

LATEST RESEARCH: THE BENEFITS OF MASSAGE page 98

# Spa

Healthy Living,  
Travel & Renewal

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Nighttime Skincare

How Much Water  
Should You Drink?  
page 68

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rejuvenate**

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FOR BEAUTIFUL HAIR



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## Best Tressed

Treatments for the hair and scalp draw on ancient traditions and natural ingredients to repair damage and soothe the senses. BY LIZ BROWN

If your precious mane has lost its shine, or you've ever wished that a stylist would massage your head for longer than two minutes during a shampoo, consider a spa treatment designed to keep your crowning glory in tip-top condition. There is an array of time-tested options from which to choose, and treatments vary from fragrant, botanical masques to warm-oil therapies that have a >>



There's a reason scalp massage feels so good and invigorates you head to toe: It restores the flow of energy throughout the body.

profound effect on the entire body as well as the hair. Many of the hair-and-scalp treatments in spas today emerged from the traditional beauty and health practices that have made the thick, glossy strands of Chinese, Japanese, Thai, and Indian women a source of envy the world over.

### Natural Nourishment

Historically, humans have relied on ingredients found in nature to cleanse, condition, color, and add shine to their tresses. It's no wonder spas continue to keep these traditions alive; natural products are effective in improving the health of the hair and scalp and are typically milder than those with chemicals. Plus, they tend to leave hair pleasantly scented.

Plant oils are among the many age-old hair treatment ingredients. "Coconut oil has been used for centuries to strengthen the hair shaft and protect against protein loss," says Martina Perko, spa director at the Biltmore in Coral Gables, Florida. It leaves hair glossy, too. A sesame oil base infused with the herb bhringaraj ("king of tresses") has long been used in ancient ayurvedic head-and-scalp treatments because of its nourishing qualities and ability to help maintain color and strength. Traditional carrier oils for Indian head massage include coconut, sesame, and olive, to which beneficial herbs or floral essences are added. The Biltmore's blend, for example, combines coconut oil with neem (treats dandruff) and gotu kola (stimulates new growth).

Designed to treat dry, damaged hair, the signature scalp therapy at Montage Laguna Beach in California utilizes a combination of olive, peanut, and jojoba oils. Essential oils of ylang-ylang, lavender, geranium, and gardenia are also included in the blend. "The essential oils help address dullness, frizz, and fly-aways by pumping each hair shaft with nourishing moisture," explains Montage spa director Julie Raistrick. These essential oils are also ideal for hair damaged by harsh water, environmental factors, illness, medication, and frequent chemical treatments.

Exquisitely scented essential floral oils not only improve the look of the hair but also provide aromatherapeutic benefits. Masques and oils containing such botanical essences are best left in place after the treatment concludes so that you can revel in the scent. Letting the products marinate also amplifies their effects. "We leave the products in for deep conditioning," says Mandy Larocque, spa operations supervisor and lead massage therapist at Silver Rain, a La Prairie Spa at The Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman. Let your treatment penetrate overnight, and you'll awaken to hair that is nourished and shining. If you'd like to extend the healthy glow, opt for a head or scalp therapy that brings vibrancy to the entire body and peace to the mind.

### Balanced Energy

There's a reason a scalp massage feels so good and invigorates you from head to toe: It >>

## stimulate

Increase circulation to strengthen strands and maintain a healthy scalp.



#### Dr. Hauschka Neem Hair Oil

A blend of neem, chamomile, and rosemary increases blood flow to the scalp and fortifies brittle, chemically treated hair. (\$30, drhauschka.com)



#### Espa Pink Hair and Scalp Mud

White clay boosts circulation and apricot kernel moisturizes in this mineral-rich mud masque for the hair. (\$57, espaaonline.com)



Sprayology Hair + Nail Tonic With natural ingredients like vitamins and amino acids, this homeopathic oral spray helps keep hair healthy. (\$24, sprayology.com)

FOR DETAILS, SEE THE SOURCE, PAGE 135.

restores the flow of energy throughout the whole body. “In our society, we tend to concentrate energy in our heads,” says Marc Zollicoffer, Aveda’s global spa educator. And headaches, sleeplessness, and other maladies are the result. At the Aveda Lifestyle Salon & Spa in Honolulu, relief comes in the form of a head massage that stimulates pressure points corresponding to meridians, channels through which chi flows according to the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Zollicoffer explains that the main goal is to restore the flow of chi down the back of the body, but the technique also stimulates hair growth.

“Scalp massage produces an increase in blood flow and circulation and, therefore, follicle irrigation — which encourages hair growth,” says Wanna Homsanoe, spa manager at Thailand’s Chiva-Som destination spa, where therapists gently address specific places on the head with circular movements to stimulate acupressure points. “This technique also unlocks the scalp tissue from the skull, which relieves stress, tension, and muscle stiffness,” adds Homsanoe.

A form of acupressure with Japanese origins, shiatsu massage can also be used on the head to promote free-flowing energy. The scalp massage offered at Montage Laguna Beach works traditional Japanese shiatsu pressure points with a deep cranial massage designed to balance the body and exfoliate the scalp. The use of a boar-bristle brush stimulates circulation prior to the

massage, supplying more oxygen and nutrients to the hair follicles, which, in addition to increasing growth, amplifies shine and improves overall texture.

Shiatsu also plays a role in celebrity stylist Billy Yamaguchi’s Feng Shui scalp treatments, offered in the spas at California’s La Quinta, La Costa, and Rancho Las Palmas resorts. Yamaguchi first determines a guest’s dominant element (fire, earth, metal, water, or wood) during a beauty consultation, then selects appropriate treatments, products, and massage techniques to right imbalances in energy flow and bring the body into a state of harmony. A “fire” scalp treatment, for instance, would include a vigorous head massage and exotic, stimulating aromas from the Orient and Middle East while the “water” version employs calming head strokes and soothing lavender essential oil.

### A Sense of Calm

Therapies for the scalp and hair can also work to clear and focus the mind, relieve stress, and induce profound relaxation and centering. “The sense of touch on the forehead helps calm mental activity,” says Rogers Badgett, a doctor of Vedic science and founder of The Raj, an authentic ayurvedic health retreat in Fairfield, Iowa.

Thick, strong hair is a symbol of beauty in India, and the country’s ayurvedic approach to health prescribes a variety of head treatments — *shirodhara* and head massage being the most

## repair

Botanical shampoos and intense treatments correct damage and restore strength.



**Aveda Damage Remedy Restructuring Shampoo** Coconut restores moisture, sea buckthorn protects, and quinoa protein rebuilds. (\$24, [aveda.com](http://aveda.com))



**Laboratoire Remède Complete Repair Conditioner** Manageability is enhanced with a sweet lupine complex, panthenol, and orange and mint oils. (\$28, [remede.com](http://remede.com))



**Carita Radiant Mask for Color-Treated Hair** Cupuaçu butter and wheat proteins restructure while sunflower seed extract helps maintain color. (\$52, [carita.com](http://carita.com))



common — to bring balance to the body, center the mind, and beautify the hair.

Shirodhara is a 5,000-year-old ayurvedic treatment that entails methodically dripping a thread of warm oil or another therapeutic liquid onto the center of the forehead from a suspended metal or clay vessel. The intention is to awaken the “third eye” (the chakra associated with intuition and inner knowing) and induce a state of total wellness. When performed correctly, the process brings a sense of orderliness, peace, and transcendence to the receiver. The nourishing oil is often run through the strands at the end of the treatment for added protection and strength.

Indian head massage, offered at the spa at the Biltmore, relieves stress by focusing on the three higher chakras (throat, third eye, and crown), according to spa director Perko. The guest sits or lies down, and a massage using kneading, friction, and warm oils is performed to stimulate *marma* points (ayurvedic energy centers that are considered to be linked to the rest of the body). Internal heat, which can cause thinning hair, is expelled through the crown, and massage oil infused with cooling flower essences

## BOOK IT: HAIR THERAPIES

In the Shirodhara treatment at Aequis Spa Retreat a steady stream of warm, botanical oil is drizzled on the forehead to soothe the senses and bring mental clarity. (\$95, 45 minutes)

Wild lime blossom oil is the star of the Sagrado Scalp Revitalizer at El Monte Sagrado. The aromatic oil is applied along meridians on the head and massaged vigorously into the scalp, neck, and shoulders to boost circulation, condition hair, and balance the mind. (\$55, 30 minutes)

Guests at the spa at Esperanza choose from a variety of scalp-nourishing masques for the Discover Your Roots treatment. The masque is applied using a deep scalp massage, and a plastic cap enhances absorption. A warm-water rinse and mild shampoo reveal newfound shine. (\$70, 30 minutes)

The scalp treatment at Kelly’s Spa at the Mission Inn revives lifeless hair with warm kukui nut oil, coconut milk, and propolis. The therapy is the perfect beautifying finale after a relaxing massage. (\$25, 15 minutes)

AEQUIS SPA RETREAT, PORTLAND, OREGON, (503) 223-7847, [AEQUISSPA.COM](http://AEQUISSPA.COM)

EL MONTE SAGRADO, LIVING SPA, TAOS, NEW MEXICO, (800) 828-8267,

[ELMONTESAGRADO.COM](http://ELMONTESAGRADO.COM)

ESPERANZA, CABO SAN LUCAS, BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO, (866) 311-2226,

[ESPERANZARESORT.COM](http://ESPERANZARESORT.COM)

MISSION INN HOTEL & SPA, KELLY’S SPA, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA, (800) 843-7755,

[MISSIONINN.COM](http://MISSIONINN.COM)

like marigold, rose, and jasmine complements the process while also fortifying follicles.

Often exotic and always rejuvenating, hair therapies can balance energy flow, encourage growth, calm the mind, and beautify the tresses. In addition, many allow you to enjoy the benefits of a spa experience without disrobing or spending hours in the spa — though their soothing effects are sure to linger long after you’ve left the treatment room.

## shine

Rehydrating products add a brilliant luster to your luscious locks.



**International Orange Nourish Hair Cream** This potion hydrates, protects, and scents with natural oils, jasmine, and tuberose. (\$42, [internationalorange.com](http://internationalorange.com))



**Simply Organic Sun Shine** Rosemary oil softens, vegetable glycerin adds sheen, and calendula flower extract smooths in this heat-activated hair mist. (\$22, [simplyorganicbeauty.com](http://simplyorganicbeauty.com))



**Davines For Wizards No.1 Finest Oil Non Oil A** non-greasy mix of sweet almond proteins leaves the hair soft and silky. (\$20, [davines.com](http://davines.com))