

Pamper Yourself

Written by Written by Melissa Larsen / Photographed by Cassandra Tomei
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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PAMPERED

That hot stone massage feels oh-so good on your aching back, and that aromatherapy facial makes your skin baby-bottom soft. But did you know that those pamper sessions are aiding in your overall health and wellness, too?



Mess of Stress

Stress wreaks havoc on our lives, and our health certainly isn't exempt. "Probably 80 percent of my patients come in for conditions that are at least exacerbated by stress, and I have a decent number that come in for adrenal fatigue, which is a fancy way of saying they've been doing way too much for way too long," says Dr. Lauren Deville, a Tucson-based naturopathic doctor. "I treat them medically of course, but one of the principles of naturopathic medicine is to treat the root cause. Pampering is one terrific way to do that." By stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system, massage and other forms of pampering lowers the stress hormone, cortisol, explains Dr. Suneil Jain of Scottsdale's Rejuvena Health & Aesthetics. Thus, a monthly, or so, spa visit can possibly reduce one's risk of heart disease and cancer, two ailments that have been linked to stress. "People tend to feel less guilty about [being pampered] when they can say they're doing it under doctor's orders," Dr. Deville says.

THINK PINK



Body Wise

It is no secret that a therapeutic massage can dissolve kinks and knots in those overworked muscles, but that magic-working masseuse is also pushing out toxins, improving circulation and increasing lymphatic flow. "We are healers," says Carmen Cherry, aesthetician specializing in vegan skincare at Zolton's Salon & Day Spa in Scottsdale. "We help people feel better." Starting with the skin, a session with a specialist can help people learn proper products and routines for their unique skin type. The results of appropriate skincare won't just be a prettier face and body—it will be healthier skin, something that is especially imperative to focus on in Arizona's dry heat. "We are in the desert, so it is important to keep your skin toned, refreshed," says Brennan Evans, director of spa operations at Willow Stream Spa at Fairmont Scottsdale Princess.

The removal of toxins is another advantage of a trip to the treatment room, as they can have a damaging impact on the body, resulting in digestive issues, aches and pains and the feeling of fatigue. "Flushing toxins out of the system is a strong benefit of massage; it gets the lymph moving in your body," Evans says. The lymphatic system also plays a major role in one's wellness, as it aids the immune system, delivers oxygen and nutrients to blood cells and carries out debris.

And remember those muscles we mentioned? "The muscles help to support your bones and your joints," Evans says. So not only are those muscles being melted, but the bones and joints they support are getting TLC, as well. "Really, any body part has acupuncture points that when massaged, touched or rubbed have a positive effect," Dr. Jain says.

Mental Wellness

How can one be expected to raise a happy, healthy family and be a success in the office if they aren't fulfilled mentally, spiritually or emotionally? "Our bodies force us to eat and sleep, but unfortunately there's no gauge, other than chronic illness, to indicate that we haven't taken care of ourselves spiritually and emotionally," Dr. Deville says. "The truth is, you can't be fully present and available to serve the needs of others until you've met your own needs first—you can't give out of an empty cup. Taking care of yourself is not selfish; it's just common sense."

One of peoples' most common excuses for not partaking in r-n-r is they simply don't have time. However, spa and medical professionals urge people to make the time for a little pampering for the sake of their health and well-being, even if they, as Evans suggests, simply take extended baths with high-quality essential oils and soothing music. "We live in times that are stressful with jobs and children and sometimes we forget about ourselves," Cherry says. "People put a lot of thought and money in material things. Think about yourself."

There's at least one local spa treatment that can very literally aid in the fight against disease. Those who indulge in the Pink Massage in Fairmont Scottsdale Princess's Power of Pink room (which is decked in inspirational quotes and plenty of pink, of course) are automatically

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donating five percent of their treatment fee to fund breast cancer research. www.scottsdaleprincess.com.