massage balances the body, mind, and spirit as it relaxes the muscles, realigns the joints and enhances their mobility, improves the circulation of blood and energy throughout the body such as *Chakras* (the seven vital energy centers), eliminating toxins; not only treating us on the inside but also providing us outer beauty.

The History of Ayurveda

It is told that fifty-two sacred and wise men from different parts of India, established what is today known as the *Verdi* philosophy. This philosophy was verbally transmitted through the sacred scriptures, written around 170-1100 B.C.E., and divided into *The Four Vedas*, considered the most ancient demonstration of human literature, classified into:

Rigveda: describes the cosmic law and origin of the universe

Yajurveda: contains internal and external rituals and transformative actions

Samaveda: based on mantras and chants in musical forms

Atharvaveda: describes the knowledge related to curative and preventative powers, as well as everything concerning medicine, lifestyle, relaxation, etc.; includes a section dedicated to the art of healing, called Ayurveda



Ayurveda Timeline

~500 B.C.E.	Ayurveda was enriched due to Buddhist influences
272—231 B.C.E.	during Ashoka ruling, Ayurveda gained importance and was studied extensively
1100—1200	First decline of Ayurveda during Muslim invasion
1839—1947	Ayurveda decline further under British rule with introduction of Western modern medicine
1947	Thanks to Mahatma Gandhi, India's independence and Ayurveda blossomed again
Today	Ayurveda is practiced all around India and is a Master's Degree at national universities

The Foundations of Ayurveda

Foundation I

Ayurveda does not focus on treating illness, but rather on avoiding its appearance, and/or freeing us from an already existing illness through a healthy lifestyle. According to Ayurveda, the universe, the human beings and in general everything surrounding us is composed of the five elements, or *Mahabhutas*: space (*Aaskash*), air (*Vayu*), fire (*Agni*), water (*Jala*) and earth (*Pithvi*). The elements are always present; however, they exist in different proportions creating balance within each person, which is why all treatments ought to be personalized.

Foundation II

Ayurveda distinguishes three principal causes for an imbalance between the three vital energies: *Vatta*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*:

- Weakening or worsening of the sensorial organs
- Misguided use of the senses and spirit
- Neglecting the influence that nature has on us

The three vital energies are called *doshas*, which form the constitution of each individual, are obtained through combining the five elements. By knowing the dominating *doshas*, treatments are specifically personalized to the individual, which aid in maintaining the three *doshas* stable.

Foundation III

The free flow of *prana*, derived from Sanskrit and refers to life force, is a requirement for good health. Massage is an efficient method for opening the energy blocks. *Marmas* are energy points which serve the energy channels called *nadis*. *Marma* points can be defined as anatomical points where veins, arteries, tendons, nerves, bones and joints come together; having receivers in the skin that relate them to certain organs and tissues.

The *nadis* can be stimulated and regulated through working on the energy points located on a superficial level. Out of the 72,000 *nadis* that the human body has, three are most important: *pingala* (*female aspect*), *ida* (*male aspect*), and *sushumna* (*neutral*).

Chakras are seven centers of vital energy that are in charge of receiving and sending information. As physical reference, we can say the *chakras* are located on the ductless endocrine glands: reproductive glands, pancreas, adrenal gland, thymus, thyroid gland, pituitary gland and pineal gland. Each *chakra* corresponds to particular emotional and psychological patterns. By opening these energy centers through massage, yoga exercise and meditation, we achieve greater vitality and health.